

BEGLA-138 READING & SPEAKING SKILLS



Block**2****READING COMPREHENSION: TYPES OF TEXTS**

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BLOCK INTRODUCTION

In this Block, you will be trained to understand the necessity of comprehension skills. You will be equipped to employ various methods of reading and comprehension. You will be able to read with precision and technical expertise if you read this Block carefully. Also, you will be introduced to the art of reading with precision and technical expertise. This Block will aid you in categorizing the basis of 'Descriptive' writing. Specific features of Descriptive texts would be analyzed for your benefit, so that you will be able to monitor your own growth in the act of comprehension.

Narration is the basis of any form of story-telling. The act of storytelling is the key aspect of this Block. The comprehension of a narrative text would entail the act of identifying the modes of narration in one of the units. If the purpose or the thesis statement of any given narration is understood, the text would be comprehended—which will be your basic training in the Block. A Persuasive Text refers to any written form to convince the reader with the writer's point of view and agree/disagree with it. To achieve this, the argument is developed on the basis of the writer's opinion. According to Aristotle, there are three modes of persuasion: Ethos, Pathos and Logos. Ethos refers to ethical persuasion which also comes from the credibility of the writer. Pathos refers to the emotional appeal made by the writer. Lastly, Logos refers to the logic addressed to the rational mind. The appeal is made through a logical argument by presenting facts, figures and research. This Block will equip you to develop all the above kinds of writings—basically, to make you a powerful voice through your pen.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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UNIT 1 EXPOSITORY TEXT

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you will be able to master an understanding of the necessity for comprehension skills. You will be equipped to employ various different methods of reading and comprehension. You will be able to read with precision and technical expertise. This Unit will also aid you in categorizing the basis of Expository writing. Specific features of Expository texts would be analyzed and understood. You will be equipped to practice techniques of skimming and scanning in the process of comprehension. This will also prepare you to understand the process of both extensive and intensive reading. You will be able to monitor your own growth in the act of comprehension.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Comprehension

Comprehension simply means understanding. It is the end goal of the act of reading. Comprehension then can also be called as the reason for reading. If the act of reading occurs without an understanding of what is being read then the

whole act becomes obsolete and redundant. If you don't understand then there is no point to reading. The process of understanding is also complex. It employs a number of strategies and meticulous practices. This Unit will give you an insight into the various techniques that can be employed in order to master the process of reading comprehension.

To tackle the comprehension of an expository text, you need to first understand the basic aspects of such a categorical form of writing. Let us look at the word "expository". The word 'Expose' could be derived from it, the definition of which reads as "make (something) visible by uncovering it." You can then say that to expose, one would have to explain to uncover something or a situation. Expository writing then is categorically concerned with explanations. However, you should not confuse this form of explanation with that of descriptive or narrative writing form. Even though all of these three forms (Expository, Narrative and Descriptive) employ the act of explanations, they do it differently. It is hence important for you to understand how explanations are projected in the expository form of writing.

1.1.2 What is Expository Text?

The explanations in expository writing are of many kinds; the steps to explain a process, the reasons compiled as arguments to support a thesis statement or any other form. You will be able to find a logical sequence of structure, smooth transitions and a thesis statement. When writing an expository text, you will have to assume that the reader has no prior information regarding the subject and hence would have to use meticulous and carefully directed instructions and explanations to make your reader understand. This form of writing is also used when trying to supplement reasons or make another understand why or how (process) something happens. As a rule then, this form of writing needs to be extremely precise and clear in its style lest the reader is unable to get clarity of the message.

1.2 TYPES OF EXPOSITORY TEXT

Before we get to reading a sample of an expository essay, it would be useful to be able to identify the type of essay. Writings in Expository texts can be summed up to be of a total of six categories. This style of writing can be used to determine the Cause and Effect of any phenomena, Problem and Solution of certain situations, for different kind of Classifications, for the development of Comparison and Contrast, determining a Definition and Detailing a Process.

1.2.1 Cause and Effect

As the name suggests, the 'cause and effect' essay concerns itself with the occurrence of a situation and a description of the consequences for the same. Regarding the process of writing such an essay, Joshua Tatum, a Professor of Literature & English Composition writes that "in such essay, a young writer must pay attention to the primary causes and results. The contributory things are not necessary, but it is possible to include some of them if a person is running out of ideas. Immediate reasons and outcomes generate the cause and effect directly unlike remote ones, which cannot be noticed with a naked eye."

The writing of a cause and effect essay entails the creation of a *thesis statement*. A thesis statement is the singular most important central idea or opinion stated in a clear and concise way. All essays or writing pieces inherently have a thesis statement which can be usually perceived through the title of the text. Hence as the reader of such a text, you need to discover the central opinion or idea of the text. Many a times, a title in a comprehension passage is missing. It is done so that the reader can be tested on their understanding skills without having read the main title in order to figure out the thesis statement of the essay.

An example of a thesis statement is “The Indian government must provide free schooling for every child in the country because literate citizens have more chances to be employed and add up to the country’s wealth.” Through an essay that discusses such a point of view, cause and effect needs to be identified. You could identify the cause of the government of India not providing free education, or, you could identify the cause for the requirement of free education. Once a “cause” has been identified, the effects would also be recognized. For example, you can say in the above thesis statement that the effect of free education would be “a better financial status of the country leading to its economic development”. You should keep in mind that the same thesis statement can be written in different kinds of essays. It could be written as an argumentative essay, a descriptive essay or a narrative essay as well. However, it would qualify as an ‘Expository’ essay if the treatment is on the cause and effect.

1.2.2 Problem and Solution

It entails the assertion of a problem and then providing a list of solutions for the same. As writing this would involve you to look at a problem from a number of directions and perspectives. As a reader then, it is imperative to identify all these angles to the problem presented. If you manage to understand the problem from various perspectives then you will be able to not only understand but analyze the solutions provided. “This sort of essay involves argumentation in that the writer seeks to convince the reader to take a particular course of action. In explaining the problem, it may also need to persuade the reader concerning specific causes” (Dave Kemper et al., “Fusion: Integrated Reading and Writing,” 2016).

Just like the ‘cause and effect’ text, a ‘problem and solution’ text also has a thesis statement. Dorothy Zemach and Lynn Stafford-Yilmaz, in “Writers at Work: The Essay.” (Cambridge University Press, 2008) say: “In a problem-solution essay, the thesis statement usually proposes the solution. Because readers must first understand the problem, the thesis statement usually comes after a description of the problem. The thesis statement does not have to give details about the solution. Instead, it summarizes the solution. It should also lead naturally to the body of the essay, preparing your reader for a discussion of how your solution would work.” Essentially then you as a reader need to gauge a comprehensive understanding of not only the problem but also the solutions provided.

1.2.3 Classification

It takes into account a comprehensive subject demarcated into various groups or categories. After giving a brief explanation about the subject overall, the writer is expected to then explain the parts in detail and with examples. The first section of such a piece of writing would contain the thesis statement while the body of the essay would follow through with descriptions of the groups formed. The

conclusions would provide a summarization of the groups along with providing a basis for the creation of this group. As a reader, you will need to understand these sections of the essay. Once you are able to identify the different groups, the reason or the basis for them being made into these groups, along with the thesis statement, you will be able to master the comprehension of the given text.

An example of an introductory paragraph to a classification essay:

“It’s a cold evening in January, and all across the country Indians are gathering to watch a match of international cricket. Armed with samosas and cold drinks, they stroll to their seats, some in grand stadiums, others in cozy parks. But no matter where the match is played, you will find the same three types of Cricket fans: the Party Rooter, the Sunshine Supporter, and the Diehard Fan.”

You can notice here how the categories have been clearly stated. This enables the reader to expect a detailed description of the said groups.

1.2.4 Comparison and Contrast

This requires the presence of two entities. It concentrates on the similarities and differences between any two ideas, things or situations. Each contrast or similarity is taken with reference to the other. You need to understand the process of working on the thesis statement keeping in mind a comparative entity always when referring to one. Once all the points are laid down in the body of the essay, the conclusion explains and sums up the thesis statement further.

As a reader of this kind of writing then, it is required that you are able to align the two entities with each other on the basis of their similarities and dissimilarities. You are expected to comprehend the distinct features of the two things through their comparison.

1.2.5 Definition

This kind of an essay, as the name suggests, deals primarily with the process of defining any particular term, concept or a thing. Writing of this essay entails that in the introductory passage, we add a standard, clear and precise definition of the concept being explained. Henceforth, we give an explanation of the given words according to our comprehension. The body, just as with other types of essays, will comprise of the detailed analysis and explanations of the given term. The various ways in which the concept can be looked at can become a part of the detailed explanation process. The conclusion will be concerned with summing up of the different angles that might be used in the definition of the concept. One of the examples of such kind of writing is E.M Forster’s “Aspects of a Novel”. It attempts in the introduction to define and explore the question of what novel is and its definition. In its subsequent sections it looks into the details.

1.2.6 Process

It is categorized under the “how-to” essay. It is concerned with listing down the processes in a methodical manner. A lot of instructions like baking a cake, fixing a car tyre, planning a trip and many more can be done through this form of writing. “A Process Essay is structured around the goal of providing the reader with directions or guidance. Most of the time, students write process essays that

discuss how to do something. Process essays are the recipes or technical brochures of essay writing.”

As a reader of the process essay, you need to identify the thing or action for which instructions are given. You need to judge and understand such a scenario by carefully comprehending the steps and assessing the conclusion it might be leading to.

1.3 EXPOSITORY TEXT SAMPLE

1.3.1 SAMPLE

“There have been many studies attempting to figure out just how music affects the human mind. For example, why do different people like different kinds of music, what parts of the brain are activated and if said parts are affected more or less by different kinds of music, and others. Some of these questions have remained unanswered, and might stay that way for a while. One thing, however, is for certain: music does affect our daily lives. Just look at the simple facts. Most people listen to music. If someone doesn’t, they’re sometimes viewed in a strange way. How could you not listen to music?

Music affects our emotions. When we listen to sad songs, we tend to feel a decline in mood. When we listen to happy songs, we feel happier. Upbeat songs with energetic riffs and fast-paced rhythms (such as those we hear at sporting events) tend to make us excited and pumped up.

With all this in mind, I sent out a survey to the students of Basehor-Linwood High School, asking some simple questions about their music taste and how music makes them feel. Studying these results show some interesting facts.

When asked about their listening habits, mixed results were found in accordance to the amount of time spent listening to music on a daily basis.

About 22.2 percent of people said that they listen to music between one to two hours every day, where another 22.2 percent said they listen at least five hours a day. The category of two to three hours a day sees about 18.4 percent of people in the school, and three to four hours meets a close second to that, at 16.5 percent. Only 11 percent of people listen to less than an hour’s worth of music every day, and even less listen to four to five hours a day; about 9.5 percent.

It seems that there isn’t really a happy medium. Either people listen to music a little, or they listen to music all the time. Music takes different standpoints in different people’s lives, and it matters more or less to one person than it does another. A majority of people listen to music in the car, as well as at home; about 90 percent of all those studied for each. Around 71 percent of people here in the school also listen in their classrooms. Both the hallway and the lunchroom receive substantially less; about 37 percent and 25 percent.

It seems that music helps us concentrate and study as well. Out of those studied, 88.5 percent of people said that they listen to music when they study, work on homework, and other activities such as that. That leaves an 11.5 percent of people who don’t. It’s no surprise that most people (69 percent) listen to pop

music. Pop literally stands for popular. 55.2 percent of all people attending BLHS listen to rock and rap. It's also not surprising to hear that 46.6% of people listen to alternative and indie music. Over half of our students listen to country, at 52.3 percent. Some genres that didn't hit the chart with full force are funk, jazz, classic, punk, dubstep, and metal. Not one of these, with the exception of classical (at 28.7 percent), crossed the 25 percent line.

No matter what people listen to, there seems to be a common consensus as to why they listen. It seems that genres that have a fast paced, upbeat, and catchy rhythm (like pop, rap, etc.) are attractive to those who do sports, or at least, those who are looking to get pumped up. Rock also stands to achieve this goal. Most people agree that music just makes them happy. They can 'get into a mood' based on the style of the song they're listening too. I must say that I agree.

Personally, I listen to rock and metal, pop punk, and acoustics, that is, if I must limit my choices. I always listen to rock and a whole lot of metalcore. To get pumped up, I listen to rock and metal, sometimes more '80s metal than modern. To help when I'm feeling down, I listen to acoustic and pop punk. When angry, I listen to metalcore and sometimes stuff even heavier than that.

Overall, here's the final conclusion I could come up with; music is simply a force that cannot be explained. It messes with our heads, it makes us feel different emotions, sometimes even physically changes us. Music unites us. Some of those surveyed said that they've had friendships established based off music, as have I. In the end, we know that music has a wide range of effects on us. Honestly, maybe we should leave it at that."

(Source: <https://www.blhsnews.com/opinion/2015/09/29/how-does-music-affect-our-lives/>)

1.3.2 Understanding structure and explanation

This essay can be categorized as a 'Problem and Solution Essay'. Right in the beginning of the text, you will find the first paragraph; the introduction setting up a problem and promising an answer to be given in a systematic manner. On reading the whole essay, you will be able to identify the various efforts and process the writer has involved for the attainment of the solution.

The body of the essay lists down how the writer organized a survey. You will understand that the writer is taking help of the facts she discovered from the survey to provide a solution for the question asked. The thesis statement identified thereof would be:

"Does music affect lives?"

And the rest of the essay is concerned with answering the same question.

The writer lists that music is treated differently by different people and it is given a variant level of significance by its listeners. She mentions how spaces are also claimed differently by students who listen to music. According to where the music is played and how much, she mentions its use in concentration and more for a student's life. She says that music helps these students by providing them with a rhythm for whichever activity they choose to immerse themselves in school according to their tastes. The personality and interest of the students also determine the kind of music they listen to.

After discussing some more findings, the writer moves to the conclusion where she asserts music to be an enigma when trying to find how it affects people's lives. She says it surely does but the ways in which it defines her student's lives are diverse and cannot be fathomed in one go. What you as a reader can decipher from this conclusion is that a probable solution is attempted but has not reached towards the end. The writer leaves the end to a philosophical musing of "To each his own".

1.3.3 Probable Questions:

There are six kinds of fixed questions which are asked when trying to test the comprehension skills of the student.

- a) Vocabulary based Questions: where the meanings of particular words in the text, their antonyms, and synonyms are asked.
- b) Direct Questions: where the question requires an answer given directly as it is in the text.
- c) Interpretative and Analytic Questions: where inferences need to be drawn from the given text.
- d) Main Idea: where the reader's ability to comprehend the overall idea of the text is questioned.
- e) Supporting Ideas: where the detailed information supporting the main idea is asked.
- f) Narrative Structure, Style and Tone: where specific structural technicalities like the thesis statement, introduction, body and conclusion are looked at.

Sample Questions:

- a) What is the meaning of the word 'dubstep' in the above passage?
- b) What kinds of music make one excited?
- c) Can it be said that music affects specific people in a definite way?
- d) What is the role of music in the lives of school students?
- e) What is the breakdown of percentage of categories of music enjoyed by people?
- f) What kind of an essay would you categorize the above-mentioned passage as?

The above-mentioned questions are set according to the types mentioned in the previous paragraph. Each of these questions tests a different sect of comprehension and they need to be answered accordingly.

Let us consider the following answers:

- a) The word "dubstep" is part of a complete sentence which reads as "*Some genres that didn't hit the chart with full force are funk, jazz, classic, punk, dubstep, and metal*". Always try to incorporate a new word within the sentence where you've found it. It is evident, even if you haven't heard of the word before that 'dubstep' has the probability of being a music genre just like classical and jazz. Hence the answer can be "It is a genre of music with emphasis on beats".

- b) This is a direct question, the answer to which will be found in the second paragraph. *“Upbeat songs with energetic riffs and fast-paced rhythms (such as those we hear at sporting events) tend to make us excited and pumped up.”* Accordingly, fast paced music becomes the answer to this question.
- c) This answer would be judging your understanding in between the lines. It is always better to look at the conclusion to understand such a question. *“Overall, here’s the final conclusion I could come up with; music is simply a force that cannot be explained. It messes with our heads, it makes us feel different emotions, sometimes even physically changes us. Music unites us”*. Through these lines one can infer that music affects everyone differently yet attempts to unite them into a universal love for it.
- d) This question addresses the thesis statement of the given essay. Music helps a person to live life depending on it for survival. It enables a constant companionship with any stage of life and this need to rely on music helps achieve a sense of universal appeal.
- e) The above essay in paragraph number 7 gives a detailed view of the genres of music and the percentage of people who enjoy that genre. This piece of information helps in adding value to the main theme of the essay; that of different kind of music appealing to different people at different points of their lives.
- f) The above-mentioned essay could be categorized as an expository essay. It lists down the cause for the need of music and its effects. Its introduction discusses how music affects people and the body gives the details of the various ways in which music is used by people. The conclusion says that music affects each differently and gives summative points for the same.

1.4 READING STRATEGIES

Readence, Bean, and Baldwin (2004) suggest a simple procedure to help students recognize, identify, and utilize text structure as a way to better comprehend and recall reading from expository text. Looking at the above passage, you must now attempt to work on key strategies to attempt comprehension passages once you have identified the type of essay, and its thesis statement.

Skimming and Scanning

These techniques are used to quickly scan through a text. It enables the reader to establish an understanding in a limited period of time. Both Skimming and Scanning involve rapid eye movements through the text, specifically the keywords, yet done so for two different purposes respectively. Skimming ensures a rapid reading to provide a creation of overall understanding of the text. Through skimming you will attempt at getting a gist of the complete text. It does not attempt to find any specificity. Scanning on the other hand is concerned with rapid reading for the purpose of finding specific keywords and facts. As you have already conducted the Skimming process, you will get well versed with the topic of the essay and this will enable you to expect certain kinds of facts and keywords in accordance with the given topic. Scanning, when done after skimming, enables the registering of these keywords to aid a better understanding of the text. “Skimming is like snorkeling, and scanning is more like pearl diving.”

You should use skimming in previewing (reading before you read), reviewing (reading after you read), determining the main idea from a long selection you don't wish to read, or when trying to find source material for a research paper. You usually use scanning in research to find particular facts, to study fact-heavy topics, and to answer questions requiring factual support.

1.4.1 Skimming

The process of Skimming enables the laborious process of finishing a cumbersome text in a short amount of time. However, skimming will only enable you to get an abstract idea of the topic and an in-depth analysis will not be possible. Hence this process can be deemed fit only as a preview into the text which is being read.

“But when you skim, you may miss important points or overlook the finer shadings of meaning, for which rapid reading or perhaps even study reading may be necessary.” A combination of both scanning along with skimming is required to have an effective comprehension of any given text.

To skim, prepare yourself to move rapidly through the pages. You will not read every word; you will pay special attention to typographical cues-headings, boldface and italic type, indenting, bulleted and numbered lists. You will be alert for key words and phrases, the names of people and places, dates, nouns, and unfamiliar words. In general, follow these steps:

“Read the *Essay overview* to learn the main divisions of ideas. Glance through the main headings in each paragraph or section just to see a word or two. Read the *headings of charts and tables*. Read the entire *introductory paragraph* and then the *first and last sentence* only of each following paragraph. For each paragraph, read only the first few words of each sentence or to locate the main idea. Stop and quickly read the sentences containing *keywords* indicated in boldface or italics. When you think you have found something significant, stop to read the entire sentence to make sure. Then go on the same way. Resist the temptation to stop to read details you don't need.”

Keep in mind that you need not give equal attention to everything. You should know when to go fast, when to skip and when to slow down your reading speed. You should particularly slow down when you skim introductory and concluding paragraphs, skim topic sentences, find an unfamiliar word, or when the material is very complicated.

1.4.2 Scanning

Scanning, too, uses keywords and organizational cues. But while the goal of skimming is a bird's-eye view of the material, the goal of scanning is to locate and swoop down on particular facts. Facts may be buried within long text passages that have relatively little else to do with your topic or claim. Use the following techniques:

“Know what you're looking for. Decide on a few key words or phrases—search terms, if you will. You will be a flesh-and-blood search engine. Look for only one keyword at a time. If you use multiple keywords, do multiple scans. Let your eyes float rapidly down the page until you find the word or phrase you

want. When your eye catches one of your keywords, read the surrounding material carefully.”

When scanning for facts to answer a specific question, one step is already done for you: the question itself supplies the keywords. Follow these steps:

- 1) Read each question completely before starting to scan. Choose your keywords from the question itself.
- 2) Look for answers to only one question at a time. Scan separately for each question.
- 3) When you locate a keyword, read the surrounding text carefully to see if it is relevant.
- 4) Re-read the question to determine if the answer you found answers this question.

