Generic Management

Learner Guide

Module 8 – Workplace Communication Skills

FETC Generic Management – Level 4 - SAQA ID: 57712 LP 74630

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Section 1

Use language and communication in occupational learning programmes

SAQA ID 119467:
Use language and communication in occupational learning programmes
NQF Level 3, 5 Credits

Programme Overview

Welcome to this learning programme that will lead you to greater understanding of **using language and communication in occupational learning programmes**.

As you work your way through the learning programme you will gain competence against the following Unit Standard:

Programme	Use language and communication in occupational learning programmes
Unit Standard	SAQA ID 119467: Use language and communication in occupational learning programmes; NQF Level 3, 5 Credits

This learning programme is **intended for** all persons who need to use language and communication in occupational learning programmes. The purpose of this unit standard is to facilitate learning and to ensure that learners are able to cope with learning in the context of learnerships, skills programmes, and other learning programmes. Many adult learners in the FET band have not been in a learning situation for a long time, and need learning and study strategies and skills to enable successful progression. Learners competent at this level will be able to deal with learning materials, to access and use useful resources, to seek clarification and help when necessary, and apply a range of learning strategies. They do this with an understanding of the features and processes of the workplace and occupations to which their learning programme refer.

Programme entry level requirements

The credit calculation is based on the assumption that learners are already competent in terms of the full spectrum of language knowledge and communication skills laid down in the Revised National Curriculum Statements and unit standards up to NQF level 2

Programme Outcomes

This learning programme is outcomes-based which means we take the responsibility of learning away from the facilitator and place it in your hands.

Your learning will begin in the workshop where you will identify the skills and knowledge you require in order to meet the specific outcomes and assessment criteria contained in the unit standard.

In this learning programme, we will be covering the following **learning outcomes**:

Module 1: **Critically analyse texts produced for a range of purposes, audiences and contexts**	**Module 2:** **Identify and explain the values, attitudes and assumptions in texts**	**Module 3:** **Evaluate the effects of content, language and style on readers'/viewers' responses in specific texts**
• Adopt reading and/or viewing strategies appropriate to the purposes for reading/viewing • Identify organisational features of texts and explain the role of each of the features in relation to usefulness in making meaning of readings and/or viewing	• Reflect an understanding of surface and embedded meaning in the text in presentations of viewpoints • Identify and explain values and views in selected texts in terms of the impact on meaning and target audience	• Outline content and explore its possible effects on different readers/viewers • Identify the impact of different writing/signing techniques on reader/viewer perspective and explain it in terms of the particular effect produced by each

• Synthesise information from texts, and generalise patterns and trends that result in appropriate conclusions about purpose, audience and context	• Cite evidence from texts in defence of a position is relevant	• Analyse the influence of specific language structures and features • Explain the effect of selected production techniques in visuals

During the workshop you will complete a number of class activities that will form part of your formative assessment. In this you have the opportunity to practice and explore your new skills in a safe environment. You should take the opportunity to gather as much information as you can to use during your workplace learning and self-study.

The workshop will be followed by summative assessment tasks to be completed through self-study in your workplace. In some cases you may be required to do research and complete the tasks in your own time.

Assessment

It is important to note that the onus is on you, as the learner, to prove your competence. You therefore need to plan your time and ensure that your Portfolio of Evidence is kept up to date and handed in timeously.

A Portfolio of Evidence is a collection of documents of work you have produced to prove your competence. You will compile your portfolio from activities, tools and checklists associated with the unit standard and relevant to the unit standard being assessed.

You will be given the following documents to assist you in creating a portfolio of evidence:

- **Learner Guide**: The Learner Guide is designed to serve as a guide for the duration of your learning programme and as the main source document for transfer of learning. It contains information (knowledge and skills required) and application aids that will assist you in developing the knowledge and skills stipulated in the specific outcomes and assessment criteria. The learner guide also indicates the formative assessment class activities that you need to complete towards your Portfolio of Evidence.

- **Learner Workbook**: The learner Workbook contains all the class activities that you will be completing to show formative learning. These will be assessed as part of your portfolio of evidence as formative assessment. You will be handing in the Learner Workbook as part of your Portfolio of Evidence.

- **Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide**: The Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide provides details about the assessment, such as the assessment preparation, plan and specific summative assessment activities that you need to complete in the workplace.

Both formative and summative assessment is used as part of this outcomes-based learning programme:

- **Formative Assessment**: In order to gain credits for this Unit Standard you will need to prove to an assessor that you are competent. The Class Activities throughout your Learner Workbook are designed not only to help you learn new skills, but also to prove that you have mastered competence. You will be required to develop a Portfolio of Evidence to hand in to an assessor so that you can be assessed against the outcomes of this Unit Standard. Where you encounter a Class Activity icon, you must complete the formative assessment activity in the Learner Workbook. Comprehensive guidelines for the development of your Portfolio of Evidence may be found in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide for the particular learning programme that you are working with.

- **Summative Assessment**: The NQF's objective is to create independent and self-sufficient learners. This means that you will also be required to do independent research and assignments, such as Knowledge Questions, Practical Activity (completed in the workplace), Witness Testimony and Logbook.

  The assessment process is discussed in detail in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide. When you are ready, you will advise your mentor that you are ready for assessment. He or she will then sign off the required sections in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide and you will be able to submit your Portfolio of Evidence for assessment. The summative assessment activities placed in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide for your convenience. If any of your assessment is conducted using observation, role plays or verbal assessment, place a signed copy of the checklists, once completed by your mentor or line manager in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide, as indicated.

The Training Provider will assess your portfolio. If successful, you will receive the credit value of this learning programme. The entire assessment process is explained in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide and you are urged to read this guide as soon as possible as it explains the assessment process in detail and clarifies your rights and responsibilities to ensure that the assessment is fair, valid and reliable.

If you are not successful, you will receive all the guidance needed to resubmit your Portfolio of Evidence within a specific time period, as per the Training Provider requirements.

Learning map (delivery structure)

Assessment	**←Formative Assessment→ 34%**		**←Summative Assessment→66%**	
Learning activities for 50 hours of notional learning	Contact Learning Theory input Formative assessment (workbook activities): group activities, simulations	Prescribed reading, support, coaching	Learning and application at the workplace	Summative assessment in PoE: knowledge questions, practical workplace activity, Witness Testimony, logbook
	16 hours	**1 hour**	**25 hours**	**8 hours**
	↓	↓	↓	↓
Portfolio of Evidence	**←Compilation of Portfolio of Evidence→**			
Complementary workplace practices	Coaching and Mentoring; Performance Management			

Learner Support

Please remember that as the programme is outcomes based – this implies the following:

- You are responsible for your own learning – make sure you manage your study, practical, workplace and portfolio time responsibly.

- Learning activities are learner driven – make sure you use the Learner Guide, Learner Workbook and Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide in the manner intended, and are familiar with the Portfolio requirements.

- The Facilitator is there to reasonably assist you during contact, practical and workplace time of this programme – make sure that you have his/her contact details.

Module 1
Access and use available learning resources

After completing this module, the learner will be able to access and use available learning resources, by successfully completing the following:

- Identify relevant learning resources
- Use learning resources effectively through appropriate selection of information and acknowledgement of sources

Access and use available learning resources

In this Module you are going to be learning about the various resources available to you to learn effectively in your workplace and when embarking on any occupational learning programme.

In an ideal world we would all have a personal tutor and all the technology and time we could wish for, but of course, the workplace and our personal circumstances are not always perfect and sometimes they are just plain difficult!

However, you will also learn how to use the resources that you *do* have at your disposal effectively in order to get the best results in terms of your learning.

1.1 Identify learning resources

Resources are the means to supply a want. Resources can be raw materials, money, knowledge, people, or anything that is used to produce a product or supply a service. The following table [1]shows some of the resources used by two different organisations. The University of Cape Town supplies a **service**, namely education, while Mittal Steel **manufactures** a product:

Organisation	Human resources	Financial resources	Physical resources	Information resources
UCT	Lecturers Administrative staff	State subsidies Fees	Buildings Lecture halls Libraries Computers	Educational expertise Research reports Annual reports
Mittal Steel	Managers Sales staff Technicians Administrative staff	Shareholders Loans Profits	Assembly plants Buildings Equipment Computers	Data on the market Environmental information Statistics Skills in steel manufacturing

Learning resources

Learning resources can be raw materials, money, knowledge, people, or anything that is used to enable us to learn. So if we look at our example above, our learning resources can be:

- Human resources, like colleagues, facilitators, subject matter experts and mentors/coaches
- Financial Resources, like subsidies, bursaries and grants
- Physical resources, like computers, books, videos, DVDs
- Information resources, like educational expertise and research reports

In addition to the above-mentioned resources, we also need to have the appropriate **communication resources** at our disposal in order to learn and apply our learnt skills

[1] Adapted from: Griffin, RW. 1993. Management, p5.

and knowledge effectively. Communication resources can range from the people with whom we interact (clients and colleagues), to the people from whom we learn, as well as the actual means of communication, e.g. lectures, coaching sessions, feedback sessions, the telephone, e-mail, in fact any means by which we communicate in order to learn.

The more effective the resources we have at our disposal, by implication, the more effective our learning.

However, no matter how much money you spend on learning material, how many textbooks, excellent facilitators and mentors are at your disposal, ultimately, effective learning depends on you and how committed you are to learning a new attitude, skill or competence, or acquiring a new value.

If it's to be, it's up to me!

1.2 Use learning resources

As we have mentioned before, it is no good having the best resources at your disposal if you do not want or know how to use them effectively.

Resource centre

The best place to look for resources is a **resource centre**. This is usually a **library** in which you will find a variety of learning resources, mainly books, but libraries are increasingly including computer-based or electronic resources.

Resource centres or libraries have specialised sections:

- The **lending section** with shelves of books separated into **fiction** books – sorted by author's surname (A to Z), and **non-fiction books** – sorted by subject, using a numbering system (the Dewey decimal classification), then by author's surname.

- The **Periodicals** section where magazines and journals are classified and stored for use.

- The **Reference** section keeps books for readers to use at the library.

Many libraries now have an **information technology** section, where electronic resources, such as CDs and DVDs, are available.

People as a source of information

You will be gathering information from people and presenting it to people in the course of your studies. This means that you must not only be able to interact with people, you must also understand people.

Whether you're talking to subject matter experts or the public, you need to know the right questions to ask and the right way to ask them. Good interviewing techniques are therefore essential for successful research, especially when you're dealing with such a wide variety of people, from the subject matter expert to the general public.

The people you're interviewing may often not have the time, energy, or desire to provide you with the information you need. A bit of socialising, negotiation and even persuasion gives you the edge you need to get information from those reluctant people.

Internet resources

Although the Web is commonly considered the most powerful information tool in history, it is one of the most difficult resources to search and evaluate effectively for many reasons.

First of all, anyone with a basic knowledge of computer systems can produce and publish a full-scale Web site on any subject, calling into question the authenticity of all the information found on the Web.

Furthermore, unlike traditional "paper" resources where the information remains unchanged, information on the Web one day may be completely gone or significantly changed the next.

With these limitations in mind, there are many legitimate and reliable resources on the Web that can be quite useful.

By following a few simple criteria and using some old fashioned "common sense," the reliable and verifiable resources can easily be distinguished from the junk:

Criteria	✓
Is the information reliable?	
Author's credentials[2]. Is the author an expert in the field?	
Are the sources of information stated?	
Can you verify the information?	
Does it tell you how frequently the resource is updated?	
Does it give header and footer[3] information to determine the author and source?	

Acknowledge sources

A critical point to bear in mind when doing research is that whenever you use information from any of your sources in writing up or presenting your research, you must acknowledge those sources of information.

Acknowledgement of sources is extremely important for two reasons, namely whoever reads your writing may want to check up on a point and using information without stating where it came from is seen in a very serious light. In fact, plagiarism is seen as theft.

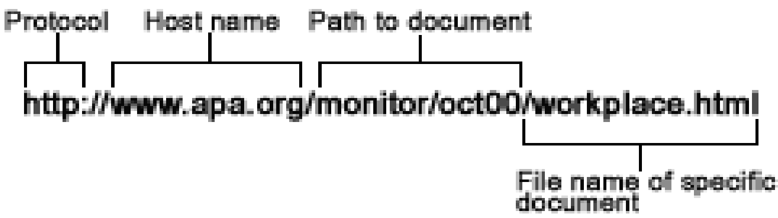
At a minimum, a reference of an Internet source should provide the following:

- A document title or description
- A date (either the date of publication, or update, or the date of retrieval)
- An address (in Internet terms, a uniform resource locator, or URL).

The components of a URL are as follows:

[2] A credential is a verification of qualification, competence, or authority issued to an individual by a third party

[3] A header or footer is text that is usually printed at the top or bottom of every page in a document. A header is printed in the top margin; a footer is printed in the bottom margin.



For a book, you need the author/s, date, the title (underlined, in bold or italics), place of publication and publisher. The title, author and publisher are found on the title page of the book, and the place and date of publication are on the next page.

Example:

Bittel, Lester R. & John W. Newstrom. 1990. **What every supervisor should know**. 6th ed. Gregg Division: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company

Class Activity 1.1:
In small groups, complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook

Module 2
Use learning strategies

After completing this module, the learner will be able to use learning strategies, by successfully completing the following:

- Summarise information and use it for learning purposes
- Select specific techniques and apply them appropriately
- Ask relevant questions
- Read texts for detail, interpret and analyse it for a given context
- Listen to spoken input for detail, interpret it and analyse it for a given context
- Ensure that learning takes place through communicating with others in groups or as individuals

Use learning strategies

STUDY SKILLS CHECKLIST

The purpose of this inventory is to find out about your own **study habits and attitudes**. Read each statement and consider how it applies to you.

If it does apply to you, tick **Yes**.

If it does not apply to you, tick **No**.

No.	Study habits and attitudes	Yes	No
1	I spend too much time studying for what I am learning		
2	I usually spend hours cramming (trying to fill my mind with facts and figures in a short time) the night before an exam		
3	If I spend as much time on my social activities as I want to, I don't have enough time left to study, or when I study enough, I don't have time for a social life		
4	I usually work on my SAs with the radio and TV turned on		
5	I can't sit and work for long periods of time without becoming tired or distracted		
6	I go to class, but I usually sit drawing pictures, daydream, or fall asleep		
7	My class notes are sometimes difficult to understand later		
8	I usually seem to get the wrong facts into my class notes		
9	I don't revise my class notes regularly in order to remember what I have learnt		
10	When I get to the end of a chapter, I can't remember what I've just read		
11	I don't know how to pick out what is important in the text		
12	I can't keep up with my reading assignments, and then I have to cram (trying to fill my mind with facts and figures in a short time) the night before the SAs are due		
13	I do not complete the long written answers well, even when I know how to practically apply the knowledge		
14	I understand the concepts, but when I want to write the answers, my mind goes blank		
15	I often work in an unsystematic, disorganised way under the threat of the next set of SAs		
16	I often find myself getting lost in the details of reading and have trouble identifying the main ideas		
17	I seldom change my reading speed in response to the difficulty level of the piece, or my familiarity with the content		
18	I often wish that I could read faster		
19	When my facilitators give us Summative Assessments, I feel so overwhelmed that I can't get started		
20	I usually complete my Summative Assessments the night before they are due		
21	I can't seem to organise my thoughts into an assignment that makes sense		

If you have answered "yes" to two or more questions in any category, you may need help in certain areas:

- **Time Management skills -** 1, 2, 3, 12, 15 and 20
- **Concentration -** 4, 5, 6, 10, 16 and 21
- **Listening & Note taking skills -** 7, 8, and 9.
- **Reading skills-** 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, and 18
- **Writing Skills -** 13, 14, 15 and 21
- **Attitude -** 5, 6, 12, 15, 19 and 20

Do not be concerned if you feel that you have many areas which need development, each of these areas is addressed throughout the various learning programmes that make up this qualification, as well as the information in the section on learning strategies.

2.1 Summarise and use information

A summary (or précis) is a shorter version of a longer piece of writing. The summary captures all the most important parts of the original, but expresses them in a much shorter space. A summary is a short account of the main ideas contained in a piece of writing.

A summary:

- Includes all the main ideas that relate to the purpose of making the summary
- Contains only the ideas in the passage, not your own ideas
- Leaves out unnecessary detail and examples
- Is brief and accurate

Summarising is one of the most important skills that we can use for learning. It makes us read the text with understanding, and therefore helps us to learn what we are reading. We will therefore look closely at some techniques for summarising information presented in a written text:

1. Read the original quickly, and try to understand its main subject or purpose.
2. Then you will need to read it again to understand it in more detail.
3. Underline or make a marginal note of the main issues. Use a highlighter if this helps.
4. Look up any words or concepts you don't know, so that you understand the author's sentences and how they relate to each other.
5. Work through the text to identify its main sections or arguments. These might be expressed as paragraphs or web pages.
6. Remember that the purpose [and definition] of a paragraph is that it deals with one issue or topic.
7. Draw up a list of the topics
8. Write a one or two-sentence account of each section you identify. Focus your attention on the main point. Leave out any illustrative examples.

9. Write a sentence which states the central idea of the original text.
10. Use this as the starting point for writing a paragraph which combines all the points you have made.
11. The final summary should concisely and accurately capture the central meaning of the original.
12. Remember that it must be in your own words. By writing in this way, you help to re-create the meaning of the original in a way which makes sense for you.

Example[4]:

Original text

'At a typical football match we are likely to see players committing deliberate fouls, often behind the referee's back. They might try to take a throw-in or a free kick from incorrect but more advantageous positions in defiance of the clearly stated rules of the game. They sometimes challenge the rulings of the referee or linesmen in an offensive way which often deserves exemplary punishment or even sending off. No wonder spectators fight amongst themselves, damage stadiums, or take the law into their own hands by invading the pitch in the hope of affecting the outcome of the match.' [100 words]

Summary

Unsportsmanlike behaviour by footballers may cause hooliganism among spectators. [9 words]

Another way of summarising information is the **Mind Map**:

Mind Maps are very useful for improving the way you take notes and for summarising and learning large amounts of information.

Mind Maps are more compact than conventional notes, often taking up only one page. This helps you to see associations easily. Mind Maps are also very quick to review, as it is easy to refresh information in your mind just by glancing at the Mind Map.

Mind Maps hold information in a format that your mind finds easy to remember and quick to review. They abandon the list format of conventional note taking in favour of a two-dimensional structure and very often use colour or icons to help memorise the facts.

Mind Maps can also be effective mnemonics (memory aids). Remembering the shape and structure of a Mind Map can provide the cues necessary to remember the information within it. They engage much more of the brain in the process of assimilating and connecting facts than conventional notes.

If you find out more information after you have drawn the main Mind Map, you can easily integrate the new information with little disruption.

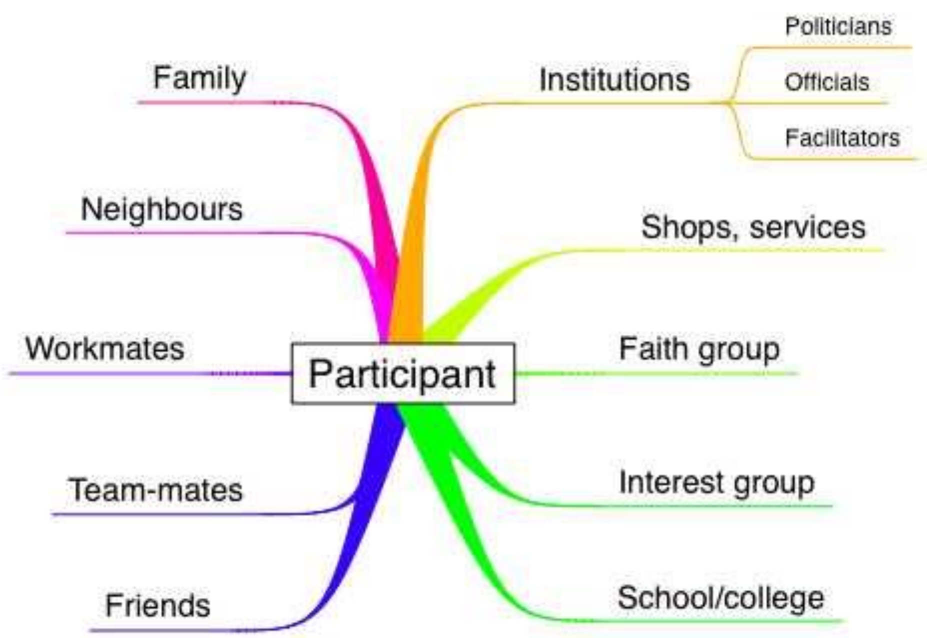
These are the foundation structures of a Mind Map, although these are open to free interpretation by the individual:

1. Start in the centre with an image of the topic, using at least 3 colours.
2. Use images, symbols, codes and dimensions throughout your Mind Map.

[4] Retrieved from: http://www.mantex.co.uk/2009/09/16/how-to-summarize/

3. Select key words and print using upper or lower case letters.
4. Each word/image must be alone and sitting on its own line.
5. The lines must be connected, starting from the central image. The central lines are thicker, organic and flowing, becoming thinner as they radiate out from the centre.
6. Make the lines the same length as the word/image.
7. Use colours – your own code – throughout the Mind Map.
8. Develop your own personal style of Mind Mapping.
9. Use emphasis and show associations in your Mind Map.
10. Keep the Mind Map clear by using Radiant hierarchy, numerical order or outlines to embrace your branches.

This is an example of how you can draw a Mind Map[5]



[5]Retrieved from: http://www.mindmapexample.com/mindmapping.php

2.2 Select and apply specific techniques

It is very important that you select and apply specific learning techniques appropriately in order for learning to place effectively.

Brainstorming

If you want many ideas and an entirely new way of looking at things, consider brainstorming.

Brainstorming is an excellent way of developing many creative solutions to a problem. It works by focusing on a problem, and then coming up with very many radical solutions to it. Ideas should deliberately be as broad and odd as possible, and should be developed as fast as possible. Brainstorming is a lateral thinking process. It is designed to help you break out of your thinking patterns into new ways of looking at things.

Brainstorming encourages “right-brain thinking” or lateral thinking, i.e. the creative sides of our brains are encouraged to think freely, by associating one idea with another and not censoring ourselves or each other.

Group brainstorming can be very effective, as it uses the experience and creativity of all members of the group. When individual members reach their limit on an idea, another member's creativity and experience can take the idea to the next stage. Therefore, group brainstorming tends to develop ideas in more depth than individual brainstorming.

However, brainstorming in a group can be risky for some individuals, as valuable but strange suggestions may appear stupid at first sight and be laughed at. As a result, sessions need to be chaired tightly so that uncreative people do not crush these ideas and leave group members feeling humiliated.

Where possible, participants in the brainstorming process should come from as wide a range of disciplines as possible. This brings a broad range of experience to the session and helps to make it more creative.

You can, of course, brainstorm on your own. When you brainstorm on your own, you will tend to produce a wider range of ideas than with group brainstorming - you do not have to worry about other people's egos or opinions, and can therefore be more freely creative. You may not, however, develop ideas as effectively, as you do not have the experience of a group to help you.

Group analysis

Group analysis takes place after a brainstorming session, when the group go back to the suggestions that were recorded during the brainstorming sessions and start analysing the ideas that came up. The ideas are discussed critically (using logical, programmed thinking) and sorted into a logical format to suit the requirements of the task or problem that has to be solved.

Mind-mapping

You looked at Mind Maps in the previous section of this study unit. A Mind Map takes selected information in point form and arranges it on a page, in a way that shows how the points are related to one another.

It is a technique that suits the way visual learners think, and for them it can be a great help in learning or planning. If *you* like working with Mind Maps, you are probably a visual learner.

Note-taking

Note taking is a technique that can be used in any situation in which you are getting information by reading, listening or watching. It uses skills very similar to summarising, because to take notes, you need to be selecting key points all the time. You cannot write down everything you are reading or listening to or seeing. Taking good notes means concentrating and understanding enough to take in the information and make decisions about what is important and what is not worth writing down. If it is a formal lecture, it is likely that you can take more orderly notes (in point form), as the topic is being given to you in an organised way. If you are making notes out in the field, it is often best to write down just the key words, in case you miss something while you are busy writing.

To use note-taking effectively, you need to understand that its primary value is not in the record you produce, it is in the process itself. The process of taking notes guides the memory connections you make. Note-taking is a strategy for making information meaningful. It is therefore only effective to the extent that you paraphrase, organise and make sense of the information *while* taking notes.

Memorising

Memorising is not the same as learning. To memorise something (to 'learn it by heart') may not necessarily involve understanding it. There are times, however, that you will need to be able to memorise something. One way of helping your brain to do this is to use a mnemonic[6]. This is a word or sentence which spells out the letters (or the first letters in the names) that you are trying to remember. For example, if you want to remember the order in which you work with mathematical functions, you can learn the acronym: **BODMAS**, which reminds you that the correct order is brackets, order, division and multiplication, and then addition and subtraction.

Key words

Key words are the most important words in a particular context. They carry the main ideas. As you saw in Activity 5, identifying key words in a passage is an important step towards summarising the passage and in the process helps you to understand the meaning of the passage.

Underlining

Underlining is a technique that can help you to focus on content and highlights important words or phrases, but it is not as effective in helping you to learn as some other techniques, such as key words or summarising.

Skimming

Skimming is the technique of running your eyes over a text very quickly in order to get the general idea of the content.

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[6] Pronounced "nemonic"- Mnemonics are devices to help us remember (aide memoire or memory aide).

In doing so, your eyes pick up occasional words, so that you get some idea of what the text is about. Skimming gives you an idea of the scope of the content but not much idea of the detail. It is more useful for selecting a text than as a learning strategy, because it is a quick way of checking to see if the text is going to be useful to your needs.

Scanning

Scanning is another reading technique. It also entails reading very quickly but this time you are looking for something specific. For example, when you look up a name in your list of contacts, you 'tell' your eyes to look for a particular name and you automatically ignore all the other names. For example, try looking at this page but look only for the **bold** print. Do you notice how your eyes take no notice of the other print?

Peer assessment

Peer assessment is assessment from a classmate. This can be an effective learning strategy because it can be very helpful to have a peer to reflect back to you what you have done. Peer assessment should help you to review your work and see it from a new perspective. For this to happen, the peer who is assessing the work should be sympathetic but honest. The peer assessment should be done using clear criteria that have been agreed upon beforehand.

Self-assessment

Self-assessment requires the same honesty as peer assessment, but now you apply the assessment to yourself. Self-assessment must also be done using clear criteria. To be able to assess your own work, you should be able to be objective about it. No matter how hard you have worked on it, you need to learn to be honest with yourself: give credit where it is due and see where you could improve. The real value of self-assessment lies in learning to monitor your own learning processes.

2.3 Ask relevant questions

Good interviewing techniques are essential for successful research, which is what you will be doing as part of your learning, especially when you're dealing with a variety of people, from the subject matter expert to the general public.

A knowledge of your language, or the language in which you will be writing, in most cases English, is core to your communication skills as a technical writer. You must know proper grammar, as well as how to express things in an easy-to-understand manner. This becomes especially important when your job is to "translate" highly technical, or even theoretical, content into something that anyone can understand.

For the moment we will focus on **your skills as an interviewer**. You're in the business of gathering information from people and presenting it to people. This means that you must not only be able to interact with people, you must also understand people.

You'll be gathering information from people who may not have the time, energy, or desire to provide you with what you need. A bit of socialising, negotiation and even persuasion gives you the edge you need to get information from those people.

Empathy allows you to intuitively recognise user needs. With empathy, you can predict difficult aspects of a service, product or issue, and devote greater focus on those aspects.

Whether you're talking to subject matter experts or customers, you need to know the right questions to ask and the way to ask them. Good interviewing skills enable you to gain access to information that might have been overlooked, or give you the ability to obtain necessary feedback from a group of users.

Telephone interviews

Try to match the interviewee's speaking rate and pitch. Remember to stay within your personality range, but venture toward that portion of your range that most closely matches that of the interviewee. This is an excellent way to establish rapport quickly over distance and phone lines.

Ensure that external noise does not contribute to an already difficult communication and repeat what the interviewee has said to confirm that you understand.

Empathetic questioning

You should be:

- Sincerely interested in what another thinks
- Able to communicate the interest by asking thoughtful and sincere questions
- More interested in the other person's answers than in your own ideas about how they should be answered
- Willing to listen and question further without imposing your own values or beliefs
- Able to ask further questions without threatening the other person

Encourage the interviewee by:

- Using more positive than negative language in your responses.
- Focusing on what is needed rather than what is missing, e.g., "Could you elaborate more on…? " rather than "You failed to . . ."
- Acknowledging all responses as a contribution, regardless of their accuracy. Greet an answer with some gesture of acknowledgment: a head nod, a smile, a verbal "Good" or "Interesting" or "I see what you mean."

Types of questions

There are many different types of questions that we can use to serve our purpose of collecting information. Let’s run through some of the most common types:

Open questions

These are useful in getting another person to speak. They often begin with the words: What, Why, When, Who, Where. Sometimes they are statements: “tell me about”, “give me examples of”. They can provide you with a great deal of information.

Example:

- Think of a time when you had to do a task that was particularly uninteresting. How did you deal with it?
- What experience have you had with a miscommunication with a customer (or fellow employee). How did you solve the problem?
- Tell me about a time when an upper-level decision or a policy change held up your work.
- Have you ever had to make a sticky decision when no policy existed to cover it? Tell me what you did.
- Describe a time when you communicated some unpleasant news or feelings to a supervisor. What happened?

Closed questions

These are questions that require a “yes” or “no” answer and are useful for checking facts. They should be used with care - too many closed questions can cause frustration and shut down conversation.

Example:

- Do you need more clarification?
- Is that correct/right/ok?
- Shall we continue?
- Any other/further questions?
- Does this answer your question?
- Do you need more clarification?

Hypothetical questions

These pose a theoretical situation in the future; for example, “What would you do if…?’ These can be used to get others to think of new situations. They can also be used in interviews to find out how people might cope with new situations.

Example:

- What else could happen as a result? Why?
- What effect would that have?
- Would that necessarily happen or only probably happen?
- What is an alternative?

Probing questions

These check for more detail or clarification. Probing questions allow you to explore specific areas. However be careful because they can easily make people feel they are being interrogated

Examples:

- **Specific questions** - These are used to determine facts; for example “How much did you spend on that?”

- **Probing or circling back to areas for more in-depth information** - Keep on probing an area if a response is too generic, or does not have enough substance. If the interviewee says something generic like, “Everyone knew that there was widespread corruption…,” probe further. Questions might include: “Give me two or three examples…; what did you do, what was the outcome?”
- **Questions that Probe Reasons and Evidence**:
    - What would be an example?
    - How do you know?
    - What evidence do you have?
    - What difference does that make?
    - What are your reasons for saying that?
    - Why did you say that?
    - What led you to believe that?
    - How does that apply to this case?
    - What would change your mind?

Reflective questions

You can use these to reflect back what you think a speaker has said, to check understanding. You can also reflect the speaker’s feelings, which is useful in dealing with angry or difficult people and for defusing emotional situations.

Example:

- What seem to be the root causes of the issue addressed?
- What is currently happening to address the issue?
- What learning occurred for you in this experience?
- How can you apply this learning?
- What follow-up is needed to address any challenges or difficulties?
- If you could do the project again, what would you do differently?

Leading questions

These are used to gain acceptance of your view – they are not useful in providing honest views and opinions; for example, “‘you will be able to cope, won’t you?”, may put someone off from disagreeing.

Example:

- You were working the late shift on the night of July 15, weren't you?
- "Do you agree that we need to save the rhinos?"

Remember:

When doing research **relevancy** is the primary criterion employed to determine which pieces of information are saved and which are rejected. We create a "net" of questions, which allows all but the most important information to slip through. We then place the good information with the questions it illuminates:

- Which parts of this data are worth keeping?
- Will this information shed light on any of my questions?

- Is this information reliable?
- How much of this information do I need to place in my database?
- How can I summarise the best information and ideas?

Bear in mind that the interviewee might have his/her own agenda, such as trying to hide certain facts, or trying to "butter you up" to win your approval. Alternatively, s/he may not be a mother tongue speaker of English and misunderstanding could creep in completely unawares, so always check for understanding by repeating your views back to the other person to see if s/he agrees that you have interpreted what s/he has said correctly.

2.4 Read, interpret and analyse texts

Reading experts tell us that meaning is not in the words on a page, but comprehension actually results from an interaction between the reader, the strategies the reader employs, the material being read, and the context in which reading takes place[7]. A reader constructs meaning by making inferences[8] and interpretations.

Researchers have also found that reading and writing are integrally related, i.e. reading and writing have many characteristics in common and that readers increase their comprehension by writing. It is therefore a good idea to make notes while you are reading.

How to read difficult text

What is the right approach to reading difficult subject matter? The answer lies in one important rule of reading. You should read a text through superficially before you try to master it.

Look first for the things you can understand and refuse to get bogged down in the difficult passages. Read right on past paragraphs, footnotes, arguments and references that escape you. There will be enough material that you can immediately grasp ... even if it is only 50 percent or less - that will enable you to understand the text in part.

A variation on the method of giving a text a first superficial reading is the technique of **skimming.** You will never get from skimming what reading and study can give you, but it is a very practical way of dealing with the mass of information available to you. By skimming you can get, often with surprising accuracy, a general sense of the contents of a book or article.

For skimming, the following steps are a good way to begin giving a text, in particular a book, the once-over:

- Look at the title page and preface and note especially the sub-titles or other indications of the scope and aim of the book or the author's special angle.
- Study the table of contents to get a general sense of the book's structure; use it as you would a road map before taking a trip.
- Check the index for the range of subjects covered or the kinds of authors quoted. When you see terms listed that seem crucial, look up the passage. You may find the key to the author's approach.

[7] From the *Guide to Curriculum Planning in Reading:* Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
[8] Conclusions drawn from evidence or reasoning

If you need more detail, you will practise **scanning:**

Scanning involves running your eyes down the page looking for specific facts or key words and phrases. Scanning is a technique you often use when looking up a word in the telephone book or dictionary.

In most cases, you know what you're looking for, so you're concentrating on finding a particular answer. This technique is useful when you're **seeking specific information** rather than reading for comprehension.

Scanning involves moving your eyes quickly down the page seeking **specific words and phrases**. It works well to find **dates, names, and places**. It might be used to **review graphs, tables, and charts**.

Strategies that can be used when scanning:

- When scanning, look for the author's use of organisers such as numbers, letters, steps, or the words, first, second, or next.
- Look for words that are bold faced, italics, or in a different font size, style, or colour.
- Sometimes the author will put key ideas in the margin.

Skimming and scanning are particularly valuable techniques for studying technical writing. Technical writers pack many facts and details closely together, and students react by shifting their reading speeds to the lowest gear and crawling through the material. Notwithstanding the fact that technical writing is usually well-organised, with main points and sub-topics clearly delineated, the typical student ignores these clues and plods through the chapter word-by-word, trying to cram it all in.

It is precisely these characteristics (organisation and density of facts per page) that make it so vital that you employ skimming and scanning techniques.

All of the techniques discussed above will allow you to approach a text in a more organised way, and therefore increase your ability to learn from it.

