UNIT 11   BUSINESS REPORTS

Structure

11.0   OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

*   describe the nature of business reports;
*   explain the importance of reports;
*   understand the essentials of a good report;
*   enumerate the types of reports and
*   prepare business reports.

11.1   INTRODUCTION

Information plays a vital role in every organization. Every phase of organizational activity creates information which should be scrutinised and preserved. Various types of information need to be processed and presented in the form of 'reports'. Thus, reports constitute a very important means of communication in a business organization. A business report essentially is a communication that contains factual information in an organised form. In every organization, several thousands of reports are prepared every year, depending on requirements. These reports vary in length and content. They provide important information to the top management for making decisions. In this unit, you will learn the meaning, importance and types of reports.

11.2   MEANING AND DEFINITION OF A REPORT

Every phase of organizational activity creates information. This information needs to be collected, scrutinised and presented in the form of 'reports'. Reports are presented in a clear correct and coherent language. In every organization, several thousands of reports are prepared every year, depending on requirements. These reports vary in length and content. They provide important information to top management for making decisions. Simply stated, *a report is "a communication from someone who has some information to someone who wants to use that information."* According to Johnson, a good business report is a communication that contains factual information organised and presented in a clear, correct and coherent language. For example, a manufacturing company decides to establish a new manufacturing unit at a place and constitutes teams to prepare reports for the viability of the project. Different teams will inspect the proposed site and prepare their reports. The land acquisition team will inspect several places, negotiate with the land owners and prepare its report. Similarly, another team looking after the infrastructural facilities will contact the concerned departments, such as electricity department, water supply department, railways and prepare its reports. There may be another team which will prepare its report for logistics. Thus, a single project will lead to the preparation of several reports. *A report may thus, be defined as a written statement based on facts, events and opinions and usually expresses a summarised and interpretative value of this information.* It may deal with past accomplishments, present conditions and probable future developments. To summarise, it may be stated that:

- Every report is based on facts, events or opinions;
- It presents a snapshot of events at a particular point of time, usually in writing;
- Presents information in a summarised and systematic manner;
- Provides a record for future use.

11.3 IMPORTANCE OF REPORTS

Reports have an important place in the functioning of organizations. Reports are basic management tools used in decision making. With the help of effective reports an organization can improve its goodwill and public relations. The importance of business report can be summarised as follows:

1) **Conveyor of information**: Reports serve as conveyors of information throughout the organization. It is by means of reports that the management is able to establish channels of communication through which ideas, opinions, suggestions, orders and commands flow in various directions. Timely flow of information helps an organization to take decisions promptly. Reports also provide necessary information to the shareholders, investors, customers, creditors and the general public as regards to the affairs of an organization.

2) **Help management to review and evaluate office operations**: Reports help management to review and evaluate all office operations continuously. They help in planning for future operations in a purposive way. Reports help in coordinating the activities of different departments. They also help managers to monitor and control the affairs of the firm in an effective manner.

3) **A tool for measuring performance**: Reports are useful tools for measuring departmental performance. The operational data from various departments are presented in a meaningful form. This helps management to assess the performance of each and every department.

4) **Reports help in making desirable changes**: Changes in business environment pose a threat and challenge to business firms. Reports are prepared to analyse the factors responsible for the changes. This helps in bringing desirable changes in business policies.

5) **Reports help in measuring the effectiveness of the organisation**: Reports are prepared to measure the effectiveness of departmental operations, employees and the management. This is also helpful in measuring the overall effectiveness of the organization.

11.4 ESSENTIALS OF A GOOD REPORT

Preparation of a report is not easy. It demands skills of a special kind. A report, as we all know, is more than language, composition, just as any other good piece of writing is more than words, commas, and semicolons. There are some common features which need to be understood clearly by all those interested in using "reports" as effective communication devices. These ate outlined below:

1) **Accuracy**: Information presented in reports should be accurate. Inaccurate information may often land the managers in trouble. As far as possible, the report must be based on accurate information. For example, in the case of the project report given in the previous section, if the teams give inaccurate information about the place or availability of the infrastructural facilities, the company may face much problem in future.

2) **Simplicity**: A report should be simple. This would help in arriving at decisions quickly and easily. If the facts are presented in complex manner, the managers may not reach the correct decision.

3) **Completeness**: The report should be complete in all respects. There should be no room for ambiguity. For example in the above case, if report about any of the required information is missing, managers will not be able to take a final decision.

4) **Brevity**: Executives do not find sufficient time to read lengthy reports. Therefore, the reports should briefly reflect the essential point.

5) **Appearance**: The arrangement, organisation, format, layout and make-up of a report should be pleasing and as far as possible, eye-catching.

6) **Readability**: Reports must be easy to read. They must avoid technical language as far as possible. The writer must present the facts through elegant and grammatically correct English.

7) **Reliability**: Reports should be reliable, and should not create an erroneous impression in the minds of readers either due to oversight or neglect.

8) **Economy**: Report writing should not be a costly exercise. The most economical methods and standard quality must be employed, while conveying the matter.

9) **Timeliness**: To be useful and purposive, reports should reach the readers well in time. Any delay in submission of reports makes the preparation of reports a futile exercise.

10) **Logical content**: The content of the report must be presented in a logical manner. The facts must be reported in an unbiased manner. Distinctive points must bear self-explanatory headings and sub-headings.

Check Your Progress A

1) What do you mean by Business Reports?

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2) State any two points of importance of Business reports for your organization.

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3) Which of the following statements are "**True or False**"?

i) A report is a conveyor of information.

ii) A report is basically built around rumours.

iii) Office reports provide a record for future reference.

iv) Reports do not help measurement of performance.

v) There is no time limit for a good report.

11.5 TYPES OF REPORTS

There are many types of reports. These can be classified on the basis of directions, functions, legality, time and formal relationship. Let us now discuss in detail various types of reports.

11.5.1 News Reports

News reports are published in newspapers to inform the readers about different developments taking place in the world. A typical news report has the following structure:

Headline
Source, Date, Place
What

A sample news report is reproduced below:

COVID-19: 29,557 Patients Recover in 24 Hours, Highest Single Day Recovery So Far

Press Trust of India | Thursday July 23, 2020, New Delhi
As many as 29, 557 COVID-19 patients have recuperated in the past 24 hours, the highest recorded in a day so far, taking the recovery rate to 63.18 per cent, the Union Health Ministry said on Wednesday.

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1. News Report begins with an eye-catching **Headline** in bold fonts.
2. It is followed by the source (in the above case, it is Press Trust of India), day, date and place (where the news originated).
3. What – this is the main body of the report giving details, reason, etc. Depending on the current importance of the news report length of the description may vary – it may be long or short.

11.5.2 Academic Reports

An **academic report** is a written document incorporating the results of an experiment, study or survey and to be presented as a part of the project. For example, dissertation or thesis written to fulfil the requirement of the M.Phil. or Ph.D. degree respectively are academic reports. An academic report is prepared in a specific format which may differ for different types of academic reports.

Following sections are usually included in an academic report:

1. Introduction
2. Literature Review
3. Results
4. Discussion
5. Methods
6. Conclusions.

In the introduction part, the subject undertaken in the studies is briefly introduced along with its contemporary importance and the reason why it has been selected for the present studies. It also includes new dimensions of the subject covered in the present studies.

In the literature review, the research work done already on that topic is briefly described citing the relevant references. In the context of the earlier work, research gap is also identified which forms the basis of the problem investigated under the present work.

In the results section, results of the studies are presented in an appropriate format. The data are usually presented in Tables and Figures.

In the discussion part, the data are analysed and discussed. Here the importance of the findings, particularly with reference to the earlier findings, are highlighted.

In the methods section, the methodology followed for the studies is explained. In the case of a survey, the sample size and the procedure of selecting respondents are also described.

In the conclusion section, summary of the findings and their importance are given.

11.5.3 Market Survey Reports

Market survey reports constitute an important activity of a business organization. It is the survey and analysis of the market for a particular product or service before it is launched. This report includes feedback from the target audience, such as customer capabilities, buying potential, expectations and requirements. Data are collected about the customers' preferences, pricing trends, competing similar products, etc. and then new strategies are planned to address these requirements. Depending upon the types of product/service and target audience, different templates have been developed, which can be used for collecting data.

An example may be cited here to elaborate the point. Suppose a company wants to launch an automatic washing machine which consumes much water. Company will ask its marketing team to make a survey about the load shedding, water supply and buying ability of the customers in that area. If any of the three factors is missing, launching of the machine will be a failure.