Scanning is a technique that requires concentration and can be surprisingly tiring. You may have to practice at not allowing your attention to wander. Choose a time and place that you know works for you and dive in.

1.5 PRACTICE TEXTS

1.5.1 Ghee - An Important Indian Cooking Fat

Have you seen? Here at Piccantino you can find several types of Ghees, but do you know what ghee is? Ghee (pronounced Gi) is a term used in Indian cuisine. Although the name sounds exotic, it is nothing other than concentrated butter. In traditional Indian medicine, Ayurveda, Ghee is credited with many health benefits.

Characteristics: In Europe ghee is revered mainly because of its frying characteristics. Ghee is usually industrially produced from cow's milk. Water and protein are removed from the milk, so that only the fat is left. This has many advantages over butter. Clarified butter can be heated to almost 200 degrees Celsius, without the fatty acids being destroyed. Therefore, it is perfectly suitable for baking, frying and roasting. It is also very durable (it can be stored non-chilled for up to 9 months, or stored cool up to 15 months) and also, people with lactose intolerance can consume it without any problems. It has a melting point of 42 degrees, so it is always crystallized at room temperature.

What is Ghee? Ghee is usually almost 100% fat. Of these fats, around 60% are saturated, 30% are monounsaturated and just over 5% are polyunsaturated fatty acids. Ghee also contains the fat-soluble vitamins A, D and E. How much fat the ghee contains depends on the manufacturing method.

Manufacturing Methods: In a large country like India, it is not surprising that there are different ways to make ghee. The procedure can influence the taste, quality and durability. For example, some ghees are made of 15% water.

At Piccantino, we only sell authentic ayurvedic ghee. This means that the ghee was made through a boiling process, in the Ayurvedic tradition. Here, butter is gently heated and kept liquid for a good 30 minutes. During this time

the water contained in butter evaporates and the protein is deposited on the surface in the form of foam. This foam is skimmed off. What remains is the fat.

The Role of Ghee in Ayurveda: In traditional Indian medicine, Ghee occupies an important position. It is used not only for cooking but is considered to have different positive effects. It is also considered the elixir of life. Some positive effects that ghee allegedly has (according to Ayurveda):

- It stimulates digestion.
- It nourishes the body tissue, because it acts as a carrier for various active ingredients which thus reach up into the cells.
- It helps to keep the body in balance.
- It binds toxins in the body and helps the body remove them

(Source: <https://www.piccantino.com/info/magazine/ghee-an-important-indian-cooking-fat>)

Check Your Progress 1

Answer the following questions based on your reading of the passage in 1.5.1.

1) What is ghee?

2) Is ghee good for Indian food?

3) What company does the writer accord to as producer of ghee?

- 4) What is the relation between ghee and Ayurveda?

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1.5.2 Education and its Philosophy

Philosophy of Education is a label applied to the study of the purpose, process, nature and ideals of education. It can be considered a branch of both philosophy and education. Education can be defined as the teaching and learning of specific skills, and the imparting of knowledge, judgment and wisdom, and is something broader than the societal institution of education we often speak of.

Many educationalists consider it a weak and woolly field, too far removed from the practical applications of the real world to be useful. But philosophers dating back to Plato and the Ancient Greeks have given the area much thought and emphasis, and there is little doubt that their work has helped shape the practice of education over the millennia.

Plato is the earliest important educational thinker, and education is an essential element in “The Republic” (his most important work on philosophy and political theory, written around 360 B.C.). In it, he advocates some rather extreme methods: removing children from their mothers’ care and raising them as wards of the state, and differentiating children suitable to the various castes, the highest receiving the most education, so that they could act as guardians of the city and care for the less able. He believed that education should be holistic, including facts, skills, physical discipline, music and art. Plato believed that talent and intelligence is not distributed genetically and thus is found in children born to all classes, although his proposed system of selective public education for an educated minority of the population does not really follow a democratic model.

Aristotle considered human nature, habit and reason to be equally important forces to be cultivated in education, the ultimate aim of which should be to produce good and virtuous citizens. He proposed that teachers lead their students systematically, and that repetition be used as a key tool to develop good habits, unlike Socrates’ emphasis on questioning his listeners to bring out their own ideas. He emphasized the balancing of the theoretical and practical aspects of subjects taught, among which he explicitly mentions reading, writing, mathematics, music, physical education, literature, history, and a wide range of sciences, as well as play, which he also considered important.

During the Medieval period, the idea of Perennialism was first formulated by St. Thomas Aquinas in his work “De Magistro”. Perennialism holds that one should teach those things deemed to be of everlasting importance to all people everywhere, namely principles and reasoning, not just facts (which are apt to change over time), and that one should teach first about people, not machines

or techniques. It was originally religious in nature, and it was only much later that a theory of secular perennialism developed.

During the Renaissance, the French skeptic Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) was one of the first to critically look at education. Unusually for his time, Montaigne was willing to question the conventional wisdom of the period, calling into question the whole edifice of the educational system, and the implicit assumption that university-educated philosophers were necessarily wiser than uneducated farm workers, for example.

Check Your Progress 2

Answer the following questions based on your reading of the passage in 1.5.2.

- 1) What is the difference between the approaches of Socrates and Aristotle?
 - a) Aristotle felt the need for repetition to develop good habits in students; Socrates felt that students need to be constantly questioned
 - b) Aristotle felt the need for rote-learning; Socrates emphasized on dialogic learning
 - c) There was no difference
 - d) Aristotle emphasized on the importance of paying attention to human nature; Socrates emphasized upon science
- 2) Why do educationists consider philosophy a ‘weak and woolly’ field?
 - a) It is not practically applicable
 - b) Its theoretical concepts are easily understood
 - c) It is irrelevant for education
 - d) None of the above
- 3) What do you understand by the term ‘Perennialism’, in the context of the given comprehension passage?
 - a) It refers to something which is of ceaseless importance
 - b) It refers to something which is quite unnecessary
 - c) It refers to something which is abstract and theoretical
 - d) It refers to something which existed in the past and no longer exists now
- 4) Were Plato’s beliefs about education democratic?
 - a) He believed that only the rich have the right to acquire education
 - b) Yes
 - c) He believed that only a select few are meant to attend schools
 - d) He believed that all pupils are not talented

- 5) Why did Aquinas propose a model of education which did not lay much emphasis on facts?
- a) Facts are not important
 - b) Facts do not lead to holistic education
 - c) Facts change with the changing times
 - d) Facts are frozen in time

1.5.3 Primary Education in India: Progress and Challenges

In recent decades India has made significant progress on access to schooling and enrollment rates in primary education but dropout rates and low levels of learning remain challenges for the state and central government. As the U.S. has a longer history of public education than India there are opportunities for India to learn from the successes and failures in the American education system and to collaborate in tackling shared challenges, such as the best use of technology in primary education.

Primary school enrollment in India has been a success story, largely due to various programs and drives to increase enrolment even in remote areas. With enrollment reaching at least 96 percent since 2009, and girls making up 56 percent of new students between 2007 and 2013, it is clear that many problems of access to schooling have been addressed. Improvements to infrastructure have been a priority to achieve this and India now has 1.4 million schools and 7.7 million teachers so that 98 percent of habitations have a primary school (class I-V) within one kilometer and 92 percent have an upper primary school (class VI-VIII) within a three-kilometer walking distance.

Despite these improvements, keeping children in school through graduation is still an issue and dropout rates continue to be high. Nationally 29 percent of children drop out before completing five years of primary school, and 43 percent before finishing upper primary school. High school completion is only 42 percent. This lands India among the top five nations for out-of-school children of primary school age, with 1.4 million 6 to 11 year olds not attending school. In many ways schools are not equipped to handle the full population – there is a teacher shortage of 689,000 teachers in primary schools, only 53 percent of schools have functional girls' toilets and 74 percent have access to drinking water.

Additionally, the quality of learning is a major issue and reports show that children are not achieving class-appropriate learning levels. According to Pratham's Annual Status of Education 2013 report, close to 78 percent of children in Standard III and about 50 percent of children in Standard V cannot yet read Standard II texts. Arithmetic is also a cause for concern as only 26 percent students in Standard V can do a division problem. Without immediate and urgent help, these children cannot effectively progress in the education system, and so improving the quality of learning in schools is the next big challenge for both the state and central governments.

Improving learning will require attention to many things, including increasing teacher accountability. According to school visits teacher attendance is just 85 percent in primary and middle schools and raising the amount of time

teachers spend on-task and increasing their responsibility for student learning also needs improvement. Part of this process requires better assessments at each grade level and more efficient monitoring and support systems. Overall, the public school system also needs a better general management system.

India also faces many challenges that could be tackled through the education system. For one gender issues have come to the fore because of the spate of recent cases of violence against girls. Changing gender mindsets seems to be imperative and gender studies education is one way of doing so. Also India, along with most countries, is concerned with the future of the labour market and employability; Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi wants to emphasize skill development in order to make school education more practically relevant.

Building good assessment systems: Good assessments are useful at the classroom level for teachers to gauge their students' understanding and also to inform policy. The need for regular and useful assessments in India is something that Indian departments of education are focusing on at the central and state level.

Gender studies education: The state of women in India has recently drawn a lot of attention and promoting gender equality through education has an important role to play. Boys and girls should be taught to think about gender equality from an early age and the curriculum should include gender studies with appropriate teacher training.

Skills Development: As making education more practically relevant to the labor market is a priority for Prime Minister Modi, there is much India can learn from experiences in the United States. A shared agenda of helping identify and implement improved ways to develop skills and competencies even at the school level could be an important area for collaboration.

(Source: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/primary-education-in-india-progress-and-challenges/>)

Check Your Progress 3

Answer the following questions based on your reading of the passage in 1.5.3.

- 1) What is the major issue related to learning in the Indian education system?

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- 2) What is the problem that India could tackle if the education sector is looked after?

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- 3) What can teachers do at a classroom level to resolve issues of lack of quality primary education?

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- 4) What is the structure of the above-mentioned essay?

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1.6 LET US SUM UP

Expository Texts are of various kinds. For you to understand and comprehend, then to answer the questions asked, it is important that you know the techniques of writing these texts or essays and then you will be able to identify these very technicalities that the writer uses in the process of writing. In the six variations or types provided in the above-mentioned sections, you could find the commonality of a thesis statement which would define the kind of question, problem, thing, process, or classification which the essay would primarily be about.

Using this identification process, you will need to understand the structure of the given essay. Identify the Introduction, Body and Conclusion through the contents of the essay and you are now equipped to tackle the questions. Further engage in the process of skimming and scanning. Skimming accords to you reading the passage in one swift go creating for you a general idea of what the essay is about; precisely what the thesis statement is. After this, scanning initiates a detailed breaking down of the text targeting specific questions asked.

Reading comprehension texts not only develops your proficiency in understanding a given passage but also works on how well you can analyze and interpret the same, using the given questions and text.

1.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

If you would like to learn more about Expository Texts, you may consult:

Marjorie Mather & Brett McLenithan (eds.), *Clear Writing: Readings in Expository Prose* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2006)

Wayne Otto & Sandra White (eds.), *Reading Expository Material* (New York: Academic Press, 1982)

1.8 ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Ghee is usually almost 100% fat. Of these fats, around 60% are saturated, 30% are monounsaturated and just over 5% are polyunsaturated fatty acids. Ghee also contains the fat-soluble vitamins A, D and E.
- 2) Yes, ghee is commonly used in Indian cooking; specifically, traditional cooking. Apart from food, Ghee also features in traditional Ayurveda medicine.
- 3) Piccantino is the company which is called the producer of ghee here.
- 4) They are both Indian Traditions. Ayurveda medicine uses ghee in a number of its productions. It is meant to clear one's internal system. It cleans body of toxins and balances the workings of internal health. It also stimulates the body tissue and helps in digestion.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) (a), 2. (a), 3. (a), 4. (b), 5. (c)
- 2) The first option is correct – their approaches were different and this difference is quite explicitly explained in the fourth paragraph.
- 3) The first option is correct because educationists believe that philosophical abstractions are not suitable for practical application.
- 4) The first option is correct because the term comes from the root word 'perennial' – which means ceaseless.
- 5) The second option is correct – Plato's beliefs were democratic but not his suggested practices.
- 6) The third option is correct – facts do change with the changing times; hence, they are not of the utmost importance when aiming for holistic education.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) As reports show that children are not achieving class-appropriate learning levels, the problems with learning quality can be spotted. According to Pratham's Annual Status of Education 2013 report, close to 78 percent of children in Standard III and about 50 percent of children in Standard V cannot yet read Standard II texts. Arithmetic is also a problem for many of these children.
- 2) Gender issues can be addressed if education problems are tackled. Violence against women and men on the basis of their gender can be solved with gender sensitization which comes from education. Apart from this, the

problem of employability can also be resolved with better standards of education.

- 3) Good assessments are useful at the classroom level for teachers to gauge their students' understanding and also to inform policy. The need for regular and useful assessments in India is something that the government is focusing on at the central and state level.
- 4) The above-mentioned essay addresses the subject of problems with primary education in India. It discusses the various modes under which these problems occur and how they can be resolved. It can be categorized as a problem and solution essay of the expository type.



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UNIT 2 DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Features of Descriptive Texts
 - 2.2.1 To Show or to Tell
 - 2.2.2 Figurative Language
 - 2.2.3 Strong Verbs
- 2.3 Types of Descriptive Writing
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 - 2.6.3 A Descriptive Story
- 2.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.8 Suggested Readings
- 2.9 Answers

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The need for comprehension is essential to the very act of reading. When you read without comprehension, the act is rendered redundant. The aim of this Unit is to make you proficient in skills of reading, by walking you through the reading strategies and help you practice.

You will be able to read with precision and technical expertise. This Unit will also aid you in categorizing the basis of ‘Descriptive’ writing. Specific features of Descriptive texts would be analyzed and understood. You will be able to monitor your own growth in the act of comprehension.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Comprehension simply means understanding. It is the end goal of the act of reading. Comprehension then can also be called as the reason for reading. If the act of reading occurs without an understanding of what is being read then the whole act becomes obsolete and redundant. If you don’t understand then there is no point to reading. The process of understanding is also complex. It employs a number of strategies and meticulous practices.

To tackle the comprehension of a descriptive text, you need to first understand the basic aspects of such a categorical form of writing. The word descriptive, derived from the verb ‘describe’ is enough to serve the purpose of explaining what kind of writing it would be. A piece of writing concerned with describing

anything is descriptive writing. You can write to give a detailed description of a place, person or a thing. What makes this kind of writing different from others is that it enables a picture being formed in the mind of the reader of the thing being described. Reading descriptive text should then enable you to picture the thing being described. Capturing anything so to create a picture in the mind of a reader would entail paying close attention to details by heeding to all the five sensory organs of the body.

This form of writing should not be confused with other forms of detailed writing styles like expository or narrative writing form. Even though all of these three forms (Expository, Narrative and Descriptive) employ the act of explanations, they do it differently. It is hence important for you to understand how explanations are projected in the “descriptive” form of writing.

Janeen Lewis in an article titled “Types of Descriptive Writing” writes, “Descriptive writing describes a person, place or thing in such a way that the reader feels she is experiencing what is being described. The details in the writing vividly come alive in the reader’s mind. Descriptive writing is found in all genres of writing, from the setting of a historical fiction novel to the details of a recipe. There are many types of descriptive writing that place the reader in the middle of the plot, scene, essay or article.”

2.2 FEATURES OF DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS

Descriptive writing has a number of indicators which can be categorized as its features and if understood, be used by its readers to identify the type.

2.2.1 To Show or to Tell

Sensory organs play an important role in receiving information from the world. They are meant to feel, smell, see, taste and hear from the world and be the first contacts of the person, his thoughts with the world. Descriptive writing is heavily dependent on this notion. It relies on appealing to your sensory system and hence is concerned with making you experience the writing through senses instead of direct thoughts. This aspect of making you understand than telling you directly what you need to think is the process of ‘showing’ instead of ‘telling’. You are more concerned with giving enough vivid a picture through which there would cease a need to out rightly tell the reader what they should be thinking about. The picture created through the process of writing should be enough to make the reader think certain thoughts. It is an indirect method of telling something yet doing it without telling but showing.

“Sensory details are details of smell, taste, texture, and sound as well as sight. If you choose “showing” words, those that supply vivid sensory details appropriate to your subject and purpose, you will succeed in showing rather than telling. “Telling” words are usually vague or ambiguous; they can be interpreted in a variety of ways.”

Consider the following examples

- a) *Telling*: “The room was empty and smelled exceptionally stale. There was no furniture or any kind of living presence. The windows had no curtains because no one had bothered for a long time.”
- b) *Showing*: “The apartment smelled of stale food, cabbage, wet waste; mixed with old sweaty socks. My sneakers kept squeaking on the cracked wood floors. Dust strewn everywhere, I could see a bit around the room due to the sunlight seeping in from a broken curtainless window.”

You can see here how the first example is also giving you directions to think in a certain way about the room while in the second one, detailed picture of the room is painted which prompts you to think in a certain way to perceive this room.

As a reader of Descriptive writing, it is your job to look for these images or indicative descriptive words that prompts you into forming a picture in your mind. In looking for these images, you will be able to compile them and get a gist of what they are trying to convey through descriptions.

2.2.2 Figurative Language

Figurative Language is used extensively in Descriptive writing. Figurative Language refers to language that consists of a number of figure of speech and allusions. These forms of ornamental writing are used to create images in the mind of the reader. It does not allude to the literal meaning of words in order for the reader to infer meaning out of them and ignite a creative thought process which comes from the process ‘*showing*’ and not ‘*telling*’. Literary devices like similes, metaphors and personification are included in this kind of writing.

Descriptive writing employs figurative language heavily in order to give a detailed and vivid picture of the thing it is describing. For you as a reader, it is crucial to specifically understand these figures of speech. You should be able to identify the similes (a figure of speech comparing two unlike things that is often introduced by like or as), metaphors (comparing two things by using one kind of object or using in place of another to suggest the likeness between them), personifications (giving something human qualities) and many more such expressions. Knowing the specifics of each one of these would help you comprehend the passage better.

2.2.3 Strong Verbs

Using verbs in their active form, for example action verbs like ‘dance’, ‘play’, ‘chat’, ‘cheat’, ‘race’, create a more compelling effect in the mind for the specific process of creating a picture. As descriptive writing is concerned with various and best ways of description, a proficient way of writing is also to use less amount of words to convey the most. As a result, the writing should be crisp and to the point. In order to do so, you should avoid using linking verbs like ‘was’, ‘is’, and ‘are’. Active verbs make it possible to write and describe in a more precise manner. Instead of writing “She ran very fast”, if it is written as “She raced past us”, it provides a stronger impact and a consequent image.

As a reader, it is important to be able to look for these verbs and understand the inferences to be derived from them. Just like it was a case in figurative language,

it is important to draw correct inferences from the given language as that would enable you to have a better idea of the text you are reading.

2.3 TYPES OF DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

Many things can be described in detail. What is the difference between description and descriptive essays? While a description is just a short passage about anything, a descriptive essay has the same structural system as any other essay. It would not be a description just for the sake of it. It will have a narrative and a thesis statement. It will need you to imagine a certain something the essay is trying to attempt; an attempt to not only make a picture in your mind but to also convey something through that picture. This is the thesis statement of a descriptive essay. Just like traditional format, this essay will have an introduction, body and conclusion which will run on the lines of the thesis statement.

The prominent types of Descriptive writings involve:

- a) Writing about a person
- b) Writing about an object
- c) Writing about a place
- d) Writing about oneself
- e) Writing about others
- f) Writing poems
- g) Writing about traveling, memory or experience
- h) Writing about nature, etc.

2.4 DESCRIPTIVE TEXT SAMPLE

After having understood the basic features that can help you distinguish and understand a descriptive essay or a passage, it is time you look at a sample. The following passage is an excellent example of a Descriptive text. Let us take a look:

2.4.1 Sample

Vampires? Hags? Harry's head was swimming. Hagrid, meanwhile, was counting bricks in the wall above the dustbin.

"Three up... two across..." he muttered. "Right, stand back, Harry."

He tapped the wall three times with the point of his umbrella.

The brick he had touched quivered—it wriggled—in the middle, a small hole appeared—it grew wider and wider—a second later they were facing an archway large enough even for Hagrid, an archway on to a cobbled street which twisted and turned out of sight.

"Welcome," said Hagrid, "to Diagon Alley."

He grinned at Harry's amazement. They stepped through the archway. Harry looked quickly over his shoulder and saw the archway shrink instantly back into solid wall.