When we read the text for the purpose of learning, we should read for:

- detail i.e. extract information that is stated directly in the text
- interpretation i.e. extract the meaning where the idea is there but not stated directly
- analysis i.e. use the content to draw a conclusion or add your own idea: you have to sort out some information in the text to get an answer, or assess something in order to give an opinion

2.5 Listen, interpret and analyse to spoken input for detail

The Business of Listening:

- To listen effectively is to reach clarity of understanding
- To understand clearly is to respond appropriately
- To respond appropriately is to enhance communication
- To enhance communication is to support cooperation
- To support cooperation is to improve morale
- To improve morale is to increase job commitment
- To increase job commitment is to focus on productivity

- Listening is good business

(Bone, Diane, The Business of Listening, 1998, Crisp Publications Inc. Ontario, Canada)

It would seem that we do not listen effectively; in fact, while we are at work, we normally listen at about 25% of our listening capacity. Everybody can improve their listening if they have the desire, the interest, a high level of concentration, self-discipline and a positive attitude. How do we do this? Let's look at some of the reasons why and how:

Listening is receiving information through your ears and your eyes. It is giving meaning to that information as well as deciding what you think or feel about it. Lastly listening is responding to what you have heard.

In the workplace we spend many hours listening in the various activities that we are involved in. Let's look at some examples:

- Meetings or lectures
- Counselling – essentially on a one-to-one basis.
- Receiving or giving instructions
- Using the telephone
- Helping others
- Decision making

There are many benefits to listening, such as:

- Improve your ability to solve problems
- Improve your working and social relationships
- Improve your memory
- Listening will also improve your concentration and in doing so will help you control any distractions while you are studying.

These benefits alone are reason enough to improve our listening skills, so how do we do that?

Effective listening is a skill that demands energy and know-how. It is also a matter of choice. We choose to listen when:

- The message is important to us
- We are interested in the subject
- We actually feel like listening
- We have listened to this kind of information before.

Listening to Spoken Input

We are not always aware of how much information comes to us through hearing it, but to make the most of this, we need to actively listen rather than just hear sound.

Listening well means staying focused on what is being said.

In the following Activity, you will be asked to listen for:

- **Detail** - where the information is stated directly in the text
- **Interpretation** - where the idea is there but not stated directly
- **Analysis** - where you add your own idea: you have to sort out some information in the text to get an answer, or assess something in order to give an opinion.

2.6 Learn through communicating with others

Learning takes place in many ways throughout our lives. As children we learn, firstly, by watching and listening to our parents. As we grow older, we learn from our friends at school and our teachers. Nowadays we can learn from watching certain informative programmes on television and from our searches on the internet. Many of these learning scenarios involve other people or at least one other person.

Working with others in a group helps learning because:

- It exposes us to more ideas than our own. We saw the value of this in brainstorming
- It can assist our creative thinking to have a number of people sharing their ideas, which we also saw in brainstorming
- It helps us to organise our own ideas when we speak about them, and this reinforces our learning
- It gives us a chance to test out our own ideas, when our peers give us constructive criticism

Learning from Facilitators

The role of the facilitator is to make our studies easy or easier, to guide us along. The facilitator encourages our participation through questioning. Questions are open questions and they form a platform for follow up or more probing questions. The facilitator will also reinforce the learning for us by giving us motivational feedback to encourage us to practice our new skills. Our learning is reinforced by the facilitator through frequent summarising of the key learning points. During our learning, the facilitator will assess us in terms of how much we have learnt and understood during our studies. This helps us to gauge how much more work is needed to complete our studies successfully.

Learning from Mentors

According to the Oxford English Dictionary a Mentor is “Experienced and trusted adviser”. Learning from mentors, whose experience is more varied and greater than your own is a key to your success in the learning environment.
You need to work closely with someone you trust, who knows you and your weaknesses well and on whom you can rely for fair advice.
Your boss, for instance may be an excellent mentor whose example and teaching can guide you for the whole of your career. You can use the boss, not only as a source of learning, but also as a sounding board for your own ideas and ambitions.

Learning from Colleagues

Our colleagues are the people that we work with. They are the people that we usually have the most contact with. As we all have different levels of understanding, it is possible that one of our colleagues may be able to assist us with some of our studies that we are having difficulty grasping. Some of your best contacts will be made at work, especially when you work in a team. Teams can operate inside departments or across both departments and functions and may well involve others outside the company.

Learning from Other Learners

You could find that you would learn quite a bit during a training session from other learners - when they ask a question or make a statement.
You would also be required to work in small groups / teams during a training session (occupational learning).

Learning from Other Team Members

Let's say we have decided that we need a team to help us with our study. We want to mind-map on an assignment that we have been given. We cannot just throw together a group of people and expect them to work as a team after just a few days; even if they are studying the same subjects that we are. Teams need to grow and develop through a series of stages. It is often difficult to blend the needs of individuals, the team and the organisation, so it can feel a bit hectic at times.

Module 3
Manage occupational learning materials

After completing this module, the learner will be able to manage occupational learning materials, by successfully completing the following:

- Organise occupational learning materials for efficient use
- Understand the layout and presentation of learning materials and use it effectively
- Engage with technical language/ terminology with, and seek clarification if needed

Manage occupational learning materials

Let's have a look at how to arrange your learning materials in an orderly way and store them safely.

3.1 Organise occupational learning materials for efficient use

This section focuses on managing occupational learning materials well by organising materials and understanding the ways that these materials are laid out and presented, in order to use them as effectively as possible to help occupational learning.

Occupational learning materials include videos, the Internet, texts, handouts, text books, charts, maps, plans, diagrams and any other documents or technology that you can utilise to help you learn.

Let's have a look at how to arrange your learning materials in an orderly way and store them safely:

Handouts and notes

Loose sheets such as handouts and notes should be dated and put into a file that has been prepared with sections or dividers that match the sections of your course of study. Your notes and handouts should be inserted into the relevant section of the file in the order in which they were received, or in an order that suits the way they will be used. Remember to write publication details onto any photocopied texts for future reference.

Textbooks

Textbooks should be preferably be covered with plastic and have the owner's name written in them. If markings are done in a textbook (e.g. underlining) this should be done in pencil. Then, if the textbook is sold, the markings can be removed by rubbing out.

Some actions that help care for textbooks are:

- Only bring the books to work if you're sure you'll have time to use them
- Clean out bags regularly removing unwanted rubbish that can damage the books
- Store drinks and lunch items in such a way that moisture does not leak or condense onto texts or other books

Electronic learning resources

Dealing with electronic learning resources also needs to be done in an orderly way, such as:

- **Internet** - When using the Internet, we need to manage any material we download and print out. We have noted that, for any printout from a website, the address prints out automatically at the top of the page. We should then file such printouts in our filing system for future reference, and for follow up if we want to return to that website at some future date.

- **Videos** - Videos are learning resources that also need to be carefully labelled and stored. Perhaps the most important point to be careful about in maintaining your videos in good condition is to avoid conditions that will damage them, such as excessive heat, excessive moisture, excessive cold, excessive dust and excessive jostling.

  Most of us are familiar with videos as a way of watching fiction film (movies). However, you may sometimes also watch specialised documentary videos on contact centre practice and related topics, which are available from libraries in the same way that books are. They are classified by the same categories and Dewey decimal classification numbers that are used for books in the resource centre.

  Your local library or resource centre should have a catalogue of available videos. If your local library or resource centre does not have your choice of video available, you can make a request through them for a loan from your Provincial Library Service.

- **CDs and DVDs** - CDs and DVDs should be handled with a good degree of care. A deep scratch will cause your disc to skip, stick or sometimes eject altogether and that can be infuriating. Even fingerprints can be damaging. It is therefore always advisable to handle your disc at the edges. In other words, when handling a disc, only touch the edges, not the flat surface.

  As it is a digital format, repair kits don't work particularly well, so it's a good idea to look after your discs from the start.

  In terms of cleaning, a good option is to use plain round wipes made specifically for CD or DVD cleaning. It is recommended to wipe the disc from the centre hole to the outer edge and not to wipe in a circular motion as this will leave marks. It may sound simple but to guard against scratches on your discs, keep them in their cases when not in use.

3.2 Understand and use the layout and presentation of learning materials

Books that are designed as learning resources are also *organised* to assist learning, by helping us find the information we need.

The most important of these features are:

Contents page

Table of Contents:		Page
1	What are Comfort Zones? And Why should we escape?	1
2	Mapping out your journey	9
3	Stage 1: What exactly is a Comfort Zone?	14
4	Stage 2: Preparing yourself for the Escape	76
5	Stage 3: Taking time out to get to know yourself	142
6	Stage 4: Stimulating the motivation and readiness for change	206
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8	Stage 6: The vital importance of a mentor/soul mate/guide	246
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The contents page is found near the front of the book, just after the title page. The contents page lists the chapters of the book, and the chapter titles give us an overview of the main focuses of the book.

If a book deals with a topic that is important for your field of study, it is very useful to make a photocopy of the contents pages (there is usually more than one page of contents) and keep that filed as a record of what is available, for future reference.

Index

The index is a most useful tool in research. When we are selecting a book for purposes of doing research, the first thing we look at is the title, which gives us a general idea of the topic it deals with. We then go to the contents page to see whether it covers the aspects of the topic that will be useful to us in our research. If we decide that the book will be of use, we finally go to the index to locate the detailed aspects of the topic that we need. The index is at the back of the book. It is a detailed listing of all the items dealt with in the book, together with the page(s) on which those items can be found.

Index

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Sometimes the page numbers will be printed in bold print. This may mean that these are the pages where the item is the main topic, or it may mean that these are the pages on which you will find illustrations. To find out, go to the top (i.e. first page) of the index and there will be a note explaining how the numbering system works.

Glossary

Many reference books also have a glossary at the back of the book. This is an alphabetical list of the specialised or technical terms used in the book. This is like a mini-dictionary and it is sometimes worth photocopying these glossary pages too, to build up your own technical vocabulary.

Glossary:	
Accruals	Expenses incurred, but not yet billed to the firm
Assets	The term comes from the work 'assez', meaning 'enough'. It is used because the property of a proprietor is judged in terms of whether it is sufficient to discharge his liabilities, i.e.: to settle his debts.
Bad debts	Debts which a firm regards as uncollectible.
Balance Sheet	A listing of the ledger balances remaining after compilation of the revenue account.
Cash book	The book in which records of cash and banking transactions are made.
Credit Note	A document which reverses the effect of an invoice
Debtors	People or firms who owe money to the business
Dividends	Shares of profit paid to shareholders
Drawings	The retrieval of capital by a proprietor or partners for private use.
Early settlement discount	A discount allowed to customers as an enticement to pay their bills o time.

Electronic texts

Electronic texts such as CDs, DVDs and web pages on the Internet are laid out in fields, such as boxes or columns. When we are reading the text, instead of turning the page as we would in a book, we scroll down the screen. In a book, if we want to go to any section dealing with a specific topic, we find it by using the contents page or the index, and then physically turning to that page. In an electronic text, the material is organised to make this easy. There are menus, boxes and icons (little symbols) on which we can click to locate the given topic. In this way we can navigate the document and make cross-references.

3.3 Engage with technical language / terminology

In any field of study, there is a vocabulary or terminology that is specific to that field- its technical language or jargon. Groups that have a similar interest, like trades and professions, commonly use jargon. Using jargon can be advantageous, as it can make it easier for a person to communicate with fellow employees. For example, someone going for a job interview at a contact centre would use terminology relevant to contact centre practice to show expertise in the field. Generally speaking, jargon, in its most positive light, can be seen as professional, efficient shorthand.

Part of learning about any subject is learning its unique language. It is important to understand the meaning of new words because you are then learning the concepts or ideas that they are referring to. This understanding will develop as you use the terms in their context, and successful learning of a subject is linked to learning the language of that subject in a meaningful way.

In your studies you will therefore come across many new words. When you hear a term or read a word you do not understand, you need to make a note of that word. It is likely that you will have an idea of its meaning from the context, but in order to check its meaning, you can ask a colleague, or go to a resource (print or electronic dictionary) and look it up.

Many technical terms are not found in an ordinary dictionary, but there are dictionaries or glossaries of terms that are specialised for a particular field of study.

Finally, you should keep your own glossary of terms, and add to it as you acquire new terms. This is especially helpful if you are learning in a language that is not your mother tongue.

Module 4
Conduct basic research and analyse and present findings

After completing this module, the learner will be able to conduct basic research and analyse and present findings, by successfully completing the following:

- Identify and define an appropriate or relevant topic and scope
- Plan research steps and sequence it appropriately
- Apply research techniques
- Evaluate information for relevance
- Classify information, categorise it and sort it
- Analyse research findings and present it in the appropriate format

Conduct basic research and analyse and present findings

A big part of what you'll do during your studies is to collect information from a number of different sources, such as those mentioned in the previous Modules.

In some cases, the information may be easy to find, such as in organisational and legal documentation. In other cases (probably the majority of cases), the information is "hidden" in a number of different sources, such as newspaper articles, professional journals, hallway conversations and even in the minds of subject matter experts and private individuals and you will need to delve deep to get it.

We call the process of collecting and information in a systematic way to increase understanding of a particular topic **research**.

4.1 Identify the appropriate / relevant topic and scope

Your first step is to define the topic that you want to research. You do this by writing a statement or question that clearly identifies the topic; for example, *"Why are road accidents on the increase in South Africa?"*

Once you have written your problem statement, you need to identify and define the key words. In our example above, the key words would be *"road accidents"*, *"increase"* and *"South Africa"*. You now have the topic and the scope, as you are going to research what is meant by road accidents, by how much they have increased over a defined period and you are going to limit your research to South Africa. You can even create a mind map of the key words to focus your thinking and as you collect new information, you can add to the mind map.

4.2 Plan and sequence research steps

There are six main research skills necessary to becoming a successful researcher. Each skill is broken down into several detailed steps that you can follow while researching a particular topic. The six main skills are:

1. Define the task/topic

a. Define the problem

1. Write a statement or question that clearly identifies the problem.
2. Identify and define key words.
3. Create a mind map of the key words.

b. Identify the information requirements of the problem

1. Acceptable Resources: How many? Types? How current?
2. List tasks in order and create a schedule for accomplishing them.

2. Information-seeking strategies

a. Determine the range of possible sources

1. Make a list of resources that you know about and can use for the assignment.
2. Ask another person or group for other sources you may not know about.

b. Determine priorities

1. Select the resources on your list that will give the best information for the assignment.
2. Develop a priority listing of these selected resources based on importance to the assignment and their availability.

3. Location and access

a. Locate the sources

1. Identify the sources in your work and home environments (i.e. textbooks, magazines, encyclopaedias, Internet).
2. Find additional sources in the organisation or public libraries.
    - Use the electronic catalogue to determine the location of each source and whether or not it is available.
    - Write down the location number for each source.
    - Use the library map to determine the physical location of each source.
    - Go to the location of each source in the library.

b. Finding information within the sources

1. Use the Table of Contents, Glossary, and Index to locate specific information within each source.
2. Browse the shelves for your topic's location number to locate other sources on your topic.
3. For electronic sources: conduct subject and word searches to locate the specific information you need.

4. Use of information

a. Engaging the information in a source

1. Read, hear, or view the information in a source.
2. Identify the main ideas, key words, dates, names, etc. that will be important for note taking.
3. Evaluate the information for reliability and usefulness.

b. Extracting information from a source

1. There are many approaches to extracting information from a source.
2. If the source is written material, the Photocopy/Highlight note-taking method can be used.
3. When using other types of materials like audiotapes and videotapes, listen to or watch the whole presentation first. Next, listen to or view the presentation again, stopping to write down important information.
4. For electronic sources of information, download appropriate files.
5. Write down bibliographic information for the sources you use.

5. Synthesis

a. Organising information from multiple sources

1. Put note cards (from multiple sources) in logical order.
2. Develop an outline (storyboard, script, etc.) for the topic.
3. Write a bibliography and include it in your project. It is always important to tell where you got the information you used.

b. Presenting information

1. Choose the best way to present the information.
2. Allow enough time to do a good job.
3. Pay close attention to details (e.g. neatness, spelling, etc.) These things can make or break a presentation.

6. Evaluation

a. Judging the product

1. Decide whether or not the assignment is fully completed.
2. Decide if it meets the criteria set up for the assignment.

4.3 Apply research techniques

Generally, there are two methods of research, they are:

- **Qualitative Research Method -** This method involves:
  - Case Study
  - Interviews
  - Observation
  - Focus Group
  - Content analysis

- **Quantitative Research Method -** Involving:
  - Interviews
  - Structured Questionnaires
  - Historical analysis

The difference between these two methods is that Quantitative is if the research results are to be in numerical format, while the Qualitative is not. We must note here, though, that the Qualitative Method is not necessarily just words or text. Photographs, videos, sound recordings etc., may be considered.

Qualitative Research Techniques
The qualitative research techniques include:

- **Case Study -** In a case study we are examining or analysing an organisation or event so that we can make an accurate assessment of a specific situation.
- **Interview -** The interview takes place as a face-to-face role situation in which, as an interviewer, you would ask the candidates certain questions. These questions should be open-ended questions that encourage the candidates to give information that is relevant to the research. The answers given should be recorded for later use.

  Interviews can be used effectively for a wide variety of functions such as: learning about cultural customs; evaluating the effectiveness of an educational programme or social programme or to document expert opinions and many more.
- **Observation -** Studying people within their own environments means we learn, first-hand, how people live, talk and behave. We learn what distresses them and what captivates their attention. Both participative and natural observation approaches can be used to conduct research:
- **Focus Group -** The purpose of the focus group is to explore people's reactions to others' ideas, when they challenge each other's view points and how they form their opinions. This is done by interviewing several people together in an informal group discussion – the focus is on interaction. As the Researcher, you will need to take the role of a go-between and observe the group rather than question them.
- **Content Analysis -** This is a technique/method for drawing conclusions from existing records or documents in an organized and impartial manner. Its advantages include an ability to study large populations and document naturally occurring trends over time; however, it is subject to influences in terms of understanding

Quantitative Research Techniques
The quantitative research techniques include interviews as described above and:

- **Structured Questionnaires -** Questionnaires are methods for collecting information on human features, attitudes, thoughts and behaviour by getting the answers from individuals to a set of prepared questions. The group to be questioned is preset so that we can accurately predict their characteristics or thoughts. Surveys are a useful and influential tool for collecting information on human characteristics and behaviour, attitudes and thoughts. Careful attention should therefore, be paid to the design, look and feel of the survey.
- **Historical Analysis -** Basically we need to know about the past and learn how technology has developed and/or changed the culture in its time.

This involves the study of the “Primary Sources”; being the origins of the issue or “Secondary Sources”; being the viewpoints of historians who have written about the issue. These sources could be in the form of: artefacts, manuscripts, books, newspapers, diaries, letters, art works, census records, tax lists, in fact, any and all human records that remain for the historian to access.

4.4 Evaluate information for relevance

Once you have collected all the raw information you need to sift through it carefully and consider in detail what you can use and what to discard.

Before we start to analyse the data that we have collected we must review the sources of inaccuracies in collected data.

If we do not appreciate these, there’s a possibility that we would believe that the data that we have collected is perfect which in turn will lead us to place too much confidence in the conclusions that we may have drawn from the data.

4.5 Classify, categorise and sort information

Once we have gathered sufficient information or data we need to combine our ideas into a logical sequence. We will need to sort through all the materials gathered and pick out the main ideas and then separate them into the different sections and subsections.

As you have seen previously, there are many approaches to extracting information from a source. If the source is written material, the photocopy/highlight note-taking method can be used. When using other types of materials, like audiotapes and videos listen to or watch the whole presentation first. Next, listen to or view the presentation again, stopping to write down important information. For electronic sources of information, download appropriate files. Remember to write down bibliographic information for the sources you use.

Now you can organise the information you have obtained from these multiple sources. Arrange your notes (from multiple sources) in a logical order. Develop an outline for the topic. Write a bibliography and include it in your research presentation. As mentioned before, it is always important to tell where you got the information you used.

4.6 Analyse and present research findings

Now choose the best way to present the information: PowerPoint presentation? Report?

Take note of the following rules before you start a report:

- Allow yourself plenty of time
- Never let the first draft be the final draft
- Write clearly. Make certain that your reader will be able to understand what you are trying to say. Keep your language clear and simple and make sure your arguments are complete
- Make sure your work has a professional look about it.

Research Report

Your report should provide an accurate and honest account of the facts. These facts should not be "bent" to suit your wishes in any way, or to minimise shortcomings.

The layout of the research report includes:

- **Table of Contents**: must show each of the titled sections of the report together with the final page numbers; followed through with the Appendices. This will show the reader at a glance what material is covered by the report.
- **Introduction**: should tell the reader the following:
    - What the research project was all about
    - Why the research took place
    - Why the research was worth doing
    - Why the research was done
    - The specific objectives of the project in some detail
    - What the Researcher wanted to accomplish
- **Procedure and Research Plan**: lays out the method you selected to conduct the research. The procedure must stress how the specific interactions between science, technology and society will be analysed and how the research plan will enable the project to be completed successfully.
- **Collated Data**: All the data should be documented in the collated format
- **Analysis**: The data must be analysed to find the solution or an outcome to the project. All the analysis documents should be included in the report.
- **Findings**: The information from the analysis should be in the relevant groups. Report on the results that you found.
- **Discussion of Published Works**: All literature used during the research and analysis of the project including any internet findings must be documented; linking the research findings to the published information.
- **Conclusion**: As many possible solutions should be generated. Those selected should be recorded as your conclusions
- **Recommendations**: You should decide on the best solution to the problem:
    - Your recommendations should be arranged in the same order as the facts in the findings section and the interpretations in the conclusions section.
    - Recommendations should only be based on the information written in the findings and the conclusions sections.
- **References**: All references should be in the form of footnotes and a bibliography. The footnotes may appear at the bottom of the page or at the end of a chapter; even at the end of the report before the Appendices. The footnotes should name the sources of information and include those of interviews or verbal contributions from others. You may also cross-reference to additional materials.
- **Bibliography**: lists all the materials named in the report.
- **Appendices**: contain materials otherwise too long to include in the text of the report, or material that is not directly relevant. Certain kinds of raw data, background material and the like can be placed here. Remember to refer to all material that you have included in the Appendices in the text so that readers know where they are.

NOTE: Double check that the recommendations are linked to the conclusions, which are linked to the findings, which in turn are linked to the procedures. The one cannot exist without the other.

Diagrams, Graphs, Charts and Illustrations

The following principles should be applied to ensure your graphics are of the highest quality and integrity:

- Focus on the substance or content of the graph and not on the design, methodology or technology
- Avoiding distortion brought about by the format of the graph is essential
- Construct graphs that not only present your data in a set format, but they also encourage comparisons between the variables, location or time periods
- Allow the viewer or reader to discover the levels of detail within the graph.
- Try to present in the graph large amounts of data in a logical manner
- Make sure the graph covers a single and clear purpose such as description, tabulation, exploration or decoration.
- Integrate the graph with statistical data and textual descriptions.
- The graph must show the data, not your technical skills.

Make sure that you allow yourself enough time to do a good job and pay close attention to details (e.g. neatness, spelling, etc.) These things can make or break a presentation.

Module 5
Function in a team

After completing this module, the learner will be able to function in a team, by successfully completing the following:

- Ensure that active participation takes place in group learning situations
- Take up responsibilities in the team and apply group work conventions in learning situations
- Practise conflict management and negotiating techniques in a defined context
- Ensure that team work results in meaningful product or outcomes

Function in a team

The nature of the modern workplace is such that team work is not only encouraged, but has become essential and it is therefore important for you to be able to function effectively in a team, both in the course of your job and when learning.

5.1 Actively participate in group learning situations

Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative activities individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and beneficial to all other group members.

Cooperative efforts result in participants striving for mutual benefit so that all group members gain from each other's efforts, recognising that all group members share a common fate, knowing that one's performance is mutually caused by oneself and one's colleagues, and feeling proud and jointly celebrating when a group member is recognised for achievement.

Cooperative learning[9] takes place when people work together to maximise their own and each other's learning. In cooperative learning situations there is a positive interdependence among colleagues' goal attainments; colleagues perceive that they can reach their learning goals if and only if the other colleagues in the learning group also reach their goals.

Cooperative learning takes place during:

- Meetings when all staff members participate and contribute
- Site/field visits to observe new processes or products
- Excursions to places of interest or centres of excellence
- Discussions around new developments in one’s industry
- Activities designed to enhance learning
- Information and training workshops
-

Participating in Meetings

Attending various meetings in the workplace can be of great value to you, the learner, providing that you:

- Read the Agenda before you attend the meeting
- Make notes of any issues that you may want to discuss
- Read any relevant material on the subjects to be discussed
- Practice your listening skills!
- Take notes during the meeting – there may be items that you will have to action.

[9] Retrieved from: http://www.co-operation.org/pages/cl.html

There are many different types of meeting, some of which are formal and others informal.

- **Formal meetings** are those which are prescribed by law, standing orders or constitution and include annual general meetings of shareholders, board meetings, statutory committees, standing committees, etc. They are conducted in a formal manner and in accordance with a set agenda, held on specific date, presided over by a chairman and with a secretary engaged to record the minutes.
- **Informal meetings** are less rigid and may be called at any time and for any reason. A record may or may not be kept of the meeting, but where meetings are called to discuss business matters it is advisable to have written record of decisions reached. Executive meetings, staff meetings, advisory committees and working party meetings will normally be informal to allow participants to contribute freely without having to adhere to rigid procedures.
- **Once-off meetings** that are used to discuss specific issues that arise.
- **Regular meetings**, such as safety meetings, departmental meetings, etc.

Checklist for Conducting a Meeting	
Opening the Meeting	
Have goals for the meeting been identified?	
Has necessary background information been reviewed?	
Are expectations for members' contributions clear?	
Has the sequence of events for the meeting been previewed?	
Have time constraints been identified?	
Encouraging Balanced Participation	
Have leaders and members used questions to draw out quiet members?	
Are off-track comments redirected with references to the agenda and relevancy challenges?	
Do leaders and members suggest moving on when an agenda item has been dealt with adequately?	
Maintaining Positive Tone	
Are questioning and paraphrasing used as non-defensive responses to hostile remarks?	
Are dubious comments enhanced as much as possible?	
Solving Problems Creatively	
Is the problem defined clearly (versus too narrowly or broadly)?	
Are the causes and effects of the problem analysed?	
Are clear criteria for resolving the problem established?	
Are possible solutions brainstormed without being evaluated?	
Is a decision made based on the previously established criteria?	
Are methods of implementing the solution developed?	

Participating in Discussions

These groups are usually held for a purpose or goal in mind. Situations may arise in the workplace where, for instance, there needs to be an increase in production. The manager may want all the people that work in that department to discuss ideas or maybe introduce new procedures to the group. Other concerns could be too many accidents in the workplace and the manager needs to know why?

It is important for you to listen carefully and think before you speak. If you do not understand something that is being discussed, ask questions.

Participating in Workshops

A training workshop is a short, but intensive course on any subject. You will attend a training workshop when you join a company. This is the Induction Programme. During the course of your employment, you may be asked to attend a Health and Safety workshop where you would learn about all the health and safety regulations. Assessment may take place during the workshop or the learners could be given assignments to complete within the workplace that form part of that assessment. An example of such an assignment could be for the learner to inspect their workplace and report on any unsafe or unhealthy conditions. This report would form part of their assessment.

Participating in Site / Field Visits, Excursions and Learning Activities

To make the individuals and teams within a business successful, they need to be learning and updating their skills continuously. A business that learns and encourages learning among its people, promotes trade of information between employees, thereby creating a well informed and educated workforce. This produces a very flexible organisation where people will accept and adapt to new ideas and changes through their shared vision.

- **Excursions** - Excursions are usually conducted by Schools where the learners are taken to places of an historical or topical interest such as Museums; Art Galleries; Game Parks or Zoos. Factories and Law courts could be added to this list. The learners are then asked to write about certain aspects of their trip or they are given a pre-prepared worksheet to complete on their return which would form part of their assessment.
- **Activities** - Some businesses, as part of the learning experience, may arrange for a Guest Speaker to do a presentation on, for example; Aids Awareness, Health and Safety, Quality Awareness, Benefits of Learnerships etc. For learners already engaged in study a guess speaker may give a presentation on Career development or Career choice. Active participation by the learner could include preparing questions to ask the speaker relating to the topics discussed. They may also be required to write up a report on the speech that would form part of their assessment.
- **Site Visits** - There are various reasons for Site visits such as:
    - As part of the induction programme a group may be taken to the main manufacturing facility of the business to learn about the production process.
    - Clerical staff, from Eskom, for instance, may be taken to one of the Sub-stations for which they have been ordering materials.
    - In a petro-chemical company, certain staff members may visit a waste disposal company's landfill site to learn how hazardous waste is disposed of.
- **Field Trips** - These trips will add practical knowledge to material that a learner is currently studying. Examples could be: trips to the city to identify different types of traders; possibly interviewing small traders and entrepreneurs. Other trips may take learners to the Labour Court or the

Newspaper printing works. For these trips, the learners may have to complete a prepared worksheet that would form part of their assessment.

5.2 Take up responsibilities in the team and apply group work conventions

Effective group work requires full participation from all members of the group. Not everyone has the same personality, however, and sometimes in a group of people some are more dominant and others are more retiring. To make sure that everyone does participate, there are conventions that govern group work, such as group roles and etiquette.

Control should be exercised to ensure that more dominant members do not drown out quieter members and **turn-taking** should be encouraged. Roles should be **rotated** regularly to give each member a turn to participate and lead.

The **chairperson** makes sure that every person in the group is heard and focuses work around the learning task:

"Let's hear from ____ next."

"That's interesting, but let's get back to our task."

The **recorder** writes on the board or the flipchart for the whole group to see during the session:

"I think I heard you say________; is that right?"

"How would you like me to write this?"

The **timekeeper** encourages the group to stay on task and announces when time is halfway through and when time is nearly up:

"We only have five minutes left. Let's see if we can wrap up by then."

The **presenter** presents the finished work on behalf of the group:

"How would you like this to sound?"

5.3 Practise conflict management and negotiation techniques

Team conflict may be caused by a single individual or the interaction of many. The person's performance may be affected through a personal conflict and therefore conflict arises within the team.

There may be members of the Team with the most to gain or lose. These members are most likely to engage in conflict. They see their goals as mismatched with those of other team members. This perception can create conflict because the members of the team rely upon one another to reach their goals.

We need to look at the various concerns that can give rise to conflict within our team. By understanding these issues you will be able to explain the sources of conflict when they arise:

- **Limited Resources**: These resources may include time, space, money, information and materials. The conflict may happen when there is not enough information for the team to complete the assignments required. Limited resources can also include rewards and leadership positions that may be available. Competition among team members for these resources may also cause conflict.
- **Different Values and Beliefs**: There could be times when our members will have different expectations about how the group should function, which increases the amount of conflict.
- **Different Perceptions**: Sometimes team members hold the same information, but are in conflict because they understand the information differently. Individuals' insights are based on their personalities, backgrounds, and personal interest in the issue at hand. Because each person's perception is unique, there is always potential for conflict. Race, ethnicity and gender differences can strongly contribute to perceptions.

How do we resolve conflict?

Your approach in resolving conflict will help determine how the conflict will benefit your team. The following are specific steps that you can take when conflict arises:

1. **Acknowledge the Conflict**: This is the first step. By acknowledging the conflict as soon as the conflict arises prevents any frustration from building up and keeps your emotional reactions to a minimum. This acknowledgement will bring a sense of relief to all your team members. The team should then commit to open communication about it as a ground rule of the team process.
2. **Identify the Conflict Source**: If your team does not identify the correct source of the conflict you will be wasting your time trying to solve the wrong problem. The initial reason for the conflict is quite often not the only one. There is always a strong possibility that there are underlying issues present that need to be resolved.

   When conflict stems from underlying interpersonal or emotional issues, the conflict can be intense. Feelings of jealousy or poor self-esteem are examples of underlying issues that could cause animosity in a team setting. Often, these underlying sources for conflict are caused by differences in background, perception, and expectations.
3. **Focus on Team Goals**: It is important, at this stage, to return the focus to the team goals. Through investigating how conflict will affect the team goals, the team members are able to decide whether the conflict should be addressed as a team issue. If the conflict can damage relationships or impair the decision-making within the team, it should be important to the team to resolve the issue.

   Remember, the commitment to the team's goals motivates your members to discover a solution to the conflict. It also helps remind members that they are working towards the same goal and this builds a sense of unity.
4. **Focus on the Issues**: It is important here for the team to focus on the issues at hand and not on individual personalities. If the team focuses on personalities it causes defensiveness and gets in the way of the conflict resolution process. So, remember to focus on the problem and not the person.
5. **Listen to all Views**: Conflict resolution is not about winning or losing, so it is important that all your team members listen and encourage each other to share views openly and honestly. Remember, these shared views cannot be considered right or wrong.

The conflict that the team discusses should be in terms of facts and observations and not personalities and feelings. There should be no blaming. Each member needs to understand the other team members' points of view – not necessarily agreeing with them. Understanding does not mean agreeing.

6. **Look for Agreement**: Try to find common ground once all the views have been heard. This provides a good starting point for resolving the conflict. Also sort through the differences and make a distinction between those issues that can be solved and those that can't. Those differences that cannot be solved – put aside. Make sure the team then focuses on the remaining differences.
7. **Discuss the Alternatives**: All ideas and suggestions on how to resolve the conflict must be considered fully. The options shared provide the information on which the team can base its resolution. Remember this type of open communication encourages trust between the team members.
8. **Create the Plan**: Once the best solution has been chosen, the team needs to focus on creating a plan. Every member will need to be involved in this process and they need to be comfortable with it. Responsibilities must then be assigned and the team members should be held accountable for these duties.

Negotiating techniques

The key to effective negotiation is clear communication. Communication involves three important skills: understanding, speaking and listening.

Understanding:

Before two sides can look for solutions, a common understanding must be reached. If two people do not understand each other's problems and concerns, then the process of negotiation will either be broken off or will end with solutions that do not work. You can't have good understanding without good listening and speaking. Negotiation is most effective when people are able to clearly identify and discuss their sources of disagreement and misunderstanding.

Speaking:

Typically a successful negotiator is a strong communicator. It's someone who's willing to do whatever it takes to build a positive relationship. It's someone who's prepared to make compromises to achieve a larger, more creative and mutually agreeable goal.

Negotiation is not always between two people: it can involve several members from two parties. Communication is always the link that will be used to negotiate the issue/argument whether it is face-to-face, on the telephone or in writing.

Negotiation begins with a clear, concise explanation of the problem as each person sees it. Facts and feelings are presented in a rational manner from the individual's perspective, using "I" statements. Communication between people will go more smoothly when statements such as "I become very upset when you..." are used rather than more aggressive statements such as "You make me mad when you," which blames the other person and puts him or her in a defensive position.

Shared concerns rather than individual issues remain the focus of discussion throughout negotiation.

The negotiation process will be most effective when people take time to **think** through what they will say.

5.4 Ensure that team work results in meaningful outcomes

Organisations increasingly rely on teams to carry out critical strategies and operational tasks.

The benefit of Team-based Learning is that everyone on the team participates in the developmental activities on a consistent basis, because the activities provide other benefits that motivate the team to use them. That is, the team not only develops its people but also functions better.

Senior team members spend extra time mentoring junior team members, and that time is more than made up by the increased productivity of the team derived from successfully driving tasks to lower levels.

Such delegation frees up senior people’s time. Junior people enjoy taking ownership of projects (with support) and are more motivated in their jobs.

The net result is that the team gets more work done, junior people are developed more quickly, and team morale is higher.

