

## Unit 2 | GENDER EQUITY

### LESSON

Appro JRD | Sudha Murty

#### PREPARATORY TASK

1. From what you know, do you think men and women are given equal opportunities at the workplace? Justify your answer with concrete real-world examples that you can cite as evidence to support your opinion. Then, discuss this issue with someone in your class whose opinion does not match yours.
2. Find out the difference between the terms *gender equality* and *gender equity*.
3. Is there a person whom you admire? State a few reasons why you admire this person.

#### INTRODUCTION

Sudha Murty (b. 1950) is an Indian technologist, philanthropist and writer. She was born in Karnataka, studied computer science and engineering, and began her career at TELCO. In 1981, she provided capital investment for a new company, Infosys, which was co-founded by her husband, Narayana Murthy. Today, Infosys is the second-largest IT services company in India. In 1996, Sudha Murty started the Infosys Foundation, a non-profit organisation which supports programmes in the fields of healthcare, rural development, education and art. She began writing in the later years of her life, documenting her varied experiences as a woman in the then-nascent IT industry, as a social worker, and as a teacher. She has published novels, short-story collections, essays and travelogues in both Kannada and English.

In this essay, she reminisces about JRD Tata, who gave her the first break in her career as an engineer. She talks of JRD Tata's simplicity and vision, and how he influenced her own journey as an entrepreneur and philanthropist.

#### READING PASSAGE

There are two photographs that hang on my office wall. Every day when I enter my office, I look at them before starting my day. They are pictures of two old people, one of a gentleman in a blue suit and the other a black-and-white image of a man with *dreamy* eyes and a white beard.

People have asked me if the people in the photographs are related to me. Some have even asked me, 'Is this black-and-white photo that of a Sufi saint or a religious guru?' I smile and reply 'No, nor are they related to me. These people made an impact on my life. I am grateful to them.' 'Who are they?' 'The man in the blue suit is Bharat Ratna JRD Tata and the black-and-white photo is of Jamsetji Tata.' 'But why do you have them in your office?' 'You can call it gratitude.'

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*dreamy*: not focused on one's present surroundings



Then, **invariably**, I have to tell the person the following story.

It was a long time ago. I was young and bright, bold and **idealistic**. I was in the final year of my master's course in computer science at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bangalore, then known as the Tata Institute. Life was full of fun and joy. I did not know what helplessness or injustice meant.

It was probably the April of 1974. Bangalore was getting warm and red gulmohars were blooming at the IISc campus. I was the only girl in my postgraduate department and was staying at the ladies' hostel. Other girls were pursuing research in different departments of science. I was looking forward to going abroad to complete a doctorate in computer science. I had been offered scholarships from universities in US. I had not thought of taking up a job in India.

One day, while on the way to my hostel from our lecture-hall **complex**, I saw an advertisement on the notice board. It was a standard job-requirement notice from the famous automobile company TELCO (now Tata Motors). It stated that the company required young, bright engineers, hardworking and with an excellent academic background, etc.

At the bottom was a small line: 'Lady candidates need not apply.' I read it and was very upset. For the first time in my life I was up against gender **discrimination**.

Though I was not keen on taking up a job, I saw this as a challenge. I had done extremely well in academics, better than most of my male **peers**. Little did I know then that in real life academic excellence is not enough to be successful.

After reading the notice I went **fuming** to my room. I decided to inform the topmost person in TELCO's management about the injustice the company was **perpetrating**. I got a postcard and started to write, but there was a problem: I did not know who headed TELCO. I thought it must be one of the Tatas. I knew JRD Tata was the head of the Tata Group; I had seen his pictures in newspapers (actually, Sumant Moolgaokar was the company's chairman then).

I took the card, addressed it to JRD and started writing. To this day I remember clearly what I wrote. 'The great Tatas have always been **pioneers**. They are the people who started the basic **infrastructure** industries in India, such as iron and steel, chemicals, textiles and **locomotives**. They have cared for higher education in India since 1900 and they were responsible for the establishment of the Indian Institute of Science. Fortunately, I study there. But I am surprised how a company such as TELCO is discriminating on the basis of gender.'

I posted the letter and forgot about it. Less than 10 days later, I received a **telegram** stating that I had to appear for an interview at TELCO's Pune facility at the company's expense.

I was **taken aback** by the telegram. My hostel-mates told me I should use the opportunity to go to Pune free of cost—and buy them the famous Pune saris for cheap! I collected Rs 30 each from

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**invariably**: in every case; always; without variation

**idealistic**: believing in and aiming for perfection, perhaps unrealistically; characterised by idealism

**complex**: a group of similar buildings or related facilities on the same site

**discrimination**: unfair treatment of a person or group due to prejudice

**peer**: a person of the same age, status and ability

**fuming**: feeling or showing extreme anger

**perpetrate**: to carry out (some harmful or illegal action)

**pioneer**: the first to explore, use or apply a new technique, invention, area, etc.

**infrastructure**: the basic structures and facilities needed for the functioning of a society, area or country

**locomotive**: a vehicle powered by steam or diesel, used to pull trains and railway cars

**telegram**: a message sent as electrical signals over telegraph wires, and then printed out when received (telegrams eventually gave way to fax, which in turn was replaced by SMS and e-mail)

**taken aback**: greatly surprised



everyone who wanted a sari. When I look back, I feel like laughing at the reasons for my going, but back then they seemed good enough to make the trip.

It was my first visit to Pune and I immediately fell in love with the city. To this day it remains dear to me. I feel as much at home in Pune as I do in Hubli, my hometown. The place changed my life in so many ways.

As directed, I went to TELCO's Pimpri office for the interview. There were six people on the panel and I realised then that this was serious business. 'This is the girl who wrote to JRD', I heard somebody whisper as soon as I entered the room. By then I knew for sure that I would not get the job. That realisation **abolished** all fears from my mind, so I was rather cool while the interview was being conducted.

Even before the interview started, I **reckoned** the panel was **biased**, so I told them, rather impolitely, 'I hope this is only a technical interview.' They were taken aback by my rudeness, and even today I am ashamed about my attitude.

The panel asked me technical questions and I answered all of them. Then an elderly gentleman with an affectionate voice told me, 'Do you know why we said lady candidates need not apply? The reason is that we have never employed any ladies on the shop floor. This is not a co-ed college; this is a factory. When it comes to academics, you are a first ranker throughout. We appreciate that, but people like you should work in research laboratories.'

I was a young girl from small-town Hubli. My world had been a limited place. I did not know the ways of large corporate houses and their difficulties, so I answered, 'But you must start somewhere, otherwise no woman will ever be able to work in your factories.'

Finally, after a long interview, I was told I had been successful. So this was what the future had in store for me. Never had I thought I would take up a job in Pune. That city changed my life in many ways. I met a shy young man from Karnataka there, we became good friends and we got married.

It was only after joining TELCO that I realised who JRD was: the uncrowned king of Indian industry. Now I was scared, but I did not get to meet him till I was transferred to Bombay. One day I had to show some reports to Mr Moolgaokar, our chairman, who we all knew as 'SM'. I was in his office on the first floor of Bombay House (the Tata headquarters) when, suddenly, JRD walked in. That was the first time I saw 'appro JRD'. Appro means 'our' in Gujarati. That was the affectionate term by which people at Bombay House called him.

I was feeling very nervous, remembering my postcard episode. SM introduced me nicely. 'Jeh (that's what his close associates called him), this young woman is an engineer and that too, a postgraduate. She is the first woman to work on the TELCO shop floor.' JRD looked at me. I was praying he would not ask me any questions about my interview (or the postcard that **preceded** it). Thankfully, he didn't. Instead he remarked, 'It is nice that girls are getting into engineering in our country. By the way, what is your name?' 'When I joined TELCO, I was Sudha Kulkarni, sir', I replied. 'Now I am Sudha Murthy.' He smiled that kindly smile and started a discussion with SM. As for me, I almost ran out of the room.

After that I used to see JRD on and off. He was the Tata Group chairman and I was merely an engineer. There was nothing that we had in common. I was in awe of him.

One day I was waiting for Murthy, my husband, to pick me up after office hours. To my surprise I saw JRD standing next to me. I did not know how to react. Yet again I started worrying about that

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**abolish:** to end; to remove

**reckon:** to expect to be true; to believe to be probable; to think about something in a particular way

**biased:** (adjective) unfairly prejudiced against someone or something

**precede:** to come before



postcard. Looking back, I realise JRD had forgotten about it. It must have been a small incident for him, but not so for me.