Importance of the Market Survey Reports

1. **Identifying the target market**: It helps to identify the potential customers their preferences, buying capabilities, etc. Based on these findings, new products/ services can be developed.

2. **Developing new partnerships**: Market survey helps in identifying the potential partners who can be aligned with to promote your product/ service and sharing the benefits thereof.

3. **Creating relevant promotional material**: Market survey helps in developing appropriate materials, such as flyers, handbills, websites and social media accounts for promoting your products. It also helps to locate the regions where advertisements/ posters should be put up to push your products.

4. **Developing strategies to outmanoeuvre competitors**: Market survey helps to identify satisfaction/ dissatisfaction of the customers vis-a-vis other competitors. Thus it helps in planning modifications in the products, if necessary, to win back your customers and attract the new ones.

5. **Expanding business operations**: Market survey helps to identify new opportunities in business and act accordingly. You are able to determine specific directions in which your current business activities can be extended.

6.   **Helpful in decision making**: Market surveys guides the business organization to make appropriate decisions at the correct moment. For example, if a new franchisee is to be given, market survey guides whom it should be given to. Whether the present product needs improvement or it should be discontinued altogether, how to fix the price, etc. all these decisions are made on the basis of market survey.

11.5.4 Sample market survey report

A market survey report has following sections:

1. **Title**: Market survey report
2. **Prepared by:** Name (person or company)
3. **Summary:** It outlines purpose of the study and results of the survey, in brief. It may also include recommendations made.
4. **Objectives:** In this section, objectives of the survey are listed point-wise. It may also include reasons of the survey.
5. **Background information:** This information forms the basis of the present survey being undertaken. It includes the existing knowledge about that particular subject.
6. **Target group:** In this section, the demographic region covered by the market survey is mentioned. For example, if the survey covers only the males in the age group of 21-40 years in the National Capital Region, this will be called the target group. Target group is selected keeping in view the product/ service to be launched.
7. **Methodology:** This section clearly explains how data was collected, i.e. whether it was personal interview, through questionnaire, through telephonic conversation or online survey. Here the statistical methods used for analysing the data and accounting for the inaccuracies are also explained.
8. **Results:** In this section, the data collected are presented preferably in the tabular form depending on the requirement.
9. **Discussion:** The results are explained in this section. Appropriate figures, and bar diagrams may be used to make comparisons between different segments of the target group. The importance and reliability of the results vis-a-vis earlier surveys are also highlighted.
10. **Conclusions:** The conclusions drawn on the basis of the results and discussion are presented here. It is in fact the gist of the survey.
11. **Limitations:** The limitations of the survey are described in this section. For example, if the survey was conducted in the NCR, it may not work in other parts of the country. Or if it covers only a particular age group or gender or income group, it may not be valid for the whole society. These limitations should be mentioned in the report so that the reader gets a clear perspective of the studies.
12. **Appendices:** This section includes list of the documents appended with the report. For example, it may include questionnaire distributed to the respondents, list of the organizations/ institutions covered in the studies, etc.

11.5.5 Internal Enquiry Report

In this era of vigilant media and strict scrutiny by the government, even a small adverse incident in a company may attract attention of the public and if a prompt remedial action is not taken, it may jeopardise its reputation and goodwill created over the years. Many incidents, such as minor accident in the manufacturing unit, compromise with the quality of the products, indiscipline by an employee or unnecessary harassment of an employee require internal enquiry at the level of the company itself. For many such enquiries, internal

committees are already in place, which follow requisite procedure and rules for the internal enquiry.

A good internal enquiry report should satisfy "3Cs"

Clear: The language should be clear, i.e. there should be no ambiguity. There should be coherence and logic.

Complete: It should address/ resolve all issues.

Concise: It should be direct and succinct and avoid use of unnecessary verbosity.

There are three parts of an internal enquiry report:

1. **The beginning**: It comprises
   - **Executive summary**: A brief description of the complaint/ incident is given. It is followed by the description of the policy/ rule in vogue vis-a-vis the complaint. Then scope of the enquiry is explained. Finally, the ultimate conclusion is given.
   - **Complaint summary**: A brief summary of the complaint/ incident is given.
   - **Enquiry Summary**: The procedure of the enquiry is briefly explained.
   - **Conclusion/Recommendation**: The conclusion of the enquiry and recommendation(s) made are outlined.

2. **The middle part**: It has the following subsections:
   - **Factual background**: The complaint made or the incident occurred is described in an appropriate detail.
   - **Scope of the enquiry**: The focus of enquiry or the mandate given is described here. The relevant rules, if any, under which the enquiry is to be completed, are referred here.
   - **Evidence/ witnesses**: The evidence taken into account or versions of the witnesses examined are recorded.
   - **Analysis of the evidence**: How the evidence or the statements of the witness were analysed is described in this section.

3. **The end**: The last section has following parts:
   - **Findings**: The factual findings are explained.
   - **Conclusion(s) and recommendations**: Here the conclusions arrived at and the recommendations made for the subsequent action are given in detail
   - **Signature and Date**. It is signed by the appropriate authority and date is mentioned.
   - **Annexure**: List of documents (recorded statements of the witnesses, photographs of the locations, etc.) attached is given.

   While writing an internal enquiry report, one should try to follow the following points:
   - Try to be impartial
   - Try to be professional
   - Use impartial neutral verbs

- Use exactly descriptive verbs
- Be consistent in tense
- Avoid unnecessary adjectives
- Avoid unnecessary information.

A sample outline of an internal enquiry report is given below:

Internal Enquiry Report

Final Report   **Date** -

Matter –

Business name/ Location –

Investigator(s) –

Executive summary –

Complaint summary –

Conclusions –

Factual background –

Scope of the enquiry –

Witnesses –

Findings –

Recommendation –

Signature of Investigator(s)   **Date** -

Annexure-

Check your Progress B

1.   Explain news report with the help of a sample.

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2.   What is meant by academic report ?

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3.   Which of the following statements are "**True or False**"?

        (i)   News report is the publicity item of a company.
        (ii)   Academic report includes literature survey
        (iii)   Market survey is necessary before a product is launched.
        (iv)   Market survey is used to outmanoeuvre the competitors.
        (v)   Internal enquiry report is used to identify new partners.

4.   Fill in the Blanks:
        (i)   New report begins with an .... headline.
        (ii)   Different academic reports have different types of ....
        (iii)   Market survey is necessary to identify ....
        (iv)   A good internal enquiry report should satisfy ....
        (v)   Internal enquiry report should be .... and ....

11.6   LET US SUM UP

A report is a statement based on facts, events and opinions which serves as a communication to management for decision-making and action. Reports play a significant role in modern organizations. Effective report enhances the goodwill of the organization. Reports are the conveyor of information and help the management to face the changing environment. The essentials of a good report are accuracy, simplicity, completeness, brevity, appearance, readability, reliability, economy, timeliness and logical content.

News reports are published in newspapers to inform the readers about different developments taking place in the world. An academic report is a written document incorporating the results of an experiment, study or survey and to be presented as a part of the project. It is prepared in a specific format which may differ for different types of academic reports. Market survey reports constitute an important activity of a business organization. It is the survey and analysis of the market for a particular product or service before it is launched. It includes feedback from the target audience, such as customer capabilities, buying potential, expectations and requirements. An internal enquiry is carried out by the company to identify the cause of a particular incident in the company, such as minor accident, compromise with the quality of the products, indiscipline by an employee on unnecessary harassment of an employee. A committee constituted for the purpose submits its report with appropriate recommendations.

11.7   KEY WORDS

Contemporary: Belonging to the same time.

Dimension: Scope or importance of a write up.

Feedback: Checking the results after the completion of work, so that deviations can be checked and corrected in future.

Format: The organization, plan, style or type of a document

Infrastructural facilities: Basic facilities, such as electricity, water, logistics for an industry.

Load shedding: Disruption in the supply of electricity.

Purposive way: In a manner that has a definite objective,

Target market: The market to be concentrated on.

11.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A   3   i) True   ii) False   iii) True   iv) False   v) False

B   3   i) False   ii) True   iii) True   iv) True   v) False

      4   i) eye-catching ii) format   iii) target markets   iv) 3 Cs
            v) concise, complete

11.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS/EXERCISES

1)   What do you mean by Business Report? Explain their nature and importance.

2)   What are the various elements of a good report?

3)   What is a news report? Discuss its different components.

4)   What are academic reports. Discuss its important parts.

5)   What is market survey? Describe its importance.