Reaching Consensus

Consensus is a form of decision-making which tries to reach the most inclusive position possible. It is often contrasted with the system of voting, in which people take a yes-or-no position. Reaching consensus means reaching a broad agreement in which everyone makes a slight compromise, but there is enough common ground for everyone to be ‘satisfied enough’ to go forward into action.

Module 6
The workplace and occupational context affect learning

After completing this module, the learner will be able to reflect on how characteristics of the workplace and occupational context affect learning, by successfully completing the following:

- Identify sector and organisation type
- Describe and discuss features of the occupational environment
- Describe and discuss ways in which these features affect learning processes and/or application of learning

The workplace and occupational context affect learning

The environment and conditions in which learning takes place can have a positive or negative effect on the learning process.

While the workplace offers many wonderful opportunities and resources for learning, such as the opportunity to apply skills learnt in practical situations and up-to-date and relevant documentation and technology, it can also hamper the learning process, as learners can be called from the classroom when emergencies arise, or the venue can be uncomfortable or unsuitable for the transfer of learning to take place.

Ideal learning conditions look like this:

- There are few distractions, such as phone, computer, or TV, in this location
- Other people rarely interrupt in this location
- This is a quiet location, with almost no distractions from phones ringing, people talking or music playing
- The temperature in this place is very comfortable for studying most of the time
- The chair in this place is very conducive to studying
- The desk/table in this place is very conducive to studying
- The lighting in this place is very conducive to studying
- Almost everything in this location is related to studying or the course work

6.1 Identify the sector and organisation type

Let's have a look at the various industry sectors found in South Africa:

Primary industries	Agriculture and mining Agriculture is the science, art, and business of cultivating soil, producing crops, and raising livestock; farming Mining is the process or business of extracting ore or minerals from the ground
Secondary industries	Manufacturing and production Manufacturing refers to any process in which materials or items are brought together and work is performed on them to make a saleable product.
Tertiary industries	Service industries The term "services" covers a huge range of economic activities, including retailing, banking, insurance, catering, medicine, law, accountancy, cleaning, teaching, television production, the civil service, sport, transport, and many more activities.

Having looked at occupational focus we now move on to look at different types of organisations that exist in the world of work:

Government	One of the largest employers in South Africa. As government employees are paid by money raised from taxes they are known as public servants.
Parastatals	State owned companies The best known examples are Transnet of which SAA is a subsidiary, and Eskom. Telkom was a parastatal until 2003 when it was privatised, i.e. shares were issued and sold to the general public.
Heavy Industries	Industries that produce basic materials, such as steel
Medium industries	Industries that produce items such as cars
Light industries	Industries that produce goods such as computer parts
Large organisations	Large organisations can be in any of the above-mentioned sectors or industries and can be private or public. Some examples of large organisations are Old Mutual, all the major banks, Anglo American, SAB
Small businesses	Small businesses can be in any of the above-mentioned sectors or industries and are usually privately owned. They are enterprises which are started by one or two people who usually put up their own capital. An example of a small business could be a small-town pharmacy, as opposed to a large chain of retail pharmacies.

6.2 Describe and discuss the features of the occupational environment

What do we mean when we refer to the occupational environment? Our environment refers to our surroundings. It can be defined as our social and physical conditions; the conditions that surround people and affect the way they live.

We spend the bulk of our adult life in some or other occupation. Most adults, depending on the level they attain in education, will work from their early twenties until they retire at sixty or sixty five. Obviously in economically depressed areas with few educational facilities, people might start work at a much younger age and be forced to continue working until they are too old or sick to do so.

Also in some parts of the world, unemployment is a major problem, and so not all adults can find work. The figure for unemployment in South Africa varies according to the source but ranges from estimates of 20 to 40 percent.

Depending on what type of work we end up doing our workplace environments can vary enormously.

6.3 Describe the ways in which the learning processes / application of learning is affected

As we have seen, there are many things that could influence the learning processes and the application of learning, such as:

- Technological resources
- Communication resources
- Communication strategies
- Multilingual needs in relation to necessary client or colleague interaction

By the time you go and start your careers you will have had a broad range of learning. You will have experienced:

- transmission teaching whereby information is passed on to you by a lecturer or via notes
- more interactive learning methods in which you undertook small research projects, went on field trips, collected and analysed data, worked in groups, accessed information on the internet, presented your findings and so on
- some courses such as this one which deals with broad general topics like communication and numeracy

Altogether you will possess a wide range of skills and learning strategies. How will you apply these in your occupational environment? Will you stop learning once you have completed this qualification?

The answer to the second question is a definite and resounding “no”. No matter how thorough your basic training has been there will always be aspects to your work that require you to learn new things.

We can cluster the type of application of learning that you will experience the need of in the workplace as:

- **Technological knowledge** - Many of your courses will have provided you with much that is necessary in this regard. You may however end up working in an occupation that requires very specific technological expertise and may have to learn this as well as apply what you already know.
- **Communication skills** - Even if you end up being a researcher who does not interact with clients or employees in any way, you would still have to communicate with colleagues and communicate your findings in public arenas.
- **Multilingualism** - In our country there is often a need to be able to communicate effectively in more than one language, e.g. in the Western Cape the three main languages are English, Afrikaans and IsiXhosa. It would be extremely beneficial to you as a future employee/business owner to become as proficient as possible in all of these languages. Most people appreciate the attempt others make to speak their language and multilingualism ensures effective communication with a far broader range of people in your occupational environment.

Section 2

Accommodate audience and context needs in oral communication

SAQA ID 119472:
Accommodate audience and context needs in oral communication
NQF Level 3, 5 Credits

Programme Overview

Welcome to this learning programme that will lead you to greater understanding of **accommodating audience and context needs in oral communication**.

As you work your way through the learning programme you will gain competence against the following Unit Standard:

Programme	Accommodate audience and context needs in oral communication
Unit Standard	SAQA ID 119472: Accommodate audience and context needs in oral communication NQF Level 3, 5 Credits

This learning programme is **intended for** all persons who need to accommodate audience and context needs in oral communication. Learners at this level are aware of their audiences and purposes for communication. They adapt their style and language register to the requirements of different situations. They are able to listen and speak confidently in both formal and familiar settings. They can articulate their purposes and reasons for the adoption of a particular register and style in any situation. They can usually identify the assumptions and inferences implicit in what people say and how they say it.

Programme entry level requirements

The credit calculation is based on the assumption that learners are already competent in terms of the following outcomes or areas of learning when starting to learn towards this unit standard: the NQF Level 2 unit standard, entitled Maintain and adapt oral communication

Programme Outcomes

This learning programme is outcomes-based which means we take the responsibility of learning away from the facilitator and place it in your hands.

Your learning will begin in the workshop where you will identify the skills and knowledge you require in order to meet the specific outcomes and assessment criteria contained in the unit standard.

In this learning programme, we will be covering the following **learning outcomes**:

Module 1: Interact successfully in oral communication
• Make contributions to group work that are appropriate to the task and nature of the group, and promote effective communication and teamwork • Participate in interviews to successfully establish a relationship appropriate to the context, and provide a non-threatening opportunity for participants to share information • Participate in formal meetings in a manner that is appropriate to the purpose and context of the meeting and ensure that participation is consistent with meeting procedures and contributes to the achievement of meeting objectives • Participate in discussions, debates or negotiations in a manner that is appropriate to the purpose and topic. Ensure that participation is consistent with the formality of procedures and contributes to meaningful interaction between participants • Respond to the ways others express themselves in a manner that is sensitive to differing socio-cultural contexts

Module 2: Use strategies that capture and retain the interest of an audience	Module 3: Identify and respond to manipulative use of language
• Use key words, pace and pause, stress, volume and intonation, pace and rhythm in appropriate ways to reinforce the message • Use body language in a manner that is appropriate to context and topic, and reinforces main ideas and points of view • Plan formal communications in writing, and plans are detailed, complete, and realistic with respect to time allocation and content • Use visual aids that are appropriate to topic and context, and enhance the presentation and the transfer of information and understanding • Use techniques to maintain continuity and interaction	• Identify and distinguish facts and opinions • Note and address omission of necessary information • Explain the implications of how the choice of language structures and features, specifically tone, register, style and point of view affect audience interpretations of spoken texts • Explore distortion of a contributor's position on a given issue with specific reference to what has been selected and omitted

During the workshop you will complete a number of class activities that will form part of your formative assessment. In this you have the opportunity to practice and explore your new skills in a safe environment. You should take the opportunity to gather as much information as you can to use during your workplace learning and self-study.

The workshop will be followed by summative assessment tasks to be completed through self-study in your workplace. In some cases you may be required to do research and complete the tasks in your own time.

Assessment

It is important to note that the onus is on you, as the learner, to prove your competence. You therefore need to plan your time and ensure that your Portfolio of Evidence is kept up to date and handed in timeously.

A Portfolio of Evidence is a collection of documents of work you have produced to prove your competence. You will compile your portfolio from activities, tools and checklists associated with the unit standard and relevant to the unit standard being assessed.

You will be given the following documents to assist you in creating a portfolio of evidence:

- **Learner Guide**: The Learner Guide is designed to serve as a guide for the duration of your learning programme and as the main source document for transfer of learning. It contains information (knowledge and skills required) and application aids that will assist you in developing the knowledge and skills stipulated in the specific outcomes and assessment criteria. The learner guide also indicates the formative assessment class activities that you need to complete towards your Portfolio of Evidence.
- **Learner Workbook**: The learner Workbook contains all the class activities that you will be completing to show formative learning.

These will be assessed as part of your portfolio of evidence as formative assessment. You will be handing in the Learner Workbook as part of your Portfolio of Evidence.

- **Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide**: The Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide provides details about the assessment, such as the assessment preparation, plan and specific summative assessment activities that you need to complete in the workplace.

Both formative and summative assessment is used as part of this outcomes-based learning programme:

- **Formative Assessment**: In order to gain credits for this Unit Standard you will need to prove to an assessor that you are competent. The Class Activities throughout your Learner Workbook are designed not only to help you learn new skills, but also to prove that you have mastered competence. You will be required to develop a Portfolio of Evidence to hand in to an assessor so that you can be assessed against the outcomes of this Unit Standard. Where you encounter a Class Activity icon, you must complete the formative assessment activity in the Learner Workbook. Comprehensive guidelines for the development of your Portfolio of Evidence may be found in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide for the particular learning programme that you are working with.
- **Summative Assessment**: The NQF's objective is to create independent and self-sufficient learners. This means that you will also be required to do independent research and assignments, such as Knowledge Questions, Practical Activity (completed in the workplace), Witness Testimony and Logbook.

  The assessment process is discussed in detail in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide. When you are ready, you will advise your mentor that you are ready for assessment. He or she will then sign off the required sections in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide and you will be able to submit your Portfolio of Evidence for assessment. The summative assessment activities placed in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide for your convenience. If any of your assessment is conducted using observation, role plays or verbal assessment, place a signed copy of the checklists, once completed by your mentor or line manager in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide, as indicated.

The Training Provider will assess your portfolio. If successful, you will receive the credit value of this learning programme. The entire assessment process is explained in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide and you are urged to read this guide as soon as possible as it explains the assessment process in detail and clarifies your rights and responsibilities to ensure that the assessment is fair, valid and reliable.

If you are not successful, you will receive all the guidance needed to resubmit your Portfolio of Evidence within a specific time period, as per the Training Provider requirements.

Learning map (delivery structure)

Assessment	**←Formative Assessment→ 34%**		**←Summative Assessment→66%**	
Learning activities for 50 hours of notional learning	Contact Learning Theory input Formative assessment (workbook activities): group activities, simulations	Prescribed reading, support, coaching	Learning and application at the workplace	Summative assessment in PoE: knowledge questions, practical workplace activity, Witness Testimony, logbook
	16 hours	**1 hour**	**25 hours**	**8 hours**
	↓	↓	↓	↓
Portfolio of Evidence	**←Compilation of Portfolio of Evidence→**			
Complementary workplace practices	Coaching and Mentoring; Performance Management			

Learner Support

Please remember that as the programme is outcomes based – this implies the following:

- You are responsible for your own learning – make sure you manage your study, practical, workplace and portfolio time responsibly.
- Learning activities are learner driven – make sure you use the Learner Guide, Learner Workbook and Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide in the manner intended, and are familiar with the Portfolio requirements.
- The Facilitator is there to reasonably assist you during contact, practical and workplace time of this programme – make sure that you have his/her contact details.

Module 1
Interact successfully in oral communication

After completing this module, the learner will be able to interact successfully in oral communication, by successfully completing the following:

- Contributions to group work are appropriate to the task and nature of the group, and promote effective communication and teamwork
- Interviews successfully establish a relationship appropriate to the context, and provide a non-threatening opportunity for participants to share information
- Participation in formal meetings is appropriate to the purpose and context of the meeting. Participation is consistent with meeting procedures and contributes to the achievement of meeting objectives
- Participation in discussions, debates or negotiations is appropriate to the purpose and topic. Participation is consistent with the formality of procedures and contributes to meaningful interaction between participants
- Responses to the ways others express themselves are sensitive to differing socio-cultural contexts

Interacting in oral communication

Speech is our primary means of communication with others. Perhaps because it usually comes naturally, we sometimes forget that there are skills attached to communication with others which can make our work and social lives more meaningful.

If we lack skill in this area we are in danger of embarrassment and misunderstanding (we can fail to understand others, and they can fail to understand us). In this Module we are going to look at some of the ways in which we can maintain effective communication.

But first, let's define communication:

"An act or means of conveying information, knowledge, ideas, feelings or thoughts."

This exchange can be said to have taken place when the speaker's (sender's) message has been understood by the listener (receiver).

Of course, before we can understand others, we first need to understand ourselves and so we will be looking at our communication in relation to our audience.

1.1 Contributing to group work

Working in groups is a vital part of almost every job. Regardless of the business, you can expect to co-ordinate tasks and schedules with others, share information, solve problems, and generate and make decisions. In all but the smallest companies, employees work on project teams, task forces, production crews, and committees – all of which are groups of one sort or another. Working as a team is therefore common but also important.

The contributions given by delegates in a group need to be appropriate to the task and the nature of the group, whilst promoting effective communication and teamwork.

The contributions given would include:

- Identifying purposes, agendas, procedures and schedules
- Monitoring developments and retaining focus
- Drawing conclusions
- Preparing and delivering feedback
- Ensuring group ownership of conclusions

That groups can be effective, however, does not guarantee that they always will succeed. Some groups are monumental time-wasters, and others produce poor results. But when a group is well conceived and managed, it has several advantages over the same number of individuals working alone. One of these advantages is productivity – research shows that the old saying "two heads are better than one" can be true: well-managed groups produce more solutions than individuals working alone, and the solutions are likely to be better, of a higher quality, and more accurate.

- **Group Characteristics**
  The word 'group' is often used to refer to any assembly of people – the commuters in a taxi, the sightseers gathering for a walking tour of the downtown area, the rock band at a local nightspot. When we talk about the importance of groups in the workplace, the label 'team' is more accurate.

  For our purposes, the working definition of a group or team is "a small, interdependent collection of people with a common identity who interact with one another, usually face-to-face over time, in order to reach a common goal." Using this definition, we can single out several significant characteristics of work-centred groups that, in turn, can guide you in developing your group oral communication skills.

- **Size**
  Most experts say that a twosome is not a group since the partners do not interact in the same way that three or more people do. For instance, two people working together can resolve disputes only by persuading one another, giving in, or compromising. In groups, however, members can form alliances and outvote or pressure the minority.

  Less agreement exists about when a collection of people becomes too large to be considered a group; at some point, a group can more properly be called an organisation. The difference isn't just a matter of labels. Members of organisations have formally specified roles and titles. Organisations are more hierarchical, with clearly defined lines of authority. Members are replaceable, and the welfare of the group becomes more important than the satisfaction of individuals.

  For reasons like these, adding members to a group does not always translate into better results. Research on a number of companies has found that ten-person teams often produce better results at a quicker rate and with higher profits than do groups of several hundred. As groups become larger, members have fewer chances to participate. A few talkative members are likely to dominate the group. Quieter members lose their identity and become less committed to the team.

  Most communication experts suggest that the optimal size for small decision-making groups is either five or seven members. The odd number of participants eliminates the risk of tie votes. Teams with fewer than five members lack the resources to come up with good ideas and to carry them out, while larger groups suffer from the problems of anonymity, domination, and lack of commitment.

- **Interaction**
  A collection of people working at their desks is merely co-acting until the individuals begin to exchange information with one another. In fact, such lack of interaction could even be a problem. A project manager and a marketing manager who don't communicate enough, for example, might find that they are duplicating each other's efforts; with both conducting market research.

  A project could lag because the financial officer doesn't realise that the production department is waiting for final cost estimates before starting up. A quality-control department could be completely ineffective if its members don't share an understanding of company standards and one person rejects samples that another approves.

- **Interdependence**
  Group members don't only interact; they depend on one another. A roomful of telephone salespeople who are working on commission have little effect on one another, and thus they can hardly be called a team. By contrast, consider the workers in a restaurant.

If the kitchen crew fails to prepare orders promptly or correctly, the servers' tips will decline. If the employees who clear tables don't do their jobs quickly and thoroughly, the servers will hear complaints from their customers. If the waiters fail to take orders accurately, the cooks will have to fix some meals twice. In a restaurant, as in any real team, the employees are part of an interdependent system.

- **Duration**
  A group that interacts over a period of time develops particular characteristics. For example, a group will tend to develop norms, "shared standards of appropriate behaviour," that members are expected to meet. Typical norms include how promptly meetings begin, what contribution each member is expected to make to certain routine tasks, what kind of humour is appropriate, and so on.
- **Goal-Directedness**
  Many informal gatherings of people may develop the characteristics we have just described. For example, a group of secretaries who meet regularly for lunch, the project managers who go bowling together on Thursday nights, the noontime runners in a department, a therapy group, a group of friends, or even a family are all, in a sense, groups. In our study of business and professional communication, however, we are principally concerned with decision-making and problem-solving groups – that is, people who are meeting to accomplish a common task.
- **Problem-Solving Communication**
  In the past decades, researchers have developed several methods for helping groups solve problems and make decisions effectively. By taking advantage of these methods, groups can come up with the highest-quality work possible.

Contributing to group work
As a group member, you are required to ensure that you contribute to group work in an appropriate manner when dealing with the task and the nature of the group. Every member for the group needs to promote effective communication and teamwork.

The contributions that you can make to group work would include:

- Identifying:
  - purposes
  - agendas
  - procedures
  - schedules
- Monitoring developments
- Retaining focus
- Drawing conclusions
- Preparing and delivering feedback
- Ensuring group ownership of conclusions

1.2 Interviewing

The range of interviews you are likely to encounter in the course of your work can be surprisingly broad:

- Your company is trying to decide whether to convert to a new voice system for handling telephone messages. You sit down with the representative from one firm to see what her company's system can offer you.
- Your boss calls you in for a meeting to rate your performance over the few months.
- One of your best customers is angry with the job your company has done. In an effort to get to the bottom of the problem, you invite him to meet you.
- You are interested in a new job. After making some inquiries, you invited to meet with the potential employer to discuss your future with company.

All of these situations call for some sort of interview. Different jobs call for different kinds of interviews. Three kinds of interviews, however, are required for almost any job or career:

- information-gathering interviews,
- selection interviews,
- performance appraisal interviews.

These interviews may be formal and/or informal and could require any of the following:

- Plans
- Background research
- Ordering of questions
- Flexibility in the situation when sequence or focus is disrupted
- Organisation of data elicited
- Conclusions drawn

Characteristics of formal and informal interviews

Formal Interviews	Informal interviews
The interviewer establishes the goals of the situation early in the interaction.	The interviewer allows the interviewee to control the purpose, pacing and subject matter of the interview.
It provides for the exchange of specific information.	More information can be gathered, but unnecessary information is generated.
It gives the interviewer more control over the situation.	The interviewer can lose control and end up having a nice conversation instead of getting the needed information.
It reduces the interviewee’s response choices.	It allows the interviewee the freedom to express him or herself freely.
Less flexible.	More flexible.
More time-efficient.	This approach can take more time.

Some interviewers use some characteristics of both the formal and the informal interview to create “an informal formal” interview.

For example, an interviewer may prefer an informal interview where more information is generated, but time may be an important factor. In such a case, some of the questions asked will require a specific response.

The interviewer will decide which type of interview to use after careful consideration of the purpose of the interview and the specific situation.

Interviewers seek information for a variety of purposes. Survey interviews gather information from a number of people. They are used to provide information from which to draw conclusions, make interpretations, determine future actions, and learn consumer reactions to new products.

Communicating during the Interview
Defining the specific goal of your interview is always a key step. Your goal ought to be as specific as possible and worded in a way that will tell you whether you have the answers you were seeking. For example, 'should we purchase a database management system for the hotel?' can be defined as a vague or closed type of goal; 'would a database management system for the hotel be affordable and would it improve efficiency at the reception desk?' could be regarded as a SMART goal (that is; specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-oriented). Once you have identified your purpose, you must develop questions that will help you achieve it.

Planning and background research
The aim of an interview is to elicit specific information. If you are unprepared for an interview, you will make inefficient use of time, present a poor image and struggle to obtain the details you require.

To prepare yourself for an interview, you can follow these steps:

Step 1 - Know the exact purpose of the interview. This includes knowing which facts and information you wish to obtain.

Step 2 - Read and familiarise yourself with all the relevant documentation prior to the interview.

Step 3 - Prepare a set of questions or topics in advance. Ensure that these questions are framed to get the information you require.

Note: Pay attention to the wording of each question. Communication may easily be blocked when the interviewer uses words and expressions beyond the interviewee's understanding. Word meanings and usage are linked to socio-economic differences between people of different professions, cultural and educational environments.

- Be aware that nowadays it is illegal to ask questions that aren't related to a person's capacity to do a job. Therefore, avoid certain personal questions relating to marital status, plans for having children, child-care arrangements, racial background, religious beliefs and practices.

Ordering the questions
Once you know the purpose of the interview, you know which facts and information you want to obtain. You also know which information is the most important. To order the questions:

- Always set the interviewee at ease by creating a pleasant atmosphere and asking questions of a general nature.
- As you know which facts and information you want to obtain and the importance of this information, you will ask the questions in order of priority

Determine what sort of response you need. Once you know what sort of answer you want, you can phrase your query as an **open** or a **closed question**.

Then vary the types of questions asked so that the interview is more interesting – for you and the interviewee!

- **Open questions** ask for broad or general information and there are few restrictions on how the interviewee might answer. Here are some examples: Tell me about yourself; what sort of relationship did you have with your colleagues? What does the company policy on absenteeism mean to you?
- **Closed questions** are specific and restrict the options available to the interviewee. Multiple choice questions, questions that require a Yes or a No answer and questions where there is only one correct answer are types of closed questions. Here are some examples: Do you prefer administration or communicating with clients? Do you agree with the proposal? How old are you?
- **Avoid asking multiple questions**. By asking two or three questions one after the other, and only asking for a response when you have finished the questions, you will probably not get a satisfactory answer to any of them.
- If there are any areas of uncertainty, make use of **follow-up questions** to probe in more depth and obtain clarification.

Organising the information elicited

As you have seen, it takes time and effort to prepare for a well-structured interview. It is vital that you record the information obtained from the interviewee.

- Tell your interviewee that you will be taking notes and then do this as unobtrusively as possible. In this way, you will have a record of the relevant information and important points.
- If you prepared a list of questions next to each topic that you intend covering, you can jot down the interviewee's responses.
- You might find it useful to draw up a checklist and mark off the relevant points. For example, if you are interviewing someone for a job, you could have a list of qualities that you feel are essential for that position.

Note: When you record the information, make use of key words and notes. Do not copy down every word. Not only is this time-consuming, it is distracting for the interviewee and can break down the atmosphere that you have tried to create.

- Recording the information helps you focus the interview on relevant matters. Just as importantly, it provides written data for analysis and the formulation of your opinions and conclusions after the interview

Drawing conclusions

You have concluded the interview on a positive, friendly note and have explained what the next step will be. Then:

- It is important for you to take some time immediately after the interview to read over your notes. Then you may need to elaborate on your notes, summarise some answers and/or record factual information. You could record this on an interview record card. (See example below)
- Review the facts and information that you obtained.
- Make a note of your feelings and impressions.

This process is vital, especially if you conduct several interviews in succession. These detailed, objective notes will help you to remember information about each candidate or employee. They also prove invaluable if you have to share this information with anyone else or if any decisions have to be made.

Example of an interview record card:

Name of Interviewee: ______________________________
Position: ____
Company: ____
Date: ___________ Time: _______________
Duration: ______
Venue: ____
Type of Interview:(formal/informal/face to face / telephonic)
Key Points:
____
____
____
Comments:
____
____
____
____

1.3 Participate in formal meetings

A meeting is an assembly or coming together of two or more persons for a common, lawful purpose.

People meet for many reasons. Some gather for personal growth or emotional support, in counselling or therapy groups. Still others meet to learn in classes, seminars, or workshops. In most business and professional settings, though, meetings fall into three categories: Information-sharing, problem-solving, and ritual activities.

- **Information-Sharing**
  In many organisations, people meet regularly to exchange information. Police officers and nurses, for example, begin every shift with a meeting in which the people going 'off duty' brief their replacements on what has been happening recently. In many office groups, the Monday morning meeting is an important tool for informing group members about new developments, emerging trends, and the coming week's tasks. Similar meetings occur at all levels in smaller businesses.
- **Problem-Solving or Decision-Making**
  In other meetings, a group may decide to take some action or make a change in existing policies or procedures:
  - "Which supplier should we contract?"
  - "Should we introduce a new product line?"
  - "Where can we cut costs if sales don't improve this year?"

All these are questions that might be discussed in problem-solving meetings. Because problem-solving and decision-making meetings are the most challenging type of group activity, the bulk of workplace meetings need to be conducted effectively.

Types of meetings

There are many different types of meeting, some of which are formal and others informal.

- **Formal meetings** are those which are prescribed by law, standing orders or constitution and include annual general meetings of shareholders, board meetings, statutory committees, standing committees, etc. They are conducted in a formal manner and in accordance with a set agenda, held on specific date, presided over by a chairman and with a secretary engaged to record the minutes.
- **Informal meetings** are less rigid and may be called at any time and for any reason. A record may or may not be kept of the meeting, but where meetings are called to discuss business matters it is advisable to have written record of decisions reached. Executive meetings, staff meetings, advisory committees and working party meetings will normally be informal to allow participants to contribute freely without having to adhere to rigid procedures.
- **Once-off meetings** that are used to discuss specific issues that arise.
- **Regular meetings**, such as safety meetings, departmental meetings, etc.

Ritual Activities
In still other meetings, the social function is far more important than any specific task. In one firm, Friday afternoon "progress review sessions" are a regular fixture. Their apparently serious title is really an insider's tongue-in-cheek joke: The meetings take place in a local restaurant and to an outsider look like little more than a T.G.I.F. party.

Despite the setting and apparently un-business like activity, however, these meetings serve several important purposes. First, they reaffirm the members' commitment to one another and to the company (choosing to socialise with one another instead of rushing home is a sign of belonging and caring). Secondly, the sessions provide a chance to swap useful ideas and stories that might not be appropriate in the office.

Finally, ritual meetings can be a kind of perk that confers status on the members. "Progress review committee" members charge expenses to the company and leave work early to attend. Thus, being invited to join the sessions is a sign of “having arrived” in the company.

Participating in formal meetings
You need to also be able to participate in formal meetings appropriate to the purpose and context of the meeting. Your participation needs to be consistent with meeting procedures and contribute to the achievement of meeting objectives.

A formal meeting is a meeting that follows the accepted conventional procedure with a chairperson and a set of rules.

Private meetings and public meetings are classified as formal meetings. The degree of formality required at different meetings varies depending on the formality of the organisation.

At some stage during your career and in the social sphere you will be expected to participate in a formal meeting. Your participation should contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the meeting. For this reason it is important to know **how** to communicate at formal meetings according to the basic rules of procedure.

Terminology and Procedures of formal meetings

Meetings are governed by rules and regulations and these can be found in:

- The **Companies Act** is the broad set of rules for a company constitution. It also gives an example of a company constitution to use as a basis if a company wants it.
- Each individual company's individual **Constitution** which all companies MUST have and which lays down the rules by which the company is run. Within the constitution of a company you will find
  - The **Memorandum of Association** – what the purpose of a company is; how the company is made up including shareholders and shares. This is lodged with the Registrar of Companies in Pretoria and for a small fee, anyone can obtain information in the Memorandum
  - The **Articles of Association** – gives the inside workings of the company, how it is run, when Directors' meetings must be held, when shareholders meetings are etc. All meetings of the company must be run in alignment with these basic guidelines or they are not valid

Most meetings are run according to a set format. A meeting will be more effective if a set programme (the agenda) is adhered to and the chairperson manages the meeting and participants tightly.

A meeting should have a distinct:

- **Beginning** – Meetings are always opened with formalities like attendance, signing off of previous minutes and dealing with matters arising from the previous minutes.
- **Middle** – This is then followed by regular reports and then matters for the day.
- **Ending** – Once all the business is concluded there may be an open session where general items are raised, after which the meeting is declared closed.

Whether a meeting is formal or informal, an **agenda** must be set if the meeting is to run smoothly. The agenda must be well constructed to meet the needs of the meeting and agenda items must be selected in order that the important issues will be addressed. The agenda must be arranged in a systematic and logical way so that it follows the course of a meeting with a distinct beginning, middle and ending. The secretary puts the agenda together and distributes it with all the relevant meeting documentation to the full distribution list. This is done well in advance of the meeting so that attendees can prepare for their input at the meeting.

Various people have **official roles** to play at meetings and in order for meetings to run smoothly, they need to understand their responsibilities and execute them as well as possible:

- The **Chairperson** (or Vice-Chairperson in the others absence) sets the agenda for a meeting with the Secretary, ensures that a meeting is valid, leads the meeting, preserves the order, makes sure that the meeting is conducted in a proper manner, keeps the meeting to the agenda, makes sure that everybody is allowed to express their point of view, takes notes, sign the minutes, and closes or adjourns the meeting.
- The **Treasurer** is only necessary in a meeting if the group controls funds. In a company they are often the financial manager or accountant. The treasurer collects, records and banks income. Records and makes payments, advises on financial matters, watches over the organisations income and expenditure balance, presents financial report and presents audited accounts to the AGM.
- The **Secretary** is the point around which the activities of an association revolve – the expert who is at all times well informed on all matters and the mechanics who keeps everything in order for the driver.

The most important point to heed is that nobody, except the chairperson, may address the meeting unless the chairperson has granted permission for this. How to gain permission to speak:

- The attendee must rise or **raise a hand**. The Chairperson then grants permission for that person to speak. If two or more members rise at the same time, the chairperson determines who will speak first.
- A member **may not interrupt a speaker** or **directly address** the speaker. All remarks must be addressed to the chairperson. If you wish to comment on what a person has said, you cannot address that person directly. For example, you could not address Mr S directly and say, “Yes, Mr S. I totally agree with you.”

  Instead, you would raise your hand, and once the Chairperson had granted you permission to speak, you could say, “Madam Chairperson, I agree with what Mr S. has said. Last week the toilets were overflowing and obviously hadn’t been cleaned for a long time.”
- The items to be discussed must **strictly follow the agenda**. If anyone wants to discuss a point not on the agenda, then permission must first be obtained from the chairperson during the section devoted to General Matters (Any Other Business).
  You must raise a hand and once the Chairperson has granted permission for you to speak, you can introduce a new topic. For example, “Mr Chairperson, I wish to bring to the members’ attention the filthy condition of the toilets.”
- **If the chairperson asks,** “Are there any apologies?” you can raise a hand and state who has sent an apology for their absence. For example, “Ms X sent her apologies, Madam Chairperson. She is away on business.”
- If the chairperson reads the written minutes from the previous meeting and asks for comments and feedback, you can raise your hand to receive permission to speak. You might say, “Mr Chairperson, I think we were asked to report back to the committee by the 15th of the month and not the 25th, as was recorded.”

Procedure for a motion to be handled

A motion is a suggestion or proposal that is put to the vote at a meeting.

- **Member A** receives permission from the chairperson to speak.
- **Member A** states the motion. For example, “I propose that the club purchases a water cooler.”
- **Member A** supports the motion by giving reasons for the proposal.
- **Member A** concludes by saying, “I propose that the club purchases a water cooler.” Also acceptable is, “I move that the club purchases a water cooler.”
- The chairperson asks for someone to **second the motion**. “Does anyone second the proposal to purchase a water cooler?”
- A member, who **agrees with this, raises a hand** and will usually say, “I second the motion.”
- The chairperson states, “It has been **proposed and seconded** that the club purchases a water cooler. Is there any discussion?”
- If there are any points to discuss, participants must follow the normal procedure and **gain permission** from the chairperson to speak.

- The chairperson asks the members to **vote on the motion**. This can be by a show of hands, by orally answering “yes” or “no” or by writing yes or no on a piece of paper.
- Finally, the **chairperson states whether the motion is carried** (approved) or **denied** (not approved).
- If it is approved, the chairperson would say, “The motion for the club to purchase a water cooler is **carried** by 35 votes to 2.”

  If the motion is not approved, the chairperson would say, “The motion for the club to purchase a water cooler is **denied**. The votes were 2 in favour and 25 against.

General Formal Meeting Etiquette

- Do not interrupt when someone else is talking.
- Avoid making side-comments to the person sitting next to you. If you have something to say, raise your hand and obtain permission to speak from the Chairperson.
- Always be pleasant, tactful and polite and respect the opinions of others.
- If you do have something negative to say, ensure that you criticise the proposal or the idea and not the person. For example, you could say, “I think that’s a ridiculous idea!” but you should not say, “You are ridiculous!”
- Make your points clearly, succinctly and positively;
- Listen carefully, so that you have a clear understanding of the issues. In this way, you can pose well-formulated questions and make valuable comments.
- Remain silent when you have nothing useful to say.

1.4 Participate in discussions, debates and negotiations

A formal debate on a particular topic can appear on the agenda of a formal meeting or it can be a separate meeting where one topic is discussed. Debates can also be informal, as issues where there is discussion and disagreement can arise at any time during your day at work or at home.

If you wish to communicate effectively in a formal debate, then you need to know how to participate.

Debating Format

- **Affirmative**: The affirmative team presents their proposition (resolution). The group defines the situation, presents proposed alternatives, explains the plan for change and provides a brief summary.
- **Negative**: Then the negative team presents their position. The group may be directly arguing that there is no need for change as is being proposed by the affirmative team. The negative team states their reasoning for the status quo. They may, only if necessary, argue the definition of the situation as defined by the affirmative team. The team raises questions about the affirmative position.
- **Affirmative**: The second affirmative speaker will summarise the arguments on both sides noting where the positions conflict. The speaker will try to demonstrate the superiority of their reasoning. The speaker also has the task of answering any questions raised by the first negative speaker.

It's important to address any particularly difficult questions. The answers should leave the audience satisfied. Present a plan.

