

## Unit 3 | DIGITAL LEARNING

### LESSON

#### Lessons from Online Learning that Should Stick After the Pandemic

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#### PREPARATORY TASK

1. How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect (a) your studies and (b) your style of learning?
2. In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of online learning?
3. Is there a need for a combination of online and in-person classes post-pandemic? Why, or why not?

#### INTRODUCTION

F. Haider Alvi is a management scholar who explores topics ranging from innovation finance to international entrepreneurship. His work often takes a critical view of Global North practices that exploit post-colonial contexts of the Global South.

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Martha Cleveland-Innes is Professor of Open, Digital, and Distance Education at Athabasca University. She studies online and blended learning processes that are designed to maximise deep learning and provide learners with a developmental and sustainable learning experience.

The essay below discusses the changes that the COVID-19 pandemic brought about in our education system. The authors stress their benefits, and provide insights into the lessons that we should implement going forward.

#### READING PASSAGE

One of the many changes COVID-19 brought those in education was an almost immediate switch to online learning.

Overnight, institutions **scrambled** to keep education moving, while bridging the physical distance between teacher and learner. Traditionally trained teachers made **valiant** efforts to adjust

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*scramble*: to move quickly

*valiant*: courageous, brave



to digital by recording lessons, posting videos and creating breakout rooms, using whatever technology they had available.

These efforts resulted in digitally mediated physical classrooms using the internet—not online education.

While these two options sound the same, they are not. Bridging physical distance through technology alone doesn't address additional adjustments required to address learner needs. Posting materials online, recording lectures and discussions themselves don't create a coached, collaborative and supported learning environment.

So what have we really learned about online education? And what do we do now?

Online learning isn't new, and lessons can be drawn from existing research and experience. Athabasca University—where we are all professors—pioneered the world's first online MBA, M. Nursing and M. Ed. programmes over 28 years ago. And today, it's one of Canada's leading online universities.

The experience of online pioneers highlights four distinct aspects of online learning that should stick post-pandemic: learning to learn online, designing online teaching with purpose, blending space and time online, and continued disruption with AI.

### 1. Learning to learn online

The pandemic highlighted that one-size-fits-all educational approaches fail to address student needs. Younger learners may seek physical spaces to promote socialisation, with supervision and teacher-led content delivery. Others, like Athabasca's mostly adult learners, value the convenience of connecting with classmates and instructors online during times of their choosing.

Common inequities like poor access to the internet, lack of financial resources and needed digital competence plague online learning. However, online education offers access for students facing geospatial barriers to traditional classrooms, and further issues of inequality are addressed via multi-modal distance education, financial support structures and orientation on how to learn online.

Emergency online education used blunt-edged instruments, ignoring student and programme differences. The pandemic takeaway, however, is the importance of preparing all students to learn, whether online or in a physical classroom.

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*breakout room*: a small meeting room (here, a separate part of large video conference where a small group can discuss a particular issue before returning to the main meeting)

*mediate*: to act as a connection between two parties; to intervene in a dispute in order to reconcile differences

*blend*: to combine different elements together

*disruption*: radical change to an existing industry or market due to technological innovation

*AI*: Artificial Intelligence; the ability of a computer to do tasks that are usually done by humans because they require human intelligence

*socialisation*: the process of learning to behave in a way that is acceptable to society

*inequity*: lack of fairness or justice

*plague*: to annoy constantly

*geospatial*: relating to or associated with a particular location

*multi-modal*: involving several different modes (i.e., ways in which something happens or is done)

*takeaway*: a key point, conclusion, idea, etc., that should be remembered for the future



## 2. Designing online teaching with purpose

Quality teaching and learning design must incorporate active, engaging roles for individual students, whether designed for traditional or distance education.

Meaningful teaching varies by setting and requires different approaches. Online course and teaching design is learner- rather than content-centred, incorporating high engagement in collaborative learning groups that fosters active learning.

Producing effective online course materials requires an approach involving both instructors and skilled course developers and takes months rather than weeks. Course materials are painstakingly detailed, and include writing everything the instructor would expect to say in a physical classroom, clearly describing all course requirements and linking students to readings, video and online resources.

Because of the pandemic, instructors had to translate classroom delivery into technology-mediated delivery—it worked for some, but was not easily tailored to unique learning needs.

Technological tools, combined with independent and joint working opportunities, should be brought back to the physical or hybrid classroom in conjunction with online pedagogical approaches that increase active, collaborative learning and learner-generated choices.

## 3. Blending space and time online

Pandemic education popularised the vocabulary of ‘synchronous’ and ‘asynchronous’ learning. Synchronous replicated physical classrooms through real-time, digitally mediated teaching, while asynchronous meant working independently, usually with materials designed for a physical classroom. Moving forward we need to think about how timing and presence impacts learning.

At Athabasca, students come together in time and space through blended, collaborative, synchronous and asynchronous online learning. Instructors coach students individually at a student-led pace.

This is different from traditional undergraduate classrooms, where students absorb material on a fixed schedule. Our graduate programs use paced programming, requiring students to work independently while regularly coming together in active online discussion.