'Young lady, why are you here?' he asked. 'Office time is over.' I said, 'Sir, I'm waiting for my husband to come and pick me up.' JRD said, 'It is getting dark and there's no one in the corridor. I'll wait with you till your husband comes.' I was quite used to waiting for Murthy, but having JRD waiting alongside made me extremely uncomfortable.

I was nervous. Out of the corner of my eye I looked at him. He wore a simple white pant and shirt. He was old, yet his face was glowing. There wasn't any air of superiority about him. I was thinking, 'Look at this person. He is a chairman, a well-respected man in our country and he is waiting for the sake of an ordinary employee.'

Then I saw Murthy and I rushed out. JRD called and said, 'Young lady, tell your husband never to make his wife wait again.'

In 1982, I had to resign from my job at TELCO. I was reluctant to go, but I really did not have a choice. I was coming down the steps of Bombay House after wrapping up my final settlement when I saw JRD coming up. He was absorbed in thought. I wanted to say goodbye to him so I stopped. He saw me and paused.

Gently, he said, 'So what are you doing, Mrs Kulkarni?' (That was the way he always addressed me.) 'Sir, I am leaving TELCO.' 'Where are you going?' he asked. 'Pune, sir. My husband is starting a company called Infosys and I'm shifting to Pune.' 'Oh! And what you will do when you are successful?' 'Sir, I don't know whether we will be successful.' 'Never start with *diffidence*,' he advised me. 'Always start with confidence. When you are successful, you must give back to society. Society gives us so much; we must reciprocate. I wish you all the best.'

Then JRD continued walking up the stairs. I stood there for what seemed like a millennium. That was the last time I saw him alive.

Many years later, I met Ratan Tata in the same Bombay office, occupying the chair JRD once did. I told him of my many sweet memories of working with TELCO. Later, he wrote to me, 'It was nice listening about Jeh from you. The sad part is that he's not alive to see you today.'

I consider JRD a great man because, despite being an extremely busy person, he valued one postcard written by a young girl seeking justice. He must have received thousands of letters every day. He could have thrown mine away, but he didn't do that. He respected the intentions of that unknown girl, who had neither influence nor money, and gave her an opportunity in his company. He did not merely give her a job; he changed her life and mindset forever.

Close to 50 per cent of the students in today's engineering colleges are girls. And there are women on the shop floor in many industry segments. I see these changes and I think of JRD. If at all time stops and asks me what I want from life, I would say I wish JRD were alive today to see how the company we started has grown. He would have enjoyed it wholeheartedly.

My love and respect for the House of Tatas remains undiminished by the passage of time. I always looked up to JRD. I saw him as a role model—for his simplicity, his generosity, his kindness and the care he took of his employees. Those blue eyes always reminded me of the sky; they had the same vastness and munificence.

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*absorbed*: (adjective, usually followed by *in*) characterised by complete attention to something

*diffidence*: lack of self-confidence

*reciprocate*: to act, feel or give in return

*mindset*: a habitual mental attitude that determines how one interprets and responds to situations

*munificence*: extreme generosity



**READING COMPREHENSION**

A. Answer the following questions in about 50 to 100 words each.

1. Describe Sudha Murty's first experience of gender discrimination.
2. Convey in your own words what Sudha Murty wrote in her postcard to JRD Tata. What reply did she receive?
3. Summarise what happened during Sudha Murty's interview at TELCO.
4. Describe Sudha Murty's feelings about Pune, and the impact that moving to Pune has had on her life.

B. Answer the following questions in about 250 to 300 words each.

1. Draw a character sketch of Sudha Murty, as seen from the facets of her personality she reveals in this essay.
2. Why does Sudha Murty have such great respect for JRD Tata? What did Sudha Murty's encounters with JRD Tata reveal about the latter?

**VOCABULARY****Commonly Misspelt Words**

Misspelt words make reading difficult and give a negative impression about us by suggesting that we do not care enough about what we write. It is therefore important to pay attention to correct spelling, especially in any kind of formal writing (such as assignments, examinations, reports, essays, official correspondence, résumés, and so on).

**Why we misspell words**

- Most spelling errors result from a combination of carelessness and laziness—we type quickly, but don't wait to check what we have typed before hitting 'send' or handing in our work. Mistyping (rather than ignorance) is often what leads to typos like *becuase* and *teh* when writing using a keyboard or a keypad. (These kinds of mistakes are rarely found in handwritten texts, but very common in text that has been typed.)
- A common type of spelling error is wrongly substituting one letter for another (*Xseperate* instead of *✓separate*). This could happen because we try to spell words according to their apparent pronunciation. E.g., *Xoppurtunity* instead of *✓opportunity*. English is notorious for a lack of correlation between a word's spelling and its pronunciation. We also base spellings on how we mispronounce a word! E.g., *Xmemento* instead of *✓memento*.
- We also sometimes add unnecessary letters (*Xninth* instead of *✓ninth*; *Xoccasions* instead of *✓occasions*) and omit letters that are required (*Xsincerly* instead of *✓sincerely*; *commitee* instead of *✓committee*). The interchange of letters (especially that of *i* and *e*) is another common error, leading to *Xbeleive* instead of *✓believe* or *Xdecieve* instead of *✓deceive*.
- Homophones (*lose-loose*; *principal-principle*; *there-their-their's*) often cause confusion for many people. You will learn more about homophones in the next lesson.
- The incorrect use of apostrophes is another common cause of misspellings. Using apostrophes to form plurals (*Xdog's* as the plural for *dog*); placing them in the wrong position (*Xdoes'nt*); confusing the singular possessive and the plural possessive (*Xtwo week's time*); and mixing up



contractions and possessive pronouns (*it's*–*its*; *you're*–*your*; the use of ~~X~~ *your's*)—these are common apostrophe-related spelling mistakes. (See Unit 1 to revise the correct use of apostrophes.)

### How to avoid errors in spelling

- If you are unsure of the correct spelling of a word, look it up in a dictionary. The more you use a dictionary, the faster you will become at looking up new words (and their usage).
- When you come across a new or unfamiliar word in any text, make a quick mental note of how it is spelt.
- Be aware that some words are spelt differently in British English and American/Canadian English. When writing for an organisation or for certain purposes, you should check if you are required to adhere to a certain spelling style (UK or US).
- Be aware of why certain spelling errors occur (see above). Knowing this may help you avoid mistakes.
- Always double-check your written work for spelling errors before submitting/publishing it.

### Commonly misspelt words

Given below is a list of words that are often misspelt. Note that these are the correct spellings. Make a note of these words so that you don't misspell them in your own writing.

accommodate	guarantee	millennium	quarantine
achieve	hygiene	occasion	recommend
cemetery	independent	occurrence	referred
colleague	jewellery (US jewelry)	omission	relevant
conscious	leisure	parliament	restaurant
dilemma	liaison	personnel	separate
embarrass	licence (US license)	potatoes	sergeant
fluorescent	maintenance	precede	skilful (US skillful)
fulfil (US fulfill)	medieval	privilege	supersede
gauge	memento	pronunciation	weird

### EXERCISES

A. Spot the incorrectly spelt words in each sentence and correct the spelling mistakes.

1. Sudha Murty heads a foundation that supports the underprivileged. Her philanthropy was influenced by JRD Tata who encouraged her to give back to society.
2. My niece is very careful about hygiene.
3. It is fascinating to see how the equipment works.
4. We enjoyed his humourous anecdotes.
5. Professor Sen retired today. The principle and Dr Sen's colleagues gave her a beautiful momento.
6. The child watched with curiosity as the mechanic completed the maintainence work.
7. An arguement between Komal and Kamal is nothing new. Its a regular occurance.
8. The only certainty we can have is that nothing is permanant.

B. Fill in the blanks using the correct spelling of the words given in brackets.

1. Last year's harvest \_\_\_\_\_ (exceded) \_\_\_\_\_ (exceptations). This year, however, the bad \_\_\_\_\_ (whether) will result in a \_\_\_\_\_ (dissappointing) \_\_\_\_\_ (yeild).