6)   Discuss important sections of an internal enquiry report.

UNIT 12   PROCESS OF WRITING A REPORT

Structure

12.0   OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

* elaborate the principles of report writing;
* describe the procedure of report writing;
* explain the stages in report writing;
* explain various parts of a long report and
* prepare short reports in different formats.

12.1   INTRODUCTION

In Unit 11, you have learnt the meaning, importance, features, contents and types of reports. It also introduced some specimen reports. It is necessary for the report writer to remember the purpose of the report, the time frame within which the report is to be submitted and the status of the receiver in the organization for whom the report is intended. These can be ensured only when you follow certain principles while writing a report. These principles are accuracy, communication, short but clear title, etc. The report writer must have facts or data at his/her disposal before preparing periodic, routine reports as well as special reports. Above all, adequate care must be taken to ensure effective presentation at every stage of report writing. Tyler G. Hicks has suggested a four-step approach to planning and organising reports.

This unit is also concerned with the report writing. In this unit you will study the general guidelines, procedure and stages in report writing in more detail. You will also study how to prepare long reports and short reports for specific purposes.

12.2 GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING REPORTS

As you know, reports are used as tools of communication in an organisation. Hence your ability to write effective business reports is of great importance for your success as a secretary in any organization. Reports may be of routine or special nature. Generally, the routine reports are prepared by the subordinate staff and the special reports are prepared by senior officers. The business executive who requires the reports normally decides as to who should prepare the report on a certain matter. It is necessary for the report writer to remember the purpose of the report, the time frame within which the report is to be submitted and the status of the receiver in the organisation for whom the report is intended. These can be ensured only when you follow certain principles while writing a report. The principles are outlined below.

1) **Accuracy:** As mentioned in the previous unit, the information given in a report should be accurate and reliable. Wherever necessary the report should be supported by adequate factual data. It should be remembered that the method employed for data collections significantly influences the degree of accuracy. Hence, an appropriate method is to be selected and proper sources identified for obtaining accurate information required for the preparation of the report. If the information is not accurate, there is possibility of wrong decisions being taken. Accurate information helps in taking right decisions by the user of the report organization.

2) **Communication:** As already stated, every report is meant for communicating information to a person or group of persons. If a report is not communicated to the person for whom it is intended, it will not serve the purpose. Since the reports are considered vehicles of information, people at various levels in the organization may require them in order to take decisions or to perform the work assigned to them.

3) **Short but Clear Title:** The title of a report should be indicative of the contents of the report. It should be attractive too. Therefore, one should select a short and clear title which will reflect the contents of the report. The opening paragraphs should indicate the terms of reference or instructions, issued for consideration while preparing the report, mentioning the date thereof, so that it is immediately clear as to why the report is made.

4) **Language:** The language used in the report should be understandable to the people for whom it is intended. Simple language should be used as far as possible. It should not include unnecessary technical terms and phrases which may not be understood by the users of the report.

5) **Routine Nature:** Reports, particularly routine reports, should be prepared in a routine manner. It would facilitate the reader to understand the nature of the report without looking into the detailed contents. In this context formal reports are useful.

6)   Paragraph: It is desirable to divide the report into a number of paragraphs. Each para should be devoted to a particular aspect. For example, a report of the general body meeting prepared by the Secretary may have several paragraphs, each of them related to different resolutions and decisions taken.

7)   Concise: The report should deal with the matter as concisely as possible. If details of certain aspects are essential to be incorporated in the body of the main report, they may be separately appended to the report and references to such appendices may be given at the relevant places in the report.

8)   Recommendations: If recommendations are to be made, they should be given at the end of the report under the heading of suggestions or recommendations. It is needless to mention that the recommendations should be based on what has been studied, analysed or scrutinised. Normally, management takes decisions on the basis of such recommendations given in the report.

9)   Signature and Date: It is important that the person preparing the report should put his signature and date. Signature acts as a check on the reliability of the findings in the report. The person who signs the report becomes responsible for any information included in the report. Hence reports are not accepted without signature of the presenter.

Check Your Progress A

6)   State the importance of accuracy in the preparation of a report.

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7)   What points you keep in mind while deciding the title of the report?

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8)   Which of the following statements are "**True or False**"?

vi)   Reports are used as tools of communication.
vii)   Routine reports are prepared by senior officers only.
viii) Factual data need not be provided in a report.
ix)   Every report is meant for communicating to others.
x)   The report should deal with the subject matter in a concise manner.
xi)   Recommendations need not be given in the reports.
xii)   The report writer should put his signature on the report.

12.3 PROCEDURE OF REPORT WRITING

Report writing requires not only the ability to communicate but also the ability to present the report in a systematic and meaningful form. It is necessary for the report writer to have clear understanding of the purpose of the report. Whether he is to present facts pertinent to any problem, or he is to analyse and interpret factual information and make recommendations on the basis of conclusions drawn. He must have facts or data at his disposal before preparing periodic, routine reports as well as special reports. Above all, adequate care must be taken to ensure effective presentation at every stage of report writing. The procedure of report writing involves the following major steps:

1) Determine the purpose of the report
2) Identify the receivers
3) Collect the necessary data
4) Analyse and classify the data
5) Outline the report
6) Prepare the final report
7) Present the report

Let us learn them in detail.

1) **Determine the Purpose of the Report**: Let us discuss in detail. It is worth noting that every report must serve the purpose for which it is prepared. Whether it is supply of information or analysis and interpretation of data for decision-making or problem-solving needs to be kept in view by the report-writer. The report will be no use, if it fails to serve the purpose of the ultimate user. Thus, as the first step in report writing, one should identify the purpose of the report.

2) **Identify the Receiver or User**: Before writing the report, one should also identify the users of the report in terms of their number, expertise, interests, hierarchical position, etc.

   Expertise: The report writer should know to what extent users of the report are conversant with the subject matter of the report and whether they are familiar with the technical aspects of the subject, if any.

   Interests: He should have an understanding of users interests as regards the facts and findings to be presented in the report, and to what extent the report will be taken seriously. For instance, a report to determine the causes of an underlying problem or to ascertain whether or not the problem exists may be of greater interest to managers directly concerned rather than to others.

   Hierarchical Position: Users of reports may be either the top management or departmental heads or supervisors. The contents of a report, its style of presentation, and details to be included in it should be decided according to the position or rank of the user in the organization. For instance, a report on declining sales should be presented differently for the sales manager as compared with the report for consideration of both sales managers and the production manager.

3) **Collect the Necessary Data**: Once the purpose of the report is clearly understood and the users are identified, attention should be paid to collecting the data from various sources. Data, as you are aware, generally consists of facts and figures. Primary data may be obtained through interviews, observation, mailed questionnaires, schedules, etc. Secondary data may be available from files, documents, published and unpublished reports. Taking into consideration the purpose of the report, one should decide whether to collect data from primary source or secondary sources or both. It is needless to add that accuracy and reliability of data is an important factor that the report writer should always keep in mind.

4) **Analyse and Classify the Data**: Mass of data collected from various sources may not be of much use unless the same are classified and analysed in the light of the purpose already set. There are no specific rules for classification and analysis of data. The effectiveness of a report obviously depends on the ability to analyse the data properly, interpret it correctly and draw appropriate conclusions.

5) **Outline the Report**: After classifying the data, one should prepare an outline of the report. In fact, the organisation of the report determines how the report is received. A long report may have many parts. However, while preparing the outline, one should concentrate on three major parts: 1) Introduction 2) Body of the Report and 3) Conclusion and Recommendations. These three parts together make up the bulk of the report. Two main aspects of the report need to be decided upon at this stage.

1) The order in which the introduction, body of the report, and conclusion and recommendations are to be presented.

2) How to organise the body of the report, as it constitutes the larger part of the report.

As far as the first aspect relating to the order of the three parts is concerned, any of the following three options may be adapted:

Option 1	Option 2	Option3
Introduction	Introduction	Conclusion
Body	Conclusion	Introduction
Conclusion	Body	Body

One may adopt first option when the user is not likely to understand conclusions until he reads the rest of the report. This option is also suitable when the conclusions are disagreeable from the users point of view or the conclusions are contrary to the users view point. The order of presentation as per the first option may prompt the receiver of the report to spend considerable time reading the detailed information before accepting the conclusions.

Options 2 and 3 may be adopted under any of the following four situations: 1) when the reader needs the conclusions first, 2) receiver has enough background to understand the conclusions without reading other parts of the report, 3) the report may be easier to read as the conclusions may provide a framework for interpreting the information in the body, and 4) the conclusions are agreeable from the point of view of the receiver.