The sun shone brightly on a stack of cauldrons outside the nearest shop. Cauldrons—All sizes—Copper, Brass, Pewter, Silver—Self Stirring—Collapsible said a sign hanging over them.

“Yeah, you’ll be needin’ one,” said Hagrid, “ but we gotta get yer money first.”

Harry wished he had about eight more eyes. He turned his head in every direction as they walked up the street, trying to look at everything at once: the shops, the things outside them, the people doing their shopping. A plump woman outside an apothecary was shaking her head as they passed, saying, “Dragon liver, sixteen sickles an ounce, they’re mad ...”

A low, soft hooting came from a dark shop with a sign saying Eeylops Owl Emporium—Tawny, Screech, Barn, Brown and Snowy. Several boys of about Harry’s age had their noses pressed against a window with broomsticks in it. “Look,” Harry heard one of them say, “ the new Nimbus Two Thousand—fastest ever,” There were shops selling robes, shops selling telescopes and strange silver instruments Harry had never seen before, windows stacked with barrels of bat spleens and eels’ eyes, tottering piles of spell books, quills and rolls of parchment, potion bottles, globes of the moon...

“Gringotts,” said Hagrid.

They had reached a snowy-white building which towered over the other little shops.”

(Source: *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* by J.K Rowling)

2.4.2 Understanding structure and explanation

This is a descriptive essay of a place. It is an excerpt from “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone” as the source suggests. It is concerned with conveying the grandeur of this new place that Harry visits called ‘Diagon Alley’. Let us find out through a deep analysis how each of these lines suggests the essay to be part of descriptive writing.

We enter the place through these lines “*He tapped the wall three times with the point of his umbrella.*”

The brick he had touched quivered—it wriggled—in the middle, a small hole appeared—it grew wider and wider—a second later they were facing an archway large enough even for Hagrid, an archway on to a cobbled street which twisted and turned out of sight.”

These lines immediately point to a narrative which wants to convey an element of magic or the supernatural. Diagon alley is clearly magical. This is not being told to us as you can see. This is being shown to us. By these very lines mentioned above, it is to be inferred that any place which opens its doors on three taps of an umbrella is not the normal and it would in turn be beyond normal either initiated through science or the supernatural.

Let us look at the next few lines “*The sun shone brightly on a stack of cauldrons outside the nearest shop. Cauldrons—All sizes—Copper, Brass, Pewter, Silver—Self Stirring—Collapsible said a sign hanging over them.*” This indicates that

the place has shops that sell cauldrons, further establishing the strangeness of the market. There were cauldrons of all sizes some of which were self-stirring! These lines point at its difference from the normal and further the narrative into the realm of the discovery of a magical world.

The next lines read as *“Harry wished he had about eight more eyes. He turned his head in every direction as they walked up the street, trying to look at everything at once: the shops, the things outside them, the people doing their shopping. A plump woman outside an apothecary was shaking her head as they passed, saying, “Dragon liver, sixteen sickles an ounce, they’re mad ...”*” By showing us Harry’s bafflement at having reached at this place, you as a reader are immediately placed in his shoes who will now decode this new world from Harry’s eyes. Through his eyes, you can sense the excitement and wonder at viewing brand new scenes.

“A low, soft hooting came from a dark shop with a sign saying Eeylops Owl Emporium—Tawny, Screech, Barn, Brown and Snowy. Several boys of about Harry’s age had their noses pressed against a window with broomsticks in it. “Look,” Harry heard one of them say, “the new Nimbus Two Thousand—fastest ever,” There were shops selling robes, shops selling telescopes and strange silver instruments Harry had never seen before, windows stacked with barrels of bat spleens and eels’ eyes, tottering piles of spell books, quills and rolls of parchment, potion bottles, globes of the moon..” This passage fits the features of a descriptive passage perfectly. These details of a number of shops selling items showcase a busy and bustling street. There are constant images being made to form in the minds of the reader with the excitement that people seem to feel towards a mere broomstick, to animal parts being displayed in window sills of the shops to the book shop selling not pens but quills, not ordinary books but spell books and so much more. All of these vivid details are used to create a feeling of busyness and the normalcy with which strangeness is proceeding. It opens the window to a world following certain rules of your regular world but strangely different.

If looking for a thesis statement, this whole passage then could be attributed to proving the normalness of the magical market place of “Diagon Alley”. The introduction holds an entry point into this world of wonder and then we move to the body which begins by elaborating the contents of the world. There isn’t a definite conclusion in this passage as it is an excerpt. But the chapter ends with Harry’s initiation into this new world and somewhat normalizing his presence in the strange world.

2.4.3 Probable Questions

There are six kinds of fixed questions which are asked when trying to test the comprehension skills of the student.

- a) Vocabulary based questions: where the meanings of particular words in the text, their antonyms, and synonyms are asked.
- b) Direct questions: where the question requires an answer given directly as it is in the text.
- c) Interpretative and analytic questions: where inferences need to be drawn from the given text.

- d) Main idea: where the reader's ability to comprehend the overall idea of the text is questioned.
- e) Supporting ideas: where the detailed information supporting the main idea is asked.
- f) Narrative structure, style and tone: where specific structural technicalities like the thesis statement, introduction, body and conclusion are looked at.

Sample questions

- a) 1) From the above passage, explain the meaning of the word "tottering".
- b) 2) How many eyes did Harry wish he had while looking around the new market place?
- c) 3) Why has the writer named this strange place Diagon Alley? Discuss.
- d) 4) What is the passage reflecting on when listing down the shops of Diagon Alley?
- e) 5) Why are there people excited about a broomstick in Diagon Alley?
- f) 6) What kind of writing genre would you categorize this passage in and why?

Let us look at the answers:

- a) 1) From the above passage it can be deciphered that there is a busy and chaotic market place where many items are in display including the 'tottering books'. From the aspect of chaos that is to be sensed from the whole passage, the nature of chaos can also be attributed to the books. The books are piled up and are 'tottering' which is a verb. The answer would then be "unbalanced or threatening to dismantle"
- b) 2) The answer to this question is available directly within the lines of the passage. "Harry wished he had about eight more eyes."
- c) 3) Diagon Alley is strange, much different than the socially accepted normal. To be Diagonal is also to not be straight or the normal. In a system of lines, the diagonal line is the one which deflects from the perfect 90-degree angle and creates a schism in perfection. In a similar manner the Diagon alley is present somewhere in the middle of the perfect human world but is extremely different from it in its contents.
- d) 4) Each of these shops resembles normal shops but is strewn with unlikely and uncommon merchandise. There is a craze for a broomstick which just like Harry, the reader is not able to decipher. There are cauldrons that stir themselves, animal parts displayed on window sills and quills and spell books being sold. All these aspects help create a sense of otherness of Diagon Alley.
- e) 5) The world of Harry Potter is a magical world. Diagon Alley is his first initiation into this world. As he goes past the shops, everything he sees is unfamiliar to him yet the shops are displaying their merchandise and

how there is a craze in the market for the best items is quite familiar to him. As he goes past the broom shop and sees people gushing over a broomstick called “Nimbus 2000” he is amazed at the craze, but just like everything else, the reader can fathom that this broom doesn’t hold the same function of value that it would have in our normal world. And this helps in adding to the point of differentness of Diagon Alley.

- f) 6) The above passage can be categorized under the genre of “descriptive” passage as one can find vivid details of a new place to establish its quality of strangeness.

2.5 READING STRATEGIES

Let us take a look at the following lines.

What do good readers do as they read?

One way that researchers have studied what good readers do, has been to ask them to **think aloud** as they read. From these studies, researchers have determined that the seemingly effortless activity described as “good reading” is made up of a set of highly complex, well-developed, and well-practiced skills and abilities.

Particularly impressive is the way in which good readers actively and consciously coordinate these skills and strategies before, during, and after reading a text.

Before reading, good readers tend to **set goals for their reading**. They note the **structure**, or organization of the text, and often create a **mental overview** or outline of the text to help them decide whether it is relevant to their goals.

During reading, good readers read words accurately and quickly, and simultaneously deal with the meanings of those words — as well as the meanings of the phrases and sentences into which the words are grouped. Good readers **connect the meaning of one sentence to the meaning of another**. If something is confusing to them, they use their **background knowledge** to try to clarify the meanings of words and phrases. Sometimes good readers interact with the text by asking themselves questions about its content and reflecting on its ideas.

They are adept at using their background knowledge to make predictions about what might happen next and to understand ideas as they encounter them. Good readers continuously evaluate their **predictions and revise** them as needed.

Good readers are **selective** as they read. They are likely to focus more of their attention on the parts of the text that are most closely tied to their reading goals. They may decide to skip some parts of a text because they already understand the content or because they do not think the parts are important to what they need (or want) to learn from the text. They may decide, after reading several pages, to skip the rest of a chapter because they recently read something similar.

On the other hand, they may decide — either because they do not clearly understand the content or because they find the topic interesting — to reread

a passage or chapter before going on. They also may **summarize** the content of a passage as they read it. In doing so, they may consciously determine what is important, what is supportive, and what is less important.

As they read, good readers often make **inferences**. They may draw on their background knowledge or look for clues in the text to supply information about characters or events that the author has not provided directly. Some good readers may also create mental images, or **visualize** a setting, event, or character to help them understand a passage in a text.

Good readers monitor their comprehension as they read. When they realize that they do not understand what they are reading, they apply procedures to “repair” or “fix-up” their lack of understanding. For example, they may ask themselves questions about the meaning of what they are reading, they may rephrase a passage in their own words, they may look up the meanings of difficult words, or they may **outline** the content of the text.

After reading, good readers often think about, or reflect on what they read. They may mentally summarize major points or events in the text, or even go to other sources to find additional information about the topic of the reading.

In short, good readers are most often **strategic readers**. That is, they use a number of comprehension strategies to get meaning from text. Comprehension strategies are conscious plans or procedures that are under the control of a reader, who makes decisions about which strategies to use and when to use them.

In addition, good readers engage in **metacognition** as they read. Cognition refers to mental functions such as remembering, focusing attention, and processing information. Metacognition refers to people’s awareness of their cognition; that is, their thoughts about their own thinking. From an array of possibilities, for example, readers with metacognitive awareness are able consciously and automatically to select the appropriate comprehension strategies for use with a particular text.

(Source: <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/what-research-tells-us-about-reading-comprehension-and-comprehension-instruction>)

Let us look at the keywords highlighted in the above passage to understand what the act of reading entails.

- **Think aloud:** When you read any piece of an essay or article, the first step should be to try and understand (as the word comprehension itself entails) what your eyes are taking in. Once you read the text having understood it, you can then explain it back to yourself. Thinking out loudly to yourself what the passage might mean has its benefits in enabling you to understand better.
- **Set goals before reading:** At any point, before beginning to read, it is important to understand the purpose of reading. Are you reading to get a gist of the passage? To answer particular questions? For research? Or for pleasure? Specifically, for the purpose of answering questions, you should be aware of the things which need to be looked for within the text. It is a

good move to find out what is being asked and keeping the points in mind you can start reading the passage with said objective.

- **Structure:** Finding out the kind of writing or essay it can be categorized in is always beneficial in the process of prompting an understanding of the text. If you are able to identify the type of essay, you will be able to then predict what you might find in the essay.
- **Mental overview:** This can be done by using the techniques of skimming when attempting comprehension passages. When you start reading, you begin to make mental notes of certain keywords and lines that give you an overall gist of the passage.
- **Connection between sentences:** It is important when reading, to create a sense of understanding that is able to connect a sentence with the next. If you read sentences as unrelated to each other, it will hamper your sense of understanding of the passage.
- **Predict and Revise:** This allows you to read faster. If you have understood what the passage is about, you recognize what it might be saying (maybe from the introduction), then keep a mindset with the background knowledge you have about that topic. This will allow you to predict what to expect and hence prove a quick way to understand the passage.
- **Be Selective:** When skimming and scanning through a passage, you cannot always retain everything you read. It is hence important that you are able to decide and select the things which you believe are important. Some suggestions would be to identify the thesis statement and then proceed to find the supporting notes to it. Other times, when attempting a comprehension passage in exams, you can look at the questions and attempt to identify the important keywords and topics.
- **Summarize:** Another strategy to reading comprehension exercises is to make a summary of each paragraph in about two to three lines. In trying to make the summaries, you will be engaging in the act of comprehending. This enhances your understanding of the passage.
- **Visualize:** This is not only important but a key feature of practice of reading. Just like the other approaches mentioned above, use your mind to visualize what you read. This comes in handy especially when you do Descriptive passages. The very aim of writing descriptive essays is to provide you with ample fodder to visualize what you read and, in the process, comprehend the written passage.
- **Meta cognition:** “Metacognition refers to “thinking about thinking” and was introduced as a concept by John Flavell, who is typically seen as a founding scholar of the field. Flavell said that metacognition is the knowledge you have of your own cognitive processes (your thinking) (Flavell, 1979). It is your ability to control your thinking processes through various strategies, such as organizing, monitoring, and adapting. Additionally, it is your ability to reflect upon the tasks or processes you undertake and to select and utilize the appropriate strategies necessary in your intercultural interactions.” It employs the process of self-regulation and self-policing. It makes you assess your own strengths and weaknesses.

Using these modes or techniques, you can attempt to master the art of comprehension. As a good reader you need to engage in so many of these activities to be able to complete the process or the very act of 'reading'. Reading is a complex activity which when done with precision and technique can help you with your skills of 'picking up ideas from texts'.

Readence, Bean, and Baldwin (2004) suggest a simple procedure to help students recognize, identify, and utilize text structure as a way to better comprehend and recall reading from expository text. Looking at the above passage, you must now attempt to work on key strategies to attempt comprehension passages once you have identified the type of essay it is, and its thesis statement.

2.6 PRACTICE TEXTS

2.6.1 Excerpt from "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood

"The lawns are tidy, the facades are gracious, in good repair; they're like the beautiful pictures they used to print in the magazines about homes and gardens and interior decoration. There is the same absence of people, the same air of being asleep. The street is almost like a museum, or a street in a model town constructed to show the way people used to live. As in those pictures, those museums, those model towns, there are no children.

This is the heart of Gilead, where the war cannot intrude except on television. Where the edges are we aren't sure, they vary, according to the attacks and counterattacks; but this is the center, where nothing moves. The Republic of Gilead, said Aunt Lydia, knows no bounds.

Gilead is within you.

Doctors lived here once, lawyers, university professors. There are no lawyers anymore, and the university is closed.

Luke and I used to walk together, sometimes, along these streets. We used to talk about buying a house like one of these, an old big house, fixing it up. We would have a garden swing for the Children. We would have children. Although we knew it wasn't too likely we could ever afford it, it was something to talk about, a game for Sundays.

Such freedom now seems almost weightless.

We turn the corner onto a main street, where there's more traffic.

Cars go by, black most of them, some gray and brown. There are other women with baskets, some in red, some in the dull green of the Marthas, some in the striped dresses, red and blue and green and cheap and skimpy, that mark the women of the poorer men.

Econowives, they're called. These women are not divided into functions. They have to do everything; if they can. Sometimes there is a woman all in black, a widow. There used to be more of them, but they seem to be diminishing. You don't see the Commanders' Wives on the sidewalks. Only in cars.

The sidewalks here are cement. Like a child, I avoid stepping on the cracks. I'm remembering my feet on these sidewalks, in the time before, and what I used to wear on them. Sometimes it was shoes for running, with cushioned soles and breathing holes, and stars of fluorescent fabric that reflected light in the darkness. Though I never ran at night; and in the daytime, only beside well-frequented roads.

Women were not protected then.

I remember the rules, rules that were never spelled out but that every woman knew: Don't open your door to a stranger, even if he says he is the police. Make him slide his ID under the door. Don't stop on the road to help a motorist pretending to be in trouble. Keep the locks on and keep going. If anyone whistles, don't turn to look. Don't go into a laundromat, by yourself, at night.

I think about laundromats. What I wore to them: shorts, jeans, jogging pants. What I put into them: my own clothes, my own soap, my own money, money I had earned myself. I think about having such control.

Now we walk along the same street, in red pairs, and no man shouts obscenities at us, speaks to us, touches us. No one whistles.

There is more than one kind of freedom, said Aunt Lydia. Freedom to and freedom from. In the days of anarchy, it was freedom to. Now you are being given freedom from. Don't underrate it.

In front of us, to the right, is the store where we order dresses. Sonic people call them habits, a good word for them. Habits are hard to break. The store has a huge wooden sign outside it, in the shape of a golden lily; Lilies of the Field, it's called. You can see the place, under the lily, where the lettering was painted out, when they decided that even the names of shops were too much temptation for us. Now places are known by their signs alone.

Lilies used to be a movie theater, before. Students went there a lot; every spring they had a Humphrey Bogart festival, with Lauren Bacall or Katharine Hepburn, women on their own, making up their minds.

They wore blouses with buttons down the front that suggested the possibilities of the word undone. These women could be undone; or not. They seemed to be able to choose. We seemed to be able to choose, then. We were a society dying, said Aunt Lydia, of too much choice.

I don't know when they stopped having the festival. I must have been grown up. So I didn't notice.

We don't go into Lilies, but across the road and along a side street."

Check Your Progress 1

Descriptive Text

Answer the following questions based on your reading of the passage in 2.6.1.

- 1) What type of writing would the above passage fit in and why?

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- 2) What is the picture of Gilead being formed in the given passage?

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- 3) What festival does the writer recall?

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- 4) “There is more than one kind of freedom, said Aunt Lydia. Freedom to and freedom from. In the days of anarchy, it was freedom to. Now you are being given freedom from. Don’t underrate it.” What do these lines mean? Discuss.

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- 5) Who are the Econowives?

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2.6.2 Nagasaki

Nearly nine years ago, on a warm autumn evening in 1945, I was driving over the mountains of Southern Japan to the city of Nagasaki. I thought I was still in open country when all at once I realized that I was already crossing what had been the city. The shadows which flickered past me in the dusk were not rocks and trees: they were crushed buildings; the bare and skewed ribs of factories, and two crumpled gasometers.

The scale of the damage of Nagasaki drained the blood from my heart then, and does so now when I speak of it. For three miles my road lay through a desert which man had made in a second. Now, nine years later, the hydrogen bomb is ready to dwarf this scale, and to turn each mile of destruction into ten miles. And citizens and scientists share at one another and ask: 'How did we blunder into this nightmare?

I put this first as a question of history, because the history of this is known to few people. The fission of uranium was discovered by two German scientists a year before the war. Within a few months, it was reported that Germany had forbidden the export of uranium from the mines of Czechoslovakia which she had just annexed. Scientists on the Continent, in England and America, asked themselves whether the secret weapon on which the Germans were said to be working was an atomic bomb. If the fission of uranium could be used explosively (and this already seemed possible in 1939) it might in theory make an explosion a million times larger than hitherto. The monopoly of such an atomic bomb would give Hitler instant victory, and make him master of Europe and the world. The scientists knew the scale of what they feared very well: they feared first desolation and then slavery. With heavy hearts, they told Albert Einstein what they knew of atomic fission. Einstein had been a pacifist all his life, and he did not easily put his conscience on one side. But it seemed clear to him that no scientist was free to keep this knowledge to himself. He felt that no one could decide whether a nation should or should not use atomic bombs, except the nation itself; the choice must be offered to the nation, and made by those whom the nation has elected to act for it. On August 2, 1939, a month before Hitler invaded Poland, Einstein wrote to President Roosevelt to tell him that he thought an atomic bomb might be made, and he feared that the Germans were trying to make one.

This is how it came about that, later in the war, scientists worked together in England, in Canada and America, to make the atomic bomb. They hated war no less than the layman does- no less than the soldier does; they, too, had wrestled with their consciences; and they had decided that their duty was to let the nation use their skill, just as it uses the skill of the soldier or the expert in camouflage. The atomic scientists believed that they were in a race against Germany whose outcome might decide the war even in its last weeks. We know now that the race was almost a walk-over. The Germans were indeed trying to make an atomic explosion, and they thought that they were ahead of the allies. But by our standards, what they had done was pitiful; they had not made a pile that worked, and they believed that the fast chain reaction of an atomic bomb was impossible. The Nazis had made fundamental science a poor relation, and put it under second rate party men with splendid titles. And more deeply, the Nazis had sapped the pith and power of research, the quizzical

eye and questioning mind, the urge to find the facts for oneself. There were not enough unconventional ideas in the German atomic projects, and when the younger men did put up some, their leaders always knew better.

Source: UPSC CPF Assistant Commandant Examination 2007 Paper II
(BSF/CRPF/ITBP/CISF/SSB)

Check Your Progress 2

Answer the following questions based on your reading of the passage in 2.6.2.

- 1) What had drained the blood from the heart of the author?

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- 2) Describe the circumstances leading to the making of atom bomb.