More flexible teaching allows students to receive instructor support when they need it. Building in synchronous, collaborative learning allows for reflection, rather than real-time responses.

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*incorporate*: to include; to have as a component

*engagement*: the act or state of sharing in the activities of a group

*foster*: to encourage the development of (something, especially something desirable)

*painstakingly*: in a manner characterised by extreme care and great effort

*tailor*: to adjust to a specific need

*hybrid*: a thing made by combining two different elements

*in conjunction*: together

*pedagogical*: relating to teaching

*synchronous ... asynchronous*: Synchronous (occurring or existing at the same time) online learning means that students participate in a class simultaneously by logging in to an online session at a fixed time. Asynchronous online learning allows students to access course materials at a time of their own choosing—you don't need to learn at the exact same time or pace as everyone else taking the same course.



#### 4. COVID-19 began the disruption, AI will continue it

The pandemic revealed how education approaches can change after instructors had to search for innovative ways to improve student learning outcomes outside the physical classroom.

At Athabasca, a virtual **co-operative programme** allowed us to introduce a co-op programme in the middle of a pandemic.

Students accessed a **simulated** work experience in a paced structure, irrespective of location. They were able to practise working as a team, problem solving, conflict resolution, **ethical** reasoning, and leadership while working on an assigned project. Students received immediate, detailed feedback from an AI coach, allowing for extensive experimentation and revision to master concepts **honed** in reflective discussion with the instructor.

Research suggests that adopting online and AI tools needs to be deliberate, coupled with supportive digital infrastructure and highly responsive student support. Planned carefully and taken together, these steps improve on traditional approaches by making education truly open, accessible and inclusive.

Now, the question for all educators should be: How do we **capitalise** on COVID-19 initiated change to build better education systems for the future?

#### READING COMPREHENSION

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

1. With reference to this essay, mention two ways in which online learning can aid students and teachers.
2. What do the authors mean by the phrase 'learning to learn online'?
3. How is the 'design' of an online course different from that of a traditional in-person course? (Or, What should be kept in mind to design a meaningful and effective online course?)
4. What was the virtual co-operative programme started by Athabasca University?

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

1. What are four takeaways related to online learning that should be retained post-pandemic?
2. There are a number of issues that need to be tackled to improve online learning, and this essay touches upon a few of them. Elaborate on any two issues mentioned in this essay by referring to your own experience.

### VOCABULARY

#### Words Often Confused

One of the mistakes that many learners of English make is to wrongly use one word in place of another word that is similar to it in spelling or pronunciation but which means something quite different.

**co-operative programme:** a course which combines classroom learning with practical work experience

**simulated:** imitating the conditions of something, especially as a training exercise

**ethical:** relating to moral principles or the branch of knowledge dealing with these

**hone:** to make perfect or complete

**capitalise:** to gain advantages from something



For example, it is common to find the word **effect** (which is a noun meaning ‘the result of something’) being confused with **affect** (which is a verb meaning ‘to cause a change in someone or something’). The spellings and pronunciations of the two words are very close. In Unit 2, you learnt about homophones (words which sound similar, but are spelt differently and have different meanings, e.g., **you’re** and **your**). Homophones often cause such confusion.

The wrong use of words—known as **malapropism**—may result in humorous errors, and, more importantly, prevents the speaker or writer from conveying the intended meaning. It would not reflect well on you if during a speech you were to say to assembled dignitaries, ‘Thank you for your presence on this *suspicious* occasion’ when you mean to say ‘*auspicious* occasion’, or if you were to write in an official e-mail ‘for all *intensive purposes*’ when you should write ‘for all *intents and purposes*’. To be sure that you are using a word appropriately, you should check its meaning, spelling, and pronunciation in a dictionary before using it.

A list of words that are commonly confused is given below. In each pair or set of words, note carefully not only the difference in meaning, but also the difference (if any) in the pronunciation of individual words. You can keep adding to the list when you come across more such sets of words, and use it for your reference.

**accept**: to agree

**except**: not including (*She is willing to accept all the clauses except the last one.*)

**adapt**: to adjust or change to suit a need (*Minnie quickly adapted to life in the village.*)

**adept**: skilled (*Lalitha is adept at learning languages.*)

**adopt**: to choose, take or accept as your own (*They adopted a dog from the animal shelter.*)

**adverse**: unfavourable, hostile (*Driving fast in adverse weather conditions puts people at risk.*)

**averse**: unwilling (*She was averse to the idea of attending classes on weekends.*)

**advice**: (noun, pronounced with a final /s/ sound) an opinion offered on how you should do something

**advise**: (verb, pronounced with a final /z/ sound) to give someone advice (*I advise you to listen to her advice.*)

**affect**: (verb) to influence or act on someone or something (*His decision affected them badly.*)

**effect**: (noun) the result of something (*The effects of his decision will affect us all.*)

**Note**: Less commonly, **effect** is used as a verb meaning to cause something to happen (*The company will effect these changes immediately.*)

**a lot**: (two words) much; to a great degree or extent (*I have a lot of work, so I feel a lot more stressed than before.*)

**allot**: (single word) to allocate or give; to assign something to someone (*A lot of work was allotted to me.*)

**alternate**: every other (*I have classes on alternate days: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.*); serving in place of another (*We must have an alternate plan in case of an emergency.*)

**alternative**: one of two or more options (*Is there an alternative to online learning during lockdowns? His alternate plan is not a good alternative.*)

**Note**: The word **alternate** is used as a noun, a verb, and an adjective. Look up a dictionary to see how the word can be used in various ways in different contexts.