The second aspect relating to the organisation of the body of the report is also equally important. As stated earlier, the body of the report generally forms the largest part of the report. Therefore, it is necessary to organise it such a way that it flows smoothly and has the kind of impact that is desired.

6) **Prepare the Final Report**: Once the outline of the report is ready, one should start writing the report. Proper presentation of the reported matter enhances the effectiveness of the report. One should use a common set of symbols that many other writers use. For presenting the information in the body, one may use tables, graphs, diagrams, etc. The reader can easily understand the substance of the report more quickly with the help of graphic presentation of data (like histogram, smoothed frequency curve, frequency polygon, etc.) and diagrammatic presentation (like pie diagram, bar diagram, cartogram, pictogram, etc.). The report writer should adopt an appropriate style in accordance with the nature and purpose of the report. The following suggestions may be useful to consider while preparing the report. While preparing the final report, you should consider the following points:

i) Consider the suitability of the language to be used. Avoid unfamiliar words as much as possible.
ii) Avoid offensive language which may be distasteful to the readers.
iii) Formal business reports demand an impersonal style of presentation. So, better not use the 'you tone' in such cases.
iv) Adopt a positive approach wherever possible.
v) Use active voice as much as possible. However, passive voice may be used wherever it is necessary to deemphasise any idea.
vi) Make sure that each sentence and paragraph contains only one central idea.
vii) Avoid unnecessary repetitions.
viii) Check and recheck the script for grammar and typographical errors.

One should remember that the purpose of classification and analysis of data is to facilitate in making useful recommendations. While drawing conclusions, on the basis of data, the writer has all the freedom and discretion. But it is most essential as to ensure that the recommendations are convincing to the readers. If the report writer can substantiate suggestions, the receiver is likely to accept the same without hesitations. The final draft of the report should, accordingly incorporate all the major recommendations.

7) **Present the Report**: Every report, once prepared, must be presented to the appropriate authority for consideration and decision-making

Check Your Progress B

1) List out the important stages involved in report writing.

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    …………………………………………………………………………………….

2) Why is it necessary to identify the purpose of the report?

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3) What methods can be followed for presenting a report?

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4) What are the main parts of a report? State the order in which they appear in the report.
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……
……

5) Which of the following statements are "**True or False**"?

i) The report writer should not accept the views and opinions of others.
ii) In using the data and in reaching conclusions, the report writer has all the freedom and discretion.
iii) Conclusions section is always presented at the end of the report.
iv) It is not necessary to take into account receiver's interests while preparing the report.
v) A good report always contains less graphs and diagrams.

12.4 STAGES IN REPORT WRITING

You have studied the detailed procedure of preparing a business report. In the light of the procedure, let us study the steps involved in the preparation. Tyler G. Hicks has suggested a four-step approach to planning and organising reports. The activities involved in each step are outlined below:

Step 1: Prepare Material

- Collect information, facts, illustrations.

- Check to see that you have all the information needed.

- Decide on the purpose of the report: who will read it? Why does he want it? What does he require? How will he use it?

Step 2: Plan Report

- Classify material.

- Make an outline.

- Make a list of major and minor subject headings.

Step 3: Write Report

- State the subject, purpose and plan the introduction of the report.

- Describe the equipment, procedures and results in the body of the report.

- Summarise the conclusions and recommendations. Give emphasis where it is required.

- Condense the report in one or two paragraphs in the abstract.

- Prepare a table of contents, a list of illustrations and tables, appendices and bibliography.

Step 4: Criticise Report

- Examine the report as a whole, the plan and the proportion of parts.

- Check the agreement of the title, the table of contents, the introduction and the abstract.

- Check the proportion of paragraphs and sentences.

- Examine the details of the textual transitions from topic to topic, part to part, sentence structure and wording.

12.5 LONG REPORTS

You have studied various aspects relating to report writing such as general guidelines, procedure, stages, etc. Let us now take up the practical aspects of writing reports. As mentioned before, the format and style of presentation are different for different types of reports. **Business Reports may be classified on the basis of their length as: 1) Long Reports and 2) Short Reports.** The format of a long report is different from that of short report. Let us first consider the structure of long reports, and the structure of short reports will be discussed in the next section.

A long report generally consists of three parts: 1) preliminary part, 2) the text, and 3) the supplementary part. Each of these parts may include several sub-parts. The three main parts of a report as well as their sub-parts are depicted in Figure 12.1 below.
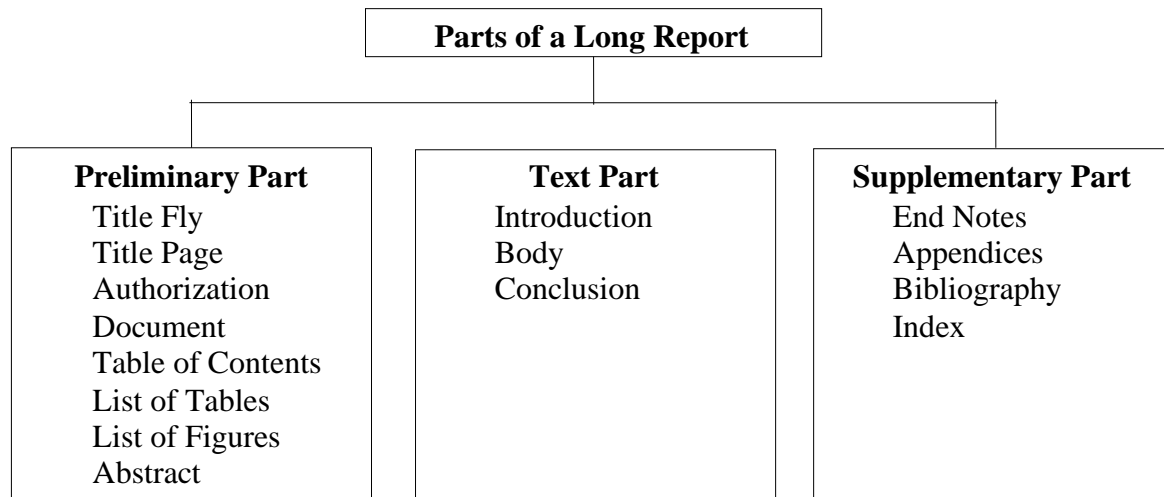
```
                    ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                    │    Parts of a Long Report   │
                    └──────────────┬──────────────┘
          ┌────────────────────────┼────────────────────────┐
┌──────────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────────┐
│  Preliminary Part    │ │    Text Part     │ │  Supplementary Part  │
│    Title Fly         │ │   Introduction   │ │    End Notes         │
│    Title Page        │ │   Body           │ │    Appendices        │
│    Authorization     │ │   Conclusion     │ │    Bibliography      │
│    Document          │ │                  │ │    Index             │
│    Table of Contents │ │                  │ │                      │
│    List of Tables    │ │                  │ │                      │
│    List of Figures   │ │                  │ │                      │
│    Abstract          │ │                  │ │                      │
└──────────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └──────────────────────┘
```

Figure 12.1: Parts of a Long Report

12.5.1 Preliminary Part

In the preliminary part of a long report a variety of items are presented. Normally, the nature of items depends upon the situation, nature and contents of the report. For instance, a formal report includes more items than an informal report. The following are generally included in the preliminary part of a formal report:

1) **Title Fly**: The title fly contains only the report title. The title should be brief and indicative of the contents and depth of the report.

2) **Title Page**: Title page is compulsory for all business reports. This should include the title of the report, name and designation of the author, date of submission and name and title of the person for whom it is prepared.

3) **Authorisation Document**: A copy of the letter issued by the competent person authorising the report to be made should be included in the preliminary part.

4) **Table of Contents**: Table of contents is normally called 'contents'. It lists various divisions (chapters) of the report such as the first and second level headings (chapters and sub chapters) in the text, list of tables, list of figures, appendices, bibliography, etc. It also gives the page numbers for each heading of chapters.

5) **List of Tables**: List of tables is presented separately after the table of contents. The list of table includes the table number, table title, and the page number where the table is located. This list is prepared in the same order they appear in the report.

6) **List of Figures**: List of figures follows the list of tables in the report. The format of the list of figure is the same as the list of tables. It consists of the serial number, title and the page number of the figures. The figures are listed in the same order of their appearance in the report.