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- 3) When was the Hydrogen bomb ready for use?

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- 4) What, according to the author, was the main reason of the failure of the German scientists?

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- 5) What do you learn from the passage about Albert Einstein?

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2.6.3 A Descriptive Story

Mike and Morris lived in the same village. While Morris owned the largest jewelry shop in the village, Mike was a poor farmer. Both had large families with many sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren. One fine day, Mike, tired of not being able to feed his family, decided to leave the village and move to the city where he was certain to earn enough to feed everyone. Along with his family, he left the village for the city. At night, they stopped under a large tree. There was a stream running nearby where they could freshen up themselves. He told his sons to clear the area below the tree, he told his wife to fetch water and he instructed his daughters-in-law to make up the fire and started cutting wood from the tree himself. They didn't know that in the branches of the tree, there was a thief hiding. He watched as Mike's family worked together and also noticed that they had nothing to cook. Mike's wife also thought the same and asked her husband, "Everything is ready but what shall we eat?". Mike raised his hands to heaven and said "Don't worry. He is watching all of this from above. He will help us."

The thief got worried as he had seen that the family was large and worked well together. Taking advantage of the fact that they did not know he was hiding in the branches, he decided to make a quick escape. He climbed down safely when they were not looking and ran for his life. But, he left behind the bundle of stolen jewels and money which dropped into Mike's lap. Mike opened it and jumped with joy when he saw the contents. The family gathered all their belongings and returned to the village. There was great excitement when they told everyone how they got rich.

Morris thought that the tree was miraculous and this was a nice and quick way to earn some money. He ordered his family to pack some clothes and they set off as if on a journey. They also stopped under the same tree and Morris started commanding everyone as Mike had done. But no one in his family was willing to obey his orders. Being a rich family, they were used to having servants all around. So, the one who went to the river to fetch water enjoyed a nice bath. The one who went to get wood for fire went off to sleep. Morris's wife said "Everything is ready but what shall we eat?" Morris raised his hands and said, "Don't worry. He is watching all of this from above. He will help us."

As soon as he finished saying, the thief jumped down from the tree with a knife in hand. Seeing him, everyone started running around to save their lives. The thief stole everything they had and Morris and his family had to return to the village empty handed, having lost all their valuables that they had taken with them.

(Source: <https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/comprehension-passages/>)

Answer the following questions based on your reading of the passage in 2.6.3.

- 1) Why did Mike and his family decide to rest under the thief's tree?
 - a) Being a large family, they knew that they could easily defeat the thief
 - b) It was a convenient spot for taking a halt at night
 - c) There was a stream nearby and wood enough to build a house
 - d) That was the only large tree that could shelter their large family
- 2) Which of the following best describes Morris?
 - a) He was a rich businessman
 - b) He bullied his wife
 - c) He paid his servants well
 - d) He was greedy and imitated Mike
- 3) What did Mike mean when he said "He is watching all this from above"?
 - a) He had spotted the thief and wanted to scare him
 - b) He was telling his wife to have faith in god
 - c) It was just a warning for his family members to stick together
 - d) He was begging the thief to help his family
- 4) Why did the thief return to the tree?
 - a) To wait for Mike to return
 - b) To set up a trap
 - c) To wait for Morris's family
 - d) Not mentioned in the passage
- 5) How did the fellow villagers react to Mike getting rich overnight?
 - a) They were jealous of him
 - b) They were very excited
 - c) They followed his example
 - d) They envied him

2.7 LET US SUM UP

Descriptive essays are concerned with creating a picture through vivid language used. Your job is to identify these details and infer the correct picture which might originally have been interpreted by the writer. If you are able to correctly assess this picture being created by the author, you will be able to analyze it further, taking into account the various choices of the images being created through this form of writing, as well as how and why those choices have been made.

It is important to pick up on all the information which is provided in the text. Make a comprehensive list of ideas found in the text that pertain to the senses

and in doing so you will be able to absorb as many kinds of sensory information as possible, thus providing holistic understanding of the text.

By thinking aloud, setting goals before reading, understanding the structure, creating a mental overview, understanding the connection between each paragraph and thereafter each sentence, picking up information which holds significance, and then summarizing your thoughts into comprehensive written form of the answer, you will be attempting the reading of descriptive text correctly. Using the skimming and scanning processes through the introduction, body and conclusion of the text, you will be able to answer the questions with precision.

2.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

If you would like to learn more about Descriptive Texts, you may consult:

Beverly Derewianka, *Exploring how texts work* (New Hampshire: Heinemann Educational Books, 1990)

Cleanth Brooks & Robert Penn Warren, *Modern Rhetoric 3rd Edition* (New York: Harcourt, 1970)

2.9 ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) The above passage is a descriptive narration of a place called Gilead as one can find detailed description of the roads, shops and the person's memory attached with it.
- 2) Gilead seems to be an extremely disciplined place with strict laws and a lack of freedom for all. It seems to be divided into factions where especially women would wear clothes which are color coded according to their faction. When looking at the writer's memories, it can also be judged that things were not often the same and after a war had taken place, the country had converted into the one we see in these passages.
- 3) Every year before Gilead, they would hold the Humphrey Bogart Festival in a movie theatre where they would celebrate independent women through their movies.
- 4) These lines are the writer's memory about the same place where she now walks. She says they are now free from all the harassment those women would face in the earlier days because they were told they were spoiled with the freedom of choices. Now as she walks there, she has no such choice and there is no harassment by men either. In this case then, these women were told to appreciate a scenario where no harassment was tolerated and they had freedom from it all.
- 5) These are the wives of the low-class men who have not been yet divided into a faction and hence have to resort to doing every kind of work and not just one. They also hence did not have a dress code to adhere to.

Check Your Progress 2

Descriptive Text

- 1) The scale of damage that the author saw when he went to Nagasaki drained his blood. He was not able to believe the massive destruction the war had resulted in. He speaks of the damage caused by the use of Atomic Bombs.
- 2) The writer discusses how Germany was predicted to be conspiring and making bombs in World War II and that they were trying to work the technology in order to create Atomic Bombs. It was a terrible thought yet the scientists of other countries like England and America including Albert Einstein felt duty bound to their nation just like soldiers to create the same technology lest Hitler wins the war due to the Atomic Bombs. As a result, the other side also made the atomic bomb and they made it much quicker than Germany. This was because Germany was unable to encourage out of the box ideas having been boxed down by the strict regime and law.
- 3) It came to be used 9 years later of the Nagasaki bombings.
- 4) “The Nazis had made fundamental science a poor relation, and put it under second rate party men with splendid titles. And more deeply, the Nazis had sapped the pith and power of research, the quizzical eye and questioning mind, the urge to find the facts for oneself. There were not enough unconventional ideas in the German atomic projects, and when the younger men did put up some, their leaders always knew better.”
- 5) It is to be understood that he was a pacifist. He was not too keen on making the bomb yet after a point was duty bound as a national scientist to do so.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) b) It was a convenient spot for taking a halt at night
- 2) d) He was greedy and imitated Mike
- 3) b) He was telling his wife to have faith in God
- 4) d) Not mentioned in the passage
- 5) b) They were very excited

UNIT 3 NARRATIVE TEXT

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Features of Narrative Texts
- 3.3 Structure of Narrative Texts
- 3.4 Narrative Text Sample
 - 3.4.1 Sample
 - 3.4.2 Understanding structure and explanation
 - 3.4.3 Probable questions
- 3.5 Reading Strategies
- 3.6 Practice Texts
- 3.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.8 Suggested Readings
- 3.9 Answers

3.0 OBJECTIVES

Narration is the basis of any form of story-telling. Any time the act of telling a story takes place, the key aspect of it is the narration. The comprehension of a narrative text would then entail the act of identifying the modes of narration. If the purpose or the thesis statement of narration is understood, the text would be comprehended. Comprehension is indispensable to the very act of reading. When you read without comprehension, the act is rendered redundant.

The aim of this Unit is to make you proficient in skills of reading, by walking you through the reading strategies and help you practice. You will be able to read with precision and technical expertise. This Unit will also aid you in categorizing the basis of 'Narrative' writing. Specific features of Narrative texts would be analyzed and understood. You will be able to monitor your own growth in the act of comprehension.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Narrative text is writing that tells a story. It can be a made-up story (fiction) or one that is based on real events. To narrate is the verb used to describe the act of telling a story, so a narrative is the story and the narrator is the person telling the story. There can be factual as well as fictional narratives, descriptive as well as argumentative narratives. In a way, narrative writing can encapsulate a variety of purposes to its creation. A factual write up will be close to reality while fiction can take liberties to change the facts even though it would be based on reality. Imagination is key in a fictional narrative. Creativity plays a crucial role in both fiction and non-fiction narratives as 'how you tell a story' ensures the effect you wish to have on your readers.

Dr. Rahmad Husein and Dr. Anni Holila Pulungan write: "The social function of narrative genre is to tell a story. The story is commonly constituted by a number

of events in which it is found that something goes wrong. The wrong side of the event leads to a stage, which is one with great suspense called a crisis or climax in the story. The story then stages a solution to the problem in the climax. A narrative ends with a solution, either with a happy or sad ending.

Society is dynamic in the sense that the society is faced to evolution where things happen and the happenings become the causes to the next events and so forth. The events attract attentions of human beings as members of the society. As a way of preserving the events, human beings record them either in oral or written mode and stage them in stories called narratives. The narratives are passed on from persons to other persons, from one generation to other generations and from one time to another. Consequently, there have been, are and will be stories or narratives in the society. As the stories form in the society, they reflect socio-cultural heritages. The value of narratives is that they indicate views, attitudes or aspirations of the society. In this way, narrative is regarded as the preservation of culture. Thus, they prevail, remain and maintained in the society.”

You as a reader would then have to identify the narrative styles for the purpose of understanding why the text has been written or a narrative mode assumed. The reason for conveyance of a message can be understood by identifying the narrative text, which helps in the act of comprehension. Non-fiction narrative examples are memoirs, biographies, periodicals and magazines while fictional narratives are novels and short stories.

3.2 FEATURES OF NARRATIVE TEXTS

The narrative text can be broken down into a few important parts and the features of this kind of writing are:

- a) **Theme:** The theme of any text is the big main idea that the text is about. Ask yourself the question, “What is this text/essay about?” and the answer to that question will sum up the theme of the writing. You shouldn’t confuse the theme with a ‘subject’ line. Thematic ideas of a text are closer to the thesis statement. It discusses the very purpose for writing. The ‘subject’ acts as the basis for the beginning of a literary work but the theme decides its purpose and answers the question “Why”. If the subject of a text is ‘war’ then its theme would be the opinion which the narrative would establish; that war is a necessity for society, or a curse, or unavoidable etc.
- b) **Setting:** Consider the time and place where your narrative is set in; this becomes the setting of the text. It is usually found in novels, short stories, plays and films. The setting can be introduced right in the onset of the text or can be discovered slowly as the narrative develops. The setting establishes the mood and tone that the writer is intending to set for a passage. As a reader, it becomes your job to understand what tone is being set and why. It gives a limit to the possibilities of the action that the characters’ lives can indulge in. This helps in engaging the readers into the story. If the setting of a story changes, so does the evolution of the story along with it. Setting becomes an important narrative mode for the story. It enables a definition of the time and space of the text.

As a reader of the narrative essay, you should be watchful of the above-mentioned aspects of the setting of an essay. If you are able to identify the

setting, you can then proceed to comprehend the role it plays in for the writer. It enables you to decipher why a certain setting has been chosen and to what end. It helps in analysis and furthers the prospect of comprehension.

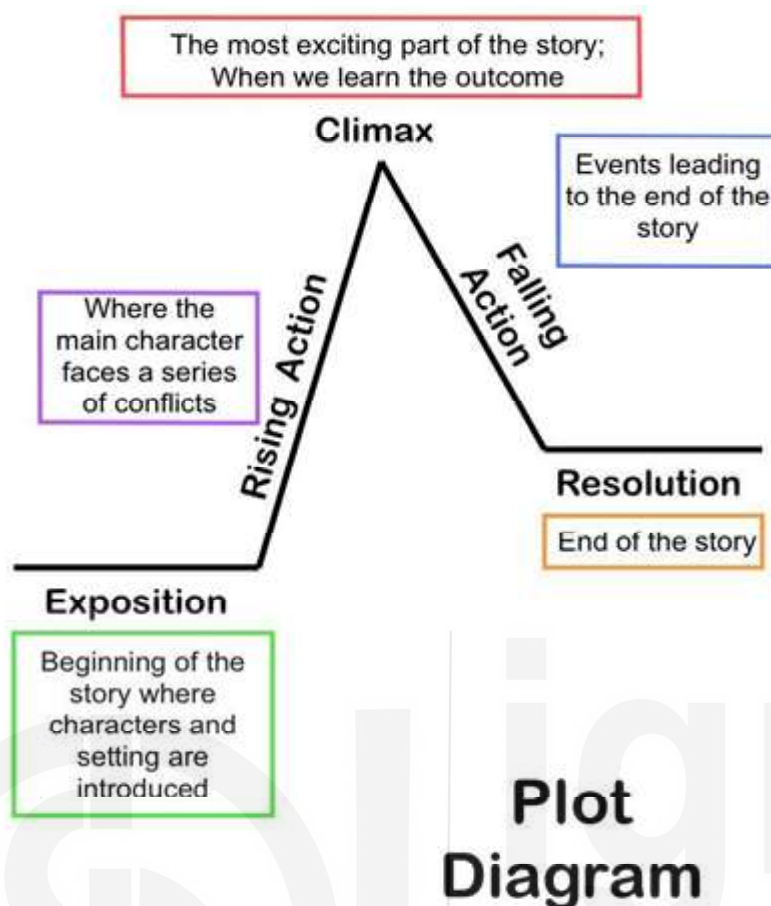
- c) **Characters:** Each narrative has characters and people who comprise the contents of the narrative. For a narrative essay, a character maybe 'you' as you tell your story of the first day at college, or the new 'pen' that you received as a gift from your favorite teacher. The characters could be inanimate or lively. The main feature would be to keep the character at the center of your narrative. The character would be what your story is about. If you are asked to write or read a narrative essay on a place or a setting like 'Delhi – my first love' then that place becomes your character.

As you read such an essay for the purpose of comprehension, you will be trying to trace the characters of the narrative. If you manage to find them, you will then proceed to judge the qualities of the characters that have been listed by the writer. What qualities have been bestowed on the character can help you understand the perspective of the writer. It would then help you to further ask questions of how or why certain characters have been given their respective characteristics. This would aid in the process of comprehension and analysis.

- d) **Point of view:** There are three points of view that encapsulate any form of writing. The first person, second- and third-person narrative. "First Person –the story is told from the main character's point of view and uses the pronouns "I" and "we". Second Person-usually for instructions; uses the pronouns "you" and "your" (the author is speaking to the reader). Third Person –the story is told from an outside point of view and uses the pronouns 'he', 'it', 'she' and 'they'." For a narrative text, the first-person narrative is usually preferred. It helps in the process of narration as the story seems to arrive from personal experiences.

When reading a narrative text, if you identify the perspective or the point of the view of the writer, then again, you can ascertain the purpose of that point of view. A first-person narrative may be used for a more personal view than the third person. After having understood the points of view of the narration, you can comprehend the passages better.

- e) **Plot:** Richard Nordquist in an article writes "Every story that you read follows a series of events that range from the introduction of a conflict to begin the story and a final resolution at the end; this is the plot of your story. Basically, it's what happens throughout the narrative, and it appears in both fiction and non-fiction work. When you write a plot summary, you'll essentially condense a novel into a short essay, touching on the key points of the material. You'll want to introduce the main characters, setting of the story, and the main conflict of the narrative, including the five basic components of the plot: introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and finally, a resolution. Some outlines will break down a plot into more segments (exposition, inciting incident, central conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution) but the premise is the same - a pattern of rising and falling action that looks essentially like an arc or a bell curve when you consider the level of drama the characters experience."



A Plot according to E.M Forster answers the ‘why’ of the story. If ‘the King died and the Queen died’ is a story then the ‘King died and the Queen died in grief of the king dying’ is the plot point. Accordingly, the reasoning for the story consists of minute details. The elements that contribute to a sound plot are as follows:

- i) **Exposition:** It is that part of the plot which appears at the beginning of the story. It introduces the reader to the main characters, setting, mood, and background information to the story. This may give out subtle interesting facts about the character and the core of the character’s emotional side. It allows the reader to connect with the characters that would be developed over the course of the whole story. For instance, in the Disney film *Finding Nemo*, it begins with the background information which helps the audience understand the characters and situations better. Characters of Marlin and Nemo are introduced and audience also learns about Coral’s death and that, after that, Marlin has been an overprotective father. Exposition is done through dialogues, narration, internal monologue, devices like newspaper clippings, letters, emails etc. Exposition statement is the part of the plot that tells how the story begins including aspects of the text like characters, setting, conflict (problem), and background information. Exposition is a form of writing that explains what’s happening or has happened in the story in a very matter-of-fact way. Exposition may present background information of the plot or characters, explain details about the setting, convey a sense of the historical context, and so on. Authors are

often counseled to keep exposition to a minimum so as not to bore the reader or at least to include exposition in such a way that it doesn't bog down the story. However, exposition is a necessary part of almost all stories as a way to convey important information.

- (ii) **Conflict:** After the introduction of the story, we are introduced to the problems within the story. This takes forward the plot as it is this struggle between the opposing forces that the individual goes through or tries to solve. It supplies tension in the story. This can be of various types: a) Individual vs Individual: This type of conflict refers to the struggle between two individuals mostly the protagonist and antagonist, the two who have opposing goals or qualities or the conflict could be in any relationship like a husband and a wife, a parent and a child or two friends. b) Individual vs Society: This type of conflict is usually between an individual in opposition to the society and its code and conduct. Here, there is a clash between the societal norms and the character. c) Individual vs Nature: This refers to the conflict between character and the environment like natural disasters. d) Individual vs Self: Another kind of conflict refers to the inner demons of the characters themselves. The character here is not in conflict with any external element but an internal one. This may spring from fear, self-doubt and could be self-destructive as well. This part of the plot is important because the presence of conflict in the story leads to change. It is when the characters go through these adversities/ problems, their character develops, gains insight and strengths. They grow and change with the story.
- iii) **Rising Action:** After the exposition (where the background information and the character is introduced) and conflict (where the struggle of the protagonist is introduced), rising action refers to the series of events that unfold and the situations that the character goes through to deal with or resolve the conflict. It creates suspense and tension in the narrative. It also includes the decisions, action, inaction and character flaws of the protagonist. The rising action leads to the most important part in a narrative i.e. Climax.
- iv) **Climax:** It is the most crucial point or the turning point in the narrative. It is also seen as the most exciting part of the story. Usually, in the climax the character faces the conflict and there is a change in the character. It is the point of crisis in the narrative. For example, in Cinderella's story, when the clock strikes midnight and Cinderella has to leave and in a hurry leaves her glass shoe behind. This is the Climax.
- v) **Falling Action:** Falling Action refers to the tying of all loose ends in the narrative. All the problems are solved and conflict resolved. It happens as a result of the climax wherein all the questions posed are answered and the plot is wrapped up. At times, the narrative does not provide you with any falling action.
- vi) **Resolution:** Resolution in a narrative completes the story. It may or may not be a happy one always but it provides a sense of closure in the end. However, it may leave certain questions, thoughts, emotions in the reader.

You need to identify these features while reading a narrative text. These are also known as story elements. They will not only help you in identifying the narrative

type of essay but understanding these will also help you in comprehending the text.

Let us now look at the organization of Narrative Texts.

3.3 STRUCTURE OF NARRATIVE TEXTS

It is imperative for you to understand how the elements studied in the previous section are organized into a text. A narrative text is one which tells a story. It has a beginning, middle and end. It introduces the reader to a character, the situations, setting; divulges all the details through action and then concludes with an outcome. This type of text can be broadly staged into: Orientation, Complication and Resolution.