2. The people were \_\_\_\_\_ (innoculated) against the \_\_\_\_\_ (desease).
3. A good \_\_\_\_\_ (calender) is \_\_\_\_\_ (indispensible) for efficient time management.
4. He copied from the work of an \_\_\_\_\_ (amature) writer, but his \_\_\_\_\_ (plagerism) was soon discovered.
5. Their economy has grown; \_\_\_\_\_ (our's) has been \_\_\_\_\_ (comparitively) \_\_\_\_\_ (stagnent).
6. Please save the \_\_\_\_\_ (reciept) of this \_\_\_\_\_ (tranzaction) for future \_\_\_\_\_ (refrence).

### Homonyms, Homographs, Homophones

**Homonyms** are words that have the same spelling and the same pronunciation, but different meanings.

- I wanted to **lie**.                      **lie** = say something that is not true  
 I wanted to **lie** down.            **lie** = assume a reclining position

#### EXERCISES

C. Each set of sentences in Column X has homonyms. Match every sentence of each set in Column X with the corresponding meaning in Column Y of the homonym in the sentence. One has been done for you.

Set	X	Y
1	(1) You mustn't always <b>bank</b> on him. (2) She withdrew money from the <b>bank</b> . (3) I sat on the <b>bank</b> of the river.	(a) financial institution (b) sloping land beside a water body (c) rely on
2	(1) He was <b>fair</b> -skinned. (2) It wasn't a <b>fair</b> deal. (3) We visited the <b>fair</b> . (4) Her performance was <b>fair</b> .	(a) travelling show or exhibition (b) slightly above average quality (c) free from bias or deception (d) lightly coloured
3	(1) It will <b>suit</b> my needs. (2) I wore my best <b>suit</b> . (3) I brought a <b>suit</b> against him.	(a) set of garments (b) legal proceedings (c) be acceptable to
4	(1) The map was not to <b>scale</b> . (2) The thief could easily <b>scale</b> the wall. (3) The patient stood on the <b>scale</b> . (4) They were ranked on a <b>scale</b> of 10.	(a) get on top of (b) ratio between actual size and its image (c) standard of reference (d) weighing instrument
5	(1) We need someone to <b>lead</b> the team. (2) The police are following a <b>lead</b> . (3) She lost her <b>lead</b> in the final round.	(a) advantage held by a competitor (b) clue pointing to possible solution (c) be in charge of

D. Fill in the blanks in each set of sentences with a single homonym.

For example: A snake \_\_\_\_\_ him.  
 Add a \_\_\_\_\_ of salt.

Answer: bit

1. She wrote a new \_\_\_\_\_.  
 The children went to \_\_\_\_\_ in the park.



2. I was asked to \_\_\_\_\_ a few lines of verse.  
The sheep are not in their \_\_\_\_\_.  
She uses a brush \_\_\_\_\_ for calligraphy.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ tree is found in temperate regions.  
Let's \_\_\_\_\_ up the house before the guests arrive.
4. We didn't realise the \_\_\_\_\_ of the pandemic.  
The symphony is in the \_\_\_\_\_ of C major.  
You need to \_\_\_\_\_ the fish before cooking it.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ out for fraudulent call and e-mails.  
She got me an expensive \_\_\_\_\_ for my birthday.

**Homographs** are words that have the same spelling, but different meanings and (occasionally) different pronunciations.

The wind is strong tonight.

I forgot to wind my watch.

wind (rhymes with *pinned*) = moving air

wind (rhymes with *find*) = twist or coil something

**EXERCISE**

E. For each set, match both sentences in Column X with the corresponding meaning in Column Y of the homograph in the sentence.

Set	X	Y
1	(1) The mayor will present the award. (2) She gave me a present for Diwali.	(a) something given as a gift (b) to give, especially an award
2	(1) You missed the train by a minute. (2) The chances of success are minute.	(a) immeasurably small (b) unit of time
3	(1) I watched the match live on TV. (2) I live in Hyderabad.	(a) to inhabit (b) being broadcast at the time of occurrence
4	(1) She did not bow before the queen. (2) The archer picked up his bow.	(a) to lower one's head in respect (b) weapon for shooting arrows
5	(1) Pick up the object. (2) I did not object to her demand.	(a) to express disapproval or disagreement (b) a material thing
6	(1) She did not shed a single tear. (2) Do not tear the paper.	(a) to separate by force (b) liquid produced by the eye when one cries
7	(1) The pipe was made of lead. (2) This will lead to success.	(a) a type of metal (b) result in
8	(1) My wound has not yet healed. (2) I wound the tape.	(a) injury (b) to arrange or coil around
9	(1) She asked me to close the window. (2) He stood close to the window.	(a) very near (b) to shut



F. For each of the following words, make two sentences each that clearly demonstrate the different meanings these words have.

- |           |         |         |          |
|-----------|---------|---------|----------|
| 1. bear   | 3. fair | 5. type | 7. train |
| 2. desert | 4. park | 6. blue | 8. saw   |

**Homophones** are words that have the same pronunciation, but different spellings and different meanings.

Do not waste paper.

waste = spend thoughtlessly

She tied a sash around her waist.

waist = part of the body between ribs and hips

**EXERCISES**

G. Fill in the blanks with the correct homophones from the options given in the box below.

road, rode	to, two, too	principal, principle
banned, band	board, bored	their, there, they're

- I am \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ games.
- She \_\_\_\_\_ her bike down the \_\_\_\_\_.
- Our \_\_\_\_\_ is a lady of great \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ garden over \_\_\_\_\_.
- Did you buy \_\_\_\_\_ tickets \_\_\_\_\_ the show, \_\_\_\_\_?
- Arjun's \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_ from playing in the school.

H. Fill in the blanks with the correct homophone from the options given in the brackets.

- I bought a \_\_\_\_\_ of gloves. (pare, pair, pear)
- The king's \_\_\_\_\_ did not last very long. (rein, rain, reign)
- If you park here, the police will \_\_\_\_\_ your car away. (tow, toe)
- The lioness picked up the \_\_\_\_\_ of her prey. (sent, scent, cent)
- She wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ her favourite outfit. (wear, ware)

I. Show the difference between the words in the given sets of homophones by using them in sentences of your own.

- |                 |               |                 |                |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. aisle, isle  | 3. four, fore | 5. pane, pain   | 7. paws, pause |
| 2. break, brake | 4. heal, heel | 6. past, passed | 8. sell, cell  |

**GRAMMAR**

Certain classes of words, such as pronouns and verbs, change their forms depending on the nouns or subjects that they are connected to. This is known as **agreement** or **concord**. This relationship between a subject (noun) and its corresponding pronoun, or between a subject and the verb connected to it, is essential to grammatical correctness. Unclear or incorrect agreement results in a lack of clarity.

In this section, we will look at the rules of agreement, which will help you avoid common errors in noun-pronoun agreement and subject-verb agreement.



### Noun-Pronoun Agreement

A pronoun must agree with its antecedent (i.e., the noun to which it refers or which it replaces) in terms of both **number** and **gender**. A singular antecedent requires a singular pronoun; a plural antecedent requires a plural pronoun; masculine and feminine antecedents require masculine and feminine pronouns respectively.

<u>Sumi</u> raised <u>her</u> hand.	Since the noun <u>Sumi</u> (the subject) is singular, the connected pronoun <u>her</u> is also singular. Also, since the subject is feminine, the pronoun is also feminine.
Sumi's <u>parents</u> praised <u>their</u> daughter.	Since the noun <u>parents</u> (the subject) is plural, the connected pronoun <u>their</u> is also plural.
Sumi's <u>uncle</u> praised <u>his</u> niece.	Since the noun <u>uncle</u> (the subject) is masculine, the connected pronoun <u>his</u> is also masculine.

In the above examples, it is easy to identify the number and gender of the antecedent noun of the pronoun. However, the antecedent of a pronoun can also be another pronoun, or both a noun and a pronoun. The guidelines below will help you figure out what the pronoun should agree with in such cases.

- When the subjects are joined by *and*, use a plural pronoun.  
Sumi and Lata celebrated their victory.
- When the subjects are joined by *either ... or*, *neither ... nor*, or *not only ... but also*, the pronoun will agree in number with the antecedent positioned closest to it in the sentence.  
Either Sumi or her parents will have their way.     Either her parents or Sumi will have her way.
- When a single pronoun is used to refer to more than one noun or pronoun of different persons, the pronoun agrees with the first person rather than with the second or third person, and with the second person rather than with the third person.