7) **Abstract**: This is also called 'synopsis'. Abstract is nothing but a summary of the entire text. This helps the receiver to form an idea of the report before reading it completely. Normally, the abstract is comprised of few paragraphs and it seldom exceeds one page.

12.5.2 Text

That part of the report which appears between the preliminary part and the supplementary part is known as the text. Sometimes it is also referred to as the body of the report. The text constitutes the major part of the report. As discussed in the earlier section, it comprises three major parts: 1) introduction, 2) body, and 3) conclusion. We have already discussed about the order (or sequence) in which these three main parts appear in the report. Let us now briefly discuss the contents of these three parts of the text.

1) **Introduction**: Normally, the introduction presents the background of the report, the objectives, methods of data collection, analysis and the organisation of the report. The introduction tells the reader what he will read in the body of the report.

2) **Body**: It is the most important part of the report, and includes the whole details of the study including tables, figures, graphs, diagrams, etc.

3) **Conclusion**: It is the summary of what the reader had just read. The conclusion highlights the significant points emerging from the report and may also describe the divergent points noted in various sections of the body. Based on the conclusions drawn, recommendations may be made at the end of this section.

12.5.3 Supplementary Part

The supplementary part appears at the end of the report, that is, after the text. Depending on the nature of the report, many items are included in the supplementary part but the most common among these are: endnotes, appendices, bibliography and index. Let us study briefly about these parts separately.

1) **Endnotes**: Using footnotes is a very common practice. Footnotes appear at the foot of a page. Sometimes, footnotes are avoided and they are presented at the end immediately after the text. **When notes are given on a separate page immediately following the text, they are called endnotes**. These endnotes should be presented in the same serial order as are cited in the report.

2) **Appendices or Annexures**: Sometimes details of any matter may be useful to the report, when presented in the text but may detract the attention of the reader when presented in the text. Such material is better presented at the end in the form of appendices or annexures. Indeed any material relevant to the text may be presented in the supplementary part, as **appendix or annexure**. Questionnaires, letters, memos and other related material are normally included as appendix with appropriate title and serial number.

3) **Bibliography**: This is also known as **references**. Bibliography is a list of references relating to the documents, publications, reports, etc., that might have been consulted in preparing the report. The references prove to be useful to readers who want additional information. Generally, the bibliography is presented in alphabetical order.

4) **Index**: This is an alphabetical list of key topics or terms, indicating the page number wherein the topic or term occurs. The index where necessary is also presented in alphabetical order in the supplementary parts.

As stated earlier, all long reports need not necessarily consist of all the parts mentioned above. Sometimes there may be some more parts also. In some reports, for instance, there may be a preface, foreword, acknowledgements, etc.

12.6 SHORT REPORTS

You have learnt about the features of long reports in the previous section. While discharging responsibilities as an office secretary, one has to write several short reports also. Normally, the format of a long report is different from the short report. Long report consists of a number of parts and are written with greater detail than short reports. Depending upon the purpose, context and the intended receivers, short reports are prepared in different forms. Broadly, there are three forms used for such reports.

Let us learn them in detail.

1)   Memorandum Form

2)   Minutes Form

3)   Letter Form

Let us discuss these three forms in detail with some illustrations.

12.6.1 Memorandum Form

Memorandum is the most widely used form of written communication within an organization. The Memorandum form is normally adopted for communication between members of the same organization. It can be used conveniently for inter-departmental and inter-branch communication, or prepared to be filed as records and references.

The format of memorandum is simple. In a memorandum, the niceties of letter are sacrificed for the sake of conciseness. The format is intended to simplify and speed up communication. Organizations often provide pre-printed forms to the users with the basic elements of any memorandum. The format of a memorandum is given below:

XYZ Manufacturing Company Ltd
New Delhi

To   : ....
From   : ....
Dated   : ....
Subject : ....

....

....

....

....

....

Sometimes pre-printed memorandum forms consist of an original and two or more colour-coded carbon copies. It may also include space for the receiver to reply. For clear understanding of the format of a memorandum, study Illustrations 1 to 3 carefully.

Illustration 1

Mr. Vinay kumar, Administrative Officer in the marketing department had submitted a short report in the form of memorandum to Mr. Ravi Tandon, Marketing Manager about certain defects in the office practices.

<div align="center">

Excel Laboratories Limited
New Delhi

</div>

To   : Ravi Tandon, Manager, Marketing Division
From   : Vinay Kumar, Administrative officer, Marketing Division
Date   : January 1, 2020
Subject   : Report on certain defects in the office practices.

As desired, I have thoroughly examined our office practices and identified certain defects, which need to be removed immediately. The main defects are outlined below along with suggestions for consideration, as follows:

1)   Our filing system is centralised. The Marketing Division has expanded its operations in recent years considerably. The number of products has increased from 4 to 18. With centralised filing system, it takes a long time to locate and get relevant files. The processing of records has also become very complicated because of centralised filing. I, therefore recommend the introduction of decentralised filing system as soon as possible.

2)   Regarding office machines; old and obsolete machines introduced at the time of setting up of the office are still being used. They are mostly outdated and obsolete. The computers along with new software must be introduced in order to improve the efficiency of office operations.

3)   The communication system also has some defects. Currently, every file is being scrutinised by four officials. They are taking their own time to process and send the file to other sections. Decision making is thus lacking in promptness. Despatch of letters to outsiders is also taking too much time. We have therefore to introduce addressing and mailing machines, franking machines, letter-folding machines, inserting machines, envelop sealing machines, etc., to avoid delay in despatch of mail.

As a result of the aforesaid defects, office procedures have become complicated, resulting in inordinate delay in work flow. I would therefore request that appropriate steps be initiated

for modernising the office systems and providing necessary machines and equipment to improve efficiency.

<div align="right">**VINAY KUMAR**</div>

Illustration 2

The following is another short report in the form of memorandum which is submitted by the purchase officer to the managing director. The report is regarding the standardisation of office furniture and stationery.

<div align="center">**Hyderabad Electrical Company Ltd.**
HYDERABAD</div>

To	:	Rathi Ram Bhardwaj, Managing Director
From	:	Madhu Chaterjee, Purchase Officer
Date	:	January 1 , 2021
Subject	:	Standardisation of office furniture and stationery

Furniture is required in every office. It involves one-time investment in assets for a long period. The use of stationery also involves a huge amount of expenditure of a recurring nature. Standardisation of office furniture and stationery is important. Furniture or stationery items should be identical in terms of quality, size or description. Standards must be laid down for almost every type of furniture and stationery. The process of standardisation involves laying down of the exact size, quality, dimensions and their specification in respect of each item of supply.

The criteria for the selection of various items of furniture and stationery should be clearly laid down. Due care should be taken before shifting from one brand of supply to another. If an item is satisfactory, no purpose is served by changing the brand of the item. However, in some cases, a new product may be superior or better in quality. Hence, samples of these products should be tested from time to time under similar conditions. The service and efficiency claimed for the items should be analysed and if the price is higher, an attempt should be made to determine whether the difference in price is justified. This would give one an idea as to whether a particular brand item should be replaced or continued. Identical furniture should be used and numbered. Proper action may please be taken to introduce standard furniture and stationery items for office use.

<div align="right">**MADHU CHATERJEE**</div>

Illustration 3

In this illustration, the Personal Manager of a company has submitted to the Managing Director a short report in the form of memorandum regarding the agitation of workers demanding higher bonus.

<div align="center">**Hindustan Machine Tools Pvt. Ltd.**
New Delhi</div>

To	: Ashok Mittal, Managing Director
From	: Arun Gover, Personal Manager

Date : January 1, 2021
Subject : Agitation for higher bonus to workmen

You are aware that workers of our organisation have been agitating from some time demanding higher bonus. We have been declaring and paying bonus in cash to the workers for the last ten years. This year our production has increased by 50% over that of the last year. Sales have also improved because of wide marketing network of facilities and successful marketing. Last year, we paid bonus at the rate of 30 days salary. This year we propose to declare bonus at the rate of 33 days salary. But workers are not agreeing to this proposal. They have started agitation demanding that they should be paid 40 days salary as bonus. They put forth the following points in support of their demand.

1)   Production and sales have increased.

2)   Standardised products are produced.

3)   Profits have increased.

4)   Other competitive firms are paying more bonus than that declared by us now.

I hope you will take appropriate action to resolve the problem and prevent the agitation of workmen taking any serious turn.