- i) **Orientation:** As the name suggests, it refers to the introduction or the beginning of the narrative text where the character and setting are introduced to the reader. The Who and What of the story usually appears in the first paragraph of this text. This Introduction can further be divided into three parts: Hook, Background and Thesis. Hook refers to the opening of the narrative where an interesting fact or a surprising element is used. It could be a shocking statistic, a question or a quote. The purpose is to attract the reader's attention. It is the first sentence of the essay. Next, you are given the background to the character and the situation you are put into. You learn about events that have happened before the action. After this history, the thesis statement in this type of essay provides you with the real action of the story. Of course, you do not get to know the entire story here but just a hint. By the end of this Orientation you know the character, the situation, the history and you know the present problem at hand. This part in the text consists of elements of Exposition and Conflict.
- ii) **Complication:** It contains emergence of crises that would need to be resolved. It takes care of the main story and the events unfold here. In these Body paragraphs, the greater detail to all the action, inaction and the situation is given which grants a life to the story. The situation paragraph describes what happens in the story, how it happens and why it is happening. It is presented step by step in the text. The second Body paragraph is dedicated to the story element of Rising Action where the story is further developed leading to the last body paragraph in a narrative text, Climax. Climax is the height of the action which sometimes comes across as a surprising turn of events within the story.
- iii) **Resolution:** This part of the narrative structure is the conclusion of the text which includes Falling Action and Resolution story elements. It is also sometimes referred to as anti-climax. The conflict is resolved here and it shows how the character solves the problem posed in the introduction paragraph of the text. The concluding paragraph shows what happens after the main event and how the problem is solved.
- iv) **Coda:** The last part of the narrative structure is known as Coda/Re-orientation. It contains the lesson learnt after the entire story and the resolution. It also presents a change in the character after going through the entire journey from conflict to resolution. Please remember it may be a good/happy ending or a bad/sad ending. It could also be a resolution that

the writer reaches and how it changed the writer in this process. However, this closing remark is optional in a narrative text depending on the aim of the writer and if the writer wants to leave the audience with a moral lesson at the end of the tale.

3.4 NARRATIVE TEXT SAMPLE

3.4.1 Sample

We arrived much late at night. As we were approaching the house, we heard dogs barking in the darkness. Cecil and Frank felt scared as the wind was blowing from the mountain forest. The night air was extremely cold and damp in that late horrible winter. We were only few metres from the huge house when we heard shootings from behind. Three stout officers in Nazi uniform appeared and one of them asked us to produce our ID cards. Cecil and I were frozen to scares. Calmly Frank showed his ID card and the three tough men in their military uniform saluted at us. They let us go. Frank waved his hand and the three men disappeared in the darkness followed by the dogs barking. We were safe to pass through the most dangerous check point at the border. I will never forget that horrible and threatening night.

Source: <https://www.usd.ac.id/fakultas/pendidikan/f113/PLPG2017/Download/materi/bing/BAB-VI-Narrative.pdf>

3.4.2 Understanding structure and explanation

The above passage can be identified as a narrative text. Some elements which can be found are the progress of a story from a set up to conflict to resolution towards the end. The first few sentences *“We arrived much late at night. As we were approaching the house, we heard dogs barking in the darkness. Cecil and Frank felt scared as the wind was blowing from the mountain forest. The night air was extremely cold and damp in that late horrible winter.”* set up the tone for the narrative. The first sentence can be attributed to be the hook. ‘Hook’ is used to begin a story and draw in your interest, just as the name suggests. It is meant to keep the reader ‘hooked’ to read further. The first section will also set up the thesis statement. A thesis statement is that which explains in detail what the essay is about. The story being told has multiple people as can be found in the pronoun “we”. The time has been set at ‘late at night’ which gives the passage a dull undertone. “dogs barking” adds further to the tone of eeriness. By informing us that two characters were scared we are informed that this is a situation which is meant to invoke fear in the reader. A detailed description of the night air, of the setting and of the general mood of the passage has been set by the exposition.

Let us look at the next few sentences. *“We were only few metres from the huge house when we heard shootings from behind. Three stout officers in Nazi uniform appeared and one of them asked us to produce our ID cards. Cecil and I were frozen to scares.”* This section can be identified to be consisting of ‘rising action’ and ‘conflict’ at the same time. The ‘hearing of shooting’ establishes the first onset into tension. It invites a probable promise of either a resolution or a destruction that is to ensue as the passage goes on. As the writer writes that they were frozen when the police officer comes to check on them, it establishes the tension which needs to be addressed in the next few lines. It creates a sense of suspense which leaves you, the reader to compellingly read on in order to find

out what happens. This section can also be attributed to be a part of the 'body' of the text. The body comprises of the tension, and conflict which would later find resolution.

The next section reads as "*Calmly Frank showed his ID card and the three tough men in their military uniform saluted at us. They let us go. Frank waved his hand and the three men disappeared in the darkness followed by the dogs barking.*" This sums up to be a concluding section of the text. This section not only gives you climax and a resolution but also a glimpse into the character of Frank, one of the characters. Falling action can be identified as the time when Frank calmly shows his ID card and then one can find a final resolution in the next few lines. "*We were safe to pass through the most dangerous check point at the border. I will never forget that horrible and threatening night.*" It gives an end to not only the exposition but also resolves the point of tension.

Understanding all these aspects of the narrative passage, you will be able to answer questions provided to you.

Let us now look at some probable questions:

3.4.3 Probable Questions

There are six kinds of fixed questions which are asked when trying to test the comprehension skills of the student.

- a) Vocabulary based questions: where the meanings of particular words in the text, their antonyms, and synonyms are asked.
- b) Direct questions: where the question requires an answer given directly as it is in the text.
- c) Interpretative and analytic questions: where inferences need to be drawn from the given text.
- d) Main idea: where the reader's ability to comprehend the overall idea of the text is questioned.
- e) Supporting ideas: where the detailed information supporting the main idea is asked.
- f) Narrative structure, style and tone: where specific structural technicalities like the thesis statement, introduction, body and conclusion are looked at.

Sample Questions

- 1) Give the meaning of the word 'stout' from the above passages.
- 2) At what time is the narrative set in?
- 3) What would be the purpose of choosing the setting as night time for the narrative?
- 4) Explain the encounter the author goes through one late night evening.
- 5) Why was the writer scared?
- 6) What category of writing would you find the above passage in?

Let us look at the answers

- 1) The word 'stout' has come in context to the Nazi army men. It can be used to describe a negative aspect of the men through a reference to 'bulk' of the men.

- 2) The narrative is set in the late night time.
- 3) The setting of the late night time enables a direction towards the morbid and the fearful. It helps create an ambience of tension and suspense and renders the reader suspecting of what is to happen.
- 4) The author of the passage narrates a time when he or she gets caught up with Nazi officials. The author is out late at night with another man called Frank and gets tensed at meeting the officials. Yet after showing an ID card, they give a sigh of relief and move on. It is a scary memory of the writer which she or he is unable to forget. The author in the passage tries to convey the details of a fearful night that is instilled in his or her memory forever.
- 5) The writer might not have been following the rules or was nervous due to the lofty and massive nature of the Nazi officials. She or he gets nervous when stopped by an authority figure as they start introspecting and wondering if they would be caught for an unforeseen matter, yet when that does not happen and they are let off, he or she begins to relax. The fear that they felt on the day however still exists.
- 6) The above passage fits perfectly in to the narrative mode of writing. It has the structural design of a narrative text. It has the following elements: exposition, rising action, conflict, climax, falling action, resolution and hence can be called a narrative text.

3.5 READING STRATEGIES

Skimming and Scanning

In order to get a general overview of the text, you will need to employ certain reading strategies. The processes of skimming and scanning allow you to do the same. When you read for the purpose of attaining an overall impression of the text, the process is called “Skimming”. It employs reading the title first, and then quickly making way through the introduction or merely the first paragraph. You can then move through the first and last line of each paragraph, ultimately absorbing the whole of the conclusion. You will also need to notice certain pictures, charts or graphs if any. This is a quick strategy to attain a general idea of the whole text.

Scanning should be used when you need to get a detailed understanding of the contents of the text. It employs a longer duration, as specific details of the content need to be understood and made note of in order to understand the text. As you would have already used the skimming technique, you will have a background to what the text is about. The process of scanning becomes easier thereafter. In order to scan, you should first know what information to look for, is it a date? an adjective? a synonym? or a factual number? Accordingly, you will be going through your text, looking for that particular information. It employs a selective reading, which enables you to concentrate only on the piece of information you are looking for.

3.6 PRACTICE TEXTS

- 1) The sage of science, Einstein, was sitting in a depressive and pensive mood one evening. His eyes were brimming with tears. The pain was evident on his face. He peeped out of the window of his room. The sun had set a few minutes back. The sky was filled with a reddish glow. At this sunset, he felt that it was humanity that had sunk into devilish darkness and the reddish glow in the sky was the blood of humanity spilling all over the sky from earth. With tired steps, he walked back to his chair and settled down. It was the 9th of August 1945. Three days back, he had felt the same agony as if someone had torn him apart. He was deeply hurt and depressed when they heard on the radio that America had dropped an atom bomb on the Japanese city, Hiroshima. Today, within three days another bomb was dropped on another city, Nagasaki and lakhs of people had been killed.
- 2) He had heard that the blast released so much energy that it had paled all past destructions in comparison and death had played out a pitiable dance of destruction. The flames that broke out of the bomb were burning, melting and exploding buildings. Scared of the heat of the bomb, people had jumped into lakes and rivers, but the water was boiling and the people too were burnt and killed. The animals in the water were already boiled to death. Animals, trees, herbs, fragrant flowering plants were all turned into ashes. The atomic energy destruction had just not stopped there. It had entered the atmosphere there and had spread radiation that would affect people for generation to come and would also bring about destructive irreversible biological changes in animals and plants.
- 3) As the news of the atomic attack reached Einstein, and he became aware of the glaring horror of the abuse of atomic energy, his distress and restlessness knew no bounds. He could not control himself and picked up his violin to turn his mind on the other things. While playing the violin, he tried to dissolve in its sad notes, but couldn't. He was burning on the embers of destruction; his heart was filled with an ocean of agony and tears just continued streaming uncontrollably out of his eyes. Night had fallen. His daughter came up and asked him to eat something as he had not taken anything for the last four days. His voice was restrained and he said, "don't feel like eating."
- 4) He could not sleep that night. Lying down, he was thinking how he had drawn the attention of the then American President Roosevelt towards the destructive powers of an atomic bomb. He had thought that this would be used to scare Hitler and put an end to the barbarism that. However, Roosevelt kept him in the dark and made false promises. Eventually, he had abused Einstein's equation of $E=mc^2$ that resulted in the destructive experiments. His actions had made science and scientists as murderers. Einstein kept on thinking for a long time. Eventually, he slipped into sleep. When he woke up at dawn, there was a new dawn in him too. The atomic threat had transformed his heart.
- 5) The next day, he decided to disassociate himself from the scientific policy of the government and all governmental institutions. He decided to open

educational institutions for children, adolescents and youth – institutions where along with science, spirituality will be compulsorily taught.

- 6) To inaugurate this institution, he had invited two great philosophers, Bertrand Russell and Albert Schweitzer. Ten other great scientists who had won Nobel Prizes in different fields were also invited. They all saw a different Einstein, not a great scientist but a sage in him. The institution was opened by garlanding a photo of Mahatma Gandhi. While garlanding the Mahatma, he became emotional and said with a lump in his throat, “I bow down to the great man who fought for the independence of his country through non-violence. He could do so because he was a truthful man and true spiritualist.”
- 7) Those who teach science should be taught spirituality too. Without harmony between science and spirituality, the destruction would continue unabated. A few years after this institution was built, a Japanese delegation came to meet him. Einstein broke down in the meeting and said, “You can give me any punishment and I will accept it. Anyway, I have decided to lead my life in penitence.” The Japanese were moved by his sincerity and forgot their grief.

(Source: [https://www.meritnation.com/cbse-class-12-science/english/board-paper-of-class-12-2019-english-all-india\(set-3\)—solutions/board-papers/starttest/fZs8\\$lbcl1ofruFYCN08ew!!](https://www.meritnation.com/cbse-class-12-science/english/board-paper-of-class-12-2019-english-all-india(set-3)—solutions/board-papers/starttest/fZs8$lbcl1ofruFYCN08ew!!))

Check Your Progress 1

Answer the following questions based on your reading of the above passage.

- 1) Besides two great philosophers how many other scientists were invited by Einstein to inaugurate the institution where spirituality would be compulsorily taught?
 - i) Five (ii) Ten (iii) Eight (iv) Fifteen
- 2) Which musical instrument did Einstein play when he was in grief?
 - i) Harmonium (ii) Guitar (iii) Violin (iv) Flute
- 3) Einstein came to know that America had dropped an atom bomb on the Japanese city, Hiroshima through
 - i) Television. (ii) Newspaper. (iii) Radio. (iv) A telephonic message.
- 4) Which American President was told about the destructive power of an atomic bomb?
 - (i) Kennedy (ii) Bill Clinton (iii) Lincoln (iv) Roosevelt
- 5) Einstein said to the Japanese delegation:
 - i) “You can give me any punishment and I will accept it.”
 - ii) “I am not at fault.”
 - iii) “What could I do?”
 - iv) “The President didn’t agree to my advice.”

- 6) What did Einstein do to overcome his distress after getting the news of the atomic attack?

- 7) Which event in 1945, according to Einstein, turned science and scientists into murderers?

- 8) What did Einstein do to show his displeasure over the atomic attack?

- 9) Why did Einstein want harmony between science and spirituality while teaching in educational institutes?

- 10) Which word / phrase means the same as:

- i) Extreme mental pain (para 1)
- ii) repentance (para 7)

The Rescue

Everything had been totally different that Sunday morning, when the two boys had set out on their walk up the cool, pine-scented mountainside near the village where they lived. Near the top, Peter and Michael had climbed onto a rock to admire the view of the valley far below them.

That was when disaster had struck. On clambering down, Peter had tumbled awkwardly to the ground, his leg bent at a painful angle beneath him. Unable to move, he was forced to wait where he was, wrapped in Michael's jacket, while Michael had begun the long trek down the mountainside to fetch help.

Michael looked down on the mountainside from the window of the helicopter. He felt increasingly helpless, as it looked totally different from the air and the network of tiny paths was mostly obscured from view by the thick covering of pine trees. To make matters worse, the light was fading fast and a thick blanket of mist was starting to form. Eventually the pilot and the three mountain rescue workers in the helicopter agreed that they would have to go back and continue the search for Michael's friend, Peter, on foot.

By seven o'clock that evening, they had left the helicopter in the village and gathered a mountain rescue team of fifteen men. Michael felt disheartened and scared for his friend's safety. Slowly they ascended the mountain, scouring the numerous paths for Peter. The only sounds were crunching footsteps and the crackle of static on the walkie-talkies that the rescue workers carried to talk to each other. The mountainside was an eerie place after nightfall and gradually Michael started to wonder whether they would ever find Peter at all. Suddenly Michael heard a voice come over one of the walkie-talkies, "We've got him. We're taking him down."

"I'm sorry," said Michael to his friend later in the warm safety of the hospital room, "I didn't realise it would take so long."

(Source: <https://resources.saylor.org/wwwresources/archived/site/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/K12ELA7-Unit1.7.1-ExOfNarrativeEssays-BY-SA.pdf>)

Check Your Progress 2

Answer the following questions based on your reading of the above passage.

- 1) Find a word from the above passage which means 'Strange and Frightening'.

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- 2) Who needs rescuing in the above passage and why?

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3) Is the title justified according to you?

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4) By what time, did they bring in the Helicopter?

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Excerpt from Charles Dickens' *The Chimes*, first published in 1844

The doctors decided to keep Peter at the hospital for the night in case of complications with his leg. Before leaving, Michael looked down at his friend and patted his shoulder as, silently, they both vowed never to go walking in the mountains again.

The letter Toby had received from Alderman Cute was addressed to a great man in the great district of the town. It must have been the greatest district of the town, because it was commonly called 'the world' by its inhabitants. The letter positively seemed heavier in Toby's hand than another letter. Not because the Alderman had sealed it with a very large coat of arms and no end of wax, but because of the weighty name on the superscription and the ponderous amount of gold and silver with which it was associated.

'How different from us!' thought Toby, in all simplicity and earnestness, as he looked at the direction.

With the involuntary homage due to such an exalted character, Toby interposed a corner of his apron between the letter and his fingers.

It was a hard frost, that day. The air was bracing, crisp, and clear. The wintry sun, though powerless for warmth, looked brightly down upon the ice it was too weak to melt, and set a radiant glory there. At other times, Toby might have learned a poor man's lesson from the wintry sun; but he was past that, now.

The Year was Old, that day. The patient Year had lived through the reproaches and misuses of its slanderers, and faithfully performed its work. Spring, summer, autumn, winter. It had labored through the destined round, and now laid down its weary head to die. Shut out from hope, high impulse, active happiness, itself, but active messenger of many joys to others, it made appeal in its decline to have its toiling days and patient hours remembered, and to

die in peace. Toby might have read a poor man's allegory in the fading year; but he was past that, now.

And only he? Or has the like appeal been ever made, by seventy years at once upon an English laborer's head, and made in vain!

The streets were full of motion, and the shops were decked out gaily. The New Year, like an Infant Heir to the whole world, was waited for, with welcomes, presents, and rejoicings. There were books and toys for the New Year, glittering trinkets for the New Year, dresses for the New Year, schemes of fortune for the New Year, new inventions to beguile it. Its life was parceled out in almanacs and pocketbooks; the coming of its moons, and stars, and tides, was known beforehand to the moment; all the workings of its seasons in their days and nights, were calculated with as much precision as Mr. Filer could work sums in men and women.

The New Year, the New Year. Everywhere the New Year! The Old Year was already looked upon as dead; and its effects were selling cheap, like some drowned mariner's aboardship. Its patterns were Last Year's, and going at a sacrifice, before its breath was gone. Its treasures were mere dirt, beside the riches of its unborn successor!

Toby had no portion, to his thinking, in the New Year or the Old.

'Put 'em down, Put 'em down! Facts and Figures, Facts and Figures! Good old Times, Good old Times! Put 'em down, Put 'em down!'—his trot went to that measure, and would fit itself to nothing else.

But, even that one, melancholy as it was, brought him, in due time, to the end of his journey. To the mansion of Sir Joseph Bowley, Member of Parliament.

The door was opened by a Porter. Such a Porter! Not of Toby's order—quite another thing. His place was the ticket though; not Toby's.

This Porter underwent some hard panting before he could speak; having breathed himself by coming incautiously out of his chair, without first taking time to think about it and compose his mind. When he had found his voice—which it took him a long time to do, for it was a long way off, and hidden under a load of meat—he said in a fat whisper,

'Who's it from?'

Toby told him.

'You're to take it in, yourself,' said the Porter, pointing to a room at the end of a long passage, opening from the hall. 'Everything goes straight in, on this day of the year. You're not a bit too soon; for the carriage is at the door now, and they have only come to town for a couple of hours, a' purpose.'

Check Your Progress 3

Answer the following questions based on your reading of the above passage.

- 1) Based on the information in the passage, Toby likely views his duties with
 - a) industriousness and enthusiasm.
 - b) annoyance and frustration.
 - c) fear and anxiety.
 - d) amusement and exhilaration.
- 2) Toby most likely feels that the difference between himself and the recipient of the letter is due to
 - a) education
 - b) wealth
 - c) religion
 - d) parenting
- 3) In the first paragraph, the phrase “positively seemed heavier” is used to indicate that
 - a) the letter was thicker than most others.
 - b) the sender used too much wax for the seal.
 - c) the letter appeared extremely important to Toby.
 - d) the envelope was made of high quality gold paper.
- 4) The author uses which of the following devices when describing the year in the fifth paragraph?
 - a) Allegory
 - b) Personification
 - c) Simile
 - d) Onomatopoeia
- 5) Which of the following best describes the scenes that Toby encounters on his journey?
 - a) A bleak winter wasteland with hardly any human activity
 - b) A busy city landscape coming to life in the budding springtime
 - c) Streets and shops bustling despite the intense cold
 - d) Stormy roads through which Toby can barely see
- 6) The passage indicates that the porter is out of breath because he
 - a) is an elderly and ailing gentleman.
 - b) is frightened of Toby and the news that he brings.
 - c) rose too quickly to answer the door.
 - d) overextends himself and is always busy.

- 7) Over the course of the passage, Toby reveals that he views himself as
- a) decidedly separate from the world of Sir Joseph Bowley, including even his servants.
 - b) on par in status with the porter of Sir Joseph Bowley, though not the lord himself.
 - c) blissfully ignorant of any class distinctions that separate him from Sir Joseph Bowley.
 - d) superior in character if not in status to Sir Joseph Bowley, his porter, and his household.
- 8) Winter: old age:
- a) autumn: middle age
 - b) rebirth: spring
 - c) New Year: change
 - d) Summer: warmth

3.7 LET US SUM UP

Narrative texts are concerned with telling a story by keeping a pace and structure intact through vivid language use. Your job is to identify these details and infer the correct sequence of actions and other elements of the text like characters, setting, timeline, etc., which might originally have been interpreted by the writer. Before arriving at analysis, it is important that you fully understand the text and its contents. Once the step of comprehension is complete, only then would you be shifting gears to question the writing choices of the author and how or why they have been employed.