<u>You</u> and <u>I</u> have wasted <u>our</u> time.	Antecedents = <u>you</u> (second person) and <u>I</u> (first person) Pronoun agrees with <i>first person</i> ( <u>our</u> )
<u>She</u> and <u>I</u> have wasted <u>our</u> time.	Antecedents = <u>she</u> (third person) and <u>I</u> (first person) Pronoun agrees with <i>first person</i> ( <u>our</u> )
<u>Gopal</u> and <u>you</u> have wasted <u>your</u> time.	Antecedents = <u>Gopal</u> (third person) and <u>you</u> (second person) Pronoun agrees with <i>second person</i> ( <u>your</u> )

- The words *each* and *every* require singular pronouns.  
Each girl contributed her share.     Every man for himself.
- When the following indefinite pronouns are used as the subject of a sentence (the antecedent), they require singular pronouns:



anybody	anyone	anything
everybody	everyone	everything
each	either	neither
nobody	no one	nothing
somebody	someone	something

For example:

Everything had been moved from its place.

Neither of the dogs returned to its master.

The above rule is the source of much confusion and awkwardness when the subject's gender is not known or if the subject refers to a group that might comprise both men and women. One could choose to use either the feminine singular or the masculine singular pronoun: 'Everyone should return to his seat' or 'Everyone should return to her seat'. However, either construction may be deemed sexist. One could say 'Everyone should return to his or her seat'; however, this solution will soon sound clunky if used in several sentences within a passage. For these reasons, the plural pronoun *their* is increasingly being used as a gender-neutral pronoun: 'Everyone should return to their seat'. The most elegant solution is to re-write the sentence to a plural antecedent (keeping in mind the context): 'Students should return to their seats'.

- When choosing a pronoun for collective nouns such as *audience, class, committee, family, public, etc.*, look at the context:
  - If the group is acting as a single unit, use a singular pronoun: The team celebrated its victory.
  - If the group is acting as individuals, use a plural pronoun: The team disagreed on their course of action.

Alternatively, replace the collective noun with a plural noun in order to use a plural pronoun: The players celebrated their victory.

## EXERCISES

### A. Fill in the blanks with suitable pronouns.

1. Shabnam and Sheila head the Marketing and the Legal departments respectively at Star Labs. Each runs \_\_\_\_\_ team efficiently. Both are highly valued by \_\_\_\_\_ company.
2. The members of the jury disagreed among \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The United States is known for \_\_\_\_\_ military strength.
4. The frequent rains and many rivers flowing through Kerala make \_\_\_\_\_ vulnerable to flooding. Many volunteers offered \_\_\_\_\_ help after the recent floods.
5. *Romeo and Juliet* was written by William Shakespeare early in \_\_\_\_\_ career. \_\_\_\_\_ protagonists are two young lovers whose deaths reconcile \_\_\_\_\_ feuding families. \_\_\_\_\_ was among Shakespeare's most popular plays during \_\_\_\_\_ lifetime.
6. Everyone should bring \_\_\_\_\_ own textbook to class.
7. You and I managed to complete \_\_\_\_\_ work in time, but neither Rohit nor Ali submitted \_\_\_\_\_ work.
8. All of the stolen jewellery was returned to \_\_\_\_\_ owner, Mr Lal. \_\_\_\_\_ put all of the jewels back in \_\_\_\_\_ cases in \_\_\_\_\_ vault.

## Subject-Verb Agreement

Present tense forms of the verb must agree with the subject in **number** and **person**. This means that the form of the verb depends, in the case of some tenses, on whether its subject is in first, second or third person and on whether it is singular or plural.



For example, the verb *be* appears in different forms depending on the number and person of the subject. In the in simple present tense, it has three forms (*am, is* and *are*), while in the simple past tense it has two forms (*was* and *were*).

Person	Number	Present tense	Past tense
1st person	singular	I am a student.	I was a student.
	plural	We are students.	We were students.
2nd person	singular	You are a student.	You were a student.
	plural	You are students.	You were students.
3rd person	singular	He/she is a student.	He/she was a student.
	plural	They are students.	They were students.

The three forms of *be* in the present tense and its two variants in the past tense are true of the verb whether it appears in a sentence as a main verb or as an auxiliary. The sentences below, where *be* appears as an auxiliary verb, will make this clear.

- |                                 |                                  |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| I <u>am</u> working in Goa.     | I <u>was</u> working in Goa.     |
| We <u>are</u> working in Goa.   | We <u>were</u> working in Goa.   |
| They <u>are</u> working in Goa. | They <u>were</u> working in Goa. |

In the case of all other verbs (including *have* and *do*, which like the verb *be* can be used as main verbs as well as auxiliaries), there are only two variant forms, known as 'singular' and 'plural', that are used in agreement with the number and person of the subject when the sentence is in simple present tense. The singular form of the verb is used with a subject in third person singular (*he/she*) and the plural form with all other kinds of subjects. Look at the examples below.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| I <u>walk</u> to school every day.           | Vilas and I <u>walk</u> to school every day. |
| You (sing.) <u>walk</u> to school every day. | You (pl.) <u>walk</u> to school every day.   |
| He <u>walks</u> to school every day.         | My sisters <u>walk</u> to school every day.  |

In the set of sentences above, the verb in the stem + *s* form (*walks*) is said to be the singular form of the verb, and the verb in the stem form (*walk*) is called the plural form of the verb.

The choice of the verb form depends, as said earlier, on the **number** and **person** of the subject of a sentence in the present tense. Look at some more examples of the use of the singular and plural forms of verbs in simple present tense.

- |                                  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Mr Anand <u>teaches</u> English. | Trains <u>arrive</u> on time here. |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|

Note that the agreement rule is not followed if the verb is in the simple past tense. In other words, the form of the verb remains the same irrespective of the number and person of the subject. Look at the sentences below to understand this fully.

- |                                    |                                  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| I <u>gave</u> her fruit.           | We <u>gave</u> her fruit.        |
| You (sing.) <u>gave</u> her fruit. | You (pl.) <u>gave</u> her fruit. |
| The girl <u>gave</u> her fruit.    | The girls <u>gave</u> her fruit. |

The only exception to this is, as seen above, the verb *be*, which appears as *was* or *were* in the simple past, in its usage as both a main verb and an auxiliary.

Although the agreement rule is applicable in most cases, it has to be used with care in some special cases, which we shall look at now.



- When the subject consists of two singular or plural nouns (or pronouns) joined by *and*, the plural form of the verb is normally used. For example:

The president and the vice president are coming to the meeting.

In the sentence above, the two nouns joined by *and* refer to two different people.

- In case the two nouns joined by *and* refer to the same person, the singular form of the verb is used. For example:

The president and chief executive of the company has arrived.

Here the two nouns (president and chief executive) refer to the same person.

- If the two nouns joined together by *and* are thought of as a single 'thing', the singular form of the verb is used. For example:

Idli and sambar is my favourite breakfast.

- When we refer to an amount or quantity of something (distance, money, etc.), it is used with the singular form of the verb. For example:

150 kilometres is not a great distance.

Ten thousand rupees is a fair price for this bike.

- When the word *either* or *neither* is used as the subject of a sentence, it takes a singular verb. For example:

Neither wants breakfast.

Neither of the boys wants breakfast.

Note the second example: the subject of the sentence is still singular (*neither* = not even one), even when it is followed by a prepositional phrase containing a plural (*of the boys*), and so the singular form of the verb is used. This rule should be followed in formal writing, but is often relaxed in informal contexts.

- The singular form of the verb is used if the subject consists of two singular nouns joined together by *either ... or* and *neither ... nor*, as in the following examples.

Either the president or the secretary has signed this document.

Neither Robert nor Abdul has come to the meeting.

- However, if the nouns connected by *either ... or* or *neither ... nor* are plural, the plural form of the verb is used. For example:

Either my children or their friends have written this letter.

Neither the girls nor the boys have any knowledge of this matter.

- When a singular subject and a plural subject are connected by *either ... or* or *neither ... nor*, the verb agrees with the subject closest to it in the sentence. For example:

Neither the teacher nor the students are present today.

Neither the students nor the teacher is present today.

- When the subject of a sentence is a pronoun such as *everyone*, *someone* and *no one*, the singular form of the verb is used. For example:

Everyone wants to succeed.

No one knows the answer.