**beside**: at the side of (*My car is parked beside her car.*)

**besides**: (pronounced with a final sound /z/) in addition to; as well as; apart from (*I am allowed to use her car besides my own.*)

**biannual**: twice a year, i.e., every 6 months (*We have biannual conferences, in July and in December each year.*)

**biennial**: once every two years, i.e., every 24 months (*Our first biennial conference took place in 2022; the next one is scheduled for 2024.*)



*complement*: to add something to complete, improve or emphasise (*The fine wine complemented the dinner.*)

*compliment*: to express praise or admiration (*We complimented the chef for the excellent dinner.*)

*desert*: (noun) arid land with little or no vegetation (*Farming is difficult in a desert.*); (verb) to leave behind, or abandon (*He deserted the army when war broke out.*)

*dessert*: (noun) sweet food eaten at the end of a meal (*I enjoy chocolates for dessert after dinner.*)

*Note*: Be careful about the pronunciations of these words! The noun *dessert* is pronounced the same way as the verb *desert* (the emphasis is on the second syllable), but the noun *desert* is pronounced differently (the emphasis is on the first syllable).

*economic*: relating to an economy (*A country's economic growth depends on its industries.*)

*economical*: using the minimum of time or resources necessary for effectiveness (*It is not economical to leave the lights on in every room all the time.*)

*elicit*: to evoke or draw out (*They failed to elicit any response from him.*)

*illicit*: not legal (*They accused him of illicit activities.*)

*eminent*: famous (*We invited an eminent actor as chief guest.*)

*imminent*: something that will happen very soon (*War is imminent.*)

*its*: possessive form of it (*The dog was chasing its tail.*)

*it's*: shortened form of it is (*It's a silly dog.*)

*lose*: to suffer a loss (*My team will lose this match.*)

*loose*: not tight or compact (*Your pants may fall if your belt is loose.*)

*premise*: the idea on which something is based (*The film has an interesting premise.*)

*premises*: a building and the its ground (*You must have your ID card with you while on college premises.*)

*principal*: most important (*She followed every rule, except the principal one.*)

*principle*: a basic truth, standard, law or assumption (*She will never act against her principles.*)

*social*: relating to society (*Ants, bees and humans are social creatures.*)

*sociable*: friendly and pleasant (*She was never sociable at social events.*)

*their*: belonging to them (*We are going to their house.*)

*there*: in or at that place (*The house is there, at the end of the street.*)

*they're*: shortened form of they are (*They're coming to our house tomorrow.*)

*were*: plural past tense of to be (*We were the best team when we were in school.*)

*we're*: shortened form of we are (*We're still the best team now in college.*)

*who's*: shortened form of who is (*Who's the owner of this cycle?*)

*whose*: belonging to someone (*Whose cycle is this?*)

*your*: belonging to or associated with you (*This is your class.*)

*you're*: shortened form of you are (*You're late for class.*)

## EXERCISES

A. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with words chosen from the options given in brackets. Use a dictionary, if required.

1. There has been a huge \_\_\_\_\_ in petrol prices. (rise, raise)
2. The suspect's nervousness \_\_\_\_\_ that she knows about the missing money. (implies, infers)



3. Priya served for two years on the city \_\_\_\_\_. (council, counsel, consul)
4. The new rules \_\_\_\_\_ much anger from the workers. (evoked, invoked)
5. Sailaja waited for the results with \_\_\_\_\_ breath. (bated, baited)
6. The amount of impurities in the water \_\_\_\_\_ the acceptable limit. (accedes, exceeds)
7. Please be \_\_\_\_\_ with this information. (discreet, discrete)
8. Her designs use a limited \_\_\_\_\_ of colours. (palate, palette, pallet)
9. Use the \_\_\_\_\_ to guide the horse along the path. (reigns, rains, reins)
10. Have you ever watched someone \_\_\_\_\_ a sheep? (shear, sheer)

B. *Make sentences with the following sets of words, distinguishing their meanings clearly. Look up a dictionary to be certain of the meanings of the given words.*

- |                        |                             |                             |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. hoard – horde       | 4. canvas – canvass         | 7. assent – ascent – accent |
| 2. illusion – allusion | 5. flaunt – flout           | 8. judicious – judicial     |
| 3. diffuse – defuse    | 6. ceremonious – ceremonial | 9. forward – foreword       |

### Words from Foreign Languages

In Unit 1, you learnt how the English language created (and continues to create) new words for itself through various processes of word formation. You also learnt that many English words were created by combining word fragments from classical Greek and Latin, and occasionally from other languages that are no longer spoken today. However, this is not the only way that English built its rich vocabulary. There is no need to always create a new word in order to express an idea—languages sometimes fill in gaps in their own vocabulary by simply *taking* existing words from other languages.