For a narrative text, try identifying the theme, setting, characters if any, the point of view of the author, as well as the structure of the plot. Once these aspects of the text have been spotted, you will be able to achieve a precise understanding of the text. The plot structure will have a certain progression where a conflict will be created and ultimately resolved through a specific treatment by the author. You will need to track this conflict, the climax and its subsequent resolution. Only then will you be able to analyze the text. The Skimming and Scanning methods will provide you the tools for comprehension of the above-mentioned elements of the narrative texts.

3.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

If you would like to learn more about Narrative Texts, you may consult:

H. Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

Lisa Sternleib et al., *The Nature of Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

Mieke Bal & Christine van Boheemen, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative 3rd edition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009)

3.9 ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) (ii), 2. (iii), 3. (iii), 4. (iv), 5. (iv)
- 6) He played the violin.
- 7) The Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a move by America to attack Japan during World War II.
- 8) He decided to disassociate himself from the scientific policy of the government and all governmental institutions. He decided to open educational institutions for children, adolescents and youth – institutions where along with science, spirituality will be compulsorily taught.
- 9) He believed that it was important to balance technology with humanity. His will to lean on spirituality came from the destruction he witnessed after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He was disillusioned with sciences when he saw the destruction it was capable of if left unchecked and unbalanced with spirituality.
- 10) (a) Agony
(b) Penitence

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Eerie
- 2) Peter had tumbled awkwardly to the ground, his leg bent at a painful angle beneath him. Unable to move, he was forced to wait where he was, wrapped in Michael's jacket.
- 3) The title of the passage "rescue" is fit as the whole piece is a narration on a rescue mission by the writer for saving his friend. It gives a detailed introduction to the premise and then narrates the process of the rescue itself. Hence the passage can aptly be titled as the 'rescue' as that is the crux of the text.
- 4) By seven o'clock that evening, they had left the helicopter in the village and gathered a mountain rescue team of fifteen men.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) c, 2. b, 3. c, 4. b, 5. a, 6. c, 7. a, 8. c

UNIT 4 ARGUMENTATIVE TEXT

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Warm Up
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Structure of Argumentative Texts
- 4.4 Argumentative Text Sample
 - 4.4.1 Explanation
- 4.5 Reading Strategies
 - 4.5.1 Skimming
 - 4.5.2 Scanning
- 4.6 Practice Texts
- 4.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.8 Suggested Readings
- 4.9 Answers

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- identify an argumentative text;
- comprehend the purpose and characteristics of an argumentative text;
- understand the organisation of an argumentative text;
- identify the main points of an argumentative text;
- infer, analyse, interpret and evaluate the ideas in an argumentative text; and
- answer the questions after reading the comprehension passage.

4.1 WARM UP

Before we start discussing argumentative essay, think about anytime that you have had an argument with someone. Usually you have an opinion or a point of view in support of which you present your ideas. What do you understand by the word ‘argument’?

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, it means “a reason or set of reasons given with the aim of convincing others that an action or idea is right or wrong.” An argument is based on logic. In an argument one has to provide reasons in support or against opinion, expressed in the form of a statement.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

An argumentative essay, thus, refers to a text where the author presents an argument either for or against the topic with an aim to convince the reader with his own point of view. This text is formal and academic. Hence, all the arguments

given in the text are solidly backed by hard evidences like facts, statistics, surveys, reports etc. which entail an in-depth knowledge and research regarding the topic. It may include quotes from experts as well. The writer researches on the topic and takes a side and then tries to get the reader to recognize the validity of his argument. An argumentative text offers facts, reasons and evidence to support the author's argument. It is strictly based on a certain logic provided by the author. However, the author presents both pros and cons on the particular topic and then based on his judgement tries to establish his side as the logical one. It acknowledges the opposing claims and compares the multiple perspectives to establish its stand. The evidences that the author posits in these types of texts makes the stand of the author very clear. Though the aim of the author is to show his side as the plausible one but the overall tone of an argumentative text is calmer as the purpose of the author is just to present worthy reasons and compelling data for consideration of the chosen side.

4.3 STRUCTURE OF ARGUMENTATIVE TEXTS

It is very important for you to understand the structure of an essay in order to grasp the meaning of the essay. It is essential, thus, that you are able to clearly see the organisation of the paragraphs and understand the progression of thought. Generally, five-paragraph rule is followed by the writers in different types of essays. Argumentative essays, which require research sources and empirical research data, usually exceed five paragraphs to present a comprehensive view on the issue.

The argumentative essay begins with the first paragraph which is the introductory paragraph; it is followed by three-five evidentiary paragraphs forming the body of the essay. This part consists of the evidences and also the discussion of opposing views. The body of the essay comprises of the arguments and the counter arguments by the writer and finally reasons and data to support his side of the argument. Finally, comes your conclusion which is the summing up of the main idea behind the essay. Also, keep in mind that you carefully look at the transition between these paragraphs. Transition from one paragraph to another or from one idea to another act as a mortar that holds the foundation of the entire essay together. It is important for you to understand the logical progression of the argument given by the writer. Now, let us look at the structure of these essays in detail to further understand how these essays are framed.

- 1) In the first paragraph, a clear, concise and defined thesis statement occurs. A review of the topic is given where the context of the topic is set. It is followed by the author talking about the need of discussing the topic. This is called exigence where the importance of the topic in today's world is laid out for the readers. Lastly, the last line or two of this paragraph gives the thesis statement which narrows down the main idea behind the essay. It essentially focuses on the position that the writer takes regarding the topic.
- 2) Body paragraphs comprise of the topic sentence making a claim followed by the explanation and an example in support of the claim. The topic sentence is a claim or an assertion. It is a declaration which states the main idea. After the declaration, the writer presents reasons through examples or facts to justify his claim. Each paragraph of the body of the essay

discusses one point which results in a focused and clear argument to be presented in the essay. This also allows the reader to easily read and comprehend the flow of the essay. It is important for the reader to use the logical connection of all these ideas presented in different paragraphs and analyse how they refer to the thesis statement (given in the opening paragraph) while they take the argument forward. As a reader, you need to understand how these paragraphs support the claim of the thesis statement; you need to be clear about the evidences used by the writer to support the argument. This is also known as warrant, points of view which give legitimacy to the writer's argument.

However, in argumentative essay, the writer presents points from the other perspective as well. He will give you counter argument as well. These will be the differing points of view regarding the topic. These conflicting or contrasting ideas are also very important to an argumentative essay because they will inform the readers about how outdated these opinions or viewpoints are. Of course, in presenting these ideas the aim of the author is only to make the readers understand why the writer has a particular point of view and that it is logical and backed up by a series of consistent coherent reasons which make his claim valid.

Now let's look at how the evidences are used in an argumentative essay to support the opinion of the writer. Evidences used in these essays can be factual, statistical, logical or anecdotal. Argumentative essays, as already mentioned are well-researched essays which are detailed and use accurate and current data or information to support the point of view of the writer. However, the evidences which do not align to the thesis statement are also presented in the essay so that you have all the perspectives to consider but definitely the writer is trying to present them as not better than the ones that support his argument. The reason why the writer gives you all the perspectives is to create a well-balanced essay and so that as readers you follow his logic to understand his point of view. The writer does not outrightly point to any position and call it wrong but gives you information so that you derive his desired point.

- 3) Conclusion of the argumentative essay is NOT the restating of the thesis statement presented in the first paragraph, but it revisits the thesis statement in light of the evidences provided in the body paragraphs. It also takes into account the counter arguments used in the body paragraphs and the concluding paragraph comes across as a logical opinion to emerge after considering all the provided data. It readdresses the claims of the introductory paragraph. This paragraph is important because it will give you the ultimate impression that the writer wishes to leave onto the minds of his readers. Thus, this paragraph is most effective and logically derived. There is no new information that you are given in this last paragraph, rather it is a synthesis of the body of the essay. This will again give you an insight into why this essay is important and will review the main points of the writer. After you finish reading the essay, there should be no room for any doubt or confusion as to what is the writer's position regarding the debate. It should come across as a complete coherent argument. If you are not sure about this, then you need to reread and try to understand what is the intent of the writer, what is his opinion regarding the topic at hand.

4.4 ARGUMENTATIVE TEXT SAMPLE

Performance Enhancement through Biotechnology Has No Place in Sports

By Jamal Hammond

The debate over athletes' use of performance-enhancing substances is getting more complicated as biotechnologies such as gene therapy become a reality. The availability of these new methods of boosting performance will force us to decide what we value most in sports—displays of physical excellence developed through hard work or victory at all costs. For centuries, spectators and athletes have cherished the tradition of fairness in sports. While sports competition is, of course, largely about winning, it is also about the means by which a player or team wins. Athletes who use any type of biotechnology give themselves an unfair advantage and disrupt the sense of fair play, and they should be banned from competition.

Researchers are experimenting with techniques that could manipulate an athlete's genetic code to build stronger muscles or increase endurance. Searching for cures for diseases like Parkinson's and muscular dystrophy, scientists at the University of Pennsylvania have created "Schwarzenegger mice," rodents that grew larger than-normal muscles after receiving injections with a gene that stimulates growth protein. The researchers also found that a combination of gene manipulation and exercise led to a 35% increase in the strength of rats' leg muscles (Lamb 13). Such therapies are breakthroughs for humans suffering from muscular diseases; for healthy athletes, they could mean new world records in sports involving speed and endurance—but at what cost to the integrity of athletic competition? The International Olympic Committee's World Anti-Doping Agency has become so alarmed about the possible effects of new gene technology on athletic competition that it has banned the use of gene therapies and urged researchers to devise a test for detecting genetic modification (Lamb 13).

Some bioethicists argue that this next wave of performance enhancement is an acceptable and unavoidable feature of competition. As Dr. Andy Miah, who supports the regulated use of gene therapies in sports, claims, "The idea of the naturally perfect athlete is romantic nonsense.... An athlete achieves what he or she achieves through all sorts of means—technology, sponsorship, support and so on" (qtd. in Rudebeck). Miah, in fact, sees athletes' imminent turn to genetic modification as "merely a continuation of the way sport works; it allows us to create more extraordinary performances" (Rudebeck). Miah's approval of "extraordinary performances" as the goal of competition reflects our culture's tendency to demand and reward new heights of athletic achievement. The problem is that achievement nowadays increasingly results from biological and high-tech intervention rather than strictly from hard work.

Better equipment, such as aerodynamic bicycles and fiberglass poles for pole vaulting, have made it possible for athletes to record achievements unthinkable a generation ago. But athletes themselves must put forth the physical effort of training and practice—they must still build their skills—even in the murky area of legal and illegal drug use (Jenkins D11). There is a difference between the use of state-of-the-art equipment and drugs and the modification of the body itself. Athletes who use medical technology to alter their bodies can bypass the hard

work of training by taking on the powers of a machine. If they set new records this way, we lose the opportunity to witness sports as a spectacle of human effort and are left marveling at scientific advances, which have little relation to the athletic tradition of fair play.

Such a tradition has long defined athletic competition. Sports rely on equal conditions to ensure fair play, from regulations that demand similar equipment to referees who even handedly apply the rules to all participants. If the rules that guarantee an even playing field are violated, competitors and spectators alike are deprived of a sound basis of comparison on which to judge athletic effort and accomplishment. When major league baseball rules call for solid-wood bats, the player who uses a corked bat enhances his hitting statistics at the expense of players who use regulation equipment. When Ben Johnson tested positive for steroids after setting a world record in the 100-meter dash in the 1988 Olympics, his “achievement” devalued the intense training that his competitors had undergone to prepare for the event—and the International Olympic Committee responded by stripping Johnson of his medal and his world record. Likewise, athletes who use gene therapy to alter their bodies and enhance their performance will create an uneven playing field.

If we let athletes alter their bodies through biotechnology, we might as well dispense with the human element altogether. Instead of watching the 100-meter dash to see who the fastest runner in the world is, we might just as well watch the sprinters mount motorcycles and race across the finish line. The absurdity of such an example, however, points to the damage that we will do to sports if we allow these therapies. Thomas Murray, chair of the ethics advisory panel for the World Anti-Doping Agency, says he hopes, not too optimistically, for an “alternative future...where we still find meaning in great performances as an alchemy of two factors, natural talents...and virtues” (qtd. in Jenkins D11).

Unless we are willing to organize separate sporting events and leagues—an Olympics, say, for athletes who have opted for a boost from the test tube and another for athletes who have chosen to keep their bodies natural—we should ask from our athletes that they dazzle us less with extraordinary performance and more with the fruits of their hard work.

4.4.1 Explanation

The above essay is an argumentative piece by Jamal Hammond who is arguing whether sportsmen should use performance-enhancing substances. Let us try to understand the structure of the above passage according to the structure of an argumentative text which we have already discussed in section 4.3.

Look at the first few lines of the essay, how they provide background for Hammond’s essay. The opening sentence tells you about what Hammond is going to talk about in the essay and immediately after this he says why this topic is important. He relates it to the current scenario where the availability of these new methods is a reality of today’s world. So, what he does is, he (a) gives you the topic sentence, and (b) establishes its importance in the contemporary world. Now, take a look at the last line of this paragraph. Hammond here very clearly posits his view on the topic that he presented in the first sentence. His stance is clear that all such athletes using performance-enhancing substances should be

banned from the competition as it leads to unfair advantage and disrupts a sense of fair play. This is the thesis statement of this essay.

Now, take a look at the second paragraph which is the body of the essay. In this first body paragraph, Hammond gives you the reason why researchers are experimenting with such gene altering techniques. Because we have read how important it is for the writer to give anecdotes, reasons for his stance which validates his view point, Hammond here uses a medical research to establish his credibility. The second body paragraph in this essay furthers the thesis statement presented in the first paragraph and talks about the integrity of the athletic competition. For this purpose, he uses a specific evidence to support his view point. He talks about the steps taken by the International Olympic Committee towards this cause. He validates his stance by using this credible committee which has devised ways to detect the substance use in athletes.

The third body paragraph of the essay, he gives you the opposing views. Dear students, you must remember that this is a very important part of an argumentative essay. The writer, here, necessarily gives you the contrasting views from his own. Notice how he tries to establish it as an alternative accepted view. However, it is not to be missed how the writer counter argues this view in the ending lines of this same paragraph. He brings out the problem with this opposing view. The next paragraph is devoted towards furthering Hammond's own thesis statement. In the fifth body paragraph, look at how Hammond uses specific example of Ben Johnson who was stripped off his Olympic medal and world record in 1988. He uses this instance to support his point of view that how unfair the competition would be if some of the athletes enhance their performance by using substances. From the fourth to the fifth body paragraph, there is a transition, generally developing on his thesis statement to giving particular reasons in favour of his argument. Even in the sixth body paragraph, he uses the argument of virtuous games and natural talents and supports this idea with a quotation from an authority figure (Thomas Murray, chair of advisory committee of World Anti-doping Agency). Murray's statement comes right after Hammond's own view of preserving the integrity of the sports and how these therapies would endanger the spirit of the sports. Murray's statement is then used to give a substance and approval to Hammond's perspective.

The concluding paragraph of the essay sums up the argument for you without adding any new information. He echoes his stance in the ending, reiterates what he already expressed in this thesis statement that too without unduly repeating the thesis statement in exact words. This is how a conclusion should be. It reaffirms the thesis statement, does not burden the reader with new information or statistics but gives a clear end with the writer's view which is logically derived from all the examples and evidences that the writer has used in the body paragraphs.

Check Your Progress 1

Now, that you are clear on the explanation part of the essay; take a look at some of the probable questions. Based on your understanding of the essay and the argument presented, answer these questions:

- 1) What is the essay about?

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- 2) What is the central argument of Jamal Hammond in the essay?

- 3) How does the writer balance the argument?

- 4) Explain the use of evidences in the essay.

- 5) Find a word from the passage having similar meaning to:

- a) Improvement
- b) Positively
- c) Persistence

- 6) Find a word from the passage having opposite meaning to:

- a) Arrange
- b) Common
- c) Dishonesty

4.5 READING STRATEGIES

Before, we move on to some practice essays and questions, let us once go through some of the reading strategies that you may adopt for a coherent reading and clear understanding of the comprehension passages. We will discuss two of these important reading strategies: **Skimming** and **Scanning**. Speed reading plays a very important role in reading long passages under a limited time, in understanding the aim of the passage and in attempting any questions related to those passages. Skimming and Scanning are thus two very effective ways to speed read any passage. Both these strategies use rapid eye movement and identification of keywords for a quick understanding. However, these techniques are different from each other and serve a different purpose towards the comprehension of the meaning of the passage. The aim is to reduce the amount of time used in understanding the passage and gain maximum knowledge out of it. Let us look at these one by one.

4.5.1 Skimming

The process of skimming refers to the technique of reading only the main ideas within the passage. The aim is to get an overall idea of the argument within the passage. While skim reading, you are looking for the central idea of the passage along with the details. There is a structure that is followed in order to effectively skim read.

Remember: *Selective Reading is necessary. What you read and what you decide to leave out is important.*

So, the next question is how do you decide what to read and what to leave? For instance, if you are reading an essay and after reading the first few paragraphs in detail, you will get a fair idea of what the essay is about and where the argument is headed. Once you know this, you can begin to skim read. You then, read only the first sentence of each subsequent paragraph. These, as we have already discussed in section 2.2, are also known as Topic Sentences. These give you the central idea of the paragraph. Then, after understanding the basic idea of the paragraph, you need to move your eyes through the rest of the paragraph and look for more information in the form of names, dates or events. You will not read every word; you will pay special attention to typographical cues-headings, boldface and italic type, indenting, bulleted and numbered lists. You will be alert for key words and phrases, the names of people and places, dates, nouns, and unfamiliar words. Read the entire body of the essay through this technique until you reach the end of the essay. The last few paragraphs may contain a conclusion where you need to stop skimming and read in detail. The technique of skimming will enable you to recognise and stop at the important points and read carefully. One way to know if you are doing this correctly is to figure out if you are able to grasp the main ideas and the tone of the essay. If you are able to understand this, you are on the right track!

Here are some pointers that you may follow when skimming through a passage:

- a) Read the title carefully to understand what the debate in the essay is about.
- b) Read the entire first paragraph which is your introductory paragraph. This will tell you the topic of discussion and the writer's stand. Repeat the same for the concluding paragraph.

- c) Then, read the first and the last sentence only of all the subsequent paragraphs. Try and locate the main idea from certain words in a sentence.
- d) Read any headings or sub-headings in the passage.
- e) Read the sentences with keywords, italics, bold, dates, names etc.
- f) Read the entire sentence when you find important information.
- g) Read the charts, tables, graphs or any other statistical data, if given.

Remember: *If you carefully choose what to skim read and what to skip, you will be pleasantly surprised how much information you can get in a very short period of time.*

4.5.2 Scanning

The process of scanning refers to the reading technique where you look for specific information. You scan read when you have a question in mind and you are looking for its answer while ignoring the rest of the irrelevant information in relation to your question. Even in this technique you do not read everything, but only a particular piece of information. You use this technique a lot of times without realising, for instance, when you look for show timings of your favourite movie in a newspaper or when you look for the sports scores on the website, you do not go through the entire article but just look for what you want to know. Skimming is reading rapidly in order to get a general overview of the material. Scanning is reading rapidly in order to find specific facts. While skimming tells you what general information is within a section, scanning helps you locate a particular fact. Skimming is like snorkelling, and scanning is more like pearl diving. Use skimming in previewing (reading before you read), reviewing (reading after you read), determining the main idea from a long essay. Use scanning in research to find particular facts, to study fact-heavy topics, and to answer questions requiring factual support. Scanning, too, uses keywords and organizational cues. But while the goal of skimming is a bird's-eye view of the material, the goal of scanning is to locate and swoop down on particular facts.

What is important in scanning is to know how to locate the specific information. Understanding the structure of an argumentative essay will help you in locating this information that you need. Keep the following things in mind before you scan read a passage:

- a) You need to know your questions. May be a few keywords or phrases from the question itself. In order to locate any information from a passage, you need to know what information you are looking for. What is the purpose of reading the passage?
- b) Next, you anticipate where you may find the answer to your question. Keep in mind how an argumentative essay is written and how it is usually structured. This will help you in looking at the right places for the desired information.
- c) Be mindful of the headings or sub-headings that will help you locate your answers.
- d) Use your fingers to scan a passage or a paragraph. It helps you focus on specific information that you are looking for.