ARUN KUMAR

12.6.2 Minutes Form

Reports of committees and sub-committees are generally submitted in 'minutes form'. Whenever a committee or sub-committee is appointed by an organization, it is expected to submit a report on its activities and findings on the subject referred to it. When committee meeting is held, proceedings are recorded in the form of minutes and communicated to all the members of that committee as well as other interested persons in the organization. Depending upon the objective and subject matter, sometimes committees submit long reports. However, proceedings of meetings recorded in the form of minutes are short reports. Organizations follow certain standardised formats for preparing minutes. The standard form includes an introductory paragraph which mentions the name of the committee, place, date and time of the meeting. The next paragraph gives the names of members who attended and members who are absent. Thereafter the proceedings are recorded with details of deliberations at the meeting. At the end it is signed by the chairman of the committee to give authenticity to the minutes.

The following is an illustration of a committee report in minutes form.

Illustration 4

Bharat Communications Ltd., is a company producing different types of telephone equipments. There is a five member Standing Committee (Permanent Committee) comprising marketing manager, production manager, finance manager and stores manager under the chairmanship of the Managing Director. The committee is to periodically review the sales of

each individual product and suggest remedial measures to achieve the target sales. Minutes of the fifth meeting is presented below:

Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Sales Review Committee held on 1 April, 2020 at 2.30PM in the Committee Room 1.

1)   Mr. Satish Agarwal
        Managing Director   - Chairman

2)   Mr. Anil Madan
        Marketing Manager   - Member

3)   Mr. Narayan Prasad
        Production Manager   - Member

4)   Mr. Ramesh Sippy
        Stores Manager   - Member

Ms. Madhu Srivastav could not attend the meeting due to illness.

The Committee studied the sales trend of Product-3 in domestic as well as international markets. It is found that sales of the product have been declining during the last six months. The following important reasons have been identified for declining sales of the product.

1)   Due to competition, other firms are selling goods at cheaper prices compared to our product. While there were five firms producing the same product earlier, there are at present more than 10 firms in the field.

2)   Our advertising expenditure is far less compared to the competitive firms. Further, the advertising strategies used by the company are not effective.

3)   We have only four marketing zones in the entire country. Because of limited number of zones, the company is not in a position to distribute the products throughout the country and the product is not available at all places. Hence, there is need to increase the number of zones and sales depots for effective distribution throughout the country.

4)   Regarding the markets our product is of low quality compared to the competitors' products. Further, there are still some restrictions on export of electronic and electrical goods. Due to these reasons export sales have not shown any progress.

Corrective measures should be taken in the immediate future to improve the sales.

SATISH AGARWAL

12.6.3 Letter Form

As stated earlier, short reports in the form of memorandum and minutes are intended for internal communication of the organization. Many short reports which are intended for external communication are presented in letter form. A letter report is similar to a letter in appearance. It includes almost all the features of a letter such as sender's address, date, inside

address, salutation, body, signature, etc. Sometimes a subject line is inserted between the greeting and the body of the letter report. Normally, letter report is typed on the company letter head.

Illustrations 5 and 6 are short reports in the form of letters. Illustration 5 is related to a short report where dealers of a firm have communicated their demands to the company.

Illustration 6 is also a letter report sent to the editor of a journal giving certain clarifications on an article related to the firm published in that journal earlier.

Illustration 5

<div align="center">

SRI AUTOMOBILE COMPANY DEALERS ASSOCIATION
N-33 SAKET, NEW DELHI 110 030

</div>

To   Date: 31-3-2020

The Managing Director
Sri Automobile Company Ltd.
MADRAS-21

Dear Sir,

A meeting of the dealers of your company was held on 14th March 2020 at the office of the association in New Delhi. We discussed different matters relating to products and sales of the automobiles manufactured by Sri Automobile Co. The following suggestions have emerged for deliberations at the meeting:

1) It is necessary to ensure that the time gap between order booking and delivery is minimised and the vehicles reach the dealers immediately after production.

2) Dealers' margin should be increased from 12% to 15%.

3) Booking of vehicles by customers should be scrutinised by the dealers.

4) The company should bear the entire advertising expenditure. The dealers must be given discretion to advertise locally in their respective areas.

5) Dealers have agreed to send reports of the company on weekly sales and stock levels.

The management of the company is required to initiate necessary steps on the points stated above and communicate the decisions to the dealers as early as possible.

Thanking you,

                                                                                    Yours faithfully,

                                                                                    Naveen Bhatia
                                                                                    President

Illustration 6

SBI FUNDS MANAGEMENT LIMITED

Date: January 1, 2021

To

The Editor
Capital Market
401, Swastik Chambers
Chembur
Mumbai-71

Dear Sir,

Sub: A rejoinder to your article on Mutual Funds published in the issue dated October 11-24, 2020.

Your cover story on Mutual Funds in the issue dated Oct 11-24, 2020, is a well-researched and lucidly presented article. We, however, find certain oddities in comparison and questionable presumptions which have unfortunately crept in. To set the record straight and put the study in the right perspective, we request you to publish this rejoinder.

1) Our 2020 growth scheme Magnum Multiplier Plus (MMPS) was launched in Feb. 2020 and by June, only 33% of the corpus of Rs. 972 cr was deployed in equities. The net asset value taken by you at Rs. 10.18 was accordingly of a portfolio in its preliminary stage of construction and you have curiously compared it with growth schemes launched in 2019, whose portfolios had stabilised long before. Importantly, MMPS 2020 is the only scheme you have taken for comparison, omitting other schemes launched in 2019 like Dhanavikas, Grand Master and Master Growth, as the relative NAVs were not available.

2) In any equity investment of a fund, the outlook for growth is medium to long-term and, be that as it may, the relative strength of the portfolio can emerge only in course of time. It is, therefore, premature to compare the growth of such a scheme over a narrow time frame of three months with others which have achieved stability in their basic investment structure.

3) If at all an evaluation of performance of any new scheme is to be carried out in an absolute time frame during the process of initial investment, the more appropriate bench-mark would have been the average index level of entry and compare the growth in NAV vis-a-vis the growth in the Stock Exchange Index. It will be of interest to know that based on the above parameter, the NAV of the Magnum Multiplier Plus Scheme showed a growth of 9.72% during the June-August period, as against the sensex growth of 7.4%.

General Manager

Check Your Progress C

1)   List the four steps suggested by Hicks in planning and organising business reports.

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

2)   List the three broad components of long reports.

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

3)   Classify the formats of short reports.

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

4)   Match the items in Category A with the items in Category B.

Category A		Category B	
a)	Memorandum	1)	Preliminary part
b)	Letter report	2)	Meetings
c)	Bibliography	3)	External communication
d)	Minutes	4)	Internal communication
e)	Abstract	5)	References

5)   State whether the following statements are "**True or False**"?

    i)   Authorisation document is found in the preliminary parts of all the long reports.

    ii)   Letter reports are normally typed on the letter head of the company.

    iii)   Short reports in the form of minutes are mostly intended for external circulation.

    iv)   While preparing the report, one should consider the receiver's interest also

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12.7   LET US SUM UP

Reports are used as tools of communication in an organisation. While preparing a report, one should keep in mind the following principles. 1) accuracy of information, 2) effective communication, 3) short and clear title, 4) appropriate level of language, 5) routine style, 6) proper paragraphing of the text, 7) concise, 8) inclusion of recombinations, 9) signature and date of submission.

The process of report writing involves seven major steps. They are: 1) determining the purpose of the report, 2) identification of the receiver, 3) collection of data, 4) analysis and classification of data, 5) preparation of outline of report, 6) preparation of final report, and 7) presentation of report. The same process has been explained by Tyler G. Hicks in four steps: 1) preparation of material, 2) planning report, 3) writing report, and 4) criticising report.

Based on the length, reports may be classified into two basic categories viz. 1) long reports and 2) short reports. The format of long reports is different from that of the short reports.

There is no prescribed structure for long reports. The parts of a long report may be broadly grouped under three heads 1) preliminary part, 2) text, and 3) supplementary part. Preliminary part comprises title fly, title page, authorisation document, table of contents, list of tables, list of figures, abstract, etc. The text consists of introduction, body and conclusion. Under the supplementary part, one may include end notes, appendices, bibliography, index, etc. In a long report, normally, preliminary parts appear in the beginning of the report, text comes in the middle and supplementary parts appear at the end.

The structure of short reports is much simple that that of long reports. Basically there are three formats for short reports. They are: 1) memorandum form, 2) minutes form and 3) letter form. The first two types of formats are used mainly for internal communication of an organization while the letter format is used to communicate with outsiders. In the case of a memorandum, certain niceties of letter writing are sacrificed for the sake of conciseness and simplicity and to speed up communication. Proceedings of committee meetings are normally recorded in the form of minutes and communicated to the members and other interested parties in the organisation. In appearance, letter reports are similar to letters.