This process is referred to as **borrowing**, and the newly introduced word, taken from a foreign language with little or no change, is called a loanword. Over the course of its evolution, the English language has borrowed words from more than 300 other cultures and languages that it came into contact with. Listed below are a few examples.

Language / culture	Loanwords borrowed into English
Arabic	algebra, bazaar, giraffe, sheikh, sultan
Chinese languages	ginseng, kung fu, tea, tofu, typhoon
French	ballet, beef, café, champagne, salon
German	fest, hamburger, loafer, noodle, waltz
Indian languages	avatar, banyan, guru, jungle, nirvana
Italian	balcony, casino, opera, studio, violin
Japanese	karaoke, karate, samurai, soy, tsunami
Russian	cosmonaut, icon, pogrom, tsar/czar, vodka
Scandinavian languages	hug, husband, knife, saga, ski
Spanish	cannibal, guerrilla, guitar, macho, mosquito

### EXERCISES

- C. *Find out the meanings of those words listed above that you are not familiar with. Use them in sentences of your own.*
- D. *English has borrowed many words from Indian languages. Find four such words that have not been mentioned above.*



## GRAMMAR

## Misplaced Modifiers

A **modifier** is a word, phrase or clause that modifies a noun or a noun clause. Look at the following sentences:

The leather sofa was torn.

The sofa made of leather was torn.

The sofa, which was made of leather, was torn.

In each case, the subject of the sentence is the noun sofa. In each sentence, the noun 'sofa' is modified by either a word (*leather*), a phrase (*made of leather*), or a clause (*which was made of leather*). Modifiers add descriptive details to the noun they modify. They are usually positioned close to the noun that they modify.

The boy drank the coffee, which was *already cold*.

The modifier *already cold* describes the coffee that the boy was drinking.

Sometimes a modifier is separated from the noun it describes and is positioned elsewhere in the sentence. These modifiers cause confusion because they seem to describe some other noun in the sentence instead of the noun they intend to modify.

*Already cold*, **the boy** drank the coffee.

In the above sentence, the modifier *already cold* (intended to describe the coffee) is positioned in such a manner that it seems to be describing **the boy**. Such incorrectly positioned modifiers are called ***misplaced modifiers***.

The position of the modifier changes the meaning of the sentence. Look at the following examples:

I *only* arrived today.

Here, the word *only* modifies the word arrived. This sentence means that all I did today was to arrive. I didn't eat, I didn't sleep—I did nothing but arrive.

I arrived *only* today.

Here, the word *only* modifies the word today. This sentence means that I arrived today, not yesterday or the day before.

Sonia ate the breakfast her mother prepared *quickly*.

This sentence implies that Sonia's mother prepared breakfast quickly.

Sonia *quickly* ate the breakfast her mother prepared.

This sentence means Sonia rushed through her meal.

Anil *almost* worked twelve hours today.

The qualifying adverb *almost* is being misapplied to the verb worked in this sentence.

Anil worked *almost* twelve hours today.

This sentence correctly conveys that Anil worked for nearly half the day.

*In the cupboard*, Kavya found her bangles.

The position of the prepositional phrase (*in the cupboard*) suggests that Kavya is inside the cupboard.

Kavya found her bangles *in the cupboard*.

The absurdity can be resolved by positioning the phrase next to the word it actually relates to: bangles.

In each example, the second sentence on the right is what the author is most likely trying to communicate. We should be careful about where we place a modifier, because a misplaced modifier might make the meaning of the sentence ambiguous.



In order to correct a misplaced modifier...

1. *understand* what the sentence actually wishes to communicate,
2. *identify* the modifier and the word/phrase/clause it relates to, and then
3. *move* the modifier to a position closer to its referent.

Given below are a few examples of how to correct misplaced modifiers.

X Shoaib saw many rabbits walking down the hill.

The writer intends to say that Shoaib was walking down the hill. However, the above sentence implies that rabbits were walking down the hill.

✓ Walking down the hill, Shoaib saw many rabbits.

X Full of stains, Shoaib wore the only jacket he had.

This sentence suggests that Shoaib is full of stains. Revise the sentence so that the stains apply to the jacket.

✓ Shoaib wore the only jacket he had, which was full of stains.

X When not working, Shoaib's hobbies include chess and fixing computers.

Here the modifier 'when not working' has been misapplied to the noun phrase 'Shoaib's hobbies'.

✓ When Shoaib isn't working, his hobbies include chess and fixing computers.

X Shoaib brushed his teeth after eating with Dento toothpaste.

✓ After eating, Shoaib brushed his teeth with Dento toothpaste.

When correcting misplaced modifiers, be sure to remove any possible source of ambiguity.

X Shoaib said on Wednesday he completed his work.

This could be re-written in two ways, depending on the intended meaning:

✓ On Monday, Shoaib said he completed his work. (i.e., Shoaib made the statement on Monday)

✓ Shoaib said he completed his work on Monday. (i.e., the work was completed by Shoaib on Monday)

A **dangling modifier** is a word or phrase that tries to modify something which is not clearly stated in the sentence. Examine the following sentence:

Not having worked hard enough, the project failed.