Remember: *Scanning requires concentration. The more you practice, the more effective a scanner you will become. Train yourself to not let your attention wander.*

4.6 PRACTICE TEXTS

Read the following text:

India's economy is doing well and we have a right to celebrate that. But what we do not like to acknowledge, let alone address, is another fact: our economy and society, is still extremely biased against women. Perhaps paying attention to such inconvenient truths would distract us as we march towards superpower status. In the latest gender gap index report released by the World Economic Forum (WEF), India keeps company with the worst in the world. Among the 128 countries that have been evaluated by the WEF, India is ranked 114, followed among others by Yemen, Chad, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Even China, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Botswana fare much better than us.

The survey considers the proportion of resources and opportunities made available to women on educational, economic, political and health fronts. It is only in the realm of political empowerment that we seem to have done somewhat OK, ranking 21st. That's also thanks to a long spell of Prime Ministership by Indira Gandhi. It raises the question why women are so badly off in our country if they are politically empowered.

To begin with, we are still largely a feudal and patriarchal society. In many parts of our country – especially in UP, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab – women are often treated as if they were a piece of property. In these parts, the sex ratio is most skewed because families often snuff out the lives of girl children before, or immediately after, they are born. In many parts of India, women are viewed as an economic liability despite contributing in several ways to our society and economy.

The state has not covered itself with glory either in bridging the gender divides. Its policies and projects for women are woefully inadequate. For instance, the literacy rate for females is a mere 48 per cent against 73 per cent for males. Unless we put more of our girl children in school and equip them with quality education – as opposed to making them merely literate – we can forget about sustainable progress. Public health is another area of failure. Hundreds of women in rural India die every year during childbirth for want of medical attention. There are thousands more who do not even have access to a primary health centre. Importantly, reforming property laws more rigorously so that gender parity becomes a reality must rank among the government's priorities. While these changes are necessary, they will amount to nothing if we, as a society, continue to deny our women the dignity, liberty and opportunities that are rightfully theirs. No society will ever prosper as a whole as long as half of it is constantly treated as somehow less than the other half.

(Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/edit-page/TODAYS-ARTICLE-Mind-The-Gap/articleshow/2539088.cms>)

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) On the basis of your understanding of this passage answer the following questions with the help of the given options:
- a) Write out the correct option:
 - i) India's economy is unbiased.
 - ii) India's economy is doing poorly
 - iii) India's economy is biased against human species
 - iv) India's economy is biased against women.
 - b) The most important rights of women are
 - i) dignity and society
 - ii) dignity and literacy
 - iii) dignity and liberty
 - iv) dignity and health
 - c) A society can prosper only if
 - i) half of it is given its special rights
 - ii) it recognizes the importance of women
 - iii) it treats men and women differently
 - iv) it constantly treats women no less than its other half
 - d) Hundreds of women in rural India die every year during childbirth
 - i) due to lack of finances.
 - ii) due to lack of literacy.
 - iii) for want of awareness.
 - iv) for want of medical attention.
- 2) Answer the following questions briefly:

- a) Why is India ranked 114 by the World Economic Forum?

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- b) In which fields are the women in India empowered?

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c) What has killing of girl children before or after birth affected the most?

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d) What is the reason behind the failure of public health?

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3) Find a word from the passage having opposite meaning to “asset”. (Para-3)

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4) Find a word from the passage having similar meaning to “continuously”. (Para -4)

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Read the following text:

- 1) In 1798, Thomas Malthus wrote an essay on population. He believed that God, as a method of punishment, strikes lazy humans with famine. In 1838, Charles Darwin read Malthus’ essay. He decided it was partially correct, but with natural causes only, such as inadequate food supplies.

In the two centuries, since, the world’s population has increased dramatically, scenes of hunger in Biafra and elsewhere galvanized many people. By the 1970s, books such as *The Population Bomb* were predicting massive starvation, plus dire shortages of virtually every resource—in the

1980s. Zero Population Growth became a popular cause. That alarmist mindset has since fallen afoul of 'political correctness' and 'multiculturalism'. The concern remains, largely unspoken, in the background of many sociopolitical debates.

- 2) The American government is always debating whether to fund birth control programs in poor nations. In fact, prosperity is the surest brake on population growth. Where children have an excellent chance of reaching healthy adulthood, couples will plan their family, and provide their kids with the best upbringing possible. Including college, each American child requires almost half a million dollars; a huge investment, but well worth it.
- 3) In the poorest countries, most women bear numerous children. In part, this is because her kids will cost relatively little to raise. Typically, she'll consider herself lucky if half of them survive, and grow up to labor in nearby fields. Is the world overpopulated, or even close? Anyone who's flown across the United States knows just how vast, and largely empty, this nation really is. Some areas of the Great Plains are actually depopulating, as farming towns decline, and the land reverts to prairie.
- 4) Parts of Asia are far more crowded. Still, the Green Revolution has enabled China and India to feed themselves. Ocean farming is opening up a new source of food, and genetic engineering another. How much further can humanity increase? There are limits. Roughly, the Earth has fifty eight million square miles of land area, and seven billion people. That comes to about five acres per person. But this includes Antarctica and Greenland, mountain crags, sand dunes, Arctic tundra, and other inhospitable areas. On an average, then, each family of four "has" about ten livable acres.
- 5) To a family with a miniscule city dwelling, ten acres may sound big. However, that includes parkland, industries, and the farms which provide their food. Modern agriculture, not to mention timber and mining, requires large tracts.
- 6) The family is central to human existence. Every traditional faith holds the marriage vow sacred, and honors mother and child as the closest bond of all. Most faiths encourage large families. There are many reasons for this. At best, every person is seen as a unique expression of God's nature, and each new child brings that much more beauty and joy into the world. At worst, organized religions are beset by rivals, and thus, seek to out populate them.
- 7) But there's more to it than just having babies. True Lord says it's unhealthy, physically and spiritually, for children to grow up in cities. He teaches that kids should come of age surrounded by nature, on a farm or in a small village. The Internet can facilitate a good education, and sophisticated careers, for even the most remote family. There is one problem there. If every family headed into the countryside, then rural areas would vanish, blanketed by a sea of humanity. 'Empty stretches' only remain *because of* the crowding in urban areas. Thus, the Earth is already too small. How would a Heavenly government deal with this issue?

- 8) A famous scientist once said, “The Earth is our cradle, but humanity cannot remain in the cradle forever.” There are many reasons to spread out. Deadly plagues have swept the world. The dinosaurs were wiped out by a gigantic asteroid. Tsunamis, and other natural disasters, affect entire regions. These can happen again.
- 9) Mars is relatively close, but no one could live on its surface without substantial protection. The twin Mars Rovers have found that water once flowed there. Microbial life may yet survive, deep underground. Buck Rogers and Captain Kirk have been “visiting alien worlds” for a long time, but only in the past decade have astronomers confirmed the existence of planets around other stars. Gradually they’re refining their methods, and spotting smaller planets. When better telescopes are developed (and funded), scientists will be able to observe Earth-sized worlds. If liquid water and oxygen are detected, we can be fairly certain that life exists there also.

(Source: <http://www.cuebon.com/HomePage/PSarticle.html>)

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Answer each of the questions given below by choosing the most appropriate option:
- i) What became the major cause in 1970s?
 - a) starvation
 - b) Zero Population Growth
 - c) every resource
 - d) food supply
 - ii) The best way to stop population growth is
 - a) Sociopolitical debates
 - b) birth control
 - c) huge investments
 - d) prosperity
 - iii) Ocean farming and are opening up new sources of food
 - a) genetic engineering
 - b) prairies
 - c) forests
 - d) mountains
 - iv) Central to human existence is
 - a) family
 - b) Earth
 - c) agriculture
 - d) oceans
 - v) The twin Mars Rover found that

- a) Mars is relatively close
- b) no one could survive on Mars
- c) water once flowed there
- d) planets exist around other stars

2) Answer the following questions briefly:

- i) Which theory did Charles Darwin add to Malthus' essay on God's method of punishment?

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- ii) What has the alarmist mindset fallen afoul of?

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- iii) Why do women in poor countries bear numerous children?

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- iv) Give reason for some areas of Great Plains getting depopulating.

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- v) According to the True Lord, which is the ideal place for a kid to grow up in?

- vi) According to the scientists, what are the reasons for human beings to spread out in outer world?

- 3) Answer any three of the following questions in 25-30 words:

- i) Elaborate upon the reflectors of prosperity in a country.

- ii) Why do most faiths encourage large families?

- iii) How will the scientists be able to ascertain that life exists away from Earth also?

- iv) How does the essayist come to the conclusion that each family of four has about ten livable acres?

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- 4) Pick out the words/phrases from the passage which are similar in meaning to the following:

- i) returns to (para 3)

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- ii) make easy (para 7)

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- iii) of considerable importance (para 9)

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4.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have dealt with comprehending Argumentative type of essay. Argumentative essay is a type of formal writing in which the writer expresses his opinion with the support of arguments and statistical data. Here are some tips that would help you in reading an argumentative essay.

- Predicting the information in subsequent paragraphs
- Selecting certain parts of the essay to read effectively
- Skipping irrelevant information.
- Breaking the essay into logical progression of the debate and comprehending the idea at hand.
- Re-reading ensures that you have not missed any important information.
- Integrating the information as you read and anticipating what may come next.
- Monitoring and Evaluating the information gathered from the essay to ensure that the purpose of reading the essay is achieved.

Post- Reading Tips

Your reading and comprehension are effective if you are able to:

- Identify and recognise the topic and what the writer's opinions are.
- Summarise what the writer has written and comprehend the progression of the idea.
- Interpret the information that the writer uses in the essay.
- Analyse the writer's point of view with that of the information/data provided by the writer and also using your own knowledge related to the topic.
- After you are clear about the writer's stand, you can take a stand yourself.

4.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

If you would like to learn more about Argumentative Texts, you may consult:

F. H. van Eemeren et al., *Reconstructing Argumentative Discourse* (University of Alabama Press, 1993)

Frans H. van Eemeren & Bart Garssen (eds.), *Exploring Argumentative Contexts* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012)

F. H. van Eemeren, *Strategic Maneuvering in Argumentative Discourse* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2010)

4.9 ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) The essay is about whether sportsmen should use performance-enhancing substances, if such practices are acceptable or not.
- 2) It is wrong for the athletes to use any type of biotechnology which can give them an unfair advantage and disrupt the sense of fair play. The writer argues that the performance enhancing steroids are against the integrity of any sports.

- 3) The writer balances the argument by giving oppositional view point as well. He says that such gene therapies build and hone sportsmen's skills further and make it possible for them to achieve unthinkable records.
- 4) The writer uses medical research and the authority of International Olympics Association which banned the use of substances by the sportsmen.
- 5) a. Enhancement, b. Optimistically, c. Endurance
- 6) a. Disrupt, b. Extraordinary, c. Integrity

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) (a). iv, (b). iii, (c). iv, (d). iv
- 2) a) In the gender gap index report, WEF is ranked 114 in the world. The sex ratio is wide and unstable.
b) political empowerment
c) People do not accept birth of a girl child in their families
d) They do not have any access to primary health centres.
- 3) Liability
- 4) Constantly

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) (i). b, (ii). b, (iii). a, (iv). a, (v). c
- 2) i) Charles Darwin believed that Thomas Malthus theory was partially correct and talked about inadequate food supplies.
ii) The alarmist mindset has since fallen afoul of 'political correctness' and 'multiculturalism'. The concern remains, largely unspoken, in the background of many socio-political debates.
iii) Taking care of so many kids, costs relatively little and more number of kids mean more number of hands to labour in the nearby fields when they grow up.
iv) because farming towns have declined and the land has reverted to prairie, i.e., predominantly to grass.
v) According to True Lord, kids should grow up surrounded by nature, on a farm or in a small village instead of growing up in cities which is unhealthy physically and spiritually.
vi) Deadly plagues, Tsunamis and other natural disasters are the reasons due to which human beings are spreading out of Earth.
- 3) i) Factors such as population growth, chances of reaching healthy adulthood, family planning, being able to provide higher education opportunities such as college reflects the prosperity of the nation.
ii) Many faiths encourage large families because every person is seen as an expression of God's nature and each new child brings that much more beauty and joy into the world. It is also possible that organised religions have rivals and they wish to out populate others.

- iii) With refined methods, spotting smaller planets and when better telescopes are made and funded, scientists will be able to observe earth sized worlds. If liquid and oxygen are detected we can be fairly certain that life exists there too.
 - iv) The essayist mentions the following calculations: Earth has fifty eight million square miles of land area, and seven billion people. That comes to about five acres per person. But this includes Antarctica and Greenland, mountain crags, sand dunes, Arctic tundra, and other inhospitable areas. On an average, then, each family of four “has” about ten livable acres.
- 4) (i) revert (ii) facilitate (iii) substantial



UNIT 5 PERSUASIVE TEXT

Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Warm Up
- 5.2 Introduction
- 5.3 Difference between Argumentative and Persuasive Texts
- 5.4 Structure of Persuasive Texts
- 5.5 Persuasive Text Sample
 - 5.5.1 Explanation
- 5.6 Reading Strategies
- 5.7 Practice Text
- 5.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.9 Suggested Readings
- 5.10 Answers

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify a Persuasive Essay
- Comprehend the purpose and characteristics of a Persuasive text
- Understand the organisation of a Persuasive text
- Recognise the main points of a Persuasive Text
- Infer, analyse, interpret and evaluate a Persuasive Text
- Understand the difference between Argumentative Text and Persuasive Text
- Answer questions on the basis of the comprehension passages

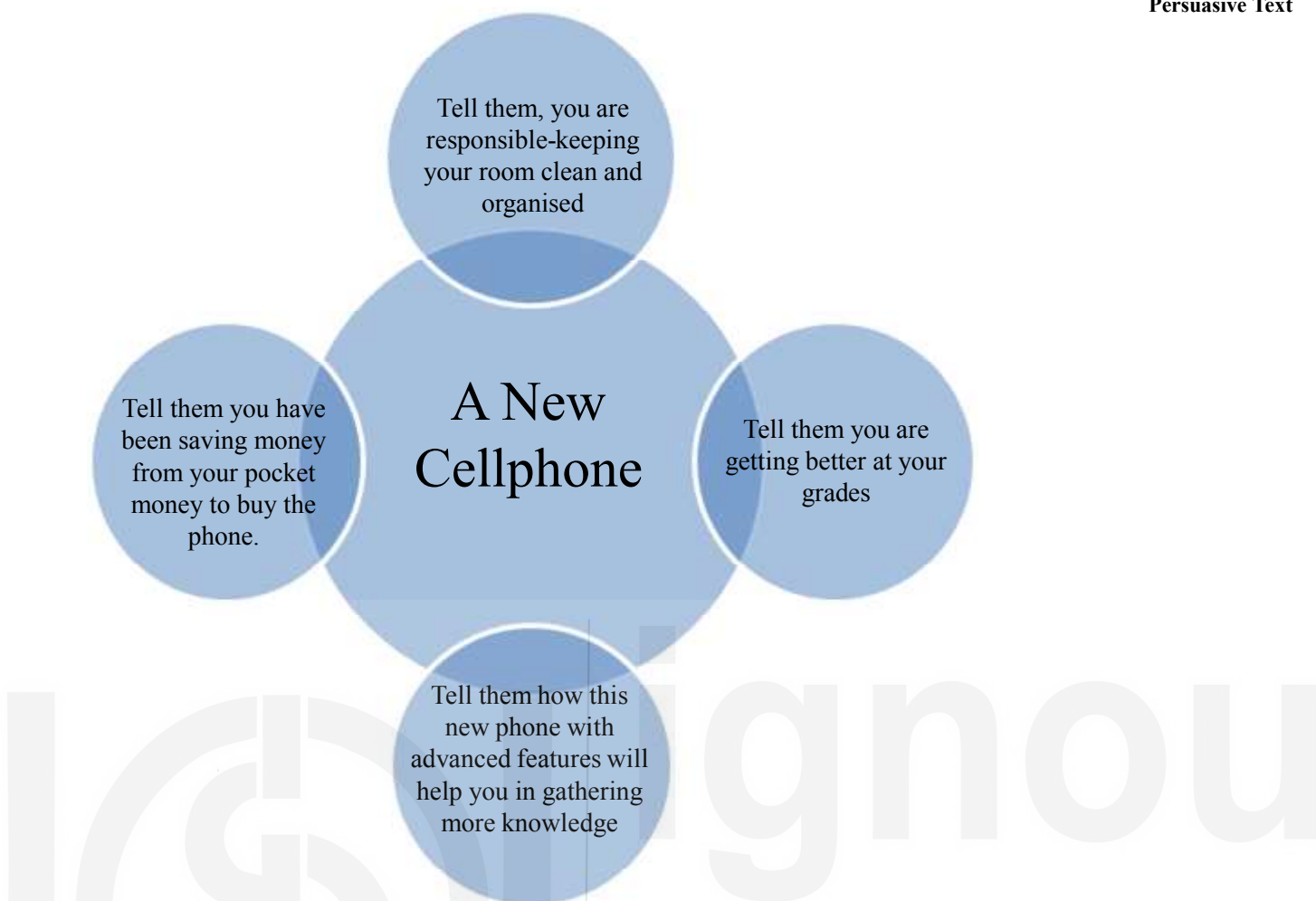
5.1 WARM UP

If you want to buy a new phone and your parents do not allow, what do you do?

You try to convince them. How?

By giving them various reasons so they come to agree with you. Look at the diagram below, it lists some of the reasons that you may use to convince your parents.

This is called persuasion. It refers to an act of trying to convince someone to agree with your point of view. If you think about it we all are surrounded with persuasion in our daily lives. We may not realize it but we are constantly being convinced about how we lead our lives. For instance, the advertisements that you read in newspapers or watch on TV, they all are trying to persuade you on something or the other.



Look at the picture below. It is not just a picture of kids selling magazines on streets during a red-light halt. The effect comes from the captioned magazine cover which reads “Help Me Read This”. This is a way to emotionally engage the reader.

Through this ad you are persuaded to help in the literacy of the children who do not have the access to education. This appeal is not to your rational mind but to your values and emotions. The aim of any such persuasion is to influence or change the reader’s beliefs, attitudes, behaviour and views.



5.2 INTRODUCTION

A Persuasive essay, thus, refers to an essay written to convince the reader with the writer's point of view and agree/disagree with it. To achieve this, the argument is developed on the basis of the writer's personal opinion. According to Aristotle, there are three modes of persuasion: Ethos, Pathos and Logos. Ethos refers to ethical persuasion which also comes from the credibility of the writer. Pathos refers to the emotional appeal made by the writer. Lastly, **Logos** refers to the logic addressed to the rational mind. The appeal is made through a logical argument by presenting facts, figures and research. The previous Unit on Argumentative essay dealt with this logical thinking and structure. However, this Unit on Persuasive essay requires us to study the other two Ethos and Pathos.

Pathos is a way of convincing a reader by creating an emotional response among the readers. It could be an emotion of fear, anger, sadness, pity, horror, disgust, excitement etc. Empathy in the reader is usually evoked by the writer. Persuasive essays are designed to influence a specific audience on specific issue. The writer in these essays does not use facts and figures as evidence in support of his perspective. So, it becomes even more important for the writer to present his views in a credible manner. This credibility of the writer is known as **Ethos**. The reader should be able to trust the writer in order to agree and be convinced by the writer. This can be achieved by a consistent and proper use of and command over the language. Grammatical errors or inconsistent use of sentence structure could lead the readers astray.

5.3 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ARGUMENTATIVE AND PERSUASIVE TEXTS

Before we delve further into details about the structure and organization of persuasive essay, it is imperative to understand the differences between Persuasive and Argumentative type of essays. Since you have already covered Argumentative essay in the previous unit, you must know what an Argumentative essay is. Sometimes, both argumentative essay and persuasive essay are synonymously used. The purpose of the writer in both kinds of essay is to influence the reader's beliefs and opinions. However, there still remains a difference between the two. Study the table below to understand these differences which will enable you to further identify the two types of essay in a comprehension passage.

Argumentative Essay	Persuasive Essay
It is based on Logic.	It is based on Emotion.
It is formal and academic in nature.	It uses informal style as it seeks to evoke emotions.
The aim is to present the arguments as valid and reasonable.	The aim is to convince the readers with the writer's point of view.
Hard evidences are used like statistics, surveys, experts etc.	Heartfelt emotions are used to arouse empathy of the reader.
Appeals to the mind of the reader.	Appeals to the emotions in the reader.

The reader understands the evidences and based on it takes a stand.	The reader feels for the cause and takes a stand.
The conclusion comes across as logical.	The conclusion comes as an emotional response to the cause.
The writer takes into account the opposing/ conflicting views as well.	The writer does not include alternate arguments.
Requires thorough research on the topic to present a coherent argument.	Requires an understanding of the audience in order to appeal to their emotions.
The tone of the essay is calmer.	The tone of the essay is emotional and aggressive.
Example- ad of Dettol soap which says 90% of the dermatologists recommend Dettol as it has been scientifically proven to reduce or kill the infecting germs by 98%. Note the use of expert to establish the credibility of the product.	Example- ad of a lost puppy which says “How much do you love me?” Note the emotional appeal to the audience.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Read the following excerpt on the topic **Smoking Kills**. These lines are written in Persuasive style.