12.8 KEY WORDS

Abstract: It is also called synopsis. It is the summary of the entire text.

Appendices: The material which is relevant to the text of the report presented as a supplementary part.

Bibliography: Also called 'references' is a list of the sources the presenter consulted during the preparation of the report.

Census Method: Statisticians take the information by conducting the survey of all the units of the universe.

Index: An alphabetical list of key topics or words discussed in the report. It is a supplementary part of a long report.

Presentation of Report: Submission of report to the appropriate authority.

Primary Sources: Sources from which data are collected for the first time.

Questionnaire: Document in which questions are provided to facilitate data collection.

Receiver: The person for whose consideration the report is being prepared and presented.

Reporter: A person who writes the report.

Secondary Sources: Sources of data collected by others.

Subordinate: A person who is working under the directions of a superior.

Table of Contents: A part of long report which is also called 'contents'. It is a list of various divisions of the report.

12.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A   3   i) True   ii) False   iii) False   iv) True   v) True
          vi) False   vii) True

B   5   i) False   ii) True   iii) False   iv) False   v) False

C 5   i) False   ii) True   iii) False   iv) True

12.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1)   What are the various principles of report writing?

2)   Explain the procedure of report writing?

3)   What are the various stages involved in report writing?

4)   Classify the reports based on the length and explain their features briefly.

5)   Explain the part of a long report.

6)   Briefly explain the features of different short reports.

7)   Write a report on the statutory meeting conducted by the company.

8)   Write a report about the introduction of computer system in a large organization.

9)   Write a report on research and development opportunities of the company.

10)   Write a report about modernisation of accounting department.

UNIT 13   PRECIS WRITING

Structure

13.0   OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to: '

•   explain the meaning of the term 'precis';

•   outline the characteristics of a good précis;

•   identify the problems in writing a précis;

•   describe the method of writing a précis and

•   write a precis for a given passage.

13.1   INTRODUCTION

In Unit 12, you learnt about the preparation of various types of reports. In this unit you will learn about another important secretarial function, precis writing, which involves an exercise in comprehension and condensation of an article, speech or correspondence. Thus, precis writing means summarising. In order to make a summary of an article, a speech or a story, one has to read it carefully and grasp its meaning. Precis-writing forces one to concentrate on the material which is to be summarised. The primary object of precis writing is to present facts and information to spend time reading unnecessary details. The necessity of speedily reading documents mainly arises in business firms and government departments besides other fields of activity. Lawyers, journalists, students, and secretaries of business executives need to apply the art of precis writing regularly in their day to day activities. Lawyers have to summarise the main points of their cases, editors and reporters have to summarise news and speeches; students have to make notes from lectures and text-books. In this unit, you will study about all these aspects.

13.2   WHAT IS A PRECIS?

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

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

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

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

13.3   CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD PRECIS

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

1)   A good precis is not merely a list of the main ideas of a passage. The ideas are to be organised and expressed in a logical sequence so that the precis reads like an original piece of composition.

2)   A good precis should contain all the essential ideas in the original passage, omitting non-essential detail, examples, etc. The ideas should be, as far as possible, in the same order as in the original. We should remember that in a precis one should not add anything that the original passage does not contain. There is no need to comment on the original matter either.

3)   The language of precis should be clear, brief and precis, maintaining at the same time the style and spirit of the original.

4) A precis should be written in indirect speech.

5) A good precis should, as far as possible, be in the writer's own words.

6) It should not exceed or fall short of the length prescribed by too large a margin. Usually, the limit set for a precis is one third in length of the original.

Check Your Progress A

1) Define the term 'Precis'.

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

2) Write the importance of writing a precis.

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

3) List four characteristics of a good precis.

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

13.4 METHOD OF WRITING A PRECIS

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

1) First of all, one should read the passage two or three times carefully to understand clearly its general theme. In short, comprehension of the passage is the first step in precis-writing.

2) Secondly, it is necessary to write down the main points of the passage by picking out the essential ideas and leaving out the unimportant details. At this stage, compression or condensation of the passage takes place. Repetitions, illustrations and examples can be eliminated. Sentences and clauses may also be compressed into shorter by using, for instance, a word for a phrase, a phrase for a clause and so on. In compressing a passage, selection, rejection and generalisation are often useful. The words and sentences of the original passage should be avoided to the extent possible. But one has to make sure that the sentences are linked up properly to show the interrelationship of the ideas in the passage. While being a summary of the original, the precis should be a piece of self contained readable and continuous whole.

3) Next, write down a preliminary or a rough draft, keeping in mind the length of the precis.

4) If it is necessary to provide a title to the summary, a short title may be given which will express the ideas in the passage.

5) While making the final draft, one should make sure that all the main points are included in the precis. One should also check whether the precis reads well and is within the length prescribed. Give it a suitable heading.

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

13.5 PROBLEMS IN WRITING A PRECIS

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

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

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

Selecting Details: The third problem is deciding on the details to be included in the précis. One should try to pick out only those details that are important. For example: Two people may go to a restaurant and order many dishes and engage in lengthy conversation. In a precis covering the above sentence, you do not need to mention each item of food and drink. If one of the character gets drunk, however, it may he noted that the observation made by the person were under the influence of liquor. Similarly, one need not report the entire conversation; only the relevant part and important points need to be recorded. Certain things are more important than others, and one must choose details according to the scale of importance.

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

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

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

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

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

Check Your Progress B

1)   Write three problems faced in writing a precis?

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2)   State whether the following statements are **True** or **False** ?

i)   A precis is an exercise in concentration, comprehension and condensation.

ii)   Comprehension of the passage of the original are to be retained in the precis.

iii)   The words and sentences of the original are to be retained in the precis.

iv)   A precis need not contain all the essential ideas in the original.

v)   A precis should be written in direct speech.

vi)   The title of the precis should be short and express the theme of the subject.

vii)   You cannot write a good precis unless you have carefully studied and understood the material you want to summarise.

13.6   SOME ILLUSTRATIONS

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

Exercise 1

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

First, read the passage carefully.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Main Points

1)   Working classes enjoy better living conditions in the present century.

2) In earlier civilisations, there was a big gap between the conditions of kings, etc. and those of the masses.

3) The effect of the Industrial Revolution on the lot of the working classes is significant.

4) The starting of the Trade Unions.

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

First Draft

An important feature of this century is the improvement in the living conditions of the working classes, in the form of more power, wealth, leisure and security. At one time, kings, leaders, priests, etc., lived in comfort doing little or no work while the majority did all the work and enjoyed few comforts and rights. In some countries there were slaves who had no rights at all. During the Industrial Revolution of Europe, production increased and workers started feeling dissatisfied. Employers were induced to improve working conditions so as to improve production. Some even felt workers had a right to better conditions. Clever employers selected the best workers. This led to competition and improvement of working conditions. Soon Trade Unions were organised to fight for 'rights' of workers or even to start strikes. Now employers and employees have come to realise their mutual dependence and strikes are disappearing. (148 words)

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

Final Draft

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

The title we may suggest is:

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND THE WORKING CLASS

Exercise 2

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

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

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

Main Points

1)   Simplest form of advertising is repetition; it helps people to remember.

2)   A phrase or trade name or trade mark is used repeatedly to make an impression.

3)   Customer asks for product, name of which is impressed on her/his mind.

4)   Repetition advertising is becoming less effective now.

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

Precis

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

The title may be suggested as below:

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ADVERTISING BY REPETITION

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Exercise 3

Let us take up another passage and attempt writing a precis in about 100 words and also suggest a title. This passage is on effect of COVID-19 on tourism industry (adapted from a report of International Monetary Fund).

Let us read the passage.

Before COVID-19, travel and tourism had become one of the most important sectors in the world economy, accounting for 10 percent of global GDP and more than 320 million jobs worldwide.

In 1950, at the dawn of the jet age, just 25 million people took foreign trips. By 2019, that number had reached 1.5 billion, and the travel and tourism sector had grown to almost too-big-to-fail proportions for many economies.

The global pandemic, the first of its scale in a new era of interconnectedness, has put 100 million jobs at risk, many in micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises that employ a high share of women, who represent 54 percent of the tourism workforce, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Tourism-dependent countries will likely feel the negative impacts of the crisis for much longer than other economies. Contact-intensive services key to the tourism and travel sectors are disproportionately affected by the pandemic and will continue to struggle until people feel safe to travel en masse again.