- **Negative**: The second negative speaker restates the position of the team. He or she will address important questions raised. The main task however is to attack the plan as proposed by the affirmative team. The speaker may show that the plan is unworkable or expose unconsidered negative implications. The goal of this speaker is to demonstrate that the proposed resolution is uncalled for and/or unneeded and/or unworkable.
- **Rebuttal** speeches are shorter (3-5 minutes or as dictated) and may not present new evidence. Their sole purpose is to defend your case and defeat the case of the opposition.
    - 1st Rebuttal – Negative
    - 1st Rebuttal – Affirmative
    - 2nd Rebuttal – Negative
    - 2nd Rebuttal – Affirmative

Example Debate:

In a formal debate there are two groups who hold differing opinions of the topic under discussion. Let's take this example. A company has proposed transferring the Pension Fund into a Provident Fund.

One group, Group A, might be against this and want to remain with the Pension Fund; the other, Group B, might support the change to a Provident Fund.

- **Step 1:** Group B, the group that supports the proposal, takes the floor first. A proposer introduces the argument and might say, "We support the proposal to move from a Pension Fund to a Provident Fund."

  Reasons to support the proposal are then put forward by the proposer and/or other members of the group.

  Points to remember:

  You are trying to persuade people to support your point of view, so:
    - Emphasise the points that support the move to the Provident Fund;
    - Make use of persuasive language;
    - Use your voice and non-verbal communication to emphasise that the move to a Provident Fund is a good idea.
- **Step 2:** Group A, the group that opposes the argument, is then allowed to express its opinions. Following the same procedure, the opposer states, "We believe that moving to a Provident Fund is not in the interests of the employees of this company."

  Reasons for opposing the proposal are then put forward by the opposer and/or other members of the group.

  Points to remember:

  The opposer is also trying to persuade people to support his/her point of view, so:
    - Emphasise why the move to the Provident Fund is not a good idea and why the company should remain with the Pension Fund;
    - Make use of persuasive language;
    - Use your voice and non-verbal communication to emphasise that the move to a Provident Fund is not a good idea.
- **Step 3:** A general discussion, led by the chairperson, then follows. The chairperson has to assume the roles and responsibilities of the group leader and

it is important for the chairperson to remain impartial. That is, he/she must not take sides.

For example, if the chairperson asked for comments from a particular department, he would not say, “What does management think of the *ill-advised* move?” If he did, this would show that he was against the move to a Provident Fund.

Instead, he would ask, “What does management think of the proposed move?”

- **Step 4:** After the discussion has ended, the chairperson allows the opposer and the proposer an opportunity to summarise their arguments.

  When you summarise your argument, take note of the following:
  - The summary should be brief, but powerful;
  - Ensure that you emphasise the most important points to support your point of view;
  - Make use of persuasive language;
  - Use your voice and non-verbal communication to emphasise your proposal;
  - End your summary in a strong, effective manner. For example, you would not end by saying, “And so you must vote to stay with the Pension Fund.” Instead, you might say, “In order to ensure we receive the pensions we deserve and have worked hard for, I urge you to reject the ill-advised move to the Provident Fund and vote for the sensible option - remaining with the Pension Fund!”
- **Step 5:** The members of the audience vote on the issue. The chairperson asks the members to vote on the issue. After a debate, this is usually done by a show of hands or by orally answering “yes” or “no.” The chairperson will state, “Those in favour of transferring from a Pension Fund to a Provident Fund, please raise your hand.”

  After those votes have been counted, the chairperson then states, “Those who are against the proposal to move from a Pension Fund to a Provident Fund, please raise your hand.”
- **Step 6:** The chairperson concludes the debate by announcing the result and stating whether the proposal is approved or denied.

  For example, “The proposal to transfer the money from a Pension Fund to a Provident Fund has been approved by 367 votes to 220.”

Communication during a debate

- Make sure that you clearly understand the proposal under discussion before the debate begins. Reflect on the issue and clarify your side of the argument. Organise your thoughts and jot down the important points.
- Let your opponents express their opinions without interruption and listen carefully to what is said. You might be able to use any faulty points in your opponents' arguments against them.
- For example, the speaker from the opposing side might have mentioned that the employees will lose money. Make a note of this, so that when you speak you can mention that, in fact, the employees will gain money.
- Present your case calmly and logically. Try not to lose your temper and shout. Calmly stating the facts is more effective than screaming and banging on the table!
- Be polite and do not make statements like, “Nonsense!” or “That's crazy!” If your opponent does this, calmly insist on asking why.

- You can attack your opponents' case, but never their character. You can say, "The proposal is criminal - people are being defrauded and are losing their money!" However, you should not say, "People who support this move are money-grabbing criminals!"
- Address comments/questions to the "chair". This is the person who is responsible for running the debate. Ex. Mr./Madame Chairperson, at this time I wish to address the issue of fairness….
- Take care with the amount of time you have. Practice beforehand. Use recipe cards to record important notes.
- Complete each speaking opportunity with a brief summary.
- Listen carefully to the opposing team. They may make a significant point your team had not thought of during your preparation. You will want to address them in your rebuttal. A strong point left unchallenged makes your side appear all the weaker.
- Back up your statements/assertions. Anybody can have an opinion but rationale wins the debate.
- Take notes during the debate.

Negotiation is another form of oral communication that is often encountered in the work place. A negotiation can be described as, "A discussion with others in order to reach a compromise or agreement." It is the process of arriving at an agreement through discussion and bargaining.

People negotiate to:

- Settle differences;
  A supplier of T-shirts may have to negotiate with its distribution company, as the T-shirts are not being distributed to as many outlets as the supplier would like.
- Determine the value of services and products;
  Wage negotiations and increases in commuter fares are common examples of negotiations in respect of the value of services and products.
- Make changes to terms and agreements.
  Negotiations would have to take place between management and workers if management wanted to increase the minimum working hours per week.

The most commonly publicised negotiations in the work place are those concerning wage increases and conditions of service. The following extract comes from NUMSA,s online newsletter, http://www.numsa.org.za dated July 1, 2003, " As NUMSA News went to print, the National Union of Mineworkers and the Chamber of Mines were still no closer to reaching a settlement in the **wage negotiations**. Although the Chamber had raised its wage offer to 7% from 6,5%, this was nowhere NUM's demand for a 20% increase."

Even the most skilful requests and the most positive communication climates don't guarantee a positive response during negotiations. Whenever two or more parties do not initially agree about an issue, they have three choices:

- They can accept the status quo (things as they are)
- The more powerful side can try to impose a solution
- The parties can reach an agreement by negotiating

Negotiation occurs when two or more parties – either individuals or groups – discuss specific proposals in order to find a mutually acceptable agreement. Negotiation is a common way of settling conflicts in business. Individuals use negotiation to reach agreement on everything from the price of a used car to who will handle an unpleasant job. Managers and workers use it to reach agreements on such issues as how much responsibility a worker should take or what she needs to do to be promoted.

There is nothing magic about negotiation. When poorly handled, it can leave a problem still unsolved and perhaps worse than before ("I tried to work things out with him, but he just tried to put me off. I'm going to the union this time"). When negotiation is handled skilfully, though, it can improve the position of one or even both parties.

Negotiation Approaches and Outcomes

Negotiations can be approached in four ways. Each of these approaches produces a different outcome:

1. **Bargaining Orientation -** This is the approach taken by competitive communicators. Bargaining is based on the assumption that only one side can reach its goals and that any victory by that party will be matched by the other's loss. Despite the fact that it produces losers as well as winners, a bargaining orientation can sometimes be the best approach to negotiating. If the other party is determined to take advantage of you and cannot be convinced that collaboration is possible, then you probably need to adopt a competitive stance out of self-defence.

   You may also need to bargain if your interests truly conflict and collaborating or compromising is not a satisfactory option. For example, in a one-time commercial transaction (the sale of a car, for instance), your concern for helping the other party may take a back seat to getting the best possible deal for yourself without violating your ethical principles.

2. **Lose-Lose Orientation -** Nobody wants a lose-lose outcome. Nonetheless, there are too many times when both parties leave a negotiation unsatisfied. Lose-lose outcomes occur most frequently when each party tries to win at the other's expense. Like armies that take mortal losses while trying to defeat their enemies, disputants who go for a bargaining victory often find that they have hurt themselves as much as their opponents.

   Consider our example of the working parent who insists on a seven-hour workday. By forcing the issue, he may wind up having his request denied and then quitting or being fired as a result of his non-negotiable demand. In this case, everyone suffers: The employer loses a talented worker and the employee's career and bank balance suffer.

   Lose-lose outcomes occur on larger issues as well: Unreasonable union demands can drive employers into bankruptcy, and employers can destroy their workers' effectiveness by taking advantage of them.

3. **Compromise -** Sometimes it seems better to compromise than to fight battles in a bargaining manner and risk a lose-lose outcome. There certainly are cases in which compromise is the best obtainable outcome – usually when disputed resources are limited or scarce. If two managers each need a full-time secretary, but budget restrictions make this impossible, they may have to compromise by

sharing one secretary. While compromises may be necessary, by definition the outcome is that both parties lose at least some of what they were seeking.

Buyers, for instance, may pay more than they can afford, while sellers receive less than they need. Sometimes a series of compromises can leave neither getting what he or she really wants. For example, if a supplier and a purchasing officer start out from a "horse trading" perspective, the purchasing officer might end up with more supplies than the company needs at a higher total expenditure than his business can afford, while the supplier might be getting a lower price than her firm would like. In the case of the employee who wants extra time with his child, a compromise wouldn't be of much help to either party. There might still be times when the employee couldn't be with his child, and the boss would still be short of help. Compromises clearly aren't the best kind of outcome.

4. **Win-Win Orientation -** This collaborative approach to negotiation assumes that solutions can be reached that satisfy the needs of all parties. A win-win approach differs significantly from the preceding negotiating styles. Most importantly, it looks beyond the conflicting means of both parties (my way versus your way) and focuses on satisfying the ends each is seeking.

   The key to finding win-win solutions is to take the kind of problem-solving, non-controlling approach described earlier. Instead of viewing your negotiating partner as an adversary who needs to be defeated (a bargaining attitude), the key is to seek ways to satisfy both your needs and those of the other party. Win-win outcomes are possible in the many cases when the parties' needs aren't incompatible – just different.

Communication during Negotiations

In order to become an effective negotiator, people need to receive specialised training in negotiation skills and knowledge. However, your oral communication during the negotiation process will be enhanced if you follow the general rules already covered in this unit.

- Know exactly what you want to achieve during the negotiation. Ensure you are well prepared: organise your thoughts, decide on your position, what you are prepared to offer and accept, and prepare your argument.
- Always leave the door open for negotiations to continue. Remember, it is a bargaining process – we can give you this, if you can give us that. If one side states, “We shall never accept that!” there is no room for discussion and therefore negotiations have broken down.
- Present your case calmly and logically, choosing your words carefully.
- Basic good manners are important, so let the other speakers express their opinions without interruption and listen carefully to what is said.
- You can attack your opponents’ demands, but should never attack their character.

Negotiation Process

The following process will assist you in compiling the essential information for a successful negotiation:

1. **Identify and categorise your objectives -** Start by determining your objectives. Use this information to brainstorm possibilities that you might have overlooked. Next, consider creative ways in which your objectives might be satisfied.

Then, categorise them according to the four main types of objectives: monetary, growth, status, and principle.

2. **Prioritise your objectives -** Next, prioritise your objectives. The category into which your objectives fall does not necessarily dictate how you'll prioritise them. How you prioritise your objectives is a judgment you have to make according to what you and/or your company want to accomplish in the negotiation. In addition, this step of the process will help you prepare an agenda for the negotiation and further clarify your objectives.

3. **Identify your optimum and alternative variables -** After you have prioritised your objectives, determine what your optimum and alternate variables are. Use your list of objectives to help you discover what other possibilities might allow you to satisfy the majority of your objectives.

4. **Determine any arguments for or against each variable -** Next identify the arguments for or against each of the optimum and alternate variables. Doing so ensures that you can address objections the other party raises regarding the solution you create.

5. **Identify your strengths and weaknesses -** Then identify your strengths and weaknesses. The other party will do its best to know where you might be vulnerable, as well as how to respond to your strong points. If you have not compiled a list of your strengths and weaknesses and formulated a plan to address them, you might allow the other party a costly advantage over you.

6. **Formulate responses to your weaknesses -** The last step is determining how you'll respond to the other party regarding your weaknesses. One option is to point out the other party's weaknesses. Another possibility is to remind the other party of your strengths.

Guidelines for a positive contribution
If you are part of a negotiation team, it is important to work with your team mates to create the best possible plan to achieve your objectives. By using the following guidelines, you will ensure that your team mates feel that they are positively contributing to the negotiation process and that they are treated fairly:

- **Be open-minded -** It is important to keep an open mind when working on a negotiation team. You do not want to miss an opportunity to achieve the best possible outcome because you have limited yourself to your own ideas about an agreement plan. Negotiation teams offer a safe environment to perfect your plan and ensure a successful negotiation.

- **Encourage all viewpoints -** You might have a team member who is quiet or seems comfortable to allow others to make the decisions. If so, you should assure the team member that every point of view is important and you want to hear what he or she has to say.

  When a team member contributes ideas, make sure you give positive feedback about the idea. Even if you don't agree with the idea, it is important to let the team know that you respect all opinions.

- **Listen actively -** When another team member talks, you should listen actively. Maintain eye contact and avoid formulating arguments against the point of view until he or she has finished speaking.

Pause before you respond to the idea. Doing so not only gives you time to consider what has been said, but also shows that you are listening.

1.5 Responding sensitively to differing socio-cultural contexts

To respond effectively to communication you need to understand what the communication is about and what is expected from you in order to respond appropriately. In order to understand the communication, we would use questions to:

- Check understanding
- Clarify meaning
- Get information

Using simple questions, we are able to ensure our accurate understanding of the issue under discussion / the topic, i.e. questions starting with Who, What, When, Where, Why, How.

Responses to communication are also influenced by the use of Emotive Language. Language deliberately designed to arouse the emotions, e.g. murderers described as "beasts" or people who might have unusual views on something being described as "raving lunatics" etc.

Activity 2.1:
In small groups, complete the formative activity in your Learner Workbook

Module 2
Use strategies that capture and retain the interest of an audience

After completing this module, the learner will be able to use strategies that capture and retain the interest of an audience, by successfully completing the following:

- Key words, pace and pause, stress, volume and intonation or sign size, pace, and rhythm are used in appropriate ways to reinforce the message
- Body language is appropriate to context and topic, and reinforces main ideas and points of view
- Formal communications are planned in writing, and plans are detailed, complete, and realistic with respect to time allocation and content
- Visual aids are appropriate to topic and context, and enhance the presentation and the transfer of information and understanding
- Techniques are used to maintain continuity and interaction

Capture and retain the interest of an audience

More people fear giving a presentation than dying. Unbelievable? Maybe, but it's true. Making a presentation - whether standing in front of a large group or just sitting with colleagues across the conference room table - can be a source of stress for even the most experienced speaker. Being perceived as credible, and conveying your thoughts in a clear, concise and powerful way can enhance not only your personal image, but that of your company or organization. Conversely, being perceived as awkward, ill -- prepared, or even uncomfortable can do your image - or your career - great harm.

The following article provides some insight into how the professionals do effective presentations:

Seven Habits of Highly Effective Speakers: Use Them And Set Yourself Apart

By Marjorie Brody

I have developed a method for successful speaking that really works - based on the hundreds of hours spent preparing and delivering presentations, and the thousands of training and coaching sessions I have conducted. If you follow the seven habits below when preparing for your own presentations, you would be able to feel confident and secure when facing your audience - whether you're a first-time speaker or a still-not-quite-secure repeat performer.

I have developed a method for successful speaking that really works - based on the hundreds of hours spent preparing and delivering presentations, and the thousands of training and coaching sessions I have conducted. If you follow the seven habits below when preparing for your own presentations, you would be able to feel confident and secure when facing your audience - whether you're a first-time speaker or a still-not-quite-secure repeat performer.

1) KNOW YOUR PAL: Purpose, Audience and Logistics. If your purpose is to inform the audience, then you need to provide new and useful information. If, however, you want to persuade people, then you need to make them believe in your message or call them to action. Be very clear about your intended results. In other words, begin with the end in mind. You also want to ask yourself: Who is in the audience? Are they colleagues, or prospective clients? Why are they there? What are their demographics (Where are they from? How old are they?). What is their attitude toward your objective? What knowledge do they have and do they need? The "right" information to the wrong audience limits your chance of achieving your objectives.

Find out as much as you can about your audience before preparing your speech. Even seasoned professional speakers sometimes forget to do all their homework and wind up feeling foolish. There have been numerous examples of speeches given with information that was either too far above or too far below the knowledge level of the audience.

Knowing the logistics is important, too. Are you part of a team or panel of speakers? What will the other speakers be discussing? How large is the audience? What visual equipment is available? How much time do you have to present? What time of day will you be speaking? The answers to these questions are crucial factors in helping you tailor your presentation.

Once you have determined your PAL, write your overall objective in one sentence or less. This helps you maintain focus during the preparation process.

2. PREPARE ADEQUATELY: Once you clarify your objectives, it's time to prepare the presentation. The first step is to collect the material. Unless you plan on a "data dump," look for analogies and metaphors, stories, examples, audience, involvement techniques, case studies to support the facts and figures. After collecting the material, begin to organize it so there is a logical progression of ideas. Limit the points, keeping the message simple. Writing out transitions helps to reinforce the ideas and to repeat without being redundant.

Write the introduction and conclusion after the body of the presentation is completed, being sure to start with impact including the benefit of the presentation to the audience and ending with strength and something memorable.

3. CREATE A USER FRIENDLY FINAL DRAFT: Imagine what would happen if you created a masterpiece ... only to have the briefcase it's in stolen. Always leave a copy of the final draft at home or in the office for someone to fax to you in an emergency. This user-friendly final draft should be in outline form on note paper, minimal 18 point boldface. Highlight the must know, should know and could know materials in different colors. Avoid using note cards; they can cause you to do too much shuffling. Only write on the top two thirds of the page, otherwise your eyes and voice will drop, and you will lose your audience's attention.

4. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE: At least three to six times, out loud -- saying it differently each time to keep the spontaneity. Practicing in your head where you are eloquent won't work as well than actually saying it. If you will be delivering your speech standing up, then practice the same way using a similar room setup. If you can't practice in the actual room where you will be speaking, improvise. Set up the chairs in the way they will actually be used. If you can practice in front of someone, their comments will help you to refine your presentation. Tape record yourself. Remember, if you don't find your presentation interesting no one else will either.

5. ARRIVE EARLY: Make sure the room is set up correctly, the microphone is working and check any visual aids you may be using. Bring extra bulbs, cords, etc., to prepare yourself for technical difficulties. If possible, be available to introduce yourself and shake hands with your audience as they arrive. This will help them to be more receptive to you as a speaker. Limber up by doing breathing and stretching exercises, it will control the adrenaline and relax you.

6. DELIVERY TECHNIQUES: As an effective speaker, you want your audience to be receptive to the communication signals you will be sending them: the three V's - **Visual**, **Verbal** and **Vocal**. While all three are important, for some audience members, what you say may not be as important as how you say it. For other audiences members, the way you look and the facial expressions you use will influence their impressions. Your ultimate credibility as a speaker will be determined by your mastery of the three V's.

- **Visual** - The old adage that "Clothes make the man" or woman, is still valid. The first thing your audience members see is your appearance. Before you get a chance to say a word, some of them will already have judged you based solely on how you look. If you are presenting at a business meeting, proper business dress is called for. If you have been invited to speak at an "off-campus" event, check with the event organizer. You can never be faulted for looking "too professional," even if the audience is dressed down. Be certain that your outfit and accessories don't detract from your presentation. Avoid anything that makes noise or looks flashy, like jangling bracelets or earrings.

Both men and women should check that their clothing fits well, and that they can move comfortably in it.

Your body language will also send the audience a message. Don't cross your arms or fidget. Use gestures to emphasize points, but be careful not to flail your arms around. The most effective stance is a forward lean, not swaying back and forth or bouncing on your feet. Effective speakers make regular eye contact with audience members, holding the connection to complete an idea. This helps draw listeners into your speech. Nodding to emphasize a point also helps make a connection with the audience. If you nod occasionally, audience members will too - creating a bond.

- **Vocal** - If you have ever listened to people speaking in a monotone, you know how difficult it is to pay attention. There are six vocal cues to remember: pitch, volume, rate, punch, pause, and diction. It is also important to speak clearly and enunciate. If you rush your delivery or speak softly, the audience will have to work too hard to pay attention. Vary your tone and speed and tailor your delivery rate to accommodate any regional differences. Keep your chin up while speaking, don't bury it in notes. When you look down, your voice drops. Emphasize or "punch" certain words for effect, but don't forget to incorporate pauses to give the audience time to let important points be understood. Proper diction is also essential - if you're not sure how to pronounce a word, look it up or don't use it.
- **Verbal** - There are three verbal communication rules to remember: Use descriptive, simple language; use short sentences; and avoid buzz words and jargon.

7. HANDLE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH TACT: Having prepared your speech thoroughly, you will be ready for most questions. Answer them as briefly and concisely as you can. It's best to paraphrase the question before answering it. This will help to clarify it in your mind and to make sure you understand the question. At some time you may encounter someone whose only objective is to stump the speaker or put you on the defensive. If you don't know the answer, say so. Don't try to make one up. Tell the questioner that you will find out the answer and get back to him or her. Knowing how to create and deliver effective presentations will enhance your ability to project a positive image. These secrets are a head start toward helping you gain the competitive edge when presenting.

Adapted from: http://www.presentation-pointers.com/showarticle/articleid/14/

Adapting language to suit different contexts, audiences and purposes

"Since organisations consist of people, the information- processing problems of individuals are transported to the larger unit or organisation through its employees. Communication is, therefore a social process of the broadest relevance in the functioning of any group, organisation or society…"

(Katz and Kahn, 1966.)

Effective communication happens when speaking, listening and understanding all come together. Speaking and listening both involve verbal and non-verbal communication, that is, your words, your tone of voice and your body language.

When speaking, constantly check for understanding. Ideally, the listener will provide the speaker with feedback to indicate their understanding, but if it is not volunteered, you must seek it out. Proper understanding comes through listening, questioning, thinking and remembering.

It is very difficult to manage effectively when communication between workers is poor. You cannot be sure that a task has been delegated effectively or properly explained to a team without checking for understanding.

2.1 Techniques to reinforce the message

There are various techniques that you can use to reinforce the message. We will explore a few:

Key Words

Speeches must have an organisational structure. Without such a structure it will be difficult to make the speech, and it will be difficult for the audience to understand. So, an organisational structure or pattern makes the speech easier to understand. Speeches can be organised in many ways. The type of pattern you choose will depend upon the topic and purpose of your speech.

Voice projection

- Size of room/ loudness- speak louder than usual; practise in a room of comparable size beforehand and ask someone to listen from the back
- Posture- chin up, so that you can "throw" your voice to the back of the room
- Confidence – believe that what you are saying is important and that your audience needs to hear it
- Breathing- control your breathing, so that you don't run out of breath before the end of the sentence
- The pregnant pause- silence at the right moment reinforces and intrigues your audience. Even those who were not listening, look up and wonder what's going on!

Articulation

- Be careful not to swallow your words or let your words trail away at the end of a sentence
- Be aware of fillers that some of us use when we don't know what to say, e.g. "OK", or ""um".
- There is nothing wrong with a strong accent (most South Africans are not mother-tongue speakers of English), but ensure that you can be understood.

Modulation

- Pitch: Women, in particular, must beware of too high a pitch. Practise lowering your pitch. It also helps to speak slowly.

Tone: Vary tone and speed. Fast delivery excites and stimulates; slow delivery to emphasise and control.

Your tone and pace of speech affect how your audience responds to you. You want to match your tone to that of your audience. You do not want to come off as arrogant or ignorant. Rather, you need to sound confident at a basic level so that you do not lose credibility with your audience. The pace of your speech is also important. You can speak faster than you can write and understand. You need to give your audience time to take in what you have just said, or you risk losing your audience.

All successful speakers know the importance of varying the speed of their voice, or in other words, how quickly they talk. Generally, a good speaker tends to talk fast to excite and energise the listener, and slow when they want to create suspense and anticipation.

Talking at the same pace all the time can cause the listener to "shut off" and ignore what you are saying. This is because it all sounds the same, like a continuous drone of noise. Continuous speaking can also tire the listener, because they will not have time to absorb and process what you are saying.

One common mistake people make is talking too slowly, or too quickly. Slow speakers are generally perceived as being less intelligent, boring, tired or incompetent. Slow speakers also tend to waffle, going on forever about something, when a few words would have been sufficient. Fast talkers are better than slow talkers, but only if they learn to pause, listen and have a 2 way conversation.

In general, just remember that you can create interest in your message by varying the speed of your voice. Use a speed that is slightly faster than average, yet slow enough to follow easily. You can then slow down occasionally to create suspense or anticipation of key points.The words we choose and the way we choose to say them are not only interpreted literally by our hearers, but our underlying values, attitudes and bias are also revealed during the communication process.

When we **pause**, are we revealing uncertainty, or are we pausing for effect, to make the audience sit up and take notice?

When we ask a **rhetorical question**, we don't expect an answer, we expect agreement and buy-in to what we are trying to convey.

Our **stress**, **intonation** and **volume** can carry the audience along with us on a wave of excitement, or lull them to sleep.

We can even reveal whether we really believe in what we saying, or where our sympathies lie by the words we use; a simple example being the use of either **inclusive** or **exclusive pronouns**.

Notice when employees talk about their company- do they refer to "they" or "we"? This is usually a good indication of buy-in to the objectives.

Tip: Taking the pressure off

Throw the spotlight on your audience within the first 30 seconds of your presentation by asking a question, asking for a show of hands, doing a quick icebreaker (such as getting members of a smaller audience to introduce themselves, or say what they know about your topic, or answer a quick quiz, etc.)

This gives you time to relax, smile and establish rapport with your audience

2.2 Use body language

A spoken message is always sent on two levels simultaneously, oral and non-oral. When communicating orally, the following aspects of non-oral communication also need to be borne in mind:

- **Eye Contact -** In business culture, it is imperative to make eye contact if one wishes to make a positive impression and maintain a relationship based on trust. However, maintain eye contact without staring, as this can be perceived as arrogant and threatening. Avoid blinking too much as this communicates nervousness and can be interpreted as an indication of dishonesty. Try to keep your eye level on the same level as the other person. Stand if the other person is standing. If the person is seated, accommodate this by standing back a little.

- **Facial Expressions -** Be aware of facial expressions when speaking to people. Professional service providers who deliver excellent service have alert, lively and appropriate facial expressions. Avoid the following facial expressions:
  - An expressionless or deadpan face showing no emotion in response to what guests say, as this makes them feel uncomfortable. This may also be interpreted as boredom, rudeness or indifference.
  - An arrogant or stern expression, which creates the impression of being superior or patronising towards others.
  - A continuous grinning, which only makes one look stupid. It creates the impression of misunderstanding what is being said or done. It may also create the impression of being deliberately unhelpful.

- **Gestures -** Head and hand movements are common during speech. Smooth and wide gestures with palms facing upwards, are warm and welcoming. People react positively to friendliness and helpfulness. Guests are naturally drawn to people who use calming gestures. Sharp, short gestures with palms facing downwards, are aggressive and negative. People react by wanting to either dispute or avoid. When upset or if there is a need to discuss problems, gestures should be controlled. Problems are never resolved through aggressive gestures.

- **Posture -** The way the speaker stands, sits or walks, indicates a great deal about the speaker's attitude, mood and self-esteem. A correct posture entails the following:
  - Stand upright with arms comfortably at sides.
  - Keep shoulders dropped and slightly back.
  - Stand with feet slightly apart to maintain balance.
  - Walk briskly because it creates a professional impression.
  - Sit upright with shoulders back. Slouching looks lazy.
  - When speaking to guests either face them completely or turn the body slightly sideways towards them.
  - Avoid leaning against walls or furniture.
  - Avoid folded arms – they create the impression of being shy or arrogant.
  - Standing with hands on hips looks arrogant.
  - Swinging when speaking to people suggests a lack of self-confidence.

- Resting the face on hands while leaning on counters looks lazy.

- **Personal Space -** This refers to the space each person has around him / her and into which intrusions are unwelcome. The exact size of the area around each person differs and depends on a variety of factors including, personality, culture, family background and even the type of sport played. Shy people usually need a wider personal space than outgoing people do. People instinctively indicate when their space is invaded – they either move away slightly, look uncomfortable, blink their eyes to show their discomfort, or look behind the speaker to avoid eye contact.

2.3 Plan formal communications

Communication is a key element of any interaction. Many projects have been known to fail due to ineffective communication. Signs of ineffective communication include: silence, vague or mixed messages, hearing things "after the fact," or receiving information overload.

Knowing how much to communicate and when to communicate comes through a well thought out plan.

The plan should be prepared with the following considerations in mind:

- What is the purpose of the communication? (Why do you want to communicate?)
- What is the message to be communicated? (What do you want to say?)
- Who is the audience? (It may be all staff members or specific groups or individuals.)
- What type of communication is most suitable for the audience?
- Who should the message come from?
- Who is the best person to prepare the communication?
- When should the communication occur?

The communication may be a "once off" such as an extraordinary meeting or occur at regular intervals such as the monthly management meeting.

Using formats, conventions, protocols and contexts

When planning formal communications we need to pay attention to the formats, conventions and protocols that govern formal language usage.

One measure of the formality of our language is the use of contractions; e.g. verb contractions such as: it's, they're, don't and we've.

Contractions are used regularly in casual conversation, and by using contractions in our text, we will convey an informal quality.

To elevate the style, eliminate the contractions and write out the verbs.

Check grammar and spelling, as incorrect usage of these elements also conveys a sloppy or informal attitude and not the image we would like to portray in a formal communication event, such as a presentation.

2.4 Use visual aids

Whether you are leading a discussion or speaking before your entire class, you should consider using visual aids. As a presenter it is your responsibility to reach out to as much of the audience as possible to address the variety of learning styles they may have. There are a few guidelines to designing your visuals. They should be big, they should be simple, they should be clear, and they should be consistent.

- **Visibility**

Visibility is very important. You have to remember that the people sitting all the way at the back of the lecture hall need to be able to read your visual aids. Your font size should be large, at least 24 points.

- **Simplicity**

Many of you have had instructors who place full lecture outlines on the overhead. While it makes sure that nobody misses a point, most students end up copying down the outlines verbatim instead of listening to the instructor. Your visuals should include critical diagrams and tables of data, and key points relevant to your discussion. They should not be detailed lecture outlines.

- **Clarity**

Your visuals need to be clear. You need to select images that will project well. Usually larger high-resolution images are best. Use simple block style fonts, as they are more readable than script fonts. Additionally, you need to be careful in picking colours when using PowerPoint. Most experts on PowerPoint recommend dark backgrounds with white or yellow text. Remember that some colour combinations, such as green and yellow, may not be visible. The text you put on your visuals needs to be quickly understood. If it requires lengthy explanation, then you should reconsider its use.

- **Consistency**

Your visuals need to be consistent in format and style. It looks sloppy when visual aids do not have a consistent format. Your audience will respond better when they perceive you as an organized speaker. Depending on the material in your presentation, you may want to consider working on a demonstration. Especially in the sciences, offering a real-time demonstration of a key principle will help your audience better understand the material.

- **Handouts**

You may also want to consider using handouts as a supplement to your discussion. The same rules apply to handouts as to visual aids. First and foremost, you do not want your audience distracted by your handouts. If you put a full presentation outline in your handouts, your audience will not pay attention because they know what you are going to say. Instead, you may want to include important figures and data that will be useful for your audience to have in front of them.

- **Practice**

In order to ensure a successful presentation, you should practice several times to feel comfortable with the content and delivery of the material. While there is no set rule as to how many times you should practice, it should be at least more than once. While practicing, you should be looking out for material that seems confusing or difficult to deliver. The best feedback that you can get is from yourself. Practice as many times as it takes to make you feel comfortable with the material and your delivery.

- **Visual Aid Checklist**
    - Are my bullet points understandable?
    - Are my pictures clearly visible?
    - Do my charts or tables make sense, or would they make sense with a brief explanation?
    - Are my slides visible everywhere in the presentation room?
    - Do my visual aids complement my speech rather than distract from it?

2.5 Techniques to maintain continuity and interaction

Your approach and style are very important in maintaining oral communication.

The techniques you can use to maintain continuity and interaction are the following:

- Responding to queries completely and timeously, making sure that you address the audience's concerns and queries
- Repetition of information to emphasise its importance
- Rewording difficult concepts
- Asking questions to check understanding
- Referring to cue cards to ensure that you have covered everything as planned
- Timing techniques, such as pausing appropriately for emphasis and effect
- Responsiveness to audience cues that contact is being lost

If you are speaking clearly and concisely, your listeners will demonstrate the following behaviour:

- Respond warmly and attentively throughout the conversation or presentation
- Their eyebrows are raised
- Their eyes are rounded
- They lean forward while you are talking
- Give you more eye contact
- Follow your directions more accurately
- Ask you fewer questions for clarification
- Appear more relaxed: smiling, shoulders down, hands relaxed

Module 3
Identify and respond to manipulative use of language

After completing this module, the learner will be able to identify and respond to manipulative use of language, by successfully completing the following:

- Facts and opinions are identified and distinguished
- Omission of necessary information is noted and addressed
- The implications of how the choice of language structures and features, specifically tone, register, style and point of view affect audience interpretations of spoken texts are explained
- Distortion of a contributor's position on a given issue is explored with specific reference to what has been selected and omitted

Identify and respond to manipulative use of language

Effective oral communicators interact successfully with the audience and use strategies that capture and retain their interest. Another important aspect of effective oral communication is the use of manipulative language.

If a person **manipulates** someone, he/she uses that person to his/her own advantage.

Manipulative language therefore, is language that is used by a speaker so that he/she gains an advantage and gets what he/she wants. For example, if a speaker wants to persuade the audience to vote for a proposal, the speaker will use all the means at his/her disposal to convince the audience that this proposal is the correct one. This will involve:

- Interacting with the audience in an effective manner;
- Formulating a good, well-structured argument; and
- Using language manipulatively.

Whether you are giving a speech, or listening to someone else speak, it is necessary for you to be aware of the importance of this technique.

Using features and conventions

Communication could be written, verbal or visual. Every communication has a purpose – to get some reaction from the reader, the listener or the viewer, e.g.:

- **To get an instruction -** The word choice will be factual and precise. Sequencing will also be used to indicate the correct order in which things ought to be done to achieve a particular outcome.
- **To be informed -** Accuracy and precision will be the main feature of this communication. Will the recipient of this communication be able to clearly understand the information provided?
- **To be persuaded -** Persuasive writing will use language and vocabulary to evoke an emotional reaction. Advertisers and politicians are recognised for using these techniques.
- **To buy -** Persuasive language is used specifically to evoke emotions to encourage you to buy a product.
- **To get a reaction by complaining -** This is when an individual is usually angry. Language will be emotive and express disappointment. The writer will also probably expect a response. This may consist of some sort of action or apology.
- **To entertain -** Communication can entertain in many different ways - it may provide beauty, amuse or simply be intriguing. Whatever the communicator's area of expertise, he/she will use language for that purpose.
- **To satirise -** Writers, artists, and comedians often use satire (mockery) to point out faults or to make a social or political comment. They use humour to attract the reader even though the point they are making is usually not funny.

3.1 Identify and distinguish facts and opinions

An opinion is a person's ideas and thoughts towards something. It is an assessment, judgment or evaluation of something. An opinion is not a *fact*, because opinions are either not falsifiable, or the opinion has not been proven or verified. If it later *becomes* proven or verified, it is no longer an opinion, but a fact.