Smoking is injurious to health. It not only kills you but destroys the lives of your loved ones as well. Increase in the number of deaths due to lung cancer which is a result of smoking habit; has taken away so many people away from the ones who love them. It leaves a child fatherless and a partner without a support in this life.

Now, attempt to write an argumentative paragraph on the same topic.

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- 2) Read the following excerpt on the topic **Colgate as the best Toothpaste**. The lines are written in Argumentative Style.

Colgate has been a trusted brand of toothpaste for over 40 years. Scientists at WHO have confirmed that Colgate kills upto 99% of germs and reduces 98% chances of plaque and bad breath.

Now, attempt to write a persuasive paragraph on the same topic.

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5.4 STRUCTURE OF PERSUASIVE TEXTS

The paragraph is essentially a unit of thought, not of length. – A.H Fowler

There are three ways to persuade: Inverted pyramid, traditional pyramid, or through a case study. Inverted pyramid refers to a situation where all the important information is given first. In this type of structure, you would get the writer's stand in the beginning of the essay. There is not much to guess for the reader apart from the reasons that the writer develops in the entire essay. In the traditional pyramid, the most important information features in the end, i.e., the stand of the writer comes in the conclusion after giving all possible reasons for his position on the matter. The writer gently leads a way for the reader. The opinion of the writer comes as a culmination of the arguments presented in the body of the essay. In the third type of structure which is called a Case Study, a profile is presented in front of the reader. The reader reads the profile and understands the argument through a presented experience. In the case of Persuasive essay this profile or the shared experience might not come from an authority or an expert because the aim is not to seek a legitimacy of the point of view but to evoke emotions in the reader by personalising the matter. Real stories of real people provide a link to the readers. These anecdotes are treated as views which do not require any alternatives/opposing views to be discussed; hence they are a bit aggressive in nature. However, these are neither against nor do they contradict any logic or ethical values.

A Persuasive essay is usually structured into five-paragraphs, divided into a) introductory paragraph, b) three body paragraphs and c) concluding paragraph. All these paragraphs are very important to the essay and have separate purpose in the essay. Let us look at them in greater detail to understand the organization of a persuasive essay.

- 1) The first paragraph introduces you to the topic of discussion. Thesis statement is given in this introductory paragraph where the readers are acquainted with the focus of the essay. This paragraph usually begins with a catchy phrase or a declaration to grab reader's attention. For instance, an essay on awareness of Recycling could begin with, "Garbage! It looks bad

and smells disgusting.” Now, the very first sentence of the essay would attract the reader to read further. Exclamatory remarks such as this are often used in these essays. The importance and need of the topic are also discussed in this paragraph. In an inverted pyramid style essay, this paragraph also clearly states the writer’s point of view whereas in the traditional pyramid style essay, this paragraph would only cater to the explanation of the topic to be discussed. The style is very carefully chosen by the author according to the topic.

- 2) The next three paragraphs which are called the Body paragraphs in an essay provide the reasons for the writer’s perspective. The writer gives reasons one by one in the three paragraphs validating the point made in the essay. These are separate declarations which state the main idea of the topic and develop the argument. The aim of all these reasons is to convince the reader about their acceptance. In a persuasive essay, the oppositional or conflicting ideas are not presented because the flow of the entire essay is not dependent on any authority or factual information provided but what adds value to the essay is how much the reasons are able to evoke the emotions of fear, sympathy, pity towards the discussed topic. The need to present a well-rounded argument is not felt in a persuasive essay since the approach to the topic and the perspective is not logical but rather emotional.
- 3) The concluding paragraph revisits the thesis statement and reiterates the point of view of the author. This paragraph is most effective because it often directly addresses and urges the reader to act and react with the writer. The assertion is strongest with this ending paragraph and it encapsulates the author’s perspective. As a reader, you should be able to clearly state the author’s point of view, what he expects the reader to know/think/do and what emotion is the author trying to evoke in his readers.

The tone of these essays is calmer and many a times conversational. It is with an aim to present the author as a friend who can be trusted with his views on the important topics. Emotive vocabulary and rhetorical questions are frequently used in persuasive essays. Readers are also treated inclusive to the topic by using certain pronouns and by deliberately making direct appeals. The readers are made to feel that they are an important part of the topic and are directly affected. It is made relatable by the writer.

5.5 PERSUASIVE TEXT SAMPLE

LIFE BEYOND ACADEMICS

- 1) Academics has always been an essential part of human development. It prepares us to survive in the outside world and establish an identity of our own. But, is an individual’s development restricted to merely academics? In India, from an early age, we have been taught that education is limited to the boundaries of academics only; the idea of getting out into the field, for gaining practical experience, is always considered a hoax. This has hindered students’ development. But, the truth is that education represents a considerably broader field than we know of it. Our teaching, from the basics, has been focused on getting good grades and job offers, rather than being creative and unique.

- 2) In the 21st century, the pure academic type of education is slowly paving way for a whole new type. The paradigm shift in the whole education system is evident. People have now come to understand that education is a 360-degree activity that should focus on students' overall development, rather than restricting him/her to the classroom.
- 3) Co-curricular activities that take place outside the classroom but reinforce or supplement classroom curriculum, in some way, have become a point of focus today. These activities help in the growth of the child, in more than one way. Participating in such activities helps youngsters grow mentally, socially and individually. Intellectual development of a student is developed in the classroom, but for the aesthetic development such as team- building, character- building, and physical growth, students must step out into the outside world. For instance, if a student is a part of school football team, he/ she will learn team- work and coordination, in a practical manner, which cannot be taught in the class.
- 4) Similarly, in colleges and institutions, there is a need for practical exposure so that the students can experience the actual working of an industry. For example, taking a student to a manufacturing firm will give him/ her the real insight and better learning of the industry. Catering to this change, most professional colleges including B- schools, have started providing practical exposure to students through regular guest lectures, industrial visits, conferences, seminars, cultural festivals, and so on. With industry visits, students are able to better identify their prospective areas of work in the overall organizational function. Moreover, they help enhance interpersonal skills and communication techniques. In addition, guest lectures are equally important for all – round development of students. It is a great way for students to gain maximum exposure, as guest speakers talk about their real- life experiences and not what is there in the text books.
- 5) Through such events, students are made to participate and coordinate different events wherein, they get to know how exactly things are managed. Classroom teaching provides the foundation, and co-curricular or extra-curricular activities provide practical exposure and opportunities to implement what students learn in the classroom. This helps in developing the overall personality of the students, inculcating various soft – skills in them, which otherwise are difficult to teach. Clearly, life beyond academics creates creative and empowered professionals.

(Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/education/life-beyond-academics/article26895970.ece>)

5.5.1 Explanation

In the above passage, the writer aims to convince the reader about the significance of extra-curricular activities for children in school. If academics ensure knowledge, taking part in activities beyond the books help the child in shaping a personality. Empathy is evoked in the essay wherein the reader is made to understand what a child needs apart from the bookish knowledge that one gains from classroom and books. The writer tries to convey the importance of overall development of a child in today's times. The growing competition seeks an active creative mind which can only be achieved by going beyond the classroom studies. The writer does not give any facts and figures to establish this point of view but

he talks about how experiences are gained apart from academics. The writer is not fuelling any revolution but is talking about a certain shift that can be noticed in the 21st century and how it becomes imperative to be able to adapt to that change.

Check Your Progress 2

On the basis of your understanding of the essay and its explanation, attempt the following questions:

- 1) According to the author, what is education?

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- 2) What paradigm shift is the author talking about?

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- 3) List some of the reasons that the author uses to support his point of view in this essay.

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- 4) Write synonyms of these words from the essay: a) emancipate b) fraud (para 1)

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- 5) Write antonyms of these words from the essay: a) deprive (para 5) b) only (para 1)

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5.6 READING STRATEGIES

In order to fully grasp the meaning behind the persuasive essay, you need to keep certain things in your mind –the Why-s and Who-s of the essay while you are reading it:

Firstly, you need to know what the author is trying to say. Try to comprehend the point of view of the writer. Be sure of the argument. Secondly, what is the purpose behind this persuasion? What is the writer trying to do? Is he trying to promote/sell a product? Lead the readers to a certain specific action? Demonstrate a thought by taking on the role of a leader? What are the reasons behind this? Is it logical, ethical or emotional? In the case of persuasive essay, it would most definitely be emotional. Identify the emotion. Is it anger? Sadness? Pity? Fear? The Pathos is important to the essay. Thirdly, any writer would give arguments/reasons according to the audience/reader. So, think about the writer's audience. Who is the intended audience? You should be able to understand who the writer is trying to convince. Who is the expected reader? Once you know the reader, you should be able to identify the reasons that the writer uses in the essay to convince his reader. The proper use of language, appropriate jargons, conventions are all done on the basis of the identified readers of the essay. Answering these things while you are reading an essay would definitely help you in gaining a better understanding of the whole argument that the writer is trying to present.

5.7 PRACTICE TEXT

Read the following text:

- 1) I was in Hyderabad giving a lecture, when a 14 year old girl asked me for my autograph. I asked her what her goal in life is: She replied: I want to live in a developed India. For her, you and I will have to build this developed India. You must proclaim: India is not an under-developed nation; it is a highly developed nation.
- 2) India is an old civilization and an extremely complex society. Her glorious past, natural beauty, resources, vast size and above all her unique geographical location has always given her the pride of place in the world. With the ups and downs of history it has retained its vibrancy. Yet, due to callousness and lethargy on our part and due to the negative slant of the media here, we as a nation have not been able to attain the status of a developed nation thus far.

- 3) In this famous speech delivered in IIT Hyderabad on 25 May 2011, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam outlines his three visions for his motherland India and pleads for Indians to be involved in the nation-building process and to make India a developed nation.
- 4) In 3000 years of our history, people from all over the world have come and invaded us, captured our lands and conquered our minds. Yet, we have not conquered anyone. Because, we respect the freedom of others, and that is the reason for his first vision of Freedom. India got its first vision of this in the Indian Rebellion in the year 1857, when we started the war of Independence. It is this freedom that we must protect and nurture and build on. We have been a developing nation for fifty years, and so it is time we see ourselves as a developed nation. In terms of GDP, we are among the top five nations of the world. Our poverty levels are falling. Our achievements are being globally recognised today. Yet we lack the self-confidence to see ourselves as a developed nation.
- 5) India must stand up to the world. Unless India stands up to the world, no one will respect us. Only strength respects strength. We must be strong not only as a military power but also as an economic power. Both must go hand-in-hand. Dr. Kalam says that being the project director for India's first satellite launch vehicle, SLV3, was the first milestone in his career. Second was when Agni met its mission requirements in 1994. Third came the partnership between DRDO and the Dept. of Atomic Energy. Removing the pain of little boys and girls in hospital, by replacing heavy metallic callipers weighing over three kg each with 300-gram callipers, was the fourth bliss or milestone of his career. Dr. Kalam wonders how the media in India could be so negative. Giving the example of Dr. Sudarshan, who has transformed the tribal village into a self-sustaining, self-driving unit, Dr. Kalam says that there are millions of such achievements in India but our media is only obsessed with the bad news and failures and disasters.
- 6) In Tel Aviv, where gory killings, deaths and bombardments take place every now and then, the front page of the newspaper had the picture of a Jewish gentleman who in five years had transformed his desert land into an orchid and a granary. It was this inspiring picture that everyone woke up to. Dr. Kalam is surprised at the people's obsession with foreign things. We want foreign TVs, foreign shirts, foreign technology. There is an obsession for everything that is imported. According to Dr. Kalam, self respect comes only with self-reliance.
- 7) In India, we the people blame the government for being inefficient, the laws for being too old, the municipality for not picking up the garbage etc. But what do we do about it? In Singapore, you don't throw cigarette butts on the roads or eat in the stores. YOU wouldn't dare to eat in public during Ramadan, in Dubai or go out with your head uncovered in Jeddah. YOU would not dare to buy an employee of the telephone exchange in London at 10 pounds (Rs.650) a month to, "see to it that my STD and ISD calls are billed to someone else". You wouldn't dare to speed beyond 55mph in Washington and tell the traffic cop about your heavy political connections. YOU wouldn't chuck an empty coconut shell anywhere other than the garbage pail on the beaches in Australia and New Zealand. Why don't

YOU spit Paan on the streets of Tokyo? Why don't YOU use examination jockeys or buy fake certificates in Boston?

- 8) You who can respect and conform to a foreign system in other countries but cannot in your own. You throw papers and cigarettes on the road the moment you touch Indian ground. If you can be an involved and appreciative citizen in an alien country why cannot you be the same here in India? We go to the polls to choose a government and after that forfeit all responsibility. We expect the railways to provide clean bathrooms but we are not going to learn the proper use of bathrooms. We want Indian Airlines and Air India to provide the best of food and toiletries and expect the government to do everything for us whilst our contribution is totally negative. We sit back wanting the government to do everything for us, while our contribution is totally negative. We expect the government to clean up but we are not going to stop chucking garbage all over the place, nor are we going to stop to pick up a stray piece of paper and throw it in the bin. When it comes to social issues like women, dowry, girl child etc., we make loud drawing room protestations and do the reverse at home. Our excuse? "It's the whole system which has to change, how will it matter if I alone forego my son's rights to a dowry." So who's going to change the system? What does a system consist of? Very conveniently for us it consists of our neighbours, other households, other cities, other communities and the government. But definitely not me and YOU.
- 9) And for all these negatives on our part, we blame it on the system. The whole system has to change, we seem to justify. When it comes to making a positive contribution to the system we lock ourselves along with our families into a safe cocoon and wait for a Mr. Clean to come along and work miracles for us, or we leave the country and run away. Like lazy cowards hounded by our fears we run to America to bask in their glory and praise their system. When New York becomes insecure we run to England. When England experiences unemployment, we take the next flight out to the Gulf. When the Gulf is war struck, we demand to be rescued and brought home by the Indian government. Everybody is out to abuse and molest the country. Nobody thinks of feeding the system, because our conscience is mortgaged to money. Dr. Kalam winds up with the words of J.F.Kennedy to his fellow Americans, and relates it to Indians: "ASK WHAT WE CAN DO FOR INDIA AND DO WHAT HAS TO BE DONE TO MAKE INDIA WHAT AMERICA AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES ARE TODAY"
- 7) Let's do what India needs from us.
(Excerpt from speech given by the former President of India, Late Dr. A.P. J. Abdul Kalam)

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) On the basis of your understanding of the above passage, answer each of the questions given below by choosing the most appropriate option.
- a) Where was the famous speech delivered by Dr Kalam?
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|---------------|----------------|
| i) Hyderabad. | ii) Pune |
| iii) Delhi. | iv) Mangalore. |

- b) How does an Indian behave in Singapore?
- i) He will never sit on the road ii) He will never spit on the road.
 - iii) He will never smoke. iv) He will never throw the cigarette butt on the road.
- c) “Our conscience is mortgaged to money,” means
- i) we earn a lot of money. ii) we live in a materialistic world.
 - iii) we are greedy. iv) we are indebted to someone.
- d) “Respecting and conforming to a foreign system,” means
- i) obeying foreign laws. ii) staying in a foreign country.
 - iii) respecting foreigners. iv) using foreign currency.
- e) The author is echoing the words of
- i) Jawahar Lal Nehru ii) Nelson Mandela
 - iii) J.F. Kennedy iv) None of the above.

2) Answer the following questions briefly.

a) What has given India the pride of place in the world?

b) Why have we not been able to attain the status of a developed nation so far?

c) Mention any 2 things that an Indian would not dare to do abroad.

d) How does an Indian behave in his own country?

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e) What is our attitude towards elections and social issues?

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f) How do we behave when it comes to making a positive contribution towards our country?

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3) Answer the following questions in 25-30 words.

a) Why is the author annoyed at Indians being involved and appreciative citizens abroad?

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b) What do we do after choosing a government?

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c) How do we behave in the context of burning social issues?

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d) What are the three milestones in the life of Dr Abdul Kalam?

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4) Pick out words from the passage which mean the same as the following.

- a) not genuine, imitation (para 7) b) obey the rules (para 8)
- c) contrary (para 8)

5.8 LET US SUM UP

- 1) You need to be insightful regarding the topic discussed in the text.
- 2) You need to pay attention to the title of the text.
- 3) Clear understanding of the writer's point of view is the most important thing.
- 4) Deconstructing the structure of the essay by understanding specific reasons used by the writer in support of his point of view.
- 5) A clear and consistent sense of the writer's intended audience will help in ascertaining the reasons used by the writer.
- 6) Aristotle's three modes of persuasion: Ethos, Pathos and Logos. Ethos and Pathos are important in persuasive essays. Ethos refers to the credibility of the writer and thus his point of view and Pathos or an appeal to the emotional side of the readers is important to understand the essence of the essay.
- 7) Three styles of structuring are often used in the essays: Inverted Pyramid, traditional Pyramid and Case Study.

5.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

If you would like to learn more about Persuasive Texts, you may consult:

Joan Mulholland, *Handbook of Persuasive Tactics: A practical language guide* (London: Routledge, 1994)

Richard O. Young, *Persuasive Communication: How Audiences Decide Second Edition* (London: Routledge, 2017)

Richard Edwards et al., *Rhetoric and Educational Discourse: Persuasive Texts?* (London: Routledge, 2004)

5.10 ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Sample paragraph

Smoking Kills (Argumentative): many people die from smoking than any other drug. In New Zealand, 20,000 people die of lung cancer every year. This figure has increased from 6,000 in 2008 to 20,000 in 2018.

2) Sample Paragraph

Colgate as the best toothpaste (Persuasive): You don't want to scare off the one you love with your bad breath the moment you get closer to them. Bad breath is one of the major turn offs which might not always be a sign of a disease but indicative of a bad choice in toothpaste. Most youngsters these days choose Colgate for their oral healthcare. It has been trusted by generations for several decades now.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Education is not merely academics but it also includes an overall development of the child. The engagement in extracurricular activities, exposure etc. is also equally important.
- 2) The paradigm shift in the whole education system in the 21st century is what the writer is talking about. People have now come to understand that education is a 360 degree activity that should focus on students' overall development, rather than restricting him/her to the classroom.
- 3) It leads to team building, character building, physical growth, practical exposure, creativity, gains life experiences and inculcates soft skills in children.
- 4) Synonyms a) Empowered, b) Hoax
- 5) Antonyms: a) inculcate, b) Merely

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) (a) i, (b) iv, (c) iii, (d) i, (e) iii
- 2) a) Her glorious past, natural beauty, resources, vast size and above all her unique geographical location has always given her the pride of place in the world.

b) Due to callousness and lethargy on our part and due to the negative slant of the media here, we as a nation have not been able to attain the status of a developed nation thus far.

c) In Singapore, you don't throw cigarette butts on the roads or eat in the stores.

- d) We go to the polls to choose a government and after that forfeit all responsibility. We expect the railways to provide clean bathrooms but we are not going to learn the proper use of bathrooms. We want Indian Airlines and Air India to provide the best of food and toiletries and expect the government to do everything for us whilst our contribution is totally negative.
 - e) We expect the government to clean up but we are not going to stop chucking garbage all over the place, nor are we going to stop to pick up a stray piece of paper and throw it in the bin. When it comes to social issues like women, dowry, girl child etc., we make loud drawing room protestations and do the reverse at home.
 - f) When it comes to making a positive contribution to the system we lock ourselves along with our families into a safe cocoon and wait for a Mr. Clean to come along and work miracles for us, or we leave the country and run away.
- 3)
- a) Author is annoyed at Indians being involved and appreciative citizens abroad. And when they step on Indian land, they forget all the laws and do the opposite in other countries as the laws are very stern there.
 - b) We expect the government to clean up but we are not going to stop chucking garbage all over the place, nor are we going to stop to pick up a stray piece of paper and throw it in the bin
 - c) When it comes to social issues like women, dowry, girl child etc., we make loud drawing room protestations and do the reverse at home. Our excuse? "It's the whole system which has to change, how will it matter if I alone forego my son's rights to a dowry."
 - d) Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam outlines his three visions for his motherland India and pleads for Indians to be involved in the nation-building process and to make India a developed nation. India's first satellite launch vehicle, SLV3, was the first milestone in his career. Second was when Agni met its mission requirements in 1994. Third came the partnership between DRDO and the Dept. of Atomic Energy.
- 4) Word/s from the passage which mean the same as following:
- i) fake, ii) conform, iii) reverie