What does the phrase 'Not having worked hard enough' relate to? Who did not work hard enough? The sentence seems to imply that *the project* did not work hard, which doesn't make sense. The phrase must surely refer to the person or people who were involved in the project. The phrase 'Not having worked hard enough' is called a **dangling modifier** because it has been left dangling (hanging freely), unattached to some missing subject which it should actually modify.

A misplaced modifier can be corrected by moving the incorrectly placed modifier to its correct place within the sentence (i.e., near the word it actually modifies). However, a dangling modifier cannot be remedied as easily because it is *not* modifying anything that is present in the sentence.

To correct a dangling modifier, you need to **rewrite the sentence by introducing the missing word that the dangling modifier refers to**. Given below are some ways to correct the dangling modifier in the example. How you rewrite the sentence will depend on what you wish to say.

X Not having worked hard enough, the project failed.

✓ Since **she** did not work hard enough, the project failed.

✓ The project failed because **they** did not work hard enough.

✓ Not having worked hard enough, **Sai** did not succeed in the project.



**EXERCISES**

A. Rewrite each sentence, moving the misplaced modifier to its correct position.

1. The train was nearly late by five hours.
2. Sindhu bought a pen from a shop that didn't cost much.
3. I only need to do this once.
4. The piece was missing from the puzzle that we needed to complete the set.
5. We listened to the speech by the Prime Minister huddled around the radio.
6. The wrestler was a large man with a flowing beard weighing 130kgs.
7. She gave the beggar her food who was sitting on the road.
8. The book was only published in Telugu.
9. Mani presented a paper at a seminar titled 'Management Challenges in a Digital Age'.
10. We saw lots of miniature paintings on a school trip to an art gallery.

**Common Errors in the Use of Tenses**

Verb conjugations and tenses often pose problems for learners of most languages. Errors in the use of tenses can lead to confusion and miscommunication. Let us look at some common errors made by learners of English with regard to tenses.

**Using the wrong tense**

A common error is choosing the wrong tense to express what you mean. Each tense (simple, progressive, perfect, and perfect progressive in the past, present and future) has a specific purpose. Conjugating a verb in the incorrect tense will therefore lead to miscommunication about the action being referred to.

✗ I have gone out yesterday.

*present perfect tense*

The action took place in the past and is complete; no relevance to the present moment is indicated.

✓ I went out yesterday.

*simple past*

Therefore, the simple past tense should be used.

✗ She is going there since Monday.

*present continuous*

Here, the action began in the past and is still continuing in the present. The present perfect progressive tense should be used in such cases.

✓ She has been going there since Monday.

*present perfect progressive*

One specific instance of incorrect tense use deserves special attention. English learners in India often overuse the present progressive tense (also called the present continuous tense), using it in place of the simple present tense.

✗ She is having a lot of work.

✗ I'm hungry; I am wanting something to eat.

✓ She has a lot of work.

✓ I'm hungry; I want something to eat.

In certain contexts, using the wrong tense will not result in a grammatical error, but may change the intended meaning of the sentence slightly.

Look at these two pairs of sentences:

	<i>Verb in simple present tense</i>	<i>Verb in present progressive tense</i>
Example 1	Srihari <u>works</u> for an NGO.	Srihari <u>is working</u> for an NGO.
Example 2	Srihari always <u>tries</u> to help.	Srihari always <u>is trying</u> to help.



- In Example 1, the first sentence indicates a present truth. The second sentence conveys the same, but with an added sense of temporariness: Srihari works for an NGO at the moment, but may not do so in the future.
- In Example 2, the first sentence implies that Srihari tries his best to help whenever help is required. The second sentence emphasises how often Srihari tries to help, perhaps with a note of annoyance and with the implication that he volunteers help more frequently than is welcome.

Understand the specific function of each tense (and the resulting implications) so that you don't end up saying something you don't mean.

### Switching tenses when not required

This is probably the most common tense-related error in English: using tenses inconsistently within the context of a particular piece of communication.

✗ Srihari **studied** engineering in college. As an undergraduate, he **is inventing** many devices to help amputees.

The first verb—*studied*—is in the simple past tense, indicating a completed action. However, the next verb—*is inventing*—has been conjugated in the present progressive tense, even though it is meant to indicate an action completed in the same time period as the first verb.

Tenses situate a particular action in a moment in time. Therefore, all actions that occur within the context of a particular moment or time period should have the same tense. A change in tense indicates the completion of an action. Tenses help the reader follow shifts in time. Using inconsistent verb tenses sends the wrong signal to the reader about the state of the action being talked about, and so confuses the reader.

Always check your writing to see if there are any illogical tense shifts. First, decide the tense you want to present information in; then, coordinate or match all other verbs (that fall into that same time frame) in relation to that chosen tense.

In the above example, the second verb should be conjugated in the simple past tense (matching the simple past tense of the first verb), to make the whole logically consistent.