Generally, a fact is something that is the case, something that actually exists, or something that can be verified according to an established standard of evaluation.

3.2 Note and address omission of information

We would often deliberately use certain words or omit certain facts in order to have the reader, listener or viewer have a certain reaction to the communication, e.g.

- "The coals settled comfortably in the fireplace." Coal is normally regarded as inanimate / lifeless but here it is seen as settling like a human might settle into a chair.
- "The wind was a knife, cutting through outer garments to attack the defenceless body."
- In the middle of a furious argument, a third party might enter and say, "Did I detect a slight difference of opinion here?"

The author of the communication could also use Euphemisms - A deliberate softening of a harsh truth, e.g. The old man passed away (rather than "died")

The author of the communication could also use Litotes - A deliberate understatement, often designed to create a comic or sarcastic effect, e.g. In the middle of a furious argument, a third party might enter and say, "Did I detect a slight difference of opinion here?"

When someone is preparing a speech or an article, they often include only the facts that support their point of view and leave out the facts that do not support their point of view. This is a technique often used in advertisements and during political speeches.

Telling half-truths

Think of an advertisement for a well-known brand of soap. The woman in the advertisement states:

"To stay beautiful, I use ABC soap."

The following sentence appears in the advertisement:

"Nine out of ten models use ABC soap."

In this case, what are the facts?

- 9 out of 10 models interviewed by the manufacturers use ABC soap.

But, how were these statistics obtained?

- The soap company probably only chose 9 models and paid them to say they used their soap.
- Therefore, the statistic used in the advertisement is true, but it is only part of the truth.
- The full truth is the company only asked 9 models and paid them to say they used the soap anyway.

Facts are omitted for the following reason:

- To convince or persuade people to do or believe something. This is not serious when it concerns advertising, but it becomes more serious when it relates to political and economic issues.
- When speakers want to win an argument, make listeners believe their side of the story or convince listeners to vote for them, they only give the facts that support their point of view. They carefully leave out the facts that would support the opposite view.

Let's look at the elections in Zimbabwe in April 2005.

> "There can never be anywhere else where elections can be as free and fair as they have been here," Mugabe said after voting in a poor township of the capital Harare.
>
> But on 8 April Rodrigue Ngowi and Dumisani Muleya reported, "The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission said 36,821 people had voted in Beit Bridge, but the tally for the candidates only adds up to 20,602, leaving 16,219 votes unaccounted for."
>
> Mugabe stated that the elections "reflect the free will of the people of Zimbabwe" and yet according to the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), "an average of 25% of would-be voters was turned away from polling stations."

3.3 Affect the audience's interpretations

We have discussed how one's voice and body language can enhance oral communication. When a speaker is trying to persuade or influence an audience, he/she must ensure that voice and body language support what is being said. Language structures and features affect the audience's interpretation of the text.

- **Tone** gives language structure and features: Tone is the quality of one's voice and it reveals the emotions, feelings and attitude of the speaker, e.g.:

*A woman's child has died from a drug overdose and the woman is telling a group of teenagers what happened to her child. She speaks in a **sad tone**.*

Other tone types would include:

- o Angry
- o Pathetic
- o Humorous
- o Mocking / derisive (person thinks something is ridiculous)
- o Pleading

- **Style** gives language structure and features. The style the speaker uses incorporates body language and other non-verbal communication, e.g.:

  *The mother telling a group of teenagers how her child died from a drug overdose will speak in a sad tone and a **low voice**. She will probably stand in a **huddled position** and will use **pitiful gestures.***

Take a look at the following examples:

- A member of a taxi association is telling the audience that the only option they have is to resort to violence. To get his message across, he will use a loud voice, upright posture, emphasising by point a finger and stamping a foot.
- An actress in an advertisement is saying how effective Glow shampoo is. To get her message across, she will use a soft voice, relaxed posture, warm, inviting gestures.

3.4 Distortion of a contributor's position

The use of language, tone and style are all used to emphasise the speaker's point of view and to communicate a specific message.

In the case of the mother whose child died from a drug overdose, all the features show that the woman is **opposed to drugs** and she is trying to **persuade teenagers not to take drugs**.

So, the member of a taxi association is telling the audience that the only option they have is to resort to violence. What would his point of view and the aim of his oral communication be?

- He is obviously against the policy and is trying to convince the audience that the only option they have is to resort to violence!

Lastly, the actress in an advertisement is saying how effective Glow shampoo is. To get her message across, she will use a soft voice, relaxed posture, warm, inviting gestures. What would her point of view and the aim of her oral communication be?

It could be either of the following:

- The actress in an advertisement really loves the shampoo and wants to persuade the audience to use it.
- The actress in an advertisement is being paid to promote the shampoo and wants to persuade the audience to use it

You are, by now, aware that it is important that you are able to identify a speaker's position on any issue. Look at the facts that have been included as well as the facts that have been omitted.

As listeners, you should take note of this manipulative use of language, or you will lose the necessary insight into the speaker's real aims or beliefs.

Let's look at this extract from a speech about smoking.

> The media and the government should stop attacking smoking and saying it is a dangerous habit.
>
> People will get frightened and turn to drugs instead and they are much more dangerous. Cigarettes have given pleasure to many people for many years and smoking helps people to relax. There are many people who are over 80 and who have smoked all their lives, so smoking can't be bad for you.

Remember the following:

- A fact is something that is true. If it is a fact, then there must be evidence to support it that it is true.
- An opinion is what a person or people think or feel about something.

The opinions stated in the above example would be as follows:

- Smoking is not as dangerous as taking drugs.
- Smoking gives pleasure.
- Smoking helps people to relax.

The speaker left out the following points:

- Cigarettes have also brought much disease and pain.
- The majority of smokers die before they are 80.
- Research has proved that smoking is bad for you.

Section 3

Interpret and use information from texts

SAQA ID 119457:
Interpret and use information from texts
NQF Level 3, 5 Credits

Programme Overview

Welcome to this learning programme that will lead you to greater understanding of **interpreting and using information from texts**.

As you work your way through the learning programme you will gain competence against the following Unit Standard:

Programme	Interpret and use information from texts
Unit Standard	SAQA ID 119457: Interpret and use information from texts NQF Level 3, 5 Credits

This learning programme is **intended for** all persons who need to interpret and use information from texts. Learners at this level read and view a range of texts. People credited with this unit standard are able to read and view a variety of text types with understanding and to justify their views and responses by reference to detailed evidence from texts. They are also able to evaluate the effectiveness of different texts for different audiences and purposes by using a set of criteria for analysis.

Programme entry level requirements

The credit calculation is based on the assumption that learners are already competent in terms of the following outcomes or areas of learning when starting to learn towards this unit standard:

- Level 2 unit standards entitled Access and use information from texts

Programme Outcomes

This learning programme is outcomes-based which means we take the responsibility of learning away from the facilitator and place it in your hands.

Your learning will begin in the workshop where you will identify the skills and knowledge you require in order to meet the specific outcomes and assessment criteria contained in the unit standard.

In this learning programme, we will be covering the following **learning outcomes**:

Module 1: **Use a range of reading strategies to understand the literal meaning of specific texts**	**Module 2:** **Use strategies for extracting implicit messages in texts**
• Identify unfamiliar words. Determine their meanings correctly by utilising knowledge of syntax, word-attack skills, and contextual clues • Test different options for the meanings of ambiguous words, and select correct meanings in relation to the context • Separate main ideas from supporting evidence and paraphrase or summarise it • Recognise and explain the purpose of visual and/or graphic representations in texts • Explain features of visual texts in relation to the way they impact on meaning	• Identify the source of text and discuss it in terms of reliability and possible bias • Explore attitudes, beliefs and intentions in order to determine the point of view expressed either directly or indirectly • Explore techniques and explain it in terms of purpose and audience • Identify promotion of, or support for, a particular line of thought/cause and explain it with reference to selection or omission of materials

Module 3: **Respond to selected texts in a manner appropriate to the context**	**Module 4:** **Explore and explain how language structures and features may influence a reader**
• Act upon instructions and requests • Use text-type, format and register on the appropriate level of formality	• Describe the choice of words, language usage, symbols, pictures and tone and pace in terms of how a point of view is shaped or supported

During the workshop you will complete a number of class activities that will form part of your formative assessment. In this you have the opportunity to practice and explore your new skills in a safe environment. You should take the opportunity to gather as much information as you can to use during your workplace learning and self-study.

The workshop will be followed by summative assessment tasks to be completed through self-study in your workplace. In some cases you may be required to do research and complete the tasks in your own time.

Assessment

It is important to note that the onus is on you, as the learner, to prove your competence. You therefore need to plan your time and ensure that your Portfolio of Evidence is kept up to date and handed in timeously.

A Portfolio of Evidence is a collection of documents of work you have produced to prove your competence. You will compile your portfolio from activities, tools and checklists associated with the unit standard and relevant to the unit standard being assessed.

You will be given the following documents to assist you in creating a portfolio of evidence:

- **Learner Guide**: The Learner Guide is designed to serve as a guide for the duration of your learning programme and as the main source document for transfer of learning. It contains information (knowledge and skills required) and application aids that will assist you in developing the knowledge and skills stipulated in the specific outcomes and assessment criteria. The learner guide also indicates the formative assessment class activities that you need to complete towards your Portfolio of Evidence.
- **Learner Workbook**: The learner Workbook contains all the class activities that you will be completing to show formative learning. These will be assessed as part of your portfolio of evidence as formative assessment. You will be handing in the Learner Workbook as part of your Portfolio of Evidence.
- **Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide**: The Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide provides details about the assessment, such as the assessment preparation, plan and specific summative assessment activities that you need to complete in the workplace.

Both formative and summative assessment is used as part of this outcomes-based learning programme:

- **Formative Assessment**: In order to gain credits for this Unit Standard you will need to prove to an assessor that you are competent. The Class Activities throughout your Learner Workbook are designed not only to help you learn new skills, but also to prove that you have mastered competence.

You will be required to develop a Portfolio of Evidence to hand in to an assessor so that you can be assessed against the outcomes of this Unit Standard. Where you encounter a Class Activity icon, you must complete the formative assessment activity in the Learner Workbook. Comprehensive guidelines for the development of your Portfolio of Evidence may be found in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide for the particular learning programme that you are working with.

- **Summative Assessment**: The NQF's objective is to create independent and self-sufficient learners. This means that you will also be required to do independent research and assignments, such as Knowledge Questions, Practical Activity (completed in the workplace), Witness Testimony and Logbook.

  The assessment process is discussed in detail in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide. When you are ready, you will advise your mentor that you are ready for assessment. He or she will then sign off the required sections in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide and you will be able to submit your Portfolio of Evidence for assessment. The summative assessment activities placed in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide for your convenience. If any of your assessment is conducted using observation, role plays or verbal assessment, place a signed copy of the checklists, once completed by your mentor or line manager in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide, as indicated.

The Training Provider will assess your portfolio. If successful, you will receive the credit value of this learning programme. The entire assessment process is explained in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide and you are urged to read this guide as soon as possible as it explains the assessment process in detail and clarifies your rights and responsibilities to ensure that the assessment is fair, valid and reliable.

If you are not successful, you will receive all the guidance needed to resubmit your Portfolio of Evidence within a specific time period, as per the Training Provider requirements.

Learning map (delivery structure)

<table>
<tr><th>Assessment</th><th colspan="2">←Formative Assessment→ 34%</th><th colspan="2">←Summative Assessment→66%</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Learning activities
for 50 hours of notional learning</td><td>Contact Learning
Theory input
Formative assessment (workbook activities): group activities, simulations</td><td>Prescribed reading, support, coaching</td><td>Learning and application at the workplace</td><td>Summative assessment in PoE: knowledge questions, practical workplace activity, Witness Testimony, logbook</td></tr>
<tr><td>16 hours</td><td>1 hour</td><td>25 hours</td><td>8 hours</td></tr>
<tr><td>↓</td><td>↓</td><td>↓</td><td>↓</td></tr>
<tr><td>Portfolio of Evidence</td><td colspan="4">←Compilation of Portfolio of Evidence→</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Complementary workplace practices</td><td colspan="3">Coaching and Mentoring; Performance Management</td></tr>
</table>

Learner Support

Please remember that as the programme is outcomes based – this implies the following:

- You are responsible for your own learning – make sure you manage your study, practical, workplace and portfolio time responsibly.
- Learning activities are learner driven – make sure you use the Learner Guide, Learner Workbook and Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide in the manner intended, and are familiar with the Portfolio requirements.
- The Facilitator is there to reasonably assist you during contact, practical and workplace time of this programme – make sure that you have his/her contact details.

Module 1
Use reading strategies

After completing this module, the learner will be able to use a range of reading and/or viewing strategies to understand the literal meaning of specific texts, by successfully completing the following:

- Unfamiliar words are identified. Their meanings are correctly determined by using knowledge of syntax, word-attack skills, and contextual clues
- Different options for the meanings of ambiguous words are tested, and selected meanings are correct in relation to the context
- Main ideas are separated from supporting evidence and paraphrased or summarised
- The purpose of visual and/or graphic representations in texts are recognised and explained
- Features of visual texts are explained in relation to the way they impact on meaning

Using reading and/or viewing strategies

Reading strategies are tools that assist a reader in unlocking the meaning behind the printed word. These strategies can be helpful before, during and after the actual reading event. The same basic strategies that can be used by beginning readers are equally helpful to advanced readers.

Some of the strategies we will be learning about are:

- Identifying unfamiliar words
- Understanding ambiguous words
- Separating main ideas from supporting detail

1.1 Identify unfamiliar words

Have you ever started reading a book or an article and found that half the words have no meaning to you; you have difficulty in understanding them, let alone pronouncing them?

So, maybe the first question that we must ask ourselves is why do we need to understand and use the information that we are reading in the workplace?

The answers to this question are as follows:

- To understand instructions
- To understand complex reports
- To understand the language in certain work-related documents
- To analyse information in business documents, such as reports.

So, let's now look at the types of documents that you might come across in your workplace:

- E-mails
- Reports
- Memoranda
- Letters
- Agendas
- Minutes of meetings
- Accounts
- Diaries
- Magazine articles or work-related newsletters
- Annual financial reports.

Naturally there will be times that you will come across words that are confusing or unfamiliar when you are reading. Apart from looking that word up in the Dictionary, there are other ways of finding the meaning of these words.

You could try breaking the word down into understandable words; this is known as a "decoding skill". Decoding is when your brain changes difficult words into easy, understandable words. Decoding skills are also known as 'word-attack' sills. It is called 'word-attack' because you either ignore the word or guess its meaning.

You can decode the meaning of an unfamiliar word by:

- Looking at the word structure
- Using your prior knowledge
- Looking for clues in the context where the word is used.

Let's look at these in more detail:

Sometimes the meaning of a word can be understood by examining the word structure and breaking the word down into two or three parts:

- **Prefix** This is a letter, syllable or word that is placed at the beginning of a word to change its meaning. As an example, let's take the word DISCOMFORT. You will recognise the word COMFORT, so the DIS is the prefix. This way you have split the word into two parts. Now, look up DIS in the Dictionary. The Dictionary gives you several meanings – the meaning of DIS changes according to the word used.

  So, Comfort means your body is at ease – the DIS in **Discomfort** changes the meaning to "your body is not at ease"

  Try doing the same with the following words: Write down the ROOT word.

Misunderstand	
Disable	
Disagree	
Rearrange	

- **Suffix**: This is a letter, syllable or word placed at the end of a word that can also change the way the word is used in a sentence. For instance: arrangement, comfortable, understanding. Can you identify the suffix for each of these? Let's try the first one: **Arrangement**: We can identify the word Arrange – so the suffix is MENT. "Arrange" is a doing word – You 'arrange' the tables and chairs in a room. The MENT then makes the word a noun – The arrangement of the tables and chairs suited the purpose of the event.

- **Root**: In each of the above, we identified the root word. This was the original word that we recognised; for instance ARRANGEment and disCOMFORT.

- **Prior Knowledge**: The other way of identifying the meaning of a word is by asking yourself questions, such as:
  - Do I know this word?
  - Can I pronounce it?
  - What do I think about when I see this word?
  - Where have I heard this word before?

  Have a look at the following words and see if you can identify their meanings:

  Yebo: Yes – Taken from Zulu meaning Yes.

  Koppie: Hill – Taken from Afrikaans

  Breyani: A meat and rice dish – taken from Indian.

  Samoosa: Savoury/spiced mince in pastry that is shaped in a triangle – taken from Indian.

These are all familiar words to you probably as you would use them normal conversation with friends and family, but they are not originally English, they are borrowed from some of the languages used in South Africa. Others that you would recognise that are typically South African are: Springbok, Wildebeest, Boerewors and Veld.

- **Contextual Clues**: When you are reading a report or even a book, you may find a word that is not familiar to you and you do not know what it means. You may be able to identify its meaning by reading other words and sentences that surround the unknown word that give you clues to its meaning. These clues are known as Contextual clues.

- **Complex Terms**: Just like complex facts, complex terms are part of language. Complex terms refer to words that appear difficult and unknown to the reader. These words may or may not be difficult to pronounce. Complex terms can be related to a particular subject or field of study. Experts often use complex terms to communicate, making their message seem even more complicated.

Understanding Acronyms

These words are formed from the first letter of each word in a title or phrase; such as AIDS – Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome or SPCA – Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Try a couple of these:

- ESCOM – Electricity Supply Commission
- COSATU – Congress of South African Trade Unions
- SABC – South African Broadcasting Corporation
- asap – as soon as possible
- NUMSA – National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa

Understanding Neologisms

Neologisms are newly invented words or existing words with new definitions. Especially in the computer industry, e.g. e-mail, etc.

Occasionally, new terms have to be coined for new situations, inventions, items, etc. A good example is cell phone: The equivalents in other languages are: selfoon, iselula; selula founo; selula founu.

Another example is: Unleaded petrol its equivalent being ongelode petrol.

To help you identify neologisms, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is it a noun, verb or adjective? (use your skills to identify word structure)

  A noun is a word used to name a person, animal, place, or thing

  [A verb is a 'doing' or action word; An adjective describes a noun]

- Does it have a prefix?

  Note: We have already learned that a prefix is a syllable or word put at the beginning of the word to modify the meaning, e.g. rearrange, discomfort, misunderstanding.

- Does this prefix have a meaning?
- Can you identify other word(s) from which the neologism is derived? For example, if we look at the neologism microwave we identify the words micro and wave. Similarly, the following neologisms allow us to identify the words that they are derived from.
    - couch-potato (from couch and potato)
    - hi-fi (from high and fidelity)
    - permit (from permission)

Understanding Colloquialisms

Colloquialisms are words that relate to, or are used in common or familiar conversations. This is the type of language you would use with your friends and not in an office or with your employer. Some are also specific to the country in which one lives. The Oxford English Dictionary says the following: Words or phrases used in normal conversation but not formal speech or writing.

Here are some examples of colloquialisms found in South Africa:

- We had a lekker jol last night. (good/excellent party, good time)
- Howzit going? (hello, how are you)
- I am really gatvol. (I have really had enough)
- Ag no man. (expressing discontent)
- Aita bra. (greetings to you my brother)

Understanding Slang

Slang is related to colloquialisms and refers to informal words or phrases that are used by specific groups of people. It is usually related to teenagers, although it can also be used by older or younger speakers. Slang is not long-lasting and ranges, in most cases, from months to a few years. You would not use slang at work when speaking to your employer or some of your work colleagues.

Examples of slang found in South Africa

- Cool
- Chick
- Cherry

Understanding Jargon

Jargon refers to language, or special vocabulary used by specific groups, professions and cultures that is not understood or used by other people. For example, if you work in the manufacturing industry you will use words that people who work in the computer industry would not understand.

Understanding Dialect

Dialect: Dialect, also called an accent, refers to the way in which people from a particular region or particular social group speak. There are two types of dialect, regional and social.

There are different dialects of English. In Australia, the English dialect is different from the dialect spoken in New Zealand. Austrians who speak English as a second language have a unique variety of German accent.

The English spoken in Britain has different dialects. Standard British is commonly known as "the Queen's English," "Received Pronunciation" or "BBC Standard." This is the more educated dialect of Southern England.

Some English South African dialects resemble varieties of soft Australian or New Zealand dialects.

In South Africa, there are different patterns of dialect. For example, siZulu spoken in Hluhluwe is different from that spoken in Johannesburg.

Have a look at the following list of languages and patterns of dialects spoken in South Africa

- **Afrikaans**: Cape Afrikaans (West Cape Afrikaans), Orange River Afrikaans: East Cape Afrikaans.
- **English**: `Coloured', Black, South African Indian, and Afrikaans English, White South African English (distinguishing between `Conservative', `Respectable', and `Extreme' South African English).
- **Southern Sotho**: Taung, Phuthi. Classification: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, S, Sotho-Tswana, Sotho, Southern.
- **Swati**: Baca, Hlubi, Phuthi. Classification: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, S, Nguni.
- **Tsonga**: Luleke (Xiluleke), Gwamba (Gwapa), Changana, Hlave, Kande, N'walungu (Shingwalungu), Xonga, Jonga (Dzonga), Nkuma, Songa, Nhlanganu (Shihlanganu).
- **Tswana**: Tawana, Hurutshe, Ngwaketse, Thlaro, Kwena, Ngwato, Tlokwa, Melete, Kgatla, Thlaping (Tlapi), Rolong.
- **Venda**: Phani, Tavha-Tsindi.
- **Xhosa**: Gealeka, Ndlambe, Gaika (Ncqika), Thembu, Bomvana, Mpondomse (Mpondomisi), Mpondo, Xesibe.
- **Zulu**: Lala, Qwabe.

Note the following South African language population percentages:

Zulu is spoken by 22.4% of the population in South Africa; Xhosa by 17.5%; Afrikaans by 15%; English by 9.1%; Tswana by 7.2 %; Southern Sotho by 6.9%; Swati by 2.6%; Tsonga by 4.2% and Venda by 1.7%

1.2 Ambiguous words

Ambiguity can be defined as: words or phrases which have more than one possible meaning or that could be interpreted in more than one way.

One can often find ambiguous statements on signs at the side of the road. The following was seen on a sign advertising a Take-Away:

- "We don't just serve Hamburgers, we serve people"
- Have a look at the following sign, found in an Office Kitchen:
- "After the tea break staff should empty the teapot and stand upside down on the draining board"

According to the Oxford English Dictionary there are 500 words that are most commonly used in the English language and each has an average of 23 different meanings. So, it is no wonder, we can have difficulties in understanding a message, be it verbal or written.

It is not just in Notices that we find sentences that are ambiguous; have a look at some of these instruction labels:

- On a bag of Fritos: You could be a winner! No purchase necessary. Details inside. (The shoplifter special!)
- This was found on the packaging for a Rowenta Iron: Do not iron clothes on body. (But, wouldn't that save more time?)
- Have you ever heard someone refer to a passer-by as "pretty ugly"?
- Or maybe your girlfriend/boyfriend has made a statement similar to: "Alone together at last!"
- Maybe someone in the office has spoken about a staff member who has attended Discipline Enquiry and has commented that the person was "clearly misunderstood"!

So, when you are travelling home, look for signs outside shops or department stores or advertisements on Billboards that may be misunderstood.

Some of the above statements are funny, but in our workplace we must make sure that we speak and write clearly without ambiguous words or phrases and without clumsy language. Clumsy and exaggerated language can lead to frustration for the reader and a breakdown in the communication process.

Abstract language also confuses; let's have a look at a few examples:

Abstract	Concrete
Several weeks ago	Three weeks ago
Your instructions of 10 May	Your written instructions of 10 May
Send us a Toyota carburettor	Send us a carburettor for a Toyota Corolla 1300, 1996 model
The technikon requested	The rector of the local technikon requested

Use words that are easy to understand and interpret, for instance, have a look at the following:

Avoid	Use
Approximately	About
Advantageous	Good
Cognisant of	Aware of
Criteria	Standards
Discrepancy	Difference
Discover	Reveal
Embellish	Adorn
Initiate	Begin
Remunerate	Pay
Terminate	End

Facts and thoughts should be expressed in simple, understandable language. A natural style will exclude redundant words and avoid the unnecessary use of sensitive adjectives and non-descriptive adverbs.

1.3 Separate main ideas

Everybody reads for different reasons. We could be reading Poetry for relaxation or Political Theories in preparation for a conference or maybe just a novel for our pleasure. Most business people will, at some stage in their careers, have to read articles, reports and various other documents to gather information. We need to be able to read quickly and pick out the facts from these documents so that we can take the necessary action.

Let's imagine that you need to prepare for a meeting and you need information that may be contained in a report. You would need to pick out the main ideas in the report and summarise what is being said. How would you do this?

You would use a technique known as Skimming.

Skimming is quickly looking through a text to gain a general idea of the overall meaning. You can do this in two ways:

- Draw your finger down the centre of the page, moving your eyes from side to side rapidly as you follow it down.
- Move an envelope or card down the centre of the page, blocking off the lines that you have read.

Both of these methods will stop you from going over text that you have already covered. Make sure that you concentrate on reading as quickly as possible.

There are a number of publications and books that you may have to use in the workplace that have summaries at the end of each chapter. These could also be referred to as Conclusions in some publications. Summaries or conclusions are a valuable way of evaluating the main content and should be read through when finding information for your work. Let's now take a look at how we go about summarising an article.

When summarising it is important to make sure that each point is expressed in as few words as possible.

This can be done by following the rules listed below:

- Avoid phrases where single words will do. For instance: 'due to the fact that' should be replaced with 'as' or the phrase 'little by little' can be replaced by 'gradually'.
- Make sure that when you use abbreviations, they are correct.
- You should leave out verbs, but make sure the meaning is still clear.
- Punctuation is important, so use it correctly. The use of semi colons and colons, for instance, can replace verbs when they are linked to causes.

You should select the important facts and then write them in your own words. This will help your understanding of the text. In many cases a book or article would have much more information than you need, so you have to decide on what information is important to you for your purpose.

It is easier to write out the summary in point form, making it look like a list. You may add any detail that you feel necessary once you have the important points or facts written down.

Let's have a look at an example:

ABC Bank Limited:

We have more branches around the country than any other bank. This makes it easy for you to get at your money, and means that you can have your account in the branch that's near to where you work or live. All our branches are open from 9.30am to 3.30pm, and some are open until 5pm.

We will give you a free Cash card, enabling you to get cash 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at around 4 000 service tills. This is the largest 24 hour cash dispenser network in the country. You can also use your Cash Card to order a statement, a new cheque book or check your current account balance.

Because it can be difficult to call into the bank during the week when you are working, we have over 200 branches open from 9.30am to 12.30pm on Saturday mornings in the bigger towns and cities. Our staff is there to advise you on opening a current account, borrowing money to buy a car, or anything else you want to discuss in connection with managing your money. Check with your local branch for details of Saturday opening.

We will provide you with a cheque book with which you can draw your money from the bank. It also lets you pay bills or buy things without having to carry, use or send cash with all the risks and problems involved. If your earnings are paid directly into your account, you can apply for a Service Card instead of a Cash Card. As well as working just like a Cash Card, a Service Card also acts as a Cheque Guarantee card, up to a maximum of R500 for each cheque. Additionally, your Service Card allows you to pay direct for goods and service, without even writing a cheque, in a growing number of shops that display the "Switch" sign.

To help you keep track of your finances, we will send you regular statements listing all the payments made into and out of your account. We will also give you a free statement holder so you can keep your records safe and tidy. Your bank account can save you time and trouble. You can arrange for the bank to pay regular bills for things like club subscriptions or insurance premiums from your account at the times you want – automatically.

We can make buying your first car a lot easier. We can give you a Car Loan Certificate as proof that you have the finance arranged, thus allowing you to look around and negotiate the best deal for the car you really want.

Summary:

- ABC Bank has more branches than any other bank.
- Easy to get money from a branch near where you work or live.
- Open from: 9.30am to 3.30pm some till 5.00pm
- Over 200 branches open 9.30to 12.30pm Saturdays
- Cheque Book provided so don't have to carry cash
- Free Cash Card – get cash 24hrs a day, 7 days a week.
- 4000 Service Tills to choose from.
- Largest 24 hour cash dispenser network in the country
- Cash Card can be used to order statements, new cheque book or to check balance.
- Service Card if earnings paid directly into bank.
- Works like a Cash Card
- Acts as a Cheque Guarantee Card up to R500 per cheque.
- Can also use to pay for goods and services in shops with the "Switch" sign.
- Staff there to advise you.
- Arrange to pay regular bills automatically.
- Provide you with regular statements and free statement holder.
- Car buying easier with Car Loan Certificate.

There are other ways of finding the main ideas in an article, report or text. Maybe your text is short, about two paragraphs. You can find the main idea in each paragraph by look at the way the paragraph is written. A paragraph is a group of sentences with one main theme. There are generally two types of sentences within that paragraph:

- The topic sentence that contains the main idea.
- Detail sentences that support, explain, prove or give more information and/or examples.
- Occasionally the last sentence will be a repeat of the first one.

1.4 Explain the purpose of visual / graphic representations

Graphics is a language in pictures, photographs, symbols and diagrams of different types. Our road signs are a perfect example of how effective graphics can be. Drivers react almost instinctively to, for instance, stop signs and yield signs at intersections. Warning signs for high voltage or workmen overhead are clearly understood by people who are illiterate, together with NO SMOKING signs that are common in public areas.

Graphics such as cartoons, photographs, drawings or illustrations all add clarity and meaning to a subject making sure the reader gains a verbal and pictorial message.

1.5 Explain the features of visual texts

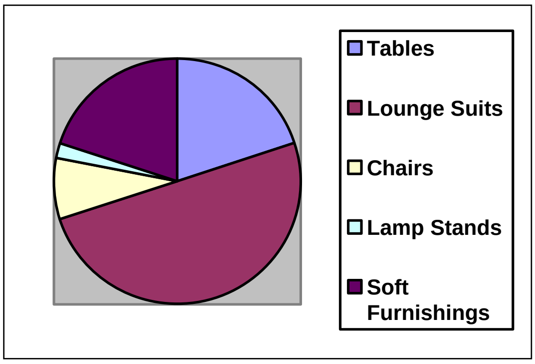
Let's take a look at some examples:

Purpose of Pie charts

In a Pie Chart each slice is shown as a percentage of the whole pie. It is used to represent facts. To create a pie chart, first find out the percentage distribution for the series.

Sort the percentages in order of size or form from the largest to the smallest clockwise. A pie chart should not have too many slices; otherwise some of them will be too small and will likely be ignored.

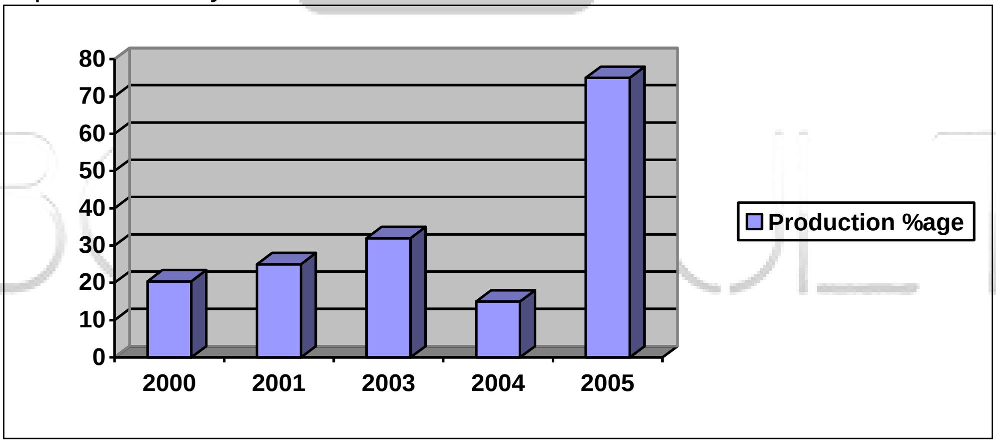
For example: The production areas of a large industry are made up of the following: Tables – 20%; Lounge Suites– 50%; Chairs – 8 % and Lamp Stands – 2 %; Soft Furnishings – 20%



Purpose of Bar charts

A simple bar chart will show facts in a picture. A bar chart has two or more bars on a common base and is used to point out growth, decline or variation. It may also symbolize the relationship between dependents and independents in a simple form. The dependent variable appears on the vertical axis and the independents on the other axle. The length or height of the bars indicates quantity.

For example: Simple bar chart: Increase in production a large manufacturing facility over a period of five years



Purpose of Photographs

Remember the pictures your parents, aunt, uncle or cousins showed of you when you were a baby or toddler. These would tell you about incidents, maybe, or fun times that the family had when you were too young to remember. Without the photographs, it would be difficult to imagine with just a verbal description. Photographs have the same effect in books, magazines etc. They enhance the narrative and give the reader a vivid understanding of the writer's purpose and subject.

Aerial photographs can act as maps. They show you the area surrounding the focal point in the picture. In certain instances, they are used to assess the suitability of the area for building factories or shopping centres.

Purpose of Mind Maps

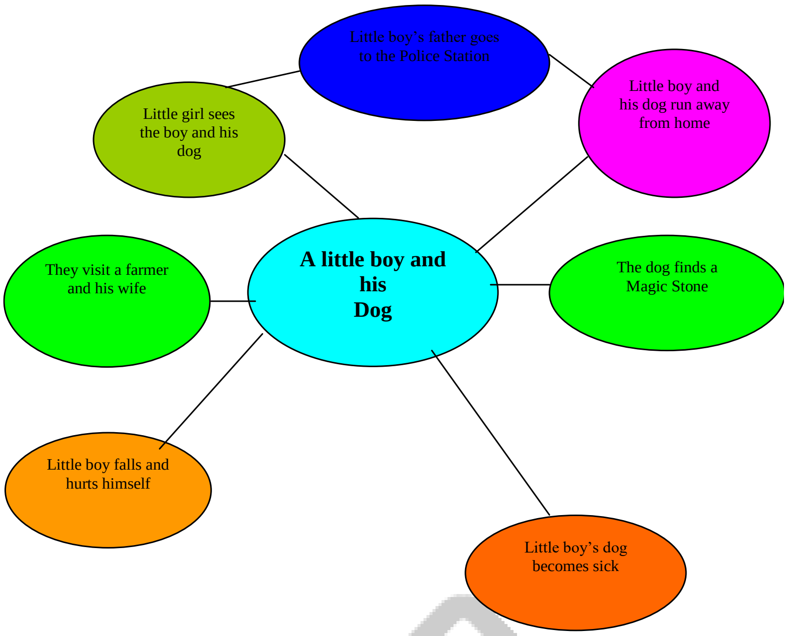
Mind maps have a variety of purposes. They are used in Problem Solving, idea generating and planning exercises. For instance, if you want to write a report on a production improvement or a process in the office that will improve efficiency, the mind map technique is ideal.

Let's have a look how it works:

For every exercise you will have a central theme or idea. Draw a circle in the middle of the page and write the idea/theme in the circle.

You can now think of as many ideas as you can to follow that theme/idea. Each of these ideas is written in another circle with a line connecting them to the main idea or theme. For each of these ideas, you may have others that you can link to them.

Have a look at the following example (next page): We are going to write a children's story. Let's say our story is about a little boy and his dog.



You can see from the mind map all the different ideas that can come from one central theme.