"There is no way we can grow our way out of this hole we are in," Irwin LaRocque, secretary-general of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said at a virtual event in September.

From the white sand beaches of the Caribbean, Seychelles, Mauritius, and the Pacific to the back streets of Bangkok, to Africa's sweeping national parks, countries are grappling with how to lure back visitors while avoiding new outbreaks of infection. The solutions range from wooing the ultra-rich who can quarantine on their yachts to inviting people to stay for periods of up to a year and work virtually while enjoying a tropical view.

Tourism receipts worldwide are not expected to recover to 2019 levels until 2023. In the first half of this year, tourist arrivals fell globally by more than 65 percent, with a near halt since April—compared with 8 percent during the global financial crisis and 17 percent amid the SARS epidemic of 2003, according to ongoing IMF research on tourism in a post-pandemic world.

Main Points

1)   Before Covid-9, travel accounted for 10 per cent of global GDP.

2)   It provided more than 320 million jobs worldwide.

3)   The global pandemic has put 100 million jobs at risk.

4)   Tourism-dependent countries will feel the negative impacts of the crisis for much longer.

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

Precis

The Covid-19 pandemic has put 100 million jobs at risk, many in micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises that employ a high share of women, who represent 54 per cent of the tourism workforce. Tourism-dependent countries are most negatively impacted, because it involves contact-intensive services. In view of this, travel sectors are disproportionately affected by the pandemic and will continue to struggle until people feel safe to travel en masse again. From the white sand beaches of the Caribbean, Seychelles, Mauritius, and the Pacific to the back streets of Bangkok, to Africa's sweeping national parks, countries are grappling with how to lure back visitors while avoiding new outbreaks of infection. (120 words).

The title may be suggested as below:

EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON TOURISM

Exercise 4
Let us take up another passage and attempt writing a precis in about 100 words and also suggest a title. This passage is on vaccination in Delhi (adapted from a report in Hindustan Times, 8 March, 2021).

Let us read the passage

Over three lakh beneficiaries have received Covid-19 vaccine till date in Delhi since the start of the inoculation drive a month ago, with more than 27,000 people receiving shots on Monday, according to the official data. Of these, more than 1.35 lakh are healthcare workers and over 1.71 lakh frontline workers, as per the data. On Monday, 27,219 beneficiaries received shots across 306 centres, including 5,459 people who got their second dose, as the inoculation drive picked up pace, officials said. The overall turnout was about 88 percent. Eight minor cases of AEFI (adverse events following immunisation) were reported, they added. Till date, 1,35,034 healthcare workers have been vaccinated. A total of 1,71,079 frontline workers have also received jabs, as per the data shared by the officials. Frontline workers include police personnel, civil defence staff, sanitation workers, among others. The vaccination drive, started on January 16, has picked up pace in the last one week. Under the nationwide mega vaccination drive launched on January 16, a total of 4,319 (53 per cent) healthcare workers, against a target of 8,117, were administered the shots at 81 centres across the city on day one. As per doctors, the second dose is given to a beneficiary after a gap of 28 days. On February 13, a total of 13,768 beneficiaries received vaccine shots and second doses were administered to healthcare workers who had received the first jab 28 days ago. On the second scheduled day after the roll-out of the exercise on January 16, the figures had stood at 3,598 (44 per cent of the target). The sharp fall had come after one severe and 50 minor

adverse effect cases were reported, on the opening day of the vaccination drive. The count on third schedule day was relatively much higher at 4,936 (48 per cent).

Main Points

1)   Over three lakh beneficiaries have received Covid-19 vaccine till date in Delhi.

2)   Of these, more than 1.35 lakh are healthcare workers.

3)   And over 1.71 lakh frontline workers.

4)   The vaccination drive, started on January 16, has picked up pace in the last one week.

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

Precis

The vaccination drive in Delhi started on January 16. A total of 4,319 (53 per cent) healthcare workers, against a target of 8,117, were administered the shots at 81 centres across the city on day one. Till date, 1,35,034 healthcare workers have been vaccinated. A total of 1,71,079 frontline workers have also received jabs, as per the data shared by the officials. Frontline workers include police personnel, civil defence staff, sanitation workers, among others. As per doctors, the second dose is given to a beneficiary after a gap of 28 days. On February 13, a total of 13,768 beneficiaries received vaccine shots and second doses were administered to healthcare workers who had received the first jab 28 days ago. Over three lakh beneficiaries have received Covid-19 vaccine till date in Delhi since the start of the inoculation drive a month ago, with more than 27,000 people receiving shots on Monday, according to the official data. (120 words).

The title may be suggested as below:

VACCINATION DRIVE IN DELHI

Check Your Progress C

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

> In the last half of the nineteenth century 'capital' and 'labour' were enlarging and perfecting their rival organisations on modern lines. Many an old family firm was replaced by a limited liability company with salaried managers. The change met the technological requirements of the new age by engaging a large professional element; and prevented the decline in efficiency that marred the fortunes of family firms in the second and third generation after the energetic founder. It was, moreover, a step away from individual initiative, towards collectivism and municipal and stage-managed

business. The railway companies though still private concerns managed for the benefit of shareholders, were very unlike old family businesses. They existed by reasons of Acts of Parliament, that conferred on them power and privileges in return for state control. At the same time the great municipalities went into business to supply lighting, trams and other services to the ratepayers. The growth of the Limited Liability Company and municipal trading had important consequences. Such large, impersonal manipulation of capital and industry greatly increased the number and importance shareholders as a class, an element in the national life representing irresponsible wealth detached from the land and the duties of the land-owner; and almost equally detached from the responsible management of business. All through the nineteenth century, America, Africa, India, Australia and parts of Europe were thus being developed largely by British capital, and British shareholders were thus being enriched by the world's movement towards industrialisation. Towns like Bournemouth and Eastbourne sprang up to house large 'comfortable' classes who had retired on their incomes, and who had no relation to the rest of the community except that of drawing dividends and occasionally attending a shareholders' meeting to bully the management. On the other hand, "shareholding" meant leisure and freedom which was used by many of the Victorians for the highest purposes of a great civilisation.

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

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13.7   LET US SUM UP

A precis is a summary of the whole passage. Precis writing is an exercise in concentration, comprehension and condensation. One has to read the passage carefully and grasp its meaning before writing a precis. The art of writing a good precis is very useful to people like lawyers, journalists, students, secretaries and business managers.

Before one starts writing the precis of a passage, one should read the whole passage at least twice, slowly carefully and with concentration. This will help him to get a general idea of what the passage is about and what the author is trying to say.

A precis should be written in indirect speech. Further one must ensure that each idea follows logically from the one before, so that the precis has a logical flow and cohesion. In addition to unity, one must also ensure that the precis is factually correct and it does not contain ideas or opinions which are not in the original passage. One should not add own ideas or comments or any extra information not contained in the passage.

13.8   KEY WORDS

Beneficiaries: The people who receive benefits. In the present case, people who received vaccination.

Cohesion: A piece of text in which idea fit well together to form a unified whole.

Comprehension: An exercise in language teaching to find out how well you understand a piece of spoken and written language.

Condensation: To make something shorter.

Diffuse: A text that is vague and difficult to understand or explain.

Frontline Workers: The people who manage civil duties and defend borders.

Gist: The general meaning or the most important points of a long piece of writing.

Indirect Speech: Where the speakers exact words are not given but the exact meaning of the remark or speech is given in passive voice.

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

13.9   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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

C)   The main points of the passage are:

1) In the second half of the 19th century, industry in Britain was reorganised on a larger and more impersonal basis:
   – family firms became limited liability companies; and
   – municipalities went into business

2) The class of shareholders
   – became numerous and more important; and
   investment without having any responsibility.

3) Labour relations declined because of :
   – the shareholder's irresponsibility;
   – the shareholder's ignorance of the conditions of the working class; and
   – the impersonality of large companies.
   The developing status of the trade unions enabled work people to resist management.
   The resulting disputes led to mutual respect and a desire for fair negotiation.

4) Industrial relations took on a new pattern.

The following is an acceptable version of the precis

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

The title we may suggest is:

NEW PATTERN OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

13.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1) State the characteristics of a good precis?

2) Discuss the various steps in writing a precis.

3) What are the problems you face in writing a precis?

4) Write a precis of the following passage in about 115 words. Your version should avoid as far as possible the words and phrases of the original. State the number of words yon have used and suggest a title.

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

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

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