- Pronouns such as *everyone, everybody, no one, nobody, someone* and *somebody* are considered to be singular and therefore take the singular form of the verb. However, note that they are often followed by plural pronouns such as *they, them* and *their* (especially when the gender of the referent is unstated). For example:

Everyone has finished their work.                      Nobody is allowed to drive unless they are eighteen.

- Uncountable nouns, such as *baggage, equipment, furniture* and *luggage*, are treated as singular nouns. Hence, they take singular verbs only. For example:

Your baggage is heavy.                                      The equipment was expensive.

- Some nouns ending in *-s* are considered plural in form and take plural verbs. These nouns do not have singular forms. For example:

His trousers have become too tight.                      Where are your spectacles (glasses)?

Some other nouns of this kind are: *arms* (meaning *weapons*), *belongings, congratulations, goods, groceries, headquarters, scissors, surroundings, thanks* and *troops*.

- Certain collective nouns, such as *police, staff, cattle, and fish*, represent a number of singular objects/members taken together. These nouns take a plural verb and have no singular noun form. For example:

The police are coming.                                      The cattle were rounded up.

- Collective nouns, such as *government, public, team, party* and *media*, can take either a singular or a plural verb. For example:

The committee is investigating this matter.

The committee are of the view that the investigation should be completed quickly.

The first sentence refers to *committee* as an undivided group, but the second refers to the individuals who form the committee.

## EXERCISES

B. Fill in the blanks in the sentences below using the appropriate form of the verb on the right. Use the verbs in the tenses suggested.

For example: Bose speaks Telugu fluently.

1. There \_\_\_\_\_ three crows on the tree branch.
2. The boys \_\_\_\_\_ table tennis.
3. Stephen \_\_\_\_\_ the table.
4. The planes \_\_\_\_\_ the airport.
5. The children in this school \_\_\_\_\_ yoga classes twice a week.
6. Both the rice and the curd \_\_\_\_\_ delicious.
7. The rice and curd which the restaurant serves \_\_\_\_\_ delicious.
8. Rs 20,000 a month \_\_\_\_\_ a good salary for a beginner.
9. Neither Murali nor Tara \_\_\_\_\_ the answer to this question.
10. Either the boys or their parents \_\_\_\_\_ the report cards.

*speak* simple present  
*be* simple past  
*play* past continuous  
*clear* present perfect  
*approach* present continuous  
*have* simple present  
*be* simple past  
*be* simple present  
*be* simple present  
*know* simple present  
*collect* present perfect

C. Fill in the blanks with either *BE* or *HAVE* in the present tense in a form that agrees with the subject of the sentence.

1. Neither of my brothers \_\_\_\_\_ any children.



2. The third innings of the match \_\_\_\_\_ begun.
3. Mathematics \_\_\_\_\_ an interesting subject.
4. This is the only one in his collection of stories that \_\_\_\_\_ worth reading.
5. My trousers \_\_\_\_\_ been stolen.
6. The shop, with all of its goods, \_\_\_\_\_ insured.
7. Seven lakh rupees \_\_\_\_\_ a large sum of money.
8. Aditi is one of the girls who \_\_\_\_\_ selected.
9. What \_\_\_\_\_ the news?
10. The police \_\_\_\_\_ arrested the culprit.

## READING

### Skimming and Scanning

**Skimming** a text means reading quickly to get an overall idea of the text. In this type of reading, you are not interested in complete details or any specific information. The purpose of skimming is to get the gist of the text.

#### EXERCISES

A. *Skim through Sudha Murty's essay, and answer each of the following questions in a single sentence.*

1. Who is the subject of Sudha Murty's essay?
2. How does the author feel about her subject?

B. *Without looking at Murty's essay again, say whether the following statements are true or false.*

1. The author studied arts and humanities in college.
2. During her postgraduation years, the author lived with her family.
3. The author intended to pursue further studies abroad.
4. The author was confident that she would get the TELCO job.
5. The author was very courteous towards her TELCO interviewers.
6. The author met JRD Tata on several occasions.
7. JRD Tata was upset when the author decided to quit TELCO.

**Scanning** is looking for specific information. The reader knows what he/she is looking for in the text. For example, if you are looking for the meaning of a word in a dictionary, you already know which word you are searching for. Similarly, if you are searching for the phone number of a particular person in a telephone directory, you know whose number you are looking for.

#### EXERCISES

C. *Choose the correct answer from the options given below by scanning through Sudha Murty's essay.*

1. What about TELCO's job requirement notice angered Sudha Murty?
  - a. poor grammar and mistakes in punctuation
  - b. discrimination against women
  - c. low salary being offered
  - d. discrimination against people with no work experience



2. What were Sudha Murty's reasons for attending TELCO's interview?
    - a. a free trip to Pune during which she could buy sarees for her friends
    - b. gaining experience of job interviews and having her résumé screened
    - c. the prestige associated with a company owned by the Tata group
    - d. the inducement of being the first female engineer to work with TELCO
  3. Looking back on her interview at TELCO, Sudha Murty is embarrassed about...
    - a. her inability to answer the technical questions.
    - b. how she behaved at the start of the interview.
    - c. having been humiliated by the male interviewers.
    - d. her lack of knowledge about the corporate world.
  4. Why was Sudha Murty nervous during her first few encounters with JRD Tata?
    - a. She was unsure whether he approved of a woman on the factory floor.
    - b. She wondered if he remembered her postcard to him.
    - c. She was uncomfortable about his superior manners.
    - d. She didn't know how to address him.
  5. Why did Sudha Murty resign from TELCO?
    - a. She wanted to pursue a PhD in the USA.
    - b. She disliked being the only woman on the factory floor.
    - c. She was beginning a new venture with her husband.
    - d. She was moving to Pune after her marriage.
  6. What advice did JRD Tata give Sudha Murty when she was leaving TELCO?
    - a. to always have confidence and to give back to society
    - b. to never make rash decisions and to save for the future
    - c. to be generous and take care of her employees
    - d. to never let people in power discriminate against her
  7. What wish does Sudha Murty express towards the end of the essay?
    - a. that more factories would employ women
    - b. that more girls would study engineering
    - c. that JRD Tata were alive to see her company's success
    - d. that more people respect JRD Tata the way she does
- D. *Answer each of the following questions in a single word or phrase. Find these answers by scanning through Sudha Murty's essay.*
1. What was Sudha Murty's hometown, as mentioned in this essay?
  2. What was Murty's surname before marriage?
  3. Who was chairperson of TELCO when Murty joined the company?
  4. Name the bearded man whose photograph hangs in Murty's office.
  5. Name the building which housed TELCO's head office.
  6. Name the institute where Murty completed her master's degree.
  7. What is the present name of TELCO?
  8. What form/type of postal mail did Murty use to write to JRD Tata?
  9. In which city was the 'Tata Institute' located?
  10. In which year did Murty quit TELCO?
  11. In which city did Murty meet her husband?
  12. What subject did Sudha Murty study at the master's level?



In later units of this textbook, you will come across more reading comprehension exercises. You will need to employ the skills of skimming and scanning to answer those questions.

## WRITING

### Nature and Style of Sensible Writing

The ability to write well is not an easy skill to acquire. Like all skills, it takes a lot of practice to get it right. Although writing style (the way in which a writer chooses to express his or her ideas) can vary from one type of writing to another (documentary, reportage, academic writing, narrative fiction, descriptive essays, and so on), the basics of good writing remain the same across all types of writing. This lesson puts together some basic guidelines for prose writing in English. Remember that these are not strict rules, but rather general guidelines.

#### *Keep the reader and the form in mind while writing*

Consider the following paragraphs:

On noticing the unfamiliar person clothed in gorgeous regal robes, the learned man of the rustic academy rose up as if prompted by reverence and fright. Yet, his demeanour betrayed a sense of amazement rather than timorousness.

Seeing the stranger in a beautiful kingly dress, the village school master stood up as if forced by respect and fear. But his behaviour showed a feeling of wonder rather than meekness.

Both paragraphs have the same meaning, but express it in different styles. The writer of the first text employs an elevated, literary style and expects the reader to be familiar with high-flown vocabulary. The writer of the second text uses a plain, straightforward style and is addressing a reader who knows simple English.

Who the reader is and why the text is written will always inform the style of writing. **Adjust your style depending on the audience you are writing for.** You should not assume that a sixteen-year-old would understand a jargon-heavy analysis of tectonic plate movement the way a geologist can. You would have to make your writing style simpler and more accessible for the former, while maintaining a scientific and factual prose style for the latter.