Purpose of Cartoons

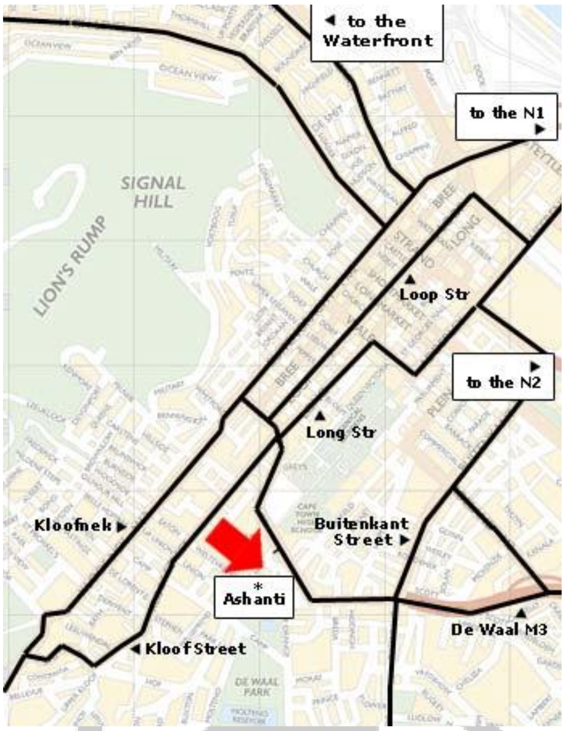
In cartoons, verbal and visual features are combined for a specific purpose; although the cartoon below does not require dialogue for its meaning. The cartoon could be just as effective if no dialogue were used.

"I miss not being on the road."

Purpose of Maps

Maps can be used to show directions when people are travelling or they can be used it identify locations of the various branches of a company within the country. Their information depends on their purpose.

The map below shows a town or village. This could be anywhere, but it shows enough detail for you to identify certain features: for example the railway line that twists and turns through the town. If you are travelling to a city or town that you are not familiar with, you would obviously require more detail.



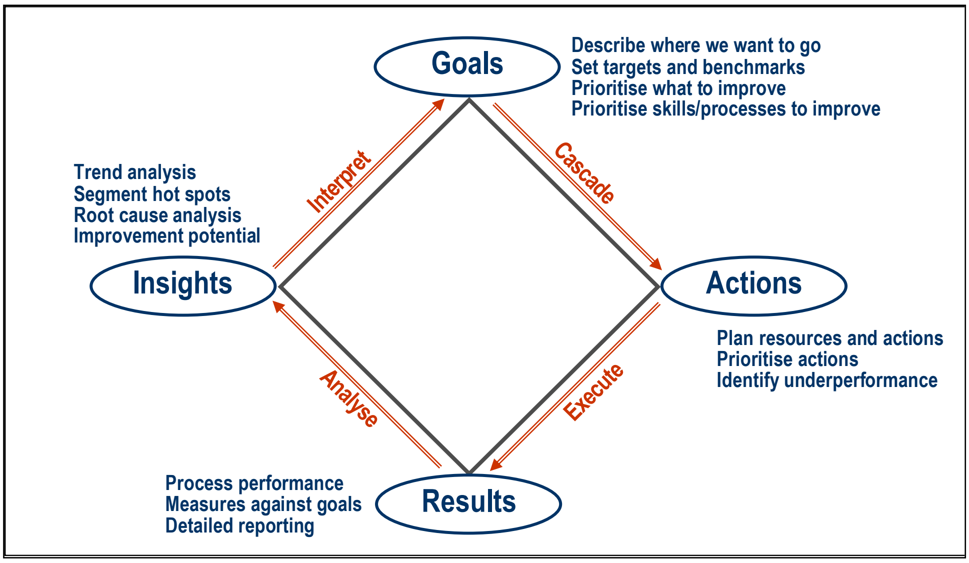
This map could be large enough to be hung on a wall in an office that deals with distribution of products. Pointers are used to give more information.

Purpose of a Schema

A schema is an outline or representation of a plan, a theory or an arrangement (English Oxford Dictionary definition).

Let’s look at an example:

In a library a card catalogue schema, asks Liberians only to provide enough information about the book to help the library users decide if they want to browse through the book or not and if so, how to find it. Examples of card catalogues include: sorting information by author, by title, keywords, shelf-lists, and so on. Think about when you had to use the library at school, university or college. You wouldn’t walk in and start looking at all the books on the shelves in order to find the one you wanted. Rather you would go to the catalogue card section and search for the book you wanted first and then go find it in the relevant part of the library. Today, this has become computerised. You would sit in front of a computer and type in the author’s name for example and the results you get would tell you where to find the book in the library.



Purpose of Action Plans

Let's look at plans for studying.

One of the most important steps in studying is the planning. When we start studying we have a goal in mind – we want to gain a qualification; increase our knowledge and maybe even find ourselves a new job.

So, we must draw up an action plan. Here are a few important things to remember when doing your Action Plan:

Good Action Plans are time-based

Good Action Plans state a clear objective – your qualification

Good Action Plans include measurements to track your progress

Good Action Plans allow for some flexibility in how their steps are accomplished

Good Action Plans hold you responsible for your actions and responsibilities.

Your action plan may look something like the following:

Action Plan					
Project: Presentation Skills Module					
Overall Purpose: To gain qualification in Generic Management Level 4					
Step No	**Action Step**	**Start Date**	**End Date**	**Measurement Criteria**	**Notes**
1.	Study Module 1 and complete first assignment	5/8	2/9	Assignment completed and submitted on time and returned with pass.	Remember to use this format for next assignment.

Purpose of other Graphic Devices

It is important to be aware of the large variety of graphic devices which are used to illustrate written material. The following are some of the basic examples of common graphics used, but is by no means complete and by being a little creative, you too can create interesting, informative graphics that will enhance the quality of your work. It is a good idea to keep a file of examples that you could use in the future when you prepare reports, proposals or presentations.

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Cycle Diagram

The Cycle Diagram is used to show the life cycle or process cycle of a product or system. For instance: The above diagram shows the cycle of production in terms of the customer.

The Customer requests a product from the Marketing Department. The product is then designed to the customer's specifications which are then sent through to the Production Planning. Planning would then tell the purchasing department what materials would be needed for the product. The product is then produced. The Quality Department check it to ensure it meets the customer's requirements and it then goes to the Customer.

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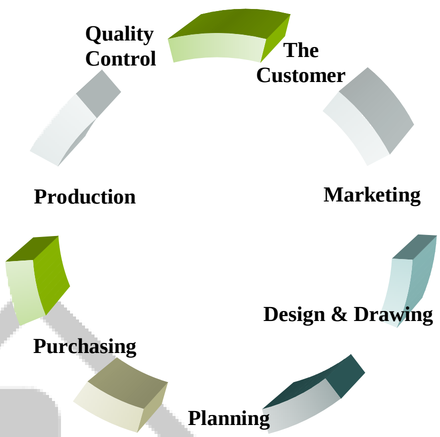

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Organisation Chart

The Organisation Chart is used to show the structure of an organisation. In the example you can see that the Human Resources Manager would have the following people in the organisation reporting to him/her:

- The training manager
- The benefits administrator (dealing with pensions, medical aid etc.)
- The Secretary or the Human Resources Administrator.

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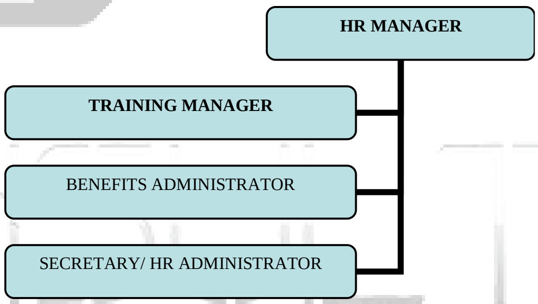

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Module 2
Use strategies for extracting implicit messages in texts

After completing this module, the learner will be able to use strategies for extracting implicit messages in texts, by successfully completing the following:

- Source of text is identified and discussed in terms of reliability and possible bias
- Attitudes, beliefs and intentions are explored in order to determine the point of view expressed either directly or indirectly
- Techniques are explored and explained in terms of purpose and audience
- Promotion of, or support for, a particular line of thought/cause is identified and explained with reference to selection or omission of materials

Strategies for extracting implicit messages in texts

It is important, as a critical reader, to be able to identify the source of the text we are reading in terms of reliability and possible bias.

What is the author's point of view and is s/he promoting a particular line of thought/cause?

2.1 Discuss the source of text

Let's say we are reading a text that we have to write a report about. We would need to find out where it came from. Did it come from a Magazine, a Newspaper, a novel or a poem? Once we have identified where the text came from, we can make certain assumptions about the text and its contents.

Sources could be any of the following:

- Poem
- Advertisement or Travel Brochure
- Romantic Novel
- Encyclopaedia
- Conversation
- Newspaper article or headline
- Magazine article
- Anti-Animal Cruelty pamphlet
- Joke
- Economic journal or text book
- Restaurant Guide
- Children's Story book.

We would read a poem, a romantic novel or a children's story book for pleasure and entertainment. For this reason, we may not concern ourselves as to whether the content is factual or not. Many of us choose certain magazines and read the articles in that magazine for entertainment and relaxation. Would we want facts?

If we are trying to decide where to go on holiday, we would study the various travel brochures available to us. In these brochures, we would expect to find the facts about the hotel, cottage, caravan and Caravan Park, depending on what appeals to us.

On the other hand, we may be studying or we may have to write a report on a particular subject. In this case we would want the facts.

When reading we must take care to tell apart fact and opinion. This can be done by checking whether evidence is provided in support of a particular point. The source of any statistics should always be noted, either in the text or at the foot of the page or at the end of the text. Points about historical events should also be supported by evidence, either quoted or referred to in the text. In general, events which are described can be taken as facts: causes, interpretations and or conclusions will be opinions. Watch out for sentences that begin with expressions such as "It has long been established that….." or "Everyone knows that……" and "Few would deny that……." All of these suggest that there is no possible doubt about the idea which follows, while offering no evidence to support such a suggestion. In this way, fact and opinion may well be confused.

Look out for the writer's vocabulary as this may also show that what is being said is a matter of opinion only. The use of sensitive words or phrases – those which are likely to create an emotional, rather than a logical response in the reader – will lead the reader towards a particular view which might not be borne out by the facts of the case. You should also look out for language like the following:

"The company has made impressive growth this year".

The word "impressive" is emotive, since it is telling us that we must be impressed by company growth without giving any evidence of the growth.

In business, it is necessary to question what you read and not accept the author's view without any supporting evidence.

We can now think about bias. What is bias? The Dictionary gives the following definition:

An opinion or feeling that strongly favours one side in an argument or one thing in a group, sometimes unfairly. To influence, especially unfairly e.g. in a newspaper article (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

So, it is important that you do not use language that separates a person or group of people because of their cultural values.

Something else that we must look out for is Stereotyping.

What is a Stereotype? Stereotyping is a way of thinking or a belief about a group of people that takes no notice of the individuality of each person. In other words, all people who drive sports cars could be said to drive at excessive speeds or taxi drivers are reckless drivers who do not obey the rules of the road. These are forecasts about the behaviour of individuals. We make these forecasts from experience; maybe we have witnessed too many incidents involving sports cars being driven at high speeds, or taxis ignoring 'no overtaking' signs. So we develop a mind-set, telling us that all people that drive sports cars behave like that, and so on.

It must be remembered when writing a text that unconscious or conscious stereotyping can cause offence to your reader.

The information in the text should also be checked for biases which may occur in stereotypical language such as:

- **Gender** stereotypes - This is one of the most common stereotypes; e.g. Instead of writing "Each team leader must submit his report" rather write "Each team leader must submit their report"
- **Disability** stereotypes - Refer to the person in your text and NOT to the disability. The following are not considered acceptable: handicapped, physically challenged, crippled. Ensure you know how your audience prefers to be addressed
- **Sexual orientation** stereotypes - It may be that on occasion the words 'Gay' and 'Lesbian' are accepted, it is important to establish your audience's preferences
- **Cultural** stereotypes - It is important to use "inclusive language" in all documentation and not pin point a particular group because of their cultural differences
- **Age** stereotypes - References to age should be avoided at all times unless this type of information is absolutely essential. Be careful not to group people together using age as a means of separation

Remember, it is not what you say in your text, it's how you say it

2.2 Explore attitudes, beliefs and intentions

Wouldn't it be so much simpler if we understood everything that was said or written? There are so many instances where we read articles or books and we are left wondering what motivated the author to write the way they did?

Let's first look at the author's attitude. The attitude of an author towards a subject as the reader understands it is called Tone. Tone can also be described as how the author feels about the ideas presented in the text. Writing style carries TONE. Some words that describe tone include: comic, tragic, ironical (saying one thing but meaning another), cold, witty, pathetic, sentimental, disillusioned, idealistic, satirical (ridiculing).

We now need to find out how the author's tone is shown in a text.

The tone in each text will be determined by the writer's objective; does she/he want to inform/instruct or does she/he want to entertain or persuade

The tone in a magazine is less formal and less technical than that in a text book (this depends on the type of magazine of course). Articles would comprise opinions, inferences, and some persuasion, in the form of advertisements.

Books, novels or text books, newspapers and magazines (not forgetting the Internet) provide us with a variety of information and reading pleasure, so it is important that we are able to understand the information/content so that we can gain the most pleasure or knowledge as the case may be.

Word choice also depends greatly on the attitude of the writer towards the subject being discussed as well as type of audience for which the author is writing. Certain word choices would be considered only for the specialist as they would have very little meaning for the lay person for example, medical terminology.

Language, that is, grammar plays a valuable part in our understanding of any literature. No doubt you will have noticed that language used in magazines and newspapers is fairly often grammatically incorrect. Competent writers may break the rules and get away with it, but this very often leads to ambiguity or failure to communicate intelligently.

An author's attitude can also be identified by the use of stereotypes and biased language. The way the author's opinions are expressed and the feelings you, the reader, experience when you read the article or book.

One important point, attitudes must be told apart from opinions. Although attitudes and opinions are much the same, attitudes often control opinions. This means that our attitude would determine how we answer certain, possibly personal questions. Attitudes are long-term; they produce in us the tendency to respond in a given way towards subjects or issues and situations. This response may be how we think or how we feel or how we behave or intend to behave.

Now let's look at persuasion. The process of persuasion often involves influencing a person to respond to one object or word in the same negative or positive way to another object or word.

To persuade, the writer or the speaker has to have credibility. Credibility refers to the receiver's insight to the writer's authoritativeness on any given topic. Credibility has to do, not with what the writer is, but what the reader or listener sees him or her to be. A writer with high credibility tends to have more influence on the readers' attitudes that do those with low credibility.

A writer may have an intention; he/she may want to change our minds or our opinion about a subject, an article or behaviour.

Advertising is persuasion: If you want to be a thinking, informed shopper, you have to develop the questioning ability to analyse advertisements, their messages and the persuasive techniques employed to create them. The art of advertising combines creative understanding with scientific knowledge of human behaviour and needs.

2.3 Explore techniques in terms of purpose and audience

Reaching the right conclusions about the purpose of a text and the type of audience that will read the text means consideration of the following:

- **Information Content**: Business documentation and text books or other documentation will contain information that is factual, possibly containing statistical data. The level of this information would therefore be specialised, written by an expert with applied knowledge such as a technician/engineer/scientist or executive. The language would contain the jargon of that particular field, e.g. legal or scientific

  The articles from a popular magazine, for that matter would contain opinions, beliefs, inferences and persuasion. They would not be technically informative, but rather for the reader's entertainment.

- **Tone**: The tone in each text will be determined by the writer's objective; does he want to inform/instruct or does he want to entertain or persuade

  The tone in a magazine is less formal and less technical than that in a text book. Articles would comprise opinions, inferences, and some persuasion, in the form of advertisements.

- **Text Type**: To identify the text type, the reader must ask him/herself the following questions:
  - What is the writer trying to tell me?
  - Is the writer trying to persuade me?
  - Is the writer informing me?
  - Lastly, does the writer want to entertain me?

Text books and other business literature consist of information and instruction.

Magazines and novels consist of articles and stories that entertain, with opinions and inferences together with some narrative with suspense or romance.

To determine the purpose of a text and therefore the audience for whom it was it written, we need to go through the text slowly. Take note of any of the ideas and examples or details which may make the writer's points clearer. Asking yourself questions as you read will help you understand exactly what the writer is saying.

The questions you need to ask yourself, also need to relate to:

- **Sentences**: Many people feel that only long sentences can convey an impression of dignity and seriousness. This is incorrect as short sentences are equally effective in conveying certainty and control. There is no point in a writer linking unrelated ideas to produce long straggling sentences, as this will only make it harder for the reader to grasp the intended meaning.

- **Paragraphs**: The use of paragraphs not only help the reader follow the writer's train of thought but also show that the writer has planned the text by ensuring that ideas are grouped under related topics and thus points follow on in a logical order. This technique helps the writer communicate with greater efficiency and precision.

- **Language**: Language is the primary means of communication between human beings, so any exercise in clear writing is an exercise in clear thought. People only speak the same language if they use the same words with the same meaning. Concrete terms such as table, book or dog are easy to use. Using abstract terms could add confusion as they have different meanings for different people.

An important feature of style is the writer's **choice of words**. The number and kinds of words used in written or spoken communication are usually referred to as vocabulary. Choosing the right vocabulary for each situation is a complex process and is influenced by many factors. There are some basic principles that the writer should apply in every situation listed below:

- **Writing the way we speak**: When speaking, we all use expressions that are relaxed and informal, for instance, when pausing for breath, we might say, 'you know what I mean?' Such an expression may be useful when talking with friends, but in a business situation, is out of place.
- **Slang**: Groups of people often develop an informal style of language which they use among themselves. Slang is often vigorous and forceful as well as inventive but it has significant drawbacks: it is usually only understood by a small group of people and it may not be particularly precise in meaning. For these reasons, it should not be used in more formal communication.
- **Emotive language** can appeal so strongly to the emotions that the basic meaning is obscured. Emotional words prejudice the reader in advance and prevent him/her from reaching impartial conclusions.
- **Persuasive language** as seen in advertisements invites, tempts and in some cases shocks the reader. Advertising combines creative understanding with scientific knowledge of human behaviour and needs. Each advertisement is designed to grab the reader's attention and sustain the reader's interest.

  They also create in the reader a desire for the product advertised and encourage the reader to take action by purchasing the product or service.
- At work, if you were writing a report for your manager or employer you would want him/her to **react** in a specific way, e.g. you may want to convince him/her to give all the employees an increase or spend more money on marketing or advertising, etc. If you were writing the same report for a magazine you would be using the same information however, you would be writing for a different audience and your purpose for writing may be different.
- Authors often use the **power** of suggestion in their texts and if used repeatedly the reader tends to believe the statement. Suggestion can therefore be a sinister and alarming barrier to clear thought.

We all have habits of thought. These are beliefs that we originally accepted without question and that we have continued to hold ever since. Often we call these our convictions, but someone else's prejudices. Prejudices create obstacles in a person's mind and limit their thinking process. Although they are often strongly held, these beliefs generally collapse when subjected to logical reasoning.

If an author uses imprecise words, faulty reasoning, padding or jargon, the reader cannot hope to get his/her message.

Writing techniques

Let’s now look at other **techniques** a writer might use:

Using Allusion

Allusion is an indirect or passing reference to something that the writer or speaker assumes is common knowledge shared by those who are educated. A writer or speaker may allude to myths, the Bible, works of literature, historical facts, movies or well-known speeches.

Writers use allusions to enrich their work. Allusions can function as parodies or can contrast with or complement the writer’s own statements. For example the title “It takes two to Toyi-toyi is an allusion to the well-known phrase ‘It takes two to Tango’.

Using Parody

A parody is an imitation of a poem, a piece of prose, a play, a newspaper article etc., with the purpose of poking fun at the original piece of writing. Parodies are always humorous and much of the humour relies on the fact that the reader knows the original and can make a mental comparison between the two.

Using Figures of Speech

Figures of speech can be divided into two categories; those that make use of comparisons and those that rely on a departure from the literal meaning of the word. Let’s first take a look at those that *rely on comparisons*:

- **Simile**: A comparison between two things that are essentially dissimilar, but share a common quality, using the word ‘like’ or ‘as’. For example: The girl is as pretty as a butterfly.

- **Metaphor**: A direct comparison between two things that are essentially dissimilar, but share a common quality. Instead of saying one thing is like another or as another, we say one thing is another or has the qualities of another. For example: The girl is an exotic flower.

- **Personification**: A kind of metaphor in which living or human qualities are attributed to an inanimate object. For instance: The wind screamed in agony.

  Now let’s have a look at the figures of speech that *depart from the literal meaning* of the word.

- **Irony**: *Intentional irony*: When a writer deliberately says the opposite of what is meant.

  Unintentional irony: When people do not realise that they are contradicting themselves, for example when smokers lash out at companies that pollute the air with noxious fumes.

- **Hyperbole**: Gross exaggeration – such as: I have told you a million times not to…..

- **Euphemism**: Using a mild, indirect term instead of a blunt one to describe something unpleasant or sensitive: For example: He passed away, instead of He died.

- **Paradox**: A seemingly contradictory statement which, when inspected closely, is found to contain an important truth. For example: You have to be cruel to be kind.

- **Satire, anticlimax and innuendo**: are three other techniques that we must remember. To satirise means to mock or ridicule something in order to communicate a serious underlying message.

  Innuendo means to imply something without saying it directly. For example: 'Did you enjoy the book?' 'Well, the cover had a nice design.'

Using Punctuation

It is important to remember when writing reports, letters or other forms of text that punctuation can change the meaning of a sentence completely. For this reason, and because poor punctuation presents a bad image to your reader, accurate punctuation is essential in many forms of communication.

- **The Full Stop**: Everyone knows that a full stop marks the end of a sentence; but it is often not used where it should be. A very common error is to use a comma in its place, to produce a long, rambling and loosely constructed sentence which the reader has to look at several times before the meaning becomes clear.

- **The Comma**: The comma is used to mark pauses, but only when a pause is needed to clarify the grammatical structure or the meaning of a sentence.

There are for main occasions when a comma should be used, they are:

  - To separate items in a list.
  - Around words or phrases: These are words that describe the subject of the sentence, or which act as an alternative subject, and are added after the main thought.
  - Around expressions in parenthesis.
  - To separate clauses from a main clause.

- **The Semi Colon**: This is used to joint two clauses which might otherwise be joined by a conjunction – usually "because" or "as". It can also be used to separate long and complex items in a list.

- **The Colon**: like the semi-colon is used to link two clauses, each of which has a subject and a main verb. The difference between the colon and the semi-colon lies in the relationship between the clauses which they join: the semi-colon joins one clause to another of similar meaning or two clauses in the relation of cause to effect, whereas the colon joins two clauses of opposite meaning. We could think of the semi-colon equalling 'because' and the colon equalling 'but'. Just remember though, this is not a hard and fast rule.

- **Diction**: Clarity and crispness of consonants (articulation) or of the words (enunciation) can be improved through reading fun nonsense rhymes and exercises.

  Try the following examples. The idea is to say them as quickly as possible and as clearly as possible:

  "She sells sea shells on the sea shore" or

  "Red Lorry, Yellow Lorry"

  - The **tone and pitch** of your voice, the speed at which you speak and your accent could each have an impact on your audience and the message you are sending. The tone of your voice expresses your intent and the words you use are the content in communicating. Remember people tend to listen to HOW you say something and not WHAT you say.

  - **Speaking rapidly** or quickly can indicate intelligence or anxiety. In becoming an effective speaker in the workplace and in social situations every effort should be made to lower the pitch (highness and lowness) and add resonance (vibration or richness) to your voice. Improving the projection (sending power) of your voice is also quite easy and this can be done through breathing correctly.

  - An **accent** can be attractive and call attention to a person, provided that the accent is not so heavy that one cannot understand what is being said.

Using visuals

Visual media remain the most powerful influence on the general public with regard to the way in which we receive information.

When analysing photographs, films, television programmes etc the following checklist will help you in terminology.

Camera angle	Position of the camera when a shot is taken
Composition	Arrangement of objects within the frame
Close-up	Shot where the subject fills the whole screen. In this shot, the head of the person will be the subject.
Deep Focus	Positioning of a subject deep in the frame, so that the
Dissolve	Effect created when one shot appears to dissolve into the next – also called a mix.
Establishing Shot	Shot used to establish specific information in the mind of the viewer, often an extreme long shot
Extreme Close-u	Shot where the camera focuses on a section of a close-up to show fine detail
Focal Point	Main subject of the shot
High-Angle Shot	The camera looks down on the subject, often creating an effect of helplessness or vulnerability.
Long Shot	The subject is some distance away from the camera. In the shot of a person, the whole body will be included in the frame.
Low Angle Shot	The camera is placed below the subject and looks up at it, to create the effect of power or dominance.

Medium Shot	The subject is cut off at waist height by the edge of the frame.
Mood	Atmosphere created through choice of subject, composition, line and colour.
Soft Focus	The use of a filter creates a soft, romantic effect.

2.4 Explain the promotion / support of a cause

Every message that you receive from, say, the television or the radio, is the result of someone carefully selecting what should be said and what must not be said. The effect of a message depends not only on what information is in it, but also the information that is not.

When watching a television advertisement, you already know that you have a choice. There are always alternative products that you can choose over the one being advertised.

Think about a cleaning product; let's call it "Dirt Away". This product may be advertised as the only product that can be used on all surfaces – that's great! What the advertiser does not tell you though, is that this product tends to discolour white surfaces over a period of time. Or, maybe they don't tell you that the product can cause an adverse reaction on sensitive skin.

Another example is one of a Glue type substance that can be used to stick Posters, photographs etc on the wall. You are not told though, that the product leaves marks that do not clean off.

How many advertisements do we see on Television where a product is being advertised, but you never actually see the product? The products are replaced by hints of a particular way of life, symbolizing the excitement and glamour that is associated with the use of that product. There are indications, however, that this type of advertising does not always persuade people to buy the product. They will always remember the stylish advertisement, but not always the product that was being advertised.

The simple rule then, of persuasion is this: Always make clear what it is that you want people to buy or do. This is especially important if the medium you are using is the printed word, since there is no guarantee that your reader will understand oblique references which attempt to sell the product by association.

If you are direct in stating your aim, no matter how stylish your approach, your results will show.

Module 3
Respond to selected texts

After completing this module, the learner will be able to respond to selected texts in a manner appropriate to the context, by successfully completing the following:

- Instructions and requests are acted upon
- Text-type, format and register used are on the appropriate level of formality

Responding to selected texts

In the business environment it is important to be able to respond to texts in a manner that is appropriate to the context of the text. You will need to consider how to:

- Act upon instructions and requests – these are not the same and therefore need a different response from you
- Use text-type, format and register on the appropriate level of formality – e.g. responding to business email is quite different to responding to an email from a friend

3.1 Act upon instructions and requests

Let's start this section off with a shopping spree. Imagine we go into a Department Store and we buy a selection of electrical appliances. The first appliance that we buy could be an Automatic Washing Machine; the second a Steam Iron and the third one a Mini Hi Fi system. We have them delivered the same day and now we have to install them.

When we purchase items like these, there is always a booklet with Instructions in various languages. As these items are electrically powered, it is important that we read the instructions carefully to make sure we understand them and then follow them methodically. The instructions are there for our own protection: protection of the item that we have purchased and protection of ourselves in terms of our safety.

The instructions will be written in point form; in other words, one step at a time will be numbered and described. They will also have diagrams that describe the part of the appliance to which the instruction refers. This is to ensure we understand what we are supposed to do to which part of the appliance.

So, let's look at Instructions a little more closely:

Instructions are not only procedures that should be followed in the case of installing electrical appliances or operating machinery. We would also find instructions to do the following:

- Execute an action
- Operate a machine
- Assemble a machine/table etc
- Install a machine/appliance
- Test a machine/program
- Dispose of an item or chemical
- Maintain a machine/appliance
- Repair a machine or appliance
- Modify a program
- Store an article
- Transport an article
- Package an article

The reasons or objectives of Instructions are as follows:

- To give information to a person so that they can accomplish some necessary or desired action or task in the most effective and efficient way
- To convey this information as simply and clearly as possible to enable the user to proceed smoothly and safely without accident or mistakes.
- To encourage competence in a certain task
- To prevent frustration caused by lack of understanding
- To promote a particular methodology or viewpoint.

Instructions tell a person:

- What to do
- What not to do
- How to do it
- Why it is done
- Where to do it
- What is dangerous
- How much to do
- What to use
- What not to use
- What it is
- What it does
- How it does it
- Who should do it
- When to do it

Requests

Requests are not instructions. They express a person's needs or desires. They ask a person to perform an action. This means that the person being asked or requested has a choice – either carry out the request or ignore it. So, a request is asking for an action: for example:

- Will you stop that noise! (Request in an angry voice)
- Will you stop that noise? (A polite request)

Whereas the following are orders:

- Let go!
- Don't do that!

So, requests ask for an action to be performed. Instructions tell a person what to do and how to do it. Look at the following example of a request:

"Typists are asked to help prevent any form of commercial sabotage. Before you leave for home, please empty contents of all waste-paper baskets into the shredder provided."

3.2 Use text-type, format and register

When reading, writing or preparing to write a communication, we must always carefully consider the following:

- Information
- Aims
- Audience
- Situation

We must also consider why we are writing; in this case a set of instructions. Let's have a look this list:

Identify the Audience:

A question that we should ask ourselves is who are we writing these instructions for? What is their level of education?

Study your subject matter:

Before writing your list of instructions, you should:

- Know your subject thoroughly
- Think through and identify any problem areas
- Remember; Prevention is better than cure. So, it is better to identify the problem areas now and take corrective action than to try and correct them later.

Think about the style of your writing:

Take into consideration, your audience, the subject and the situation – why you are writing the instructions in the first place.

Plan the format:

Consider how the following will contribute to your audience understanding:

- Layout
- Use of white space
- Print and type
- Use of illustrations and diagrams
- A numbering system
- Organisation of your text.

Layout:

A set of instructions may contain some or all of the following:

- Introduction
- Theory or principles of operation
- Equipment and materials required
- Description of machine or mechanism
- Performance instructions
- Precautions and/or warnings
- Procedures
- Graphics
- Appendices
- References or bibliography

Module 4
Explain the influence of language structures and features

After completing this module, the learner will be able to explore and explain how language structures and features may influence a reader, by successfully completing the following:

- The choice of words, language usage, symbols, pictures and tone and pace is described in terms of how a point of view is shaped or supported

Explaining the influence of language structures and features

In this module we will explore how language structures and features may influence a reader/viewer:

- **Structures** of language refer to characteristics of the overall ordering and organisation of texts, as well as aspects such as word order and the order of sentences in a paragraph.
- **Features** of language refer to the grammar of speech and of writing.

Your reader/viewer's point of view is therefore shaped / supported by such elements of structure as:

- the choice of words in a particular context and order,
- language usage in terms of formality and grammatical elements,
- symbols,
- pictures,
- tone, and
- pace

We therefore need to develop abilities to use the following structures and features of written and spoken language effectively:

- print elements, such as letters, words, spelling, paragraphs, punctuation, layout and presentation
- textual and grammatical aspects of language, such as sentence structure and vocabulary
- patterns of text structure and organisation of various kinds of texts, including narrative, exposition, verse, narrative voice and point of view
- intonation, rhythm, pace, pitch, volume and pauses in spoken language
- non-verbal elements of communication, such as facial expression, body movement, proximity and gestures, and the graphic elements of texts, such as the impact of illustrations on the meaning of a text.

4.1 Describe the choice of language structures and features

Language structures and features are selected to influence the reader.

Point of view is shaped by choice of words, language usage, accompanying visuals, or pictures, tone and style.

We will explore a few:

Choice of words

Your choice of words is influenced by many things, e.g.:

Bias can shape or support a particular point of view. We have mentioned bias in an earlier section.

Remember that we said bias was an unfair preference for or dislike of something. Bias is unfair, because it is not representative of how we should treat people. In South Africa we are lucky enough to have an extremely good constitution through which we are all protected. Our constitution does not permit us to discriminate against, or treat unfairly, people on the basis of cultural or ethnic identity, gender, religion, age or sexual preference. This guarantees us all our basic human rights.

Examples of bias:

These are all statements made by someone about somebody else:

Statement made:	Possible speaker is …
"Of all the Nguni speakers, Xhosas are the most intelligent."	bias against a certain culture; culturally biased
"All Moslems are fanatically against the Jewish people."	bias against people of a certain religion; showing religious bias
"Only people under the age of 25 are capable of learning anything new."	biased towards a certain age group; an ageist person
"All the American forces have been involved in torturing Iraqis."	bias by misrepresenting facts
“Only black people should be allowed to vote in the next election."	bias against a particular group / race; treats them unfairly
"All white people are greedy and power-mad."	bias against people on the basis of their race; racist person
"Women belong in the kitchen, not in the workplace."	bias against women; a sexist person
"I will only let my own age-group join any club I run."	bias towards their own peer group
"Old people are just a burden on society, they contribute nothing."	bias against old people; an ageist person
"Gay people are really evil and should not be allowed into churches."	bias against homosexuals; a homophobic person

Bias is encountered frequently. We have to guard against it influencing us to make unfair judgements about people. Most of the research done in South Africa shows that we have more in common with each other than we think. Newspaper surveys show that people from all race groups, income groups and age groups, of both sexes or genders have similar fears about life in South Africa. We all worry about crime, unemployment, the cost of living and corruption. Of course there will also be differences, but to be biased against people for any of the reasons shown in the example above is to cut yourself off from experiencing the rich diversity this country has to offer us all.

If an author has a particular point of view which is biased, what he/she writes will reflect this bias. The choice of words used by the author may influence us.

Humour can influence the reader in indirect ways. If we constantly read or hear jokes about how dumb blondes are or how stupid a particular race is, we can start to be influenced by this.

There are many examples of humour that are based on negative messages about a particular group. Some examples are jokes about fat people, disabled people, old people, and so on.

Humour can be used in advertisements to influence a reader / audience. While humour can add a great deal to our enjoyment of things and can successfully be used to influence readers in positive ways, we should be aware that humour that is based on the supposed weakness or vulnerability of a particular group is usually being used to attempt to influence us in a negative way about that group.

Language usage

It has been said that words are the strongest drug used by mankind and when you examine the impact of great orators such as Churchill, Hitler, Martin Luther King and, most recently, Barack Obama, you can probably see how that may actually be true.

We, too, must learn how to use words to influence the audience we are trying to reach. This involves the use of skilful phrasing to influence the thoughts of our reader and bring about the result we desire.

Therefore the purpose of the communication will determine the language usage, be it formal or informal; persuasive or informative.

Symbols

Language is a system of spoken or written symbols by which we communicate. Every word is a symbol; the five letters that form the word 'chair' represent a sound as well as a physical object.

In writing, symbolism is the use of a word, a phrase, or a description, which represents a deeper meaning than the words themselves. This kind of extension of meaning can transform the written word into a very powerful instrument.

Just as in any medium, symbolism is used extensively in advertising. A good example, with which you are certainly familiar, is the use of actors dressed in white lab coats who are discussing the merits of a product in a laboratory setting, implying that the product has been approved by, and has the support of, doctors or medical scientists.

In literature, symbolism is used to provide meaning to the writing beyond what is actually being described. A simple example might be the occurrence of a storm at a critical point, when there is conflict or high emotions. The storm might symbolise these. Similarly a transition from day to night, or spring to winter, could symbolise a move from goodness to evil, or hope to despair. Flowers can symbolise youth or beauty.