✓ Srihari **studied** engineering in college. As an undergraduate, he **invented** many devices to help amputees.

Maintain the same tense within a sentence if the actions happen in the same time.

✗ Meera **stopped** the ball and **throws** it to the wicketkeeper.

✓ Meera **stopped** the ball and **threw** it to the wicketkeeper.

✓ Meera **stops** the ball and **throws** it to the wicketkeeper.

### Future tense in complex sentences

Be careful when it comes to the use of the future tense in a complex sentence (a sentence with at least one subordinate clause dependent on a main clause to make complete sense). In Unit 1, you learnt about main (independent) clauses and subordinate (dependent) clauses. When the main clause of a sentence has a verb in the future tense, the verb in the subordinate clause should be in the present tense (not the future tense).

✗ She **will come** if you **will call** her. ✗ The match **will resume** after it **will stop** raining.

✓ She **will come** if you **call** her. ✓ The match **will resume** after it **stops** raining.

### EXERCISES

B. Rewrite the following sentences correctly.

1. It is raining for four days.



2. I used to wrote stories as a child.
3. She is driving for two hours now.
4. I did not met Akram yesterday. I have met Amir instead.
5. My sister has returned home last week.
6. He did not came to class yesterday.

C. Complete the sentences by choosing the correct option.

1. I \_\_\_\_\_ that it is true. (a) know, (b) am knowing
2. I \_\_\_\_\_ myself. (a) have hurt, (b) hurt
3. She \_\_\_\_\_ three sisters. (a) is having, (b) has
4. Do you know where \_\_\_\_\_ from? (a) she comes, (b) does she come
5. I \_\_\_\_\_ mangoes. (a) am liking, (b) like
6. That museum \_\_\_\_\_ shut a long time ago. (a) was, (b) has been

D. Fill in the blanks using appropriate tense forms of the verbs in brackets. The first one is done for you.

Mohanty Mr Khiangte, what do you do?

Khiangte I am (be) a teacher.

Mohanty How many years have you \_\_\_\_\_ (teach)?

Khiangte I \_\_\_\_\_ (teach) for the last twelve years.

Mohanty What subject do you \_\_\_\_\_ (teach)?

Khiangte I usually \_\_\_\_\_ (teach) chemistry, but I \_\_\_\_\_ (teach) biology this year.

Mohanty Why?

Khiangte Our biology teacher, Ms Renthlei, \_\_\_\_\_ (be) away. She \_\_\_\_\_ (invite) to participate in an exchange programme abroad, and \_\_\_\_\_ (be) on leave since February. The principal \_\_\_\_\_ (ask) me to take her classes while she \_\_\_\_\_ (be) on leave. What about you, Mr Mohanty? What do you \_\_\_\_\_ (do)?

Mohanty Oh, I run an employment agency for people \_\_\_\_\_ (look) for opportunities abroad. Have you ever \_\_\_\_\_ (think) about \_\_\_\_\_ (work) in a foreign country?

Khiangte I \_\_\_\_\_ (work) in Kuwait for a while. I \_\_\_\_\_ (be) there from 2002 to 2007.

Mohanty Would you like to go back there?

Mohanty Not at all. As a matter of fact, I \_\_\_\_\_ (get) offers from employment agencies in Kuwait, but I \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_ (accept) anything so far.

## READING

Intensive reading and extensive reading are two different ways of reading. Are you reading a particular piece of writing for the sake of gaining information, or for the sake of entertainment and relaxation? Depending on the nature of the reading material and on one's purpose, a competent user of language should be able to switch between extensive and intensive reading modes. The terms



*intensive reading* and *extensive reading* are not tied to the reading material itself; instead, they relate to our approach to the reading material, our attitude towards a text when reading.

### Intensive Reading

Intensive reading involves reading in detail, and is usually tied to a learning objective or a classroom (or work-related) task. For example, the comprehension questions after the poems, essays and stories in this book require you to engage in intensive reading. Similarly, reading for summarising and paraphrasing also involves intensive reading. Any kind of reading material that is tied to academic or professional or utilitarian needs—textbooks, instruction manuals, work reports, analyses of processes and situations, etc.—is read in an intensive manner.

Intensive reading is often slow, deliberate, careful and focused. It is usually put in service of some purpose, such as finding information, analysing language, developing a better understanding of a topic, and so on. This kind of reading is not done for the sake of enjoying the moment or the act of reading itself; rather, the reader's focus is on what will remain after the act of reading—the knowledge acquired.

#### Tackling intensive reading

- Intensive reading requires concentration. Try and avoid distractions as much as possible when you know you need to read intensively.
- Go slow. The purpose of intensive reading is to understand ideas, not just take in information.
- Be critical about what you read: ask yourself questions while reading, such as the ones listed in the topics 'Strategies for Effective Reading' in Unit 1.
- Take notes as you read. When you can, go one step further: organise your thoughts on what you have learnt by summarising, in your own words, what you read. Reading actively—by underlining key lines, making notes, and summarising what you have learnt in your own words—because these actions help you to focus, which in turn helps you remember what you have read.