Your style would also depend on the format in which you intend to present your information. A novel allows you to take more liberties with language, whereas writing an academic paper requires you to follow a more defined structure and perhaps use specific and appropriate terminology. A podcast script would differ in style from a scientific report; the style of a scientific report will be different from that of a business letter; a business letter is written in a style different from that of a book review. When describing the scene of an accident for a newspaper article, you will adopt a formal, journalistic style; but when describing the same scene to a friend, you can write in a more casual, conversational tone. Therefore, **adapt your writing to the requirements of the form of the written content.**

#### *Aim for clarity*

The ability to communicate your ideas in a clear, straightforward manner is an important strength to cultivate. If the meaning of a piece of composition is not clear to the reader, it will not be effective in its purpose—whether the purpose is to inform, instruct, or entertain the reader.



Take a look at the following two sentences and compare them in terms of clarity.

- ✗ On account of the prohibitively exorbitant, extortionate rates of the Local Transportation Unions I was forced to wend my way home on foot; and it was raining.
- ✓ I walked home in the rain because the auto drivers demanded too much money.

The first sentence is rambling, unwieldy, unspecific, and incorrectly punctuated. It lacks clarity: you have to make an effort to understand its meaning. The second sentence is concise and has a simple structure, making it clear and easy to understand.

Here are three tips to make your ideas clearer to your readers—

- **Clarity in writing begins with clarity in thought.** Before you begin writing, think about *what* you want to say. Focus on what you have decided to write about. Do not digress unnecessarily. For instance, an essay on water pollution should focus only on water pollution and not wander into the causes of air pollution or soil pollution.
- In general, it is a good idea to **keep sentences short and simple**. Split long sentences with multiple clauses into shorter sentences if necessary. If you use a long sentence, punctuate it correctly.
- **Keep related words and ideas together.** The position of words in a sentence is an indicator of their relationship to one another; this in turn gives rise to meaning. If you scatter your words across a sentence without careful thought, it makes the sentence confusing and dense. Keep the subject near the beginning of the sentence. Keep the principal verb as close to the subject as possible, without interposing a phrase that could come elsewhere in the sentence. In the examples below, note how the second sentence reads so much better than the first:

- ✗ Sunaina read, in the fourth chapter of the novel, about the heroine's quest.
- ✓ Sunaina read about the heroine's quest in the fourth chapter of the novel.

### **Structure your writing**

'Structure' refers to the way something is constructed and arranged. Many people write without thinking about how their sentences and paragraphs are arranged and connected. Whether it is an essay, a business report, an e-mail, or just one paragraph, **give some thought to how you will present your ideas**.

Try and **restrict yourself to one main idea per paragraph**, instead of cramming in too many ideas. Dealing with only one idea per paragraph makes it easier for you to structure your writing more carefully.

Arrange your paragraphs in a manner such that there is a **sensible flow of thought from one idea to another**. This will help the reader understand the logic behind your writing. Do not jump from one idea to another without connecting them in a coherent flow of thought. Haphazard paragraphing makes it difficult for the reader to understand what is being said.

### **Use correct grammar and punctuation**

No one likes reading an incorrectly written paragraph or essay, much less an important document such as a résumé or an official letter. **Be aware of the rules of English grammar and punctuation**. A grammatically correct piece of writing signals the fact that the writer is competent, aware of the niceties of language, and careful enough to avoid making basic mistakes of usage—all of which contribute to a very good impression of the writer.

### **Use appropriate diction**

'Diction' refers to the manner in which something is expressed in words. It is not enough to merely know a lot of words—you also need to know when and how to use these words meaningfully. Using



the most apt word in a particular context will make your writing stand out. Faulty diction (using the wrong word) will negate whatever impact your writing might have had until that point.

**Do not use a word if you do not know what it means.** If you're uncertain of the meaning or the usage of a particular word, check it in a dictionary. Avoid using the wrong word in the wrong context. (See Unit 3 for commonly confused words such as *amoral* and *immoral*, *loose* and *lose*, *affect* and *effect*.)

**Avoid using a complicated word or phrase when there is a simpler alternative** (for example, instead of saying *cognizant of*, use *know*). Do not use 'fancy' words for their own sake, or because you think they make your ideas sound more important. Using a scholarly or unusual word will not necessarily make you look smarter. Such words can be distracting and confusing, thereby hindering communication instead of assisting it. Employing inflated words all the time comes across as pretentious and can put off the reader; using them sparingly makes for a bigger impact. Use complicated words only in the interest of clarity or accuracy of expression.

**Avoid clichés** in your writing as much as possible (see Unit 4 for more on this). **Be careful with the use of jargon and slang** in your writing. These have their uses, but only in very specific contexts. For example, jargon is convenient shorthand when communicating between professionals in your own field, or when writing scientific and academic papers meant for an audience familiar with the subject. Slang may have a place in fiction, but should always be avoided in formal writing.

### **Vary your sentences**

If you keep re-using certain words, or if you construct every sentence in the same manner, it will result in a dull paragraph which your reader will find quite monotonous.

Look at the two paragraphs below.

- ✗ In 2018, our company published 40 new books. In 2019, our company published 29 new books. In 2020, our company published 35 new books. In 2021, our company aims to publish 50 new books.
- ✓ In 2018, our company published 40 new books. The next year, this figure dropped to 29. Our publishing house brought out 35 new titles in 2020. In the coming year, we aim to release a total of 50 new books.

Note how the second paragraph varies words, sentence structures and sentence lengths in order to make the same material more readable.

You could avoid repetitive patterns and enliven your writing by trying the following—

- **Alternate long and short sentences:** Introduce variety in your passage by writing sentences of different lengths.
- **Change the way you begin each sentence:** Do not begin each word in the same manner (for example, with the same word or phrase).
- **Combine sentences:** Short sentences can be combined in a number of ways. (Do this with care, however: do not combine sentences that have no relation to each other.)
- **Invert your sentence structure:** Reverse the syntax of your sentence (but ensure that it remains grammatically correct).

A sentence may be as long as the writer pleases; however, it is best that you **confine a long sentence to a single connected range of ideas**. A sentence should not be so long that the reader loses her/his way in it and struggles to understand its meaning. Unless they are well constructed, long sentences could become either boring or confusing.

The same word should not be used so often in a paragraph that it becomes tedious. Instead of re-using certain words again and again, check if you can use apt synonyms. Also check your writing for excessive repetition of linking words such as *like*, *as*, *so*, *therefore*, *although*, *but*, etc.



**Revise what you have written**

Once you have finished the first draft of your composition (be it a summary, a letter, an essay, a report, or a novel), carefully go through what you have written line by line, and look for mistakes in grammar, punctuation, spelling, syntax, and diction. Rarely is a first draft perfect; you may catch many mistakes and find better ways to express yourself as you re-read your work a second or a third time.

This is a very important step, particularly with regard to any kind of formal, official, legal or professional document. Take as much time as you can afford on this process. Once a piece of written communication reaches its recipient, it cannot be taken back and modified; therefore, ensure that it is error-free and that it says exactly what you intend it to say.

Put yourself in your reader's shoes. Check the following—

- Is the structure of your work (the arrangement of its parts) easily comprehensible?
- Is the flow of thought logical and coherent?
- Will the intended reader understand the terms, concepts, and assumptions that you have not explicitly explained?
- Have you given appropriate credit for quotations or cited sources for references you have made?

It might help to read your work aloud, in order to get a feel for how it sounds. Reading your text out loud also reveals awkward phrasing and convoluted sentence structures.

Take some time away from your document and do something else. Come back to it after a while, and re-read it with fresh eyes and a clear mind. This might help you gain some necessary 'distance' from your work, and therefore allow you to revise it in a more objective manner.

These basic guidelines will help you become a better writer. Be it in college or at the workplace, good writing skills are essential for success. Practice writing in various forms and contexts to refine your abilities. Understand and apply the suggestions laid out in this unit, and you will definitely be able to communicate more effectively through the written word.

**Describing People, Objects, Places and Events**

The purpose of descriptive writing is to depict a person, place, object, experience, emotion, event, or situation in such a way that a picture is formed in the reader's mind. When describing something, your goal is to evoke a strong sense of familiarity and appreciation in the reader by painting an image that is vivid and moving. This is done by using imaginative language, interesting comparisons, and images that appeal to the senses.