Pictures

Research on how people read news stories has shown that readers choose to read and access news stories associated with pictures that contain an element of attraction. Human interest pictures are effective in attracting readers to read and remember the news stories.

Therefore, if you want to influence people, including an appropriate picture might do the trick.

Tone

The "author's tone" is the attitude or feeling that the author presents to the reader. An author's feelings and attitudes greatly influence their choice of words. Authors choose words to create an emotion, feeling or attitude which can influence the reader. Knowing what the tone is can help you understand the author's purpose.

Example:
My best friend died last week in a car crash. She was the kindest person I have ever known-someone I will never forget. I miss her terribly. (The tone is sorrowful and evokes sadness and empathy in the reader)

Pace

Pacing is the tool that allows writers to determine the speed at which their texts are going to be read. Whether you need to leave the readers breathless or you want them to savour the text, your ability to integrate pacing into your writing will allow you to make it happen.

If you need to slow a piece down, you can add descriptive segments that detail the environment, the setting and other similar content that provides the reader with a break in the action. For speeding up the material, a rapid-fire dialogue is easily one of the best techniques to use. For less-narrative based writing, you can use short, bulleted points.

Using proper syntax

Syntax is the logical sequence of words, which gives the writer a framework to build sentences correctly; it ensures the coherence of the subject, verb and object, and the relationships that tie them together.

To write clear sentences, the writer must know what he is writing about – the subject – and what he wants to say about the subject – the predicate. For writing to be more interesting, the subject should not be the beginning of every sentence.

Varying sentences

Writing made up of mostly short, simple sentences can become dull and boring to read; reading something that consists of mainly long, complex sentences can be difficult to read. A good writer will use a combination of sentences, varying the length and complexity.

Readers will enjoy writing where the writer has taken the time to use proper syntax and a variety of sentence structures.

Being brief

Writers should write concisely and not let the message get buried in long sentences or paragraphs of text. A writer will keep the reader's interest by keeping comments brief and to the point. Especially in our culture of quick e-mails and text messaging, people don't want to read long, verbose text.

Limit paragraphs to one idea each, particularly in letters, memos, e-mails, and the like.

To help readers grasp main ideas quickly and easily, begin each paragraph by stating the main point or purpose of that paragraph, and follow this first sentence with supporting points or additional information.

Use a sentence rather than a paragraph, a phrase rather than a sentence, and a word rather than a phrase when it can be done without losing meaning. Especially avoid wordy phrases such as *due to the fact that*; use *because* instead, for example. Also check for repetitious or superfluous information that can be deleted.

Though the deadline has been extended, we will still meet this morning to discuss the estimated costs is better than In spite of the fact that the deadline has been extended, we will still hold a meeting this morning for the purpose of discussing the estimated costs.

Using Active and Passive Voice

Writers should generally use active rather than passive constructions. The active voice is stronger than the passive, and it therefore produces more powerful sentences.

If the subject of the sentence is the person or thing *doing* the acting, then the verb is in active voice. If the subject of the sentence is the person or thing *receiving* the action, then the verb is in passive voice.

The passive form is less direct and is usually wordier than the active voice. Moreover, with the passive voice it is easy to make the actor anonymous and thereby avoid responsibility; this is an unfortunate and all-too-common practice in business communications.

Though mentioning the action without identifying the actor may be appropriate in rare cases (for example, if knowing who did something really is unimportant), it is generally best to avoid doing so.

For example:

- *The stockholders decided to sell the company* is more direct than *The decision was made to sell the company.*
- *The executive directors postponed the seminar* is more direct than *The seminar was postponed by the executive directors.*

Being clear

A business writer, in particular, should use clear, simple words and avoid flowery, pretentious language. Though it is all right to include a seldom-used or high-level word every now and then, for most audiences, this should be the exception rather than the rule. You don’t want your readers to misunderstand or, just as bad, to think you are talking above them.

Jargon (technical or highly specialised terminology) is notorious in some sectors of the business world. It has received a bad reputation, and largely for good reason. Because such language tends to be exclusive, it is usually best to simply avoid jargon. If you are writing solely to others in your profession, including industry acronyms and abbreviations and other jargon may be appropriate, but still use caution. In cases where jargon is used solely for euphemistic reasons, as in the example below, it should be replaced with more direct, clearer language.

Next week, the company will begin redundancy elimination is not as clear as *Next week, the company will begin laying people off.*

A document should make sense. There should be omission of necessary information and no gaps in logic.

Readers should be able to easily grasp what you are telling them or what you want them to do; you should do the work so that they don't have to.

Section 4

Write texts for a range of communicative contexts texts

SAQA ID 119465:
Write texts for a range of communicative contexts
NQF Level 3, 5 Credits

Programme Overview

Welcome to this learning programme that will lead you to greater understanding of **writing texts for a range of communicative contexts**.

As you work your way through the learning programme you will gain competence against the following Unit Standard:

Programme	Write texts for a range of communicative contexts
Unit Standard	SAQA ID 119465: Write texts for a range of communicative contexts NQF Level 3, 5 Credits

This learning programme is **intended for** all persons who need to write texts for a range of communicative contexts. Learners at this level write texts with complex subject matter and a need for various levels of formality in language and construction. They select text type, subject matter and language to suit specific audiences, purposes and contexts. Writers can use linguistic structures and features to influence readers/their audience. They draft, redraft and edit own writing to meet the demands of a range of text-types. They use language appropriate to the socio-cultural, learning or workplace/technical environment as required. They explore presentation techniques as an alternative to writing own texts.

Programme entry level requirements

The credit calculation is based on the assumption that learners are already competent in terms of the following outcomes or areas of learning when starting to learn towards this unit standard:

- NQF Level 2 Unit Standard entitled Write for a defined context

Programme Outcomes

This learning programme is outcomes-based which means we take the responsibility of learning away from the facilitator and place it in your hands.

Your learning will begin in the workshop where you will identify the skills and knowledge you require in order to meet the specific outcomes and assessment criteria contained in the unit standard.

In this learning programme, we will be covering the following **learning outcomes**:

Module 1: Write for a specified audience and purpose
• The purpose for writing, the target audience and the context are clear in relation to the learning task or activity • The text-type, style, and register selected are appropriate to audience, purpose and context • Language appropriate to socio-cultural sensitivities is selected and used in an appropriate manner without compromising own values or arguments • Writing is well-structured and conveys its message clearly • Critical thinking skills are used as strategies for planning • Writing reflects a clear point of view with sound reasons and facts to support arguments and logical development of a clearly articulated premise • Research skills are evident in the way data and information relevant to the context is identified, located, selected and synthesised for inclusion in the final text

Module 2: Use language structures and features to produce coherent and cohesive texts for a wide range of contexts	**Module 3: Draft own writing and edit to improve clarity and correctness**

• Meaning is clearly expressed through the use of a range of sentence structures, lengths and types • The use of paragraph conventions and links between paragraphs in texts, promotes coherence and cohesion in writing. Their use is explained with reference to logical progression, cause and effect and/or contrast • The overall structure of a piece of writing is controlled and the conclusion is clearly formulated	• Writing produced is appropriate to audience, purpose and context. Corrections are an improvement on the original • Control of grammar, diction, sentence and paragraph structure is checked and adapted for consistency • Logical sequencing of ideas and overall unity are achieved through redrafting • There is clear evidence that major grammatical and linguistic errors are edited out in redrafts • Inappropriate or potentially offensive language is identified and adapted/removed • Experimentation with different layouts and options for presentation is appropriate to the nature and purpose of the task

During the workshop you will complete a number of class activities that will form part of your formative assessment. In this you have the opportunity to practice and explore your new skills in a safe environment. You should take the opportunity to gather as much information as you can to use during your workplace learning and self-study.

The workshop will be followed by summative assessment tasks to be completed through self-study in your workplace. In some cases you may be required to do research and complete the tasks in your own time.

Assessment

It is important to note that the onus is on you, as the learner, to prove your competence. You therefore need to plan your time and ensure that your Portfolio of Evidence is kept up to date and handed in timeously.

A Portfolio of Evidence is a collection of documents of work you have produced to prove your competence. You will compile your portfolio from activities, tools and checklists associated with the unit standard and relevant to the unit standard being assessed.

You will be given the following documents to assist you in creating a portfolio of evidence:

- **Learner Guide**: The Learner Guide is designed to serve as a guide for the duration of your learning programme and as the main source document for transfer of learning. It contains information (knowledge and skills required) and application aids that will assist you in developing the knowledge and skills stipulated in the specific outcomes and assessment criteria. The learner guide also indicates the formative assessment class activities that you need to complete towards your Portfolio of Evidence.

- **Learner Workbook**: The learner Workbook contains all the class activities that you will be completing to show formative learning. These will be assessed as part of your portfolio of evidence as formative assessment. You will be handing in the Learner Workbook as part of your Portfolio of Evidence.

- **Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide**: The Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide provides details about the assessment, such as the assessment preparation, plan and specific summative assessment activities that you need to complete in the workplace.

Both formative and summative assessment is used as part of this outcomes-based learning programme:

- **Formative Assessment**: In order to gain credits for this Unit Standard you will need to prove to an assessor that you are competent. The Class Activities throughout your Learner Workbook are designed not only to help you learn new skills, but also to prove that you have mastered competence. You will be required to develop a Portfolio of Evidence to hand in to an assessor so that you can be assessed against the outcomes of this Unit Standard. Where you encounter a Class Activity icon, you must complete the formative assessment activity in the Learner Workbook. Comprehensive guidelines for the development of your Portfolio of Evidence may be found in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide for the particular learning programme that you are working with.
- **Summative Assessment**: The NQF's objective is to create independent and self-sufficient learners. This means that you will also be required to do independent research and assignments, such as Knowledge Questions, Practical Activity (completed in the workplace), Witness Testimony and Logbook.

  The assessment process is discussed in detail in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide. When you are ready, you will advise your mentor that you are ready for assessment. He or she will then sign off the required sections in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide and you will be able to submit your Portfolio of Evidence for assessment. The summative assessment activities placed in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide for your convenience. If any of your assessment is conducted using observation, role plays or verbal assessment, place a signed copy of the checklists, once completed by your mentor or line manager in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide, as indicated.

The Training Provider will assess your portfolio. If successful, you will receive the credit value of this learning programme. The entire assessment process is explained in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide and you are urged to read this guide as soon as possible as it explains the assessment process in detail and clarifies your rights and responsibilities to ensure that the assessment is fair, valid and reliable.

If you are not successful, you will receive all the guidance needed to resubmit your Portfolio of Evidence within a specific time period, as per the Training Provider requirements.

Learning map (delivery structure)

Assessment	**←Formative Assessment→ 34%**		**←Summative Assessment→66%**	
Learning activities for 50 hours of notional learning	Contact Learning Theory input Formative assessment (workbook activities): group activities, simulations	Prescribed reading, support, coaching	Learning and application at the workplace	Summative assessment in PoE: knowledge questions, practical workplace activity, Witness Testimony, logbook
	16 hours	**1 hour**	**25 hours**	**8 hours**
	↓	↓	↓	↓
Portfolio of Evidence	**←Compilation of Portfolio of Evidence→**			
Complementary workplace practices	Coaching and Mentoring; Performance Management			

Learner Support

Please remember that as the programme is outcomes based – this implies the following:

- You are responsible for your own learning – make sure you manage your study, practical, workplace and portfolio time responsibly.
- Learning activities are learner driven – make sure you use the Learner Guide, Learner Workbook and Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide in the manner intended, and are familiar with the Portfolio requirements.
- The Facilitator is there to reasonably assist you during contact, practical and workplace time of this programme – make sure that you have his/her contact details.

Module 1
Write for a specified audience and purpose

After completing this module, the learner will be able to write for a specified audience and purpose, by successfully completing the following:

- Ensure that the purpose for writing, the target audience and the context are clear in relation to the learning task or activity
- Ensure that the text-type, style, and register selected are appropriate to audience, purpose and context
- Select language appropriate to socio-cultural sensitivities and use it in an appropriate manner without compromising own values or arguments
- Ensure that writing is well-structured and conveys its message clearly
- Use critical thinking skills as strategies for planning
- Ensure that writing reflects a clear point of view with sound reasons and facts to support arguments and logical development of a clearly articulated premise
- Ensure that research skills are evident in the way data and information relevant to the context is identified, located, selected and synthesised for inclusion in the final text

Write for a specified audience and purpose

Have you ever heard (or made) any of the following statements:

- "I dread writing reports. I just don't know where to start."
- "Report writing takes me so long to do."
- "I want my reports to be clearer, more logical, and easier to read and understand. But I wasn't taught how to do that at university/college/school."
- "I'm never sure if my report is good enough - will the manager like it?"
- "My reports are so technical. I'm worried that no one will understand them - that is, if they even read them."
- "I write procedures for people to follow. Often there are safety issues. How can I be sure that my procedures are clear and accurate, so people use them and no one gets hurt?"
- "Is there an 'accepted' way to write this report? Will I look stupid if I don't follow the norm?"
- "How do I make my reports look more professional?"
- "English is my second language. I want to be more confident that my reports are well written and easy to understand."

There is a need for effective written communication skills in all aspects of our daily lives, whether in our private capacity when writing to our bank manager, or at work when we have to hand in our monthly report.

We have all handed in a report at one time or another that wasn't written as well as it could have been. Poor writing reflects badly on us, it limits the influence we can have on others, and it steals time away from those who read it when they try to decipher what we mean. Furthermore, there are legal implications when we cannot express ourselves clearly in policy documents or disciplinary reports.

Even if we were taught how to write well at school or college, the focus of the type of writing we did was usually creative writing, rather than what we are required to do as managers, namely **technical writing**.

Tec'nĭcal: "peculiar to a particular art or science or craft"[10]

Technical writing ability is a very important competence in today's fast growing technological society.

You need good technical writing skills to communicate technical information to **non-technical readers** effectively.

The key idea in technical writing is to look at things not from your own, but rather from the audience's perspective.

[10] Source: The Pocket Oxford Dictionary

1.1 Identify the purpose, target audience and context for writing

For all writers the most important people are their readers. If you keep your readers in mind when you write, it will help you use the right tone, appropriate language and include the right amount of detail.

What do readers want from writing? They want relevant information, presented in a clear, easy-to-understand style. They don't want muddled thinking, background information they already know, business-speak and jargon or waffle.

Above all, they want to get the point of your message in one reading—they don’t want to search for the meaning through long sentences and a boring style. So if you always keep your readers in mind, you will have to adapt your style and content to meet their needs.

Getting a clear picture of your readers before you start to write helps to focus your writing and get your message across. The better the picture you have of your readers, the better you can direct your writing.

Ask questions to get a clear picture of your readers:

- Who are my readers?
- What do they already know about the subject?
- What do they need to know?
- Will they understand technical terms?
- What information do they want?
- What do I want them to do?
- What interests or motivates them?
- What prejudices do they have?
- What worries or reassures them?
- What will bring them round to my view?
- What other arguments do I need to present?
- How are they likely to react to what I say?

Your audience may be internal and your document intended for use within the organisation, in which case you can use jargon and language specific to the organisation and position.

However, your audience could be external and your document may be written for wider publication, for example for customers, the press, readers of company brochures, etc.

In the latter instance, your language has to be simplified to reach as wide an audience as possible and must contain little or no jargon or company-specific abbreviations.

Your message will be directed to your contact(s) in the organisation and will vary depending on what your intent is upon writing. Regardless of the type of message, it is very important to make sure that you use a writing strategy that will effectively reach your reader. You need to tailor your documents for a specific audience in order to convey your message clearly and convincingly. Considering your audience will help you to personalise the document and make it relevant to the reader.

If you write without a specific audience in mind, the document might be far too general and vague, or it might include too much information. When you tailor a document to a specific audience, the document will have better "unity of purpose and style," and it will make the reader feel more involved

Audience is important for all pieces of writing, and even more so for any technical document, because technical documents must be able to persuade the reader that what you are saying is true, in order to be effective. You are directly communicating with the organisation, and you want the reader to understand your message and its relevance.

There are two main kinds of readers that a document should be tailored for:
Skimmers and **Sceptics.**

Skimmers are readers that are typically very busy. Pressed for time, they often skim documents in a rather short period of time. Consequently, the documents you prepare for this particular reader should:

- State the main point clearly and up front
- Place the most important information at the beginning of paragraphs
- Highlight key dates or figures

Both of the following examples from a CV represent the same experiences. A skimmer would be able to understand Example 2 much more quickly:

Example 1	Example 2
Managed R10 000 in project accounts, compiled and published engineering reports as assistant to Vice President, coordinated registrations, payments, and literature for software training seminars.	• Managed **R10 000** in project accounts. • Compiled and published engineering reports as Assistant to Vice President • Coordinated registrations, payments, and literature for software training seminars

The second type of reader is a **Sceptic.**

A sceptic is a reader that is cautious and doubtful. Sceptical readers will tend to read a document carefully, questioning its validity. Ultimately, they will question the writer's claims.

In order to meet the needs of the sceptic, it is necessary to support your statements with sufficient details and evidence. Provide specific examples, numbers, dates, names and percentages to meet the needs of the sceptical reader.

For example:

NOT: I performed very well in my classes.

RATHER: I received the Honours Award for 7 out of 8 semesters and received a *Women in Communications* Scholarship in May 2003.

Example:

Compare the two letters below. The difference between the two letters is that the first request is vague, unstructured and provides little information. The second letter provides information that helps you create a picture of what is needed. It gives you information as to:

- Who the audience is
- What the purpose of your document should be
- What the needs are of the people you would be speaking to (context)

When we write any document we must ensure that:

- the purpose of the writing,
- the target audience and;
- The context of the writing

is clear to the reader.

Dear Anne We would like you to speak to a group of people about your company's products. Please let us know as soon as possible if you can make it on Friday, 6 July. Regards Thabo	*Dear Anne* We would like you to speak to a group of people about your company's products. The group you will be speaking to are all young females, with babies no older than six months. They need investment advice to plan for their children's education. They have little or no knowledge of financial planning and investment, so you will need to start with the basics. Please let us know if you can make it on Friday, 6 July Regards Thabo

Know why you are writing

In business there are a number of reasons for writing:

- **To inform**, e.g. to respond to requests for information or changes, to remind clients of payments, to market new products, to educate consumers, etc
- **To persuade**, e.g. to encourage customers to buy products, use services, to apologise for poor service and encourage the customer to continue doing business with us
- **To argue**, e.g. to complain about new legislation and request assistance from government departments, etc.
- **To entertain**, e.g. in-house newsletters that keep staff amused, congratulate individuals on promotions, etc.

1.2 Select the text-type, style and register

When creating texts, you need to select the appropriate text-type, style and register for each type of document that you are creating.

- **Text type** refers to the kind of writing, e.g. e-mail, letter, etc.
- **Style** refers to the way you write, e.g. serious, humorous, etc.
- **Register** refers to the level of formality

Text types

1. The E-mail

E-mail is the most commonly-used (and abused) form of office communication today. When I quickly want to ask a colleague something, I drop him/her a line, especially if it's something difficult or embarrassing, or perhaps I don't have time to have a polite telephone conversation. I don't have to pay too much attention to what and how I say things, as it's like having a conversation, right? Wrong! We forget that an e-mail is a legal document that can be used as evidence against us and, just like any other piece of writing, conveys a particular image of who we are.

How should I format my e-mail?
You are probably familiar with the general rules about formatting e-mail, but here are some tips to keep in mind[11]:

- Try to keep the e-mail brief (preferably to one page), so that readers do not have to scroll
- Return e-mails on the same day that you would a phone call
- Use capitalisation and punctuation in the same way that you would in any other document
- Format your e-mail to be sent in plain text rather than HTML because some e-mail clients may not read HTML
- Write a salutation or greeting for each new subject e-mail. However, if you exchange several e-mails over the same topic (for example, a meeting day and time), it is not necessary to include a greeting, because it is as though you are carrying on a conversation. When we carry on conversations, we do not say hello each time we speak.
- Be sure to write an appropriate and specific subject in the subject line so that the recipient knows what to expect. For example: "April 22 production team meeting agenda" instead of "meeting."

To whom am I sending my e-mail?
It is always important to know who will receive your e-mail, including the number of people you have on the mailing list.

This helps you in two ways:

11Supplied by : http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/pw/p_emailett.html

- Firstly, it helps you think about the tone of your writing. For example, while you still want to follow the traditional rules of writing, e-mails that you send to your manager may be more formal than to a colleague or team member.

  You will need to decide whether you need to use a person's title, or if writing the first name is appropriate.

- Secondly, if you send an e-mail to more than four people regularly, you should create mailing groups, so that the recipients do not need to scroll through names before they can get to the content of the e-mail.

It also helps to keep some email addresses anonymous, as some perceive it as rude for their names and e-mail addresses to be posted for strangers to see. You will need to talk with the technical support in your office, or use the "help" option on your computer, if you do not know how to create a mailing group. A mailing group is a list of e-mail addresses assigned to one name (like, newmember@abd.co.za). Remember to use names that make sense to you so that you can remember them. This is especially helpful when you are managing several mailing group lists.

E-mails are **public documents**, despite the fact that you may send an e-mail to someone privately. Therefore, only include those statements in e-mail that you can openly defend should your message be circulated or shown to other parties.

Using **emoticons** (smiley faces, winks, etc.), and other virtual gestures may be appropriate in some cases, but not in all cases! It is always essential to consider the type of relationship you have with the receiver of your message before including virtual non-verbals. If your relationship is more casual, then using the symbols is fine. If your relationship is more formal, then it is best to refrain from using them.

The Memo

When you think of a memo[12], what do you think of? Is it a little piece of paper with a letterhead that says something like:

"From the desk of ..." or "Don't forget ..." or "Reminders ..."

The message itself may be very simple--something like:

"Buy more paper clips" or "Meet with President at 2:30" or "Mom, we're out of milk."

While these memos are informative or persuasive, and may serve their simple purposes, more complex memos are often needed in an office setting.

But don't let that worry you. Even though business memos may be more formal and complicated the intention in writing one is still the same. You want to achieve your purpose with your reader effectively.

Parts of a Memo:
Standard memos are divided into segments to organise the information and to help achieve the writer's purpose:

Heading Segment
The heading segment follows this general format:
TO: (readers' names and job titles)
FROM: (your name and job title)
DATE: (complete and current date)
SUBJECT: (what the memo is about, highlighted in some way)

[12] Article from: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/pw/p_memo.html

- **Opening Segment**

  The purpose of a memo is usually found in the opening paragraphs and is presented in three parts: the context and problem, the specific assignment or task, and the purpose of the memo.

  1. The **context** is the event, circumstance, or background of the problem you are solving. You may use a paragraph to establish the background and **state the problem** or simply the opening of a sentence, such as, "In our effort to reduce rat parts in our product...." Include only what your reader needs, but be sure it is clear.
  2. In the **task statement** you should describe what you are doing to help solve the problem. If the action was requested, your task may be indicated by a sentence opening like, "You asked that I look at...." If you want to explain your intentions, you might say, "To determine the best method of controlling the percentage of rat extremities, I will...."
  3. Finally, the **purpose statement** of a memo gives your reason for writing it and forecasts what is in the rest of the memo. This is not the time to be shy. You want to come right out and tell your reader the kind of information that's in store. For example, you might say: "This memo presents a description of the current situation, some proposed alternatives, and my recommendations." If you plan to use headings for your memo segments, you can refer to your major headings in this forecast statement to provide a better guide for your reader.

- **Summary Segment**

  If your memo is longer than a page, you may want to include a separate summary segment. This segment provides a brief statement of the key recommendations you have reached. These will help your reader understand the key points of the memo immediately. This segment may also include references to methods and sources you have used in your research, but remember to keep it brief.

- **Closing Segment**

  After the reader has absorbed all of your information, you want to close with a courteous ending that states what action you want him/her to take. Make sure you consider how the reader will benefit from the desired actions and how you can make those actions easier. For example, you might say, “I will be glad to discuss this recommendation with you during our Tuesday meeting and follow through on any decisions you make.”

The Research Report

Generally, a research/ project report will include the following sections:

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Heading
- Introduction
- Body
- Conclusion
- Recommendations
- References

However, it's always best to consult a style manual for your discipline, to talk to other people in your discipline who have written reports, and to look at similar reports that have been published in order to more fully understand the expectations for reports in your field.

- **Introduction**

  The introduction prepares readers for the discussion that follows by introducing the purpose, scope, and background of the report. The audience for your report largely determines the length of the introduction and the amount of detail included in it. You should include enough detail so that someone knowledgeable in your field can understand the subject and your research.

  You should begin your introduction at the top of a new page, preceded on the page only by the report's full title. The title is followed by the word Introduction, which can be either a centre or side heading.

  Most introductions contain three parts to provide context for the research done: **purpose, scope, and background information**. These parts often overlap one another, and sometimes one of them may be omitted simply because there is no reason for it to be included.

  It is very important to consider the **purpose** of your research and your report in the introduction. If you do not completely understand what the purpose is, there is little chance that the reader will understand your purpose either.

  The following questions will help you to think about the purpose of your research and your reason for writing a report:

  What kind of problem did you work on?

  Why did you work on this problem? If the problem was assigned, try to imagine why the facilitator assigned this particular problem; what were you supposed to learn from working on it?

  Why are you writing this report?

  What should the reader know or understand when he/she has finished reading the report?

  Scope refers to the ground covered by the report and will outline the method of investigation used in the project. Considering the scope of your project in the introduction will help readers to understand the parameters of your research and your report. **Scope may also include defining important terms.**

  These questions will help you to think about the scope of both your research and your report:

How did you work on the research problem?

Why did you work on the problem the way you did?

Were there other obvious approaches you could have taken to this problem? What were the limitations you faced that prevented your trying other approaches?

What factors contributed to the way you worked on this problem? What factor was most important in deciding how to approach the problem?

Background Information includes facts that the reader must know in order to understand the discussion that follows. These facts may include descriptions of conditions or events that caused the project to be authorised or assigned and details of previous work and reports on the problem or closely related problems.

You might also want to review theories that have a bearing on the project and references to other documents although if you need to include a lengthy review of other theories or documents, these should be placed in an **appendix.**

Ask yourself:

What facts does the reader need to know in order to understand the discussion that follows?

Why was the project authorised or assigned?

Who has done previous work on this problem?

What facts are already known that support the theory?

What will the reader know about the subject already and what will you need to tell them so they can understand the significance of your work?

- **Body**

The body is usually the longest part of the research report, and it includes all of the evidence that readers need to have in order to understand the subject. This evidence includes details, data, results of tests, facts, and conclusions.

Exactly what you include in the body and how it is organised will be determined by the context in which you are writing.
Be sure to check the specific guidelines under which you are working to see if your readers are expecting you to organise the body in a particular way.
However, bear in mind that all the techniques for clear, accurate, objective writing apply, no matter what the format chosen.

- **Conclusion**

The conclusion of a research report is usually a very short section that introduces no new ideas.

You may ask, then, why include conclusions? The conclusion is important because it is your last chance to convey the significance and meaning of your research to your reader by concisely summarising your findings and generalising their importance.

It is also a place to raise questions that remain unanswered and to discuss ambiguous data. The conclusions you draw are opinions, based on the evidence presented in the body of your report.

- **Recommendations**

  You may or may not need to include a section titled "Recommendations." This section appears in a report when the results and conclusions indicate that further work needs to be done or when you have considered several ways to resolve a problem or improve a situation and want to determine which one is best.

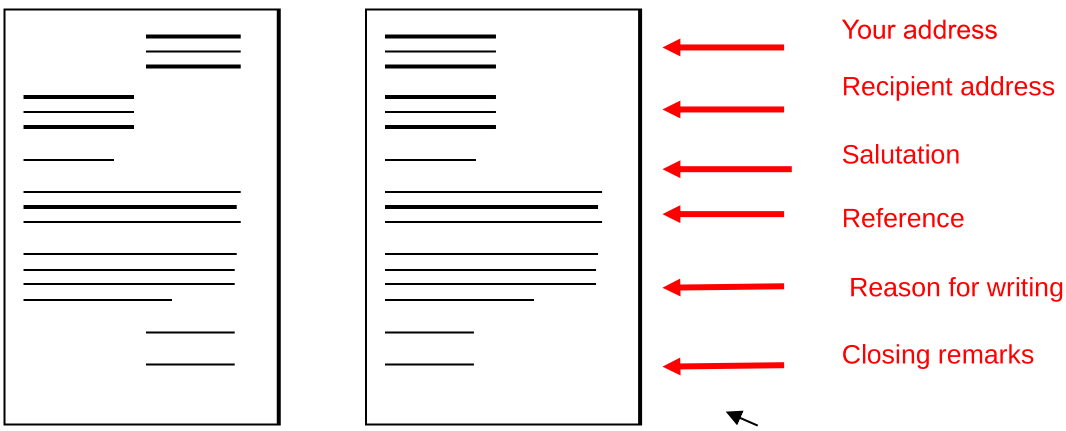
  You should not introduce new ideas in the recommendations section, but rely on the evidence presented in the results and conclusions sections.

  - The style of the report should be concise, formal, and written in the past tense. This is the style most appropriate to written reports in any scientific or technical environment. Your sentences should present ideas in a logical sequence. Do not give instructions (e.g. write 'A was connected to B' rather than 'Connect A to B'). Paragraphs should be used to introduce new topics. You are also expected to write legibly, with good grammar, and spell accurately. You should proof read reports.
  - Diagrams, charts and graphs should only be computer generated if the detail can be as complete as those drawn neatly by hand. Elaborate presentation is neither required nor encouraged, clarity in your writing and presentation is your main aim.
  - Where a report is short, it is acceptable to combine two or more sections under one heading, e.g. Results and Discussion.

The Business Letter

Each company has its own preferred format for business letters[13], so make sure that you find out which format your company wants you to use.

Normally, you would use company paper, with the company letterhead and logo, and it would be written in block format, as in the following examples:



[13] Free advice from: The "how to write" writers website ring; webmaster@business-letter-writing.com

Salutation

Dear Personnel Director,

Dear Sir or Madam (use if you don't know who you are writing to)

Dear Mr, Mrs, Miss or Ms (use if you know who you are writing to, and have a formal relationship with - use Ms for women unless asked to use Mrs or Miss) Dear Frank (use if the person is a close business contact or friend)

Reference

With reference to your advertisement in *The Sunday Times /* your letter of 23 March / your phone call today

Thank you for your letter of March 5

Your reason for writing

I am writing to enquire about / apologise for / confirm that

Requesting

Could you possibly?

I would be grateful if you could

Agreeing to Requests

I would be delighted to

Giving Bad News

Unfortunately

I am afraid that

Enclosing Documents

I am enclosing

Please find enclosed

Enclosed you will find

Closing Remarks

Your last paragraph should summarise the key points or repeat the key message. If some action is needed, explain what you want the reader to do or what you will do. Use positive words such as **when** not **if**.

Examples of good closing sentences for business letters:

- I would again like to apologise for the delay in replying and I trust that this has clarified the points you have raised; however, if you wish to discuss any points I have not clarified, or need any further information, you may telephone or contact me via e-mail.
- I look forward to hearing from you and in the meantime, should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

- I regret that I cannot be of more assistance in this matter, and should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.
- Thanking you for your...
- Hoping for a prompt reply...
- Thanking you in advance for your assistance...
- Trusting this answers your questions...
- Please do not hesitate to contact me
- I trust this clarifies the situation

End your letter positively and politely. Don’t leave your reader in mid-air, but use the final paragraph to explain or repeat what you want your reader to do.

Please contact us again if we can help in any way/ if there are any problems/ if you have any questions.

Reference to Future Contact

I look forward to ... hearing from you soon/ meeting you next Tuesday/ seeing you next Thursday.

The Finish

Yours faithfully, (If you don't know the name of the person you're writing to)

Yours sincerely, (If you know the name of the person you're writing to)

Best wishes / Best regards, (If the person is a close business contact or friend)

General guidelines for all your writing

- Use single spaces between lines
- Use double spaces between paragraphs
- Place the beginning line of each paragraph flush left for a contemporary look.
- Leave white space around the typed copy for a pleasant “feel” to the document. White space makes a document more readable.
- Two-centimetre margins usually give a document enough white space to "feel" more readable.
- Headings should be bold
- No more than two fonts should be used in a document e.g. Arial Narrow for headings and Tahoma for the body of your document
- Colour should be limited especially in a formal document

Regardless of the layout you have chosen, documents should project a positive image of your organisation and meet basic formatting and layout requirements. In order to check the detail of your document, you may also want to consider the following:

- Do page numbers follow logically?
- Does the index (if any) and text headings match?
- Did you include any addenda as you said?
- Is your document dated correctly?
- Did you acknowledge any resources you used (if needed)?
- Is your information correct and accurate? Double-check any information tables and/or descriptions of data.
- Did you comply effectively with any organisational, industry and/or national standards and requirements?
- Have the (necessary) people approved your text?

If possible, let one or more people proofread your text for you. If you work often with a text, you tend to lose your sensitivity for its accuracy and correctness. A fresh pair of eyes can spot inaccuracies in incorrect information easier.

Using Bullets correctly

Bullet points help organise information and make information more manageable.

Remember is to maintain the same format throughout for consistency. For example, make sure that you keep to the **same sentence structure and layout format throughout** in your bulleted list.

If you start in a particular tense, **all the bullets must be in that same tense**.

For example:

Incorrect:

- **Prepared** weekly field payroll
- Material purchas**ing**, expedit**ing**, and return**ing**
- **Recording** OSHA regulated documentation
- **Change** orders
- **Maintained** hard copies of field documentation

Correct:

- **Prepared** weekly field payroll
- **Handled** material purchasing, expediting, and returning
- **Recorded** OSHA regulated documentation
- **Processed** change orders
- **Maintained** hard copies of field documentation

Avoid Repetition

It can be hard to avoid repeating words in bullets, but consider what would happen if you didn't:

- Wrote project documentation
- Wrote procedural and reference documents
- Wrote Quick Reference Guides
- Wrote documents for end users

The writer sampled above could have condensed these into one bullet:

- Wrote project documentation, Quick Reference Guides, conceptual, procedural and reference documents.

Or s/he could have used words other than "wrote":

- **Wrote** project documentation
- **Developed** conceptual, procedural and reference documents
- **Created and implemented** Quick Reference Guides
- **Produced** documents for end users

If you're having a hard time finding alternative words, use a thesaurus, but carefully. Never use words that you cannot define.

Using styles of writing

More specifically you would use the following styles of writing to match the purpose of your document:

Discursive	Lengthy documents where you will argue a point, reason and debate a specific issue e.g. a legal article or academic paper
Reflective	A review of a document or experience to share your personal feelings or opinion e.g. a reflection on your learning
Argumentative	Characterised by disagreement or argument and stating dissatisfaction
Descriptive	Containing descriptions, classifying, expressing an attribute or quality e.g. an advertisement or a product leaflet
Expository	Writing to inform, a detailed description or discussion of a theory, proposal or commentary discussing its meaning and implications e.g. an academic paper
Transactional	A business deal that is being negotiated or has been settled; a communication or activity between two or more people that influences and affects all of them e.g. a proposal
Business	Communication in the workplace e.g. memorandums, business correspondence, e-mails etc.
Electronic texts	Correspondence using a computer, e.g. e-mail
Multi-media presentations	Using more than one medium, e.g. presenter and PowerPoint slide presentation with sound effects

You will often communicate with people who have different educational backgrounds to your own. If a doctor writes about a medical topic, a fellow doctor will have no problem understanding what is being said, while others will find it less easy.