Intensive reading will seem difficult in the beginning—that is simply the nature of the exercise. Do not get discouraged by initial difficulties. It gets easier gradually as you strengthen this ability, and the effort is well worth it. You will learn one specific method of intensive reading—the SQ3R method—in Unit 4.

#### EXERCISES

*All of the lessons at the beginning of every unit of this textbook contain exercises on intensive reading (under the heading 'Reading Comprehension'). Make sure you complete these exercises, as they are designed to test your intensive reading abilities.*

### Extensive Reading

Extensive reading, also known as 'free reading', refers to reading widely—especially the reading of books and longer texts—for pleasure. The phrase 'reading for pleasure' refers to recreational reading (as opposed to reading to seek information or to complete a task) that is chosen by oneself (as opposed to being assigned to read a text by someone else for some work-related purpose).



This kind of reading is not tied to classroom discussions, assignments or tests, but is instead done for its own sake, for entertainment and leisure. Novels, poetry, drama, and short stories are usually read in this manner. You read such texts to explore the work, to be engaged in the experience of reading. Even works of nonfiction related to any field may be read for pleasure.

Reading for pleasure has many benefits:

- It is a source of pleasure and relieves stress. It is thus linked to overall mental well-being.
- It stimulates the imagination and one's creativity.
- It increases our ability to empathise with others, and thus promotes social skills.
- Reading a lot improves one's language skills and general knowledge, and thus has positive implications for personal and academic/work-related success. However, these benefits are incidental; the primary intent of extensive reading is *enjoyment*. When one enjoys what one reads, one is motivated to read more. This results in better language abilities—a happy consequence of extensive reading.

### **Getting started with extensive reading**

- To begin with, read what you enjoy reading—not what you think you need to be reading; not what others tell you have to read. Read what interests you and what brings pleasure to you, whether it be comics or romance or fantasy fiction or nonfiction or even newspaper articles.
- Aim for a general understanding of what you read. You don't need to understand every word or every line, as long as you can understand the overall meaning of the text.
- If you find the selected reading material uninteresting, feel free to drop it and begin something else that you might find more interesting.
- If you are unsure where to begin or what to choose, ask your teacher to suggest a few graded readers. These books are often written specially for learners of English as a second or foreign language. Try and pick a book which has language that you find moderately challenging (as opposed to books in which the language level is either too easy or too difficult for you).

### **Additional tips on reading for pleasure**

- When reading, try to not think about the other things going in your life. Allow yourself to lose yourself in what you are reading.
- If you wish to make reading for pleasure a habit, set aside a recurring small amount of time just for reading. It can be something like 10 minutes a day, or one hour every Sunday. At first, it won't seem like much; but you will be surprised at how much progress you will make as these tiny increments add up over time.
- You can also make time for reading in between tasks, such as when waiting in queue or when commuting by train or bus. Carry a book with you if this appeals to you. Books in digital formats (read on phones, tablets or standalone e-readers) are particularly suitable in this regard.
- If you have a reading disorder, the world of books is not shut to you! Explore audio books on your phone and other digital devices. Many sites and services (both free and paid) allow you to listen to both fiction and nonfiction books.



**EXERCISE**

*Think of a few topics that genuinely interest you. Find a book related to any one of these topics. Over the next few weeks, read a little bit from it regularly (either a few minutes a day, once every two days, or even just once a week). Then, write down three things that you liked best about that book.*

## WRITING

**Formal Letters**

A formal letter (also known as an official letter or a business letter) is written to a person in an organisation for some work-related purpose. Examples of formal letters are those written as part of business transactions, application letters, letters of enquiry or complaint, letters to the editor of a newspaper, and letters written to one's colleagues on matters concerning work.

Formal letters should be:

- correct and accurate in all respects
- complete, with all the necessary details
- clear, without any room for ambiguity
- concise or brief, but not at the cost of clarity
- courteous and polite

The ability to communicate effectively through letters is a crucial skill that anyone can acquire through practice.

**PARTS OF A FORMAL LETTER**

An official letter is written in a formal tone. There are certain elements found in all official letters. These are listed below.

**Sender's address**

The address of the sender is placed at the top-left corner of the page. It is not punctuated in current practice. The address is omitted when official letters are written on personal or company letterheads.

**Date**

The date is placed below the sender's address.

**Inside address**

This is the name, designation and address of the receiver. It is placed below the date. The inside address is not punctuated, and each line of the address begins on the left margin.

**Salutation**

The most common forms of salutation in an official letter are 'Dear sir' (or 'Dear sirs' if the organisation and not a specific individual is being addressed) and 'Dear madam'.

- In case you do not know whether the person to whom the letter is being sent is a man or a woman, the salutation 'Dear sir/madam' may be used.
- If you know the name of the person you are writing to, address the person by his or her surname or full name, accompanied by a title, as in, 'Dear Ms Uma Verma' or 'Dear Dr Sharif'.

**Subject**

This is a brief statement of the subject of the letter or what it is about. It is placed below the salutation.



**Body of the letter**

This is the main part of any letter. An official letter should be brief, clear, precise and complete with respect to the information being conveyed. What is just as important is that your letter must be polite, even when refusing an offer or saying something difficult for the receiver to accept.