**General guidelines for descriptive writing**

- The first thing to keep in mind is to be original. Try not to be too influenced by what you may have read or heard about the subject you are writing about; instead, express as exactly as possible what you yourself sense, think or feel.
- Be more observant: good descriptive writing depends heavily on carefully observing and vividly recollecting your observations.
- Choose clear, precise words that convey the exact meaning intended, not a general sense. For example, to describe a tidal wave, the word *gigantic* would be a better choice than merely *big*. Use adjectives and adverbs to enliven your writing and make it more striking and pictorial.
- Try to involve all five senses when describing something. What do you see (sights, colours, lights)? What can you hear (sounds, noises, voices, music)? What can you smell (pleasant and unpleasant



odours or aromas)? What do you *taste* (sweet, bitter, salty, sour, spicy)? How does something *feel* to the touch (temperature, textures)? Add as many such details as necessary to convey a full picture to the reader.

- In addition to sensory details, you can also talk about your thoughts and emotions. How does the person/place/object/experience you are describing make you feel? Does it evoke happiness, sadness, pity, fear, anger, excitement, indifference? Describing your emotions may help you connect with your reader who may have felt the same in similar situations.
- Introduce the general, identifying features of the subject in the opening paragraph. Focus on specific details in the following paragraphs. Sum up or comment in a general way on the subject in the concluding paragraph.
- Remember to group individual points in a manner that feels coherent and organised, instead of haphazard or random.

For certain people, objects, places or events, you may find that there are many things that you could possibly describe. When given a word limit, don't try to describe a little bit of every feature. Instead, restrict yourself by choosing those features that will leave the strongest impression in the reader.

### Describing people

Here are some points you could mention when describing people:

- Name, age, gender, first impressions
- Physical features: height, weight, skin, hair, disability, other externally visible features (e.g., tattoos)
- Clothing and accessories
- Action: manner of walking, repetitive motions, etc.
- With certain features, such as hair, you could go into great detail: colour, length, type (curly, straight, frizzy), hairstyle, facial hair. This is also true for clothing.

When asked to write more than just a simple description of a person, you could mention things such as occupation, routine, skills and talents, personality, likes and dislikes, goals, how the person makes you or others feel, and so on.

### Describing Objects

Here are some points you could mention when describing objects:

- Name the object (you could also mention what kind of object it is, or what category it might fall under)
- Use: what the object does, or what it is used for
- Physical attributes: size, shape, colour, material
- Other attributes: smell, taste, sound, temperature
- Functioning: how the object works, its component parts
- Other characteristic features: where it is found, who uses it, etc.

### Describing Places

When asked to describe landscapes, cities or villages, buildings, rooms, etc., you could mention:

- Location (e.g., the city or neighbourhood the building is in, the region or country the landscape is in, etc.)



- What the place is known for
- People and objects within or related to the place
- How the place makes you feel
- For buildings and manmade places, you could mention the following: size, function (what it is used for), age (when it was built), its present state, structural features, objects inside it (such as furniture), interior and exterior decoration, etc.

### Describing Events

When describing events, include the following points:

- Why the event was important, interesting, etc. (for greater impact, this point can be included either in the beginning or at the end of your description)
- Key details: location, day, time, etc. (find creative ways to include these details instead of simply stating the information mechanically)
- The incidents that happened (these can be mentioned chronologically)
- The people involved and what they did
- Other significant, related details (e.g., if describing a festival, you could mention the reasons for celebrating and the preparations involved)

Focus on what happens not only *to* you (or the people involved) but also *around* you in the scene you are describing. Talk about who, what, when, where, how and why.

### EXERCISES

A. Write a brief descriptive passage on any one of the following.

1. A neighbour
2. A celebrity
3. A person you dislike

B. Write a brief descriptive passage on any one of the following.

1. An object that you received as a present
2. A scientific apparatus or a device used in a laboratory
3. An electronic appliance used daily at home

C. Write a brief descriptive passage on any one of the following.

1. A place of worship
2. A beautiful scenery
3. A museum or art gallery
4. A marketplace
5. The city at night
6. A ruined building

D. Write a brief descriptive passage on any one of the following.

1. A bus/train accident
2. A natural disaster
3. A birthday celebration
4. A festival
5. A sporting event
6. A musical concert
7. An embarrassing experience
8. Admission time at colleges
9. A rally or a demonstration

E. Answer any one of the following questions in about 250–300 words.

1. Write a short passage describing a house. Describe the outside of the house, the rooms inside, and the garden, if any. Remember to mention sizes, colours and any other details that might help the reader get a better picture of the house. Be careful not to stray off the topic.
2. Write a description of a person who sat opposite you on a train journey. Convey what the character, thoughts and mood of the person seemed to be.

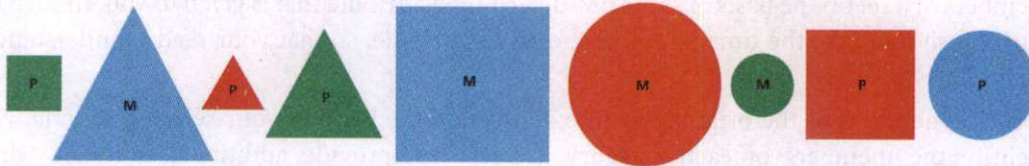


- Describe a walk through (a) an open field during a storm *or* (b) a wooded area on a moonlit night. Remember to employ the senses in your description. You could also mention your thoughts and feelings during such a walk.

### Classifying

To classify is to group together people, objects, places, etc., based on certain characteristics. Classification is a useful tool when we need to organise, manage, make sense of, or describe things.

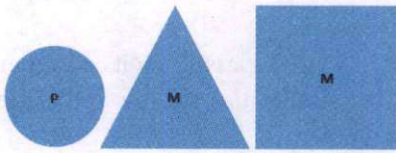
Let us say, for example, that we have the following objects of different shapes, sizes, colours, and materials (plastic and metal):



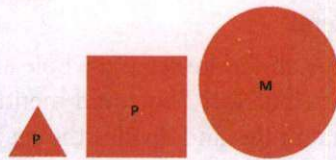
Describing, managing, or analysing a large variety of objects like these can feel overwhelming or difficult. Grouping them into smaller, manageable units makes our task easier. The above objects can be classified in several ways, as shown below:

Classified by colour

*Blue*



*Red*

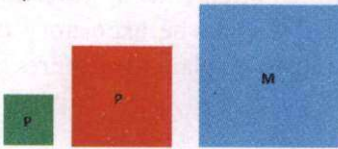


*Green*

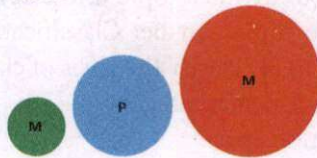


Classified by shape

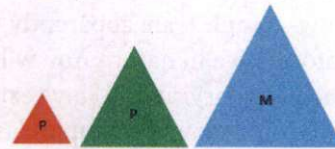
*Square*



*Circle*



*Triangle*

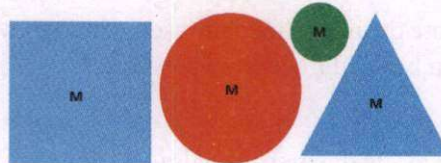


Classified by material (*plastic or metal*)

*Plastic*



*Metal*



In each case, we select one characteristic feature (colour, shape, material) and then group the given objects based on that selected feature. (Can you think of a fourth way to classify the above objects?)

### How to classify

- First, **carefully examine** the set (of people, objects, places, etc.) that you have been given in order to understand the properties of its members. In the example above, we see that we were given plastic and metal objects of different shapes, sizes, and colours, arranged in no particular order.