When you write about a particular field to people who know very little about the subject, it is necessary to be aware of what your audience knows. The level of communication can then be adjusted according to your audience. Your audience will always be mixed, which means you cannot adjust your communication to satisfy every reader. However you can aim to make you communication understandable to most.

The most important aspects of language when writing for a specific audience is the tone and word choice you use.

- **Tone** – The tone of written communication is the attitude of the writer towards the reader, the subject, situation and the medium. This is determined by the level of formality of the situation and by the audience. The level of formality is usually high for specialists, while informal readers like your workgroup may respond better to devices such as humour and irony in a piece of writing.
- **Word Choice** - This will depend on the audience you are writing for. Your choice of words is determined by what is appropriate, getting your message across effectively and grammar. Slang, conversational language and acronyms are not appropriate in formal writing.

1.3 Select appropriate language

When writing for a specific audience, you need to select appropriate language:

Use jargon/technical language selectively

Technical writing has earned the reputation of being dense, difficult to read, and at times, incoherent. **Jargon** is responsible for some of the difficulty that readers have, but difficulty in reading can also happen when writing does not conform to standard rules of grammar for written English.

Generally speaking, jargon, in its most positive light, can be seen as professional, efficient shorthand.

One current or modern definition of jargon is “an outlandish, technical language of a particular profession, group, or trade.” Another meaning is “unintelligible writing or talk.” Yet another definition is “specific dialects resulting from a mixture of several languages.”

Since the reoccurring problem with jargon is that only a few people may understand the actual terminology used by different groups, this may explain its origin from “twittering” which, of course, would be misunderstood by most people.

However, someone who studies jargon may claim that jargon was invented simply as a professional shorthand, developed out of convenience rather than intentional trickiness.

While jargon is understood by those who know the terminology; plain English refers to common words everyone can understand. People who use plain English can easily converse with other people because they do not use exaggerated words, which may confuse the listener. The plain English movement is growing daily because people want jargon, doublespeak, and other professional terminology taken out of government, law and the medical field. People want to understand what they are reading and hearing without being undermined by ‘fancy’ terminology.

Always consider your audience:

- If you are writing for the general public, keep language simple and avoid abbreviations and acronyms that are particular to the organisation
- If you are writing for your organisation, ensure that the jargon you are using is common usage in the organisation, and not just in your department.
- If you feel the need to add a glossary of abbreviations and acronyms used in your report, it means that the jargon you have used is NOT common usage
- If you are writing for an international audience, do not use abbreviations or local acronyms, unless they are a legal name or commonly used, e.g. IBM, Mon, Tue, St, Rd, etc.

Avoid Offensive Language

When writing you need to remember that you are writing for a wide audience and you need to make sure that you do not use language that may be offensive. Offensive language could include categories of bias and stereotyped often used in language, e.g.

- Gender
- Culture
- Language
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age

Stereotyping is a rigid attitude towards, or a belief about a group of people that ignores the individualism of a person. E.g. Blonde women are stereotyped as having more fun and are believed to be “dumb”, accountants are stereotyped as highly intelligent and are believed to be dull and taxi drivers are stereotyped as reckless drivers and are believed to show no concern for the safety of their passengers.

Stereotyping becomes problematic when it is offensive, hurtful, or infringes people’s rights as laid out in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

As a responsible employee of the organisation, you need to ensure that your written communications do not reflect any of your personal unconscious or conscious stereotypes or biases.

For example: *Fashion Tights are available in black, suntan, and flesh colour*

This innocent statement is made frequently to describe beige coloured stockings and suggests that white skin is flesh toned. What about any other colour skin? Do you see how innocent statements can lead to stereotyping and hurt? You need to be aware of other people’s feelings and the unintended consequences of your words all the time.

1.4 Structure the writing to convey the message clearly

All writers, even the most famous authors, follow certain basic steps when writing. These are:

- Planning – Identify purpose and audience, identify relevant information, group and order relevant information
- Preparing a draft or a rough copy, decide on appropriate layout, write draft
- Editing , revising, improving the draft
- Writing the final copy

Planning

When you are given a topic on which to write, your first step should be to analyse the topic, picking out key words. There are several ways in which you can develop ideas from a given topic, for example brainstorming and mind mapping.

Gathering Information

Once you have completed you mind map you need to start gathering the information you will need to write you document. This is vital to the quality of the text you will produce.

To start the information gathering process, make sure that you have all the information you need to write the required text. Think about the information that the recipient requires by using the six basic questioning techniques:

- Who? E.g. who can assist me with verification of the sales figures for this month?
- What? E.g. what has the impact of the sales figures been on the business?
- When? E.g. when can the additional sales people start to address the shortage in sales people?
- Why? E.g. why are we experiencing the current boom in business?
- Where? E.g. where would I be able to find historical documents, or information on competitors to use as a case study and draw a comparison?
- How? E.g. how will I present the information I have gathered.

As you gather information your information you will eventually have large volumes of documents. You need to sort through it, make sure you categorise and prioritise the information you have, decide what you are going to use and discard what is not important.

Preparing the first draft

Once you have gathered all the information you need, use your mind map to arrange your work in paragraphs. We will cover structure and paragraphs in detail in Module Two but remember that each paragraph should contain no more than one idea.

Editing your work

After you have prepared the draft, you will need to edit it. This means reading through it to correct any errors of spelling, punctuation and poor language usage. You may also rewrite certain sentences.

Writing the final copy

The revised correct draft should now be ready to finalise. In this step you will apply the finishing touches to your layout, and print out your final document.

1.5 Use critical thinking skills

When planning your writing, you need to use critical thinking skills, such as identifying key words, underlining, brainstorming and mindmapping:

Key words and underlining

Key words are the main words in a piece of text that summarize what the text contains. It helps to underline them.

Underlining or highlighting the main points helps to create a visual memory of the words on the page. It also helps you focus on what is important information. Ignore the examples and only underline the main points.

Brainstorming

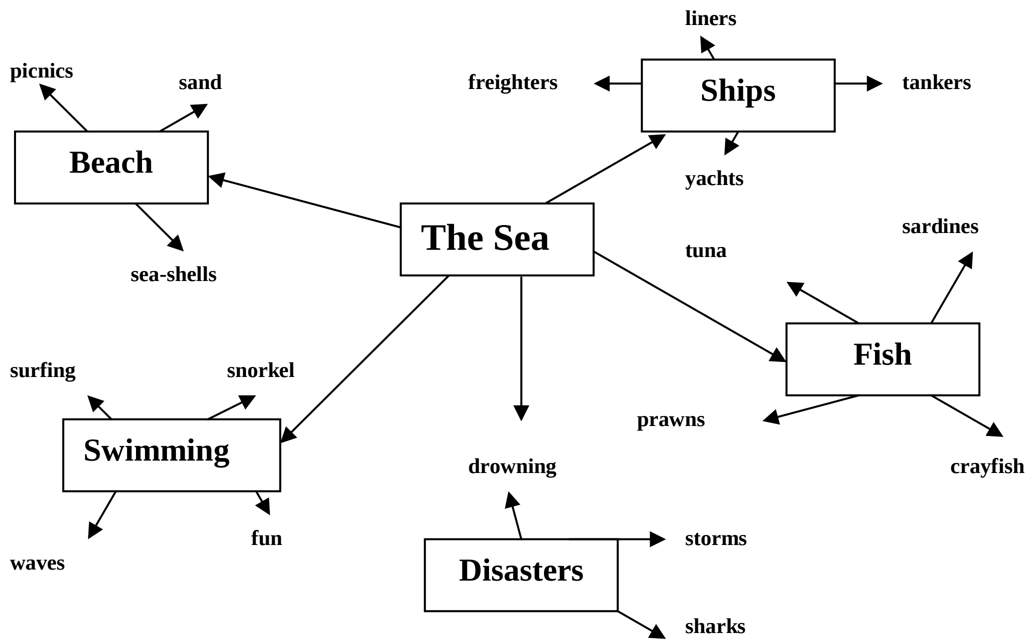
Brainstorming is an excellent way of developing many creative solutions to a problem. It works by focusing on a problem, and then coming up with very many radical solutions to it. Ideas should deliberately be as broad and odd as possible, and should be developed as fast as possible. Brainstorming is a lateral thinking process. It is designed to help you break out of your thinking patterns into new ways of looking at things.

Brainstorming is often used as a first step in the creative process. It is rapid-fire suggestions designed to get the creative juices flowing!

This method involves writing down all the ideas which come to mind when thinking of a topic. If one were to brainstorm the topic “The Sea” for example, some of the main ideas that would come to mind might be the beach, swimming, ships, fish disasters etc.

Mind Mapping

When you think of a topic, several thoughts immediately come to mind and generally, one idea gives rise to several others, for example, “The Sea” makes us think of the beach, swimming, surfing, ships, fish,, disasters etc These ideas can be jotted down in a web of words called a mind map:



This is an easy way to plan anything you want to write and help you focus, identify the information you want and prepare for your first draft.

1.6 Reflect a clear point of view with sound reasons and facts

Remember that when you make statements of "fact", you must ensure that it is not just your opinion or a strongly held belief that you are putting forward.

Sometimes when someone feels very strongly about some issue (the death penalty, animal rights, etc.), they can become so close to their belief — so familiar and comfortable with it — that this belief will seem utterly natural and uncontroversial to them. It will seem so obvious as to be unworthy of any further explanation and justification. This is one of the most common reasons why writers neglect to give arguments for their opinions/beliefs. They believe that many of their claims are so obvious that they don't need to "spell it out." But, in good, clear writing, one always needs to "spell it out." You should never think of a particular person as the only audience for your writing, because this will lead you to cut important corners (imagining incorrectly that "oh, s/he'll know what I mean by this").

Be aware of the logic and reasoning you use in your argument. An example of unsound reasoning is the following[14]:

A recent prime time T.V. program argued that since a number of wealthy men had consulted with psychics about their investments, psychic insight *caused* the men's wealth. We could just as easily and erroneously point out that these wealthy men all wore underwear, therefore underwear causes wealth.

Always write with the assumption that your reader is someone who *disagrees* with you, but is willing to listen to reason and possibly change his/her mind. In writing for *that* audience, you will avoid taking things for granted, and you will be more careful to articulate your position (or the position of an expert).

[14] Retrieved from: http://www.stephenasma.com/GoodEssay.html

1.7 Show research skills

We call the process of collecting and information in a systematic way to increase understanding of a particular topic ***research***. Research is searching carefully, with a method, so that you can answer a question. It is wider than finding out a fact and more focused than reading widely around a subject.

The research techniques we need to master when collecting information are:

- reading/viewing
- interviewing
- observing
- using appropriate electronic resources, e.g. the internet.

Once we have collected all our information we follow these steps:

- **Evaluate and sift the information for relevance**
- Go back to your research question and ask yourself what it means
- Make sure you know how much you're expected to write
- Underline the key words
- Write down what information you need
- Plan your essay or report — the structures are different for each, so take advice if you're unsure
- Work out how many words you can write on each point
- Relax for active reading!
- As you read, look for answers to your questions
- Tell yourself the main points or ideas of what you've just read
- Link ideas using a mind map
- Use your word limit to guide your reading
- Reject information that is far too detailed for your purpose
- Gain confidence
- Start realising that some bits don't fit in — you can discard them
- Take notes in whatever way works for you
- Start writing to your plan — start with whatever seems easiest and keep going without worrying about style. It's a good idea to start by stating things clearly and simply in short sentences
- Work on your first draft — each time you work on your draft it will get better
- Remember to write out your bibliography
- Enjoy improving your work!
- Ask someone to read what you've written and give you feedback

- **Classify** or categorise the information **(in other words – sort it).**

- **Analyse** your findings**. What can you use? How will you use it? Can you make any** recommendations **to your colleagues?**

- **Present** your findings in the correct format**, in other words, in a report or a PowerPoint presentation.**

Module 2
Use language structures and features to produce texts

After completing this module, the learner will be able to use language structures and features to produce coherent and cohesive texts for a wide range of contexts, by successfully completing the following:

- Clearly express meaning through the use of a range of sentence structures, lengths and types
- Ensure that the use of paragraph conventions and links between paragraphs in texts, promotes coherence and cohesion in writing. Their use is explained with reference to logical progression, cause and effect and/or contrast
- Control the overall structure of a piece of writing and formulate the conclusion clearly

Use language structures and features to produce texts

Communication would be a great deal easier if we all knew what the other person meant. Often what we want to say can come out completely wrong if we do not show the reader through language conventions what we mean with our message.

Using formats, conventions, protocols and contexts

When writing, we need to take into account that each ***format*** (letter, dialogue, report, etc.) has its own ***conventions*** (e.g. a dialogue will mimic natural spoken language, while a report will use more formal terminology), ***protocols*** (the etiquette or correct order of doing things) and ***contexts*** (i.e. you will write a dialogue in a transcript of a real conversation, while a report will be required by management as part of the performance management process.)

By following the basic rules of grammar, punctuation and spelling everyone with whom you communicate will arrive at the same meaning of what is being said.

2.1 Express meaning clearly

Standard written English requires correct sentence structure and punctuation. To understand sentence structure and to recognize and fix problems correctly, you need to know the definitions of a phrase, an independent clause, a dependent clause, and a sentence.

- A phrase is a group of words that does not have a subject or a verb, or both. It does not make sense by itself.
- An independent clause has a subject and a predicate, and can stand alone as a complete sentence.
- A dependent clause has a subject and a predicate, but depends on an independent clause to be complete. Dependent clauses are introduced by subordinating conjunctions (after, although, because, before, if, though, unless, until, when, where, who, which, that).
- A sentence is a group of words containing at least one independent clause and expressing a complete idea. It has a subject and a verb and can stand alone.

To make your written work more understandable and easier to read, try using a variety of basic sentence structures. We can categorize sentences into four main types, depending on the number and type of clauses they contain:

- **Simple** (one independent clause):

  We drove from Cape Town to Johannesburg in one day.

- **Compound** (more than one independent clause):

  We were exhausted, but we arrived in time for my father's birthday party.

- **Complex** (one independent clause and at least one dependent clause):

  Although he is now 79 years old, he still claims to be 65.

- **Compound-complex** (more than one independent clause and at least one dependent clause):

  After it was all over, my dad claimed he knew we were planning something, but we think he was really surprised.

Sentences have to be combined to avoid the monotony that would result if all sentences were short and of equal length.

Using Conjunctions

A conjunction is a joiner, a word that connects (conjoins) parts of a sentence. The simple, little conjunctions are called coordinating conjunctions. Remember the acronym FANBOYS: For-And-Nor-But-Or-Yet-So. Be careful of the words then and now; neither is a coordinating conjunction, so what we say about coordinating conjunctions' roles in a sentence and punctuation does not apply to those two words.)

When a coordinating conjunction connects two independent clauses it is often (but not always) accompanied by a comma:

> *John wants to study chemistry, but he has had trouble meeting the academic requirements.*

When the two independent clauses connected by a coordinating conjunction are nicely balanced or brief, many writers will omit the comma:

> *John has a great pass but he isn't quick on his feet.*

The comma is always correct when used to separate two independent clauses connected by a coordinating conjunction. A comma is also correct when and is used to attach the last item of a serial list, although many writers (especially in newspapers) will omit that final comma:

> *Sam spent his holiday studying basic math, writing, and reading comprehension.*

When a coordinating conjunction is used to connect all the elements in a series, a comma is not used:

> *English and Chinese and Spanish are the most widely spoken languages in the world.*

A comma is also used with but when expressing a contrast:

> *This is a useful rule, but difficult to remember.*

In most of their other roles as joiners (other than joining independent clauses, that is), coordinating conjunctions can join two sentence elements without the help of a comma.

> *Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu are among the best-known South Africans.*

Among the coordinating conjunctions, the most common, of course, are and, but, and or. It might be helpful to explore the uses of these three little words. The examples below by no means exhaust the possible meanings of these conjunctions.

AND

- To suggest that one idea follows another: "Tas sent in her applications and waited by the phone for a response."
- To suggest that one idea is the result of another: "Willie heard the weather report and promptly brought in the washing."
- To suggest that one idea is in contrast to another (frequently replaced by but in this usage): "Juanita is brilliant and Shalimar has a pleasant personality.

- To suggest an element of surprise (sometimes replaced by yet in this usage): "Johannesburg is a rich city and suffers from many symptoms of urban decay."
- To suggest that one clause is dependent upon another, conditionally (usually the first clause is an imperative): "Use your credit cards frequently and you'll soon find yourself deep in debt."
- To suggest a kind of "comment" on the first clause: "Charlie became addicted to gambling — and that surprised no one who knew him."

BUT

- To suggest a contrast that is unexpected in light of the first clause: "Joey lost a fortune in the stock market, but he still seems able to live quite comfortably."
- To suggest in an affirmative sense what the first part of the sentence implied in a negative way (sometimes replaced by on the contrary): "The club never invested foolishly, but used the services of a sage investment counsellor."
- To connect two ideas with the meaning of "with the exception of" (and then the second word takes over as subject): "Everybody but Goldenbreath is trying out for the team."

OR

- To suggest that only one possibility, excluding one or the other: "You can study hard for this exam or you can fail."
- To suggest the inclusive combination of alternatives: "We can cook chicken on the grill tonight, or we can just eat leftovers.
- To suggest a refinement of the first clause: "Smith College is the top college in the country, or so it seems to most Smith College students."
- To suggest a restatement or "correction" of the first part of the sentence: "There are no snakes in this valley, or so our guide tells us."
- To suggest a negative condition: "The gang's motto is the rather grim "Live free or die."

Using Words Effectively

A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts.

Avoid saying the same thing twice.

> *Many uneducated citizens ~~who have never attended school~~ continue to vote for better schools.*

A phrase that repeats itself—like "true fact," "twelve noon," "I saw it with my own eyes"—is sometimes called a pleonasm.

Redundant phrases are bad habits just waiting to take control of your writing. Beware of the following:

Redundancy	The Lean Version
12 midnight	midnight
12 noon	noon
3 am in the morning	3 am
a person who is honest	an honest person
a total of 14 birds	14 birds
biography of her life	biography
circle around	circle
close proximity	proximity
completely unanimous	unanimous
consensus of opinion	consensus
cooperate together	cooperate
each and every	each
enclosed herewith	enclosed
end result	result
exactly the same	the same
final completion	completion
free gift	gift

Phrases You Can Omit

Be on the lookout for important sounding phrases that add nothing to the meaning of a sentence, e.g.:

all things considered	All things considered, the Cape's woodlands are in better shape now than ever before. ~~All things considered,~~ The woodlands in the Cape are in better shape now than ever before.
as a matter of fact	As a matter of fact, there are more trees in Johannesburg now than there were in 1898. ~~As a matter of fact,~~ There are more woodlands in Johannesburg now than there were in 1898.
at the present time	This is because there are fewer farmers at the present time. This is because there are fewer farmers now.
because of the fact that	Trees have grown in area because of the fact that farmers have abandoned their fields. Trees have grown in area because farmers have abandoned their fields.
by means of	Major forest areas are coming back by means of natural processes. Major forest areas are coming back through natural processes. (or naturally)
due to the fact that	Due to the fact that their habitats are being restored, forest creatures are also re-establishing their population bases. ~~Due to the fact that~~ Because their habitats are being restored, forest creatures are also re-establishing their population bases.
exists	The fear that exists among many people that we are losing our woodlands is uncalled for.

	The fear ~~that exists~~ among many people that we are losing our woodlands is uncalled for.
for all intents and purposes	The era in which we must aggressively defend our woodlands has, for all intents and purposes, passed. The era in which we must aggressively defend our woodlands has~~, for all intents and purposes,~~ passed.
for the most part	For the most part, people's suspicions are based on a misunderstanding of the facts. ~~For the most part, p~~People's suspicions are based on a misunderstanding of the facts.

2.2 Use paragraph conventions and links

When creating texts, use paragraph conventions and links:

Just as poor sentences will make a document difficult for the reader to understand, so writing which is not broken up into paragraphs make it difficult to understand the message. Paragraphs can vary in length depending on the amount of information they cover. However all good paragraphs consist of the following:

- A topic sentence which is located at the beginning of a paragraph. With this sentence you state what you are going to cover and indicate how you will discuss the subject of the paragraph.
- Supporting sentences that explain the topic sentences follow. These provide specific information that clarify the rest of the information in the paragraph. A good paragraph forms a cohesive unit with enough information to clarify its topic.
- Transitions that makes paragraphs coherent and support your train of thought. Examples of transitional words include “but”, “or”, however” and “in addition”.

Topic Sentence

The topic sentence is the thought or vital piece of information from which the rest of the paragraph flows. The topic sentence is the first sentence in the paragraph and should be quite short.

The topic sentence must be supported with details. When giving details, be specific. Give dates, places, times and names.

Too Vague	More Specific
Several people complained that it gets too hot in the office.	Thirteen employees reported the temperature rose above 24^{oC} in the Customer Service Department on January 13,15,18 and 21.

Be **complete**. Give all the information necessary for the reader to act.

Incomplete	More complete
The meeting will be on Thursday during lunch.	The secretarial staff will meet Thursday, 17 June 2001, 12 noon at the Kraft Cafe, 113 Long Street, Johannesburg.

Be **accurate**. Check your facts. Are they correct?

Incorrect	Correction
Since Freedom Day is on Friday in 2004, all security personnel were required to work that night.	[*Freedom Day was on a Saturday in 2004.*]

Be **clear**. Avoid jargon and company specific phrases.

Difficult	More Clear
In future incendiary emergency exercise egress patterns cannot be disregarded by assigned marshals or the result may be ultimate loss of personnel.	Marshals must ensure that emergency exit routes are practiced in fire drills, or people may die.

Be **ordered**. Write the way things happened. Bring the reader along with you step by step.

- The opening paragraph should create the context or framework for the rest of your document
- The middle paragraph(s) or body should deal clearly with the topics you are writing about.
- The closing paragraph should summarise the main points or ideas and tie up loose ends. Be specific.

Be **concise**. Avoid wordiness. Use the fewest words possible. Remember to try shorter sentences to make your writing more readable.

Wordy	More Concise
It has come to my attention, as brought forward by several straight-thinking and appreciated employees in the mail room, that personal correspondence not addressed to a localized address in the company is requiring far too much valuable and expensive company time to research.	Please request that all mail sent to you includes your work station identification in the address. Thanks to the mail room for their help in alerting us to this way of reducing costs.

In order to create effective paragraphs you need to:

- Focus on one idea at a time. Combining different topics in a paragraph can be confusing.
- Keep your paragraphs short as long paragraphs lose their focus and become boring. Keep to one thought and no more than three sentences per paragraph.
- Vary the length and structure of both your sentences and paragraphs as this will help keep you document interesting.

2.3 Control the overall structure of writing and formulate a conclusion

In formal paragraphs you will sometimes see a sentence at the end of the paragraph which summarises the information that has been presented. This is the concluding sentence. You can think of a concluding sentence as a sort of topic sentence in reverse. Let's see how a concluding sentence (in **bold** font) might look in our sample paragraph about Still Bay:

"My hometown, Still Bay, is famous for several amazing natural features. First, it is noted for the Goukou River, which is very wide and beautiful. Also, on the other side of the town is Pulpit Hill, which is unusual because it is very steep. ***These two landmarks are truly amazing and make my hometown a famous place.****"*

Notice how the concluding sentence, "*These two landmarks are truly amazing and make my hometown a famous place",* summarises the information in the paragraph. Notice also how the concluding sentence is similar to, but not exactly the same as, the topic sentence.

Not all paragraphs contain concluding sentences, especially if the paragraph is very short. However, if your paragraph is very long, it is a good idea to use a concluding sentence.

Concluding your essay or report

The conclusion brings closure to the reader, summing up your points or providing a final perspective on your topic.

All the conclusion needs is three or four strong sentences. Simply review the main points (in different words to what you have used already) or briefly describe your feelings about the topic. Even an anecdote can end your essay in a useful way.

Module 3
Draft own writing and edit to improve clarity and correctness

After completing this module, the learner will be able to draft own writing and edit to improve clarity and correctness, by successfully completing the following:

- Ensure that writing produced is appropriate to audience, purpose and context. Corrections are an improvement on the original
- Check control of grammar, diction, sentence and paragraph structure and adapt it for consistency
- Achieve logical sequencing of ideas and overall unity through redrafting
- Ensure that there is clear evidence that major grammatical and linguistic errors are edited out in redrafts
- Identify and adapt / remove inappropriate or potentially offensive language
- Ensure that experimentation with different layouts and options for presentation is appropriate to the nature and purpose of the task

Draft own writing and edit to improve clarity and correctness

Writing is an important method of communicating one's beliefs, intentions, knowledge, and ideas.

Accurate use of language allows others to understand what we mean.

A critical part of the writing process is editing. Good editing removes all the errors which distract readers from the content and ensure the message is clear and true. Editing is, however, one of the most frequently skipped steps in writing and, often when it is done, it is not done well.

When you are editing you are looking for errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, accuracy of information, consistency in writing style, tightness of expression, clarity of explanation, and logical sequencing of your argument or story.

3.1 Produce writing appropriate to audience, purpose and context

You should ensure that you are writing with a specific audience in mind and that you are providing them with information that is important to them:

- Evaluating your readers' knowledge of a subject will help you determine the type and amount of information you need to include in a message.
- Use simple language as you don't want the reader to consult a dictionary to decipher what you are trying to say. If you use complex language with a huge vocabulary you may frustrate your reader.
- Most people are juggling several tasks at the same time and are interested in receiving only necessary information. By anticipating your readers' probable reaction, you can address any doubts, fears, or uncertainties they might have about your purpose. This increases the probability that they will accept your message.

3.2 Check the written text

Editing is an important step. Effective editing will assist you with the following:

- **Correct spelling and grammar**
- **Formatting (logical and readable)**
- **Relevance of information**

If possible when editing, allow a few days between completion and editing; it will allow you to see the material with fresh eyes.

When editing, check the following:

Focus and purpose:

- What is your document intended to do or accomplish?
- Will the purpose be clear to the reader?
- Can you offer a one-sentence summary of the document's purpose?
- Is your main point stated early in the document?

Audience:

- Do you have a specific and appropriate audience in mind? Can you describe them?
- What is their position? What is your relationship with them?
- How much do they already know about this topic?
- Can you determine what their feelings toward your document will be?
- Have you used language that they will be able to understand?
- Is your tone appropriate for your audience?

Organisation:

- Does your document proceed in a logical and organised way?
- Is each paragraph organised around one main idea?
- Can you identify the most important information in the message quickly?
- Ask others to read your document and tell you what they think are your most important ideas.

Development:

- Is the order of the points logical?
- Did you include enough details and examples to support your main point?
- Is it clear by the end of the message what you want the reader to do or know?
- Do you provide enough context for the message, or is more background information required?
- Do any paragraphs seem shorter and in need of more material than others?
- Is all the information that you have included necessary?
- Ask someone to read the document and comment if something is unclear and needs more description, explanation, or support.

Formatting:

- Are all of the parts of the message included and in the correct position?
- Does the document look attractive on the page?
- Does your document conform to standard business writing convention?

Sentence structure, punctuation, choice of words and spelling:

- Are there problems that frequently occur in your writing? Keep a list of problems that recur and check for those specifically.
- Read the document aloud to see and hear if there are any missing or wrong words, or other errors that you can spot.
- For possible spelling errors, **proofread backwards**, from the end of a line to the beginning.

3.3 Use logical sequencing

Logical sequencing of ideas and overall unity are achieved through redrafting, for example[15]:

Paragraph:

There should be evidence of a logical progression of thought, rather than an apparent fumbling around for anything that comes to mind regarding the particular point in focus. Within a paragraph, the sentences should fit together in an order that makes sense. The writer directs the reader by the construction of sentences and by choosing the order in which they should go. We have already established that the first sentence is usually the topic sentence and that all the sentences should seek to develop a key point summed up by the topic sentence.

How did it feel reading the above paragraph? Confusing? You probably understood the main points and got the general gist of it, but it is likely that you felt that it did not flow, that it jumped around. The first sentence does not serve as a clear introduction to the theme of the paragraph; it is not the topic sentence. The points made are all valid and all with the same focus, but there is no clear, logical train of thought. Just as one paragraph needs to flow smoothly onto the next, so does a sentence need to connect with the one previous to it and the one that follows.

Redrafted paragraph:

Within a paragraph, the sentences should fit together in an order that makes sense. We have already established that the first sentence is usually the topic sentence and that all the sentences should seek to develop a key point summed up by the topic sentence. The writer directs the reader by the construction of sentences and by choosing the order in which they should go. There should be evidence of a logical progression of thought, rather than an apparent fumbling around for anything that comes to mind regarding the particular point in focus.

3.4 Correct grammatical and linguistic errors

Please bear in mind the following basic rules for correct sentences[16]:

1. **Every sentence needs a verb. If it lacks a verb, it is not a sentence. "Verb" here means MAIN VERB, which cannot be in a tense or form which renders it a dependant clause rather than a main clause.**

Incorrect	Correct
Twenty-seven different student errors of maximum violence.	I counted twenty-seven different student errors of maximum violence.

[15] Retrieved from: http://hospitality.hud.ac.uk/studyskills/writing/structure/sequencingSent.htm
[16] Retrieved from: http://www.jessicatiffin.org/teaching/commonerrors.htm#5

2. The main verb in a sentence CANNOT be in the continuous form, i.e. it cannot have the -ing ending. The present continuous is a dependent tense, i.e. it must be attached to another clause with a proper, non -ing verb.

Incorrect	Correct
Placing themselves in the vicinity of bars. Even this is wrong: The students placing themselves in the vicinity of bars.	The students placed themselves in the vicinity of bars. OR: Placing themselves in the vicinity of bars, the students became extremely drunk and failed all their courses.

3. A sub-clause is not a sentence. A phrase which begins with, or includes, "although", "since", "because", "which", "who", etc, cannot stand alone: it must be attached to a second phrase which completes the thought (and usually, contains the main verb).

Incorrect	Correct
The bar which the students frequent.	This is the bar which the students frequent. OR: The bar which the students frequent is called *The Mended Drum*.

4. Please watch your tenses! The general convention when undertaking English analysis is to use present tense, and you should make sure that you **stick to one tense throughout your essay!** Moving from past to present within a few sentences, or sometimes within one sentence, is both inelegant and incorrect.

Incorrect	Correct
Smith believed that students liked to hang around in pubs. OR: Smith believed that students like to hang around in pubs.	Smith believes that students like to hang around in pubs.

In an age of word processing, there is no excuse for mis-spelling words. Run the spell-checker before you print out your text.

- You should make sure that your word processor is set to UK English, not American English; American spellings are not correct for the South African context.
- The major pitfall, spelling-wise, has become the one which your spellchecker cannot pick up: homophones and basic malapropisms. Homophones are words which sound the same but are spelt differently. Malapropism is the use of a completely incorrect word that often sounds only vaguely similar to the one you actually mean. Both are actual errors of knowledge, rather than errors of carelessness; most people seem to have two or three favourites which they consistently misuse. It is very much to your benefit to work out what your common errors are, and correct them when you write.
- If you're not sure of the meaning of a word, LOOK IT UP!
- Very common and recurring problems include loose/lose, then/than, were/where, ones/once, cites/sites, opposed to/a pose to.

Incorrect	Correct
You will loose marks for doing this.	You will not lose marks for doing this.
Spell-check rather then handing in error-filled work.	Spell-check rather than handing in error-filled work.
I correct student errors were I can.	I correct student errors where I can.
Ones upon a time, students used to learn grammar at school.	Once upon a time, students used to learn grammar at school.
This page sites famous author Terry Smith.	This page cites famous author Terry Smith.

3.5 Adapt / remove inappropriate / potentially offensive language

Make sure that you check for inappropriate or potentially offensive language and adapt /remove it. Examples are:

Inappropriate or potentially offensive language	Explanation
Obfuscation	Obfuscation is the concealment of intended meaning in communication, making communication confusing, intentionally ambiguous, and more difficult to interpret. "One of the best ways to win an argument is to use language that obfuscates the issues; just ask any lawyer."[17]
Excessive use of jargon or jargon that excludes	The problem with jargon is that only a few people may understand the actual terminology used by different groups and thus be excluded.
Insensitive choice of words	Avoid language that reinforces stereotypes or excludes certain groups of people. Sexism, race and ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, depersonalisation of persons with disabilities or illnesses, patronising or demeaning expressions, and language that excludes or emphasises differences.
Offensive or incorrect register	The audience judges what language is offensive and what is not. It is a subject that depends mostly on the ideas of the audience. Offensive language is rude, in that it is not polite or accepted in the place where it is being spoken. It disagrees with the personal beliefs of those who find it offensive. To degrade something that many are proud of or hold dear to them is offensive. It makes people feel that they are less than they are. If someone told a military general that the army was a waste of time, it would degrade the things he believes in. Telling a baseball player that sports are a waste of time is offensive.

[17] Retrieved from: http://examples.yourdictionary.com/obfuscate

3.6 Experiment with different layouts and presentation options

The form business letters, memos, reports and e-mails take can vary from the traditional to the more contemporary. Some companies have a policy for writing company documents with regards their form and layout. Before you write, check your company's policy.

In general:

- Use single spaces between lines
- Use double spaces between paragraphs
- Place the beginning line of each paragraph flush left for a contemporary look.
- Leave white space around the typed copy for a pleasant "feel" to the letter. White space makes a letter more readable.
- Two-centimetre margins usually give a document enough white space to "feel" more readable.
- Headings should be bold
- No more than two fonts should be used in a document e.g. Arial Narrow for headings and Tahoma for the body of your document
- Colour should be limited especially in a formal document

Regardless of the layout you have chosen, documents should project a positive image of your organisation and meet basic formatting and layout requirements. In order to check the detail of your document, you may also want to consider the following:

- Do page numbers follow logically?
- Does the index (if any) and text headings match?
- Did you include any addenda as you said?
- Is your document dated correctly?
- Did you acknowledge any resources you used (if needed)?
- Is your information correct and accurate? Double-check any information tables and/or descriptions of data.
- Did you comply effectively with any organisational, industry and/or national standards and requirements?
- Have the (necessary) people approved your text?

If possible, let one or more people proofread your text for you. If you work often with a text, you tend to lose your sensitivity for its accuracy and correctness. A fresh pair of eyes can spot inaccuracies in incorrect information easier.

Note:

Please refer to your organisational policies and procedures for writing specific documents to find the accepted layout and format for your written documents.

Summative Assessment

You are required to complete a number of summative assessment activities in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide. The Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide will guide you as to what you are required to do:

- Complete all the required administration documents and submit all the required documentation, such as a certified copy of your ID, a copy of your CV and relevant certificates of achievement:
  - Learner personal information form
  - Pre-assessment preparation sheet
  - Assessment plan document
  - Declaration of authenticity form
  - Appeals procedure declaration form
- Place your complete Learner Workbook (with the completed Class Activities) in the specified place in the Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide.
- Complete the summative assessment activities in your workplace:

Knowledge Questions

Individually, complete this summative activity in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide

Practical Activities

Individually, complete this summative activity in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide

Witness Testimony

Individually, complete this summative activity in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide

Logbook

Individually, complete this summative activity in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide

Once you have completed all the summative activities in your Learner Portfolio of Evidence Guide, complete the Assessment Activities Checklist to ensure that you have submitted all the required evidence for your portfolio, before submitting your portfolio for assessment.

References and Further Reading

Books

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