- Select one or more identifiable attributes or properties on the basis of which you can clearly divide/group the members of the given set into categories/subsets. For instance, we can choose to categorise the objects given above on the basis of colour, since each object has a distinct colour and can fall into one of three colour categories.
- Name the categories. If required, define the attribute(s) you have selected, so that criteria for categorisation is clear to the reader. In our example, since we have chosen to categorise on the basis of colour, the categories are *blue*, *red* and *green*. (Here, the categories are simple and self-explanatory; but more complex categories may require definition and explanation.)
- It's possible that instead of selecting the attributes yourself, you may be asked to classify the members of a set on the basis of some pre-determined attribute that is given to you. In such cases, too, you should take the time to define the given attribute, so that your reader understands the basis of classification.
- Sort the members of the original set into subsets on the basis of your selected criteria. Name/identify the members of each category. If required, provide additional rationale why the members of a particular subset belong together by stating examples or evidence to support your classification.
- What observations can you draw about each subset/category after you complete your classification? For instance, in the example above, we observe that each colour category contains one square, one circle and one triangle. We also observe that the *blue* has the largest objects whereas *green* has the smaller objects in general.
- What conclusions can you draw about the set as a whole after you finish classifying its members on the basis of your chosen attribute(s)? You could mention the similarities and dissimilarities between the categories, or what unites and divides the set as a whole.

### Sample classification essay

Classification exercises require you to divide a topic into categories, which often ends up revealing how complex an apparently simple topic can be. Classification essays tend to be expository or informative in nature. You will have to (1) clarify the basis of classification, (2) explain the features of each category, and (3) give examples for each category.

Given below is a simple classification essay.

- Note carefully how the essay is structured: the first paragraph introduces the classification system; the main body consists of several paragraphs, each devoted to one category; the final paragraph concludes the essay, tying things up with a general observation.
- Also note the underlined phrases, which provide examples of vocabulary and language structures that can be used in your own essays.

#### *Dog Breeds*

Dogs were among the first animals to be domesticated by humans, and today there are more than four hundred distinct breeds of dogs. A 'breed' is a special variety of a species created through decades of artificial selection—purposefully bred to be genetically suited to perform certain tasks like hunting or guarding. The huge variety in modern dog breeds can be classified into seven major categories based on the function that they were primarily bred for—herding dogs, working dogs, sporting dogs, hounds, terriers, toy dogs, and utility dogs—each with its own characteristic features.

Herding dogs were developed to assist farmers, shepherds and ranchers in herding cattle, sheep and other livestock. They are intelligent and easier to train compared to most other categories of dog breeds. Due to the nature of their breeding, these kinds of dogs have very high energy levels.



They are hard-working and are ready to be outdoors in all kinds of weather. The most well-known breeds of herding dogs are German Shepherd, Old English Sheepdog, Border Collie, Welsh Corgi, and Belgian Malinois.

Working dogs are some of the oldest breeds, developed for pulling sleds, performing search and rescue, and guarding people and property. As is to be expected, these breeds of dogs tend to be large, strong, alert, active, intelligent and loyal. Even today, working dog breeds such as the Great Dane, Doberman Pinscher, Rottweiler, Saint Bernard, and Husky assist humans in tasks such as guiding, guarding, rescue, police work, and so on.

Sporting dogs were bred to help hunters find and retrieve killed game (animals hunted for sport or food). These types of dogs tend to be highly trainable. They are active dogs that love being outdoors. Some breeds within this group have features that suit the environments for which they were specifically bred (for example, sporting dogs bred to retrieve aquatic birds tend to have water-repellent coats), and can be divided into further sub-categories on this basis. The Cocker Spaniel, Labrador Retriever, Irish Setter, and Golden Retriever are famous examples of sporting dog breeds.

Breeds of the hound group were developed to hunt live prey, and have all of the qualities that make them good at pursuit and capture—good vision and a keen sense of smell; long legs and sleek bodies; explosive speed, stamina and determination. No wonder that for centuries law enforcement officials around the world have used them to chase escaped criminals! Breeds like Greyhound, Bloodhound, Dachshund, Beagle, Rhodesian Ridgeback, and Wolfhound fall into this category.

Terrier breeds are fearless and tough, have strong personalities, and they love to dig—unsurprising, since they were originally bred for cruel blood sports, and to kill burrowing vermin and rodents. The Bull Terrier, Jack Russell, Scottish Terrier, and Border Terrier are some popular types of this group. Terrier breeds are very popular as pets.

Breeds like Pomeranian, Pug, Chihuahua, Shih Tzu, and Maltese belong to the category of toy dogs. These are small dogs that generally don't want or need much exercise. They were bred to be friendly and make for affectionate companions.

Utility dogs were bred for purposes other than the ones mentioned above (and often have interesting backgrounds). They do not share any common traits—they look very different from each other and have different personalities—and are grouped together for convenience, simply because they don't fit into the above groups. These breeds are also referred to as non-sporting dogs, and include, among others, the Bulldog, Poodle, Dalmatian, Shiba Inu, and Lhasa Apso.

Numerous as they are, it is possible to divide the greatly varied breeds of dogs into broad types. As can be observed from these categories, the distinguishing attributes (physical features and personality) of each major group are evidently linked to the purpose for which humans around the world bred them. The sheer number of familiar and unfamiliar breeds provides irrefutable evidence that, around the world, the dog has been humankind's oldest companion.

## EXERCISES

F. Select any three of the topics given below, and mention three different ways in which each can be classified.

For example: An app (software) can be classified on the basis of its coding language, its operating platform, its purpose, whether it is a paid app or freeware, and so on.

- |                          |                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Mobile phones         | 5. Laptops                   |
| 2. Sports                | 6. Buildings                 |
| 3. Metals                | 7. Measurement tools/devices |
| 4. Vacation destinations | 8. Trees                     |



G. Choose any two topics from the options given below and break them down into smaller categories in about 300–350 words. Remember to explain your criteria for classification and give examples as required.

- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Engineering           | 6. Electrical circuits |
| 2. Programming languages | 7. Universities        |
| 3. Music bands           | 8. Video games         |
| 4. Social media posts    | 9. Citizens of India   |
| 5. Waves                 | 10. Ecosystems         |



Unit 2 Gender Equity

VOCABULARY

Commonly Misspelt Words

- A. 1. underprivileged = underprivileged, influinced = influenced, soceity = society  
2. neice = niece, hygeine = hygiene  
3. fasinating = fascinating, ecquipment = equipment  
4. humourous = humorous  
5. principle = principal, collegues = colleagues, momento = memento  
6. curiosity = curiosity, maintainence = maintenance  
7. arguement = argument, its = it's, occurance = occurrence  
8. certainty = certainty, permanant = permanent
- B. 1. exceeded, expectations, weather, disappointing, yield  
2. inoculated, disease  
3. calendar, indispensable  
4. amateur, plagiarism  
5. ours, comparatively, stagnant  
6. receipt, transaction, reference

Homonyms, Homographs, Homophones

- C. 1. (1)(c) (2)(a) (3)(b) 4. (1)(b) (2)(a) (3)(d) (4)(c)  
2. (1)(d) (2)(c) (3)(a) (4)(b) 5. (1)(c) (2)(b) (3)(a)  
3. (1)(c) (2)(a) (3)(b)
- D. 1. play 4. scale  
2. pen 5. watch  
3. spruce
- E. 1. (1)(b) (2)(a) 6. (1)(b) (2)(a)  
2. (1)(b) (2)(a) 7. (1)(a) (2)(b)  
3. (1)(b) (2)(a) 8. (1)(a) (2)(b)  
4. (1)(a) (2)(b) 9. (1)(b) (2)(a)  
5. (1)(b) (2)(a)
- G. 1. bored, board 4. they're, their, there  
2. rode, road 5. two, to, too  
3. principal, principle 6. band, banned
- H. 1. pair 4. scent  
2. reign 5. wear  
3. tow



**GRAMMAR**

**Noun–Pronoun Agreement**

- A. 1. her, their  
2. themselves  
3. its  
4. it, their  
5. his, its, their, it, his  
6. his / her / his or her / their [all four answers are correct]  
7. our, his  
8. its, he, their, his

**Subject–Verb Agreement**

- B. 1. were  
2. were playing  
3. has cleared  
4. are approaching  
5. have  
6. were  
7. is  
8. is  
9. know  
10. have collected
- C. 1. has  
2. has  
3. is  
4. is  
5. have  
6. is  
7. is  
8. is  
9. is  
10. have

**READING**

**Skimming and Scanning**

- B. 1. false  
2. false  
3. true  
4. false  
5. false  
6. true  
7. false
- C. 1. (b)  
2. (a)  
3. (b)  
4. (b)  
5. (c)  
6. (a)  
7. (c)

**Unit 3 Digital Learning**

**VOCABULARY**

**Words Often Confused**

- A. 1. rise  
2. implies  
3. council  
4. evoked  
5. bated  
6. exceeds  
7. discreet  
8. palette  
9. reins  
10. shear