**Complimentary close**

The complimentary close is a word or phrase used to end a letter, and appears above the sender's signature.

- Use the expression 'Yours sincerely' if you have addressed the receiver by his/her title and name (e.g., when your salutation was 'Dear Ms Verma').
- When the receiver has not been addressed by name (e.g., 'Dear madam' and similar salutations), use 'Yours faithfully' as the complimentary close.
- This phrase 'With regards' used to be reserved for those situations in which the addressee was someone you know well. Nowadays, it is increasingly acceptable in almost all cases (except for a few rare very formal situations).
- Note that forms like 'Yours respectfully', 'Yours obediently' and 'Your obedient servant' are now dated and seem overly formal to the point of awkwardness.

**Signature**

Official letters must have the sender's signature, with the person's name and designation in two separate lines below it. (In an e-mail, the handwritten signature is left out, but the name and designation of the sender should be present.)

- If the name of a company/organisation is mentioned as the sender, it appears above the signature of its representative who writes the letter.
- If an employee signs a letter on behalf of a senior colleague, the name and designation of the senior colleague is given below the signature and name of the person signing the letter.

In addition to the parts listed above, some official letters have all or some of the following.

**Reference numbers**

Official letters sent from organisations are assigned numbers that help in having the letters filed according to their subject. The reference number is placed above the sender's address.

**Attention line**

This contains the name of the person to whom the letter is to be directed, especially in large organisations or in departments that have a common mailing address for a number of employees. It appears above the salutation.

**Enclosures**

This lists the documents enclosed or attached with the letter. It is placed on the left margin, below the signature.

**Copies**

If copies of the letter are going to other persons (for their information or for further action), their names and designations are mentioned below the list of enclosures.



**LAYOUT OF A FORMAL LETTER**

The most common (and preferred) layout used in modern business correspondence is known as the **block format**, in which all the parts of the letter are aligned to the left margin, one below the other. Paragraph divisions are indicated by a slight space between paragraphs.

A variation of the block format is the **modified block format**. The sender's address and date (and reference number, if any) are indented towards the right-hand side of the page, as are the complimentary close and the sender's signature, name and designation. All other elements (including the list of enclosures and copies) are aligned to the left margin.

A third layout worth noting is the **semi-block format**. This is formatted in exactly the same way as the modified block format, with one key difference: the first line of each paragraph is indented. Since the start of each paragraph is clear from the first-line indents, the inter-paragraph spaces may be dropped, if you wish. This format is also known as the **indented format**.

**BLOCK FORMAT**

Sender's address .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Date .....  
 .....  
 Inside address .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Salutation .....  
 Subject line: .....  
 Body: Paragraph 1 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Body: Paragraph 2 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Body: Paragraph 3 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Complimentary close  
 Signature  
 Enclosures

**MODIFIED BLOCK FORMAT**

Sender's address .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Date .....  
 .....  
 Inside address .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Salutation .....  
 Subject line: .....  
 Body: Paragraph 1 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Body: Paragraph 2 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Body: Paragraph 3 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Complimentary close  
 Signature  
 Enclosures

**SEMI-BLOCK FORMAT**

Sender's address .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Date .....  
 .....  
 Inside address .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Salutation .....  
 Subject line: .....  
 Body: Paragraph 1 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Body: Paragraph 2 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Body: Paragraph 3 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Complimentary close  
 Signature  
 Enclosures

We recommend the use of the block format, since it is the simplest layout, the easiest to format, and used in business correspondence around the world today.

Take a look at the official letter given on the next page. Note carefully the formal tone, its block format, and the various parts of the letter that have been labelled for you.



RO-PL-Gen/33	Reference number
234 Asha Colony Visakhapatnam 531001	Sender's address
6 November 2021	Date
Mr Gautam Banerjee Regional Manager Visakhapatnam Branch	Inside address
Dear Mr Banerjee	Salutation
Subject: Leave Application	Subject line
I am writing to request leave for two weeks from 7 to 20 November. My mother, who lives with me, is in hospital for heart surgery, which is scheduled for tomorrow. I want to be by her side to take care of her in the difficult days after surgery.	Body: purpose of letter
I am enclosing a report on my work status. Ms Sheila John has agreed to take care of my work on the shipyard project until I return.	Body: additional information or elaboration
I would be grateful if you could please grant me privilege leave for the above period.	Body: action expected and expression of thanks
Yours sincerely, <i>G RAO</i> Gopalan Rao Assistant Manager	Complimentary close Signature Full name and designation
Enclosed: Report on work status	Enclosures
Copy to: Ms Neelam Batra, HR, Head Office Mr Umair Irfan, Admin, Visakhapatnam	Copies sent to (names and designations)

**MODEL LETTERS**

Official letters need to be written with care because they leave a lasting impression, and can build or spoil the relationship between the parties concerned.

- Use simple language so that your letters are easy to read and understand.
- Stick to one subject or topic in one letter. If there are many topics in a single letter, it may cause confusion, resulting in a delayed response or prolonged correspondence.
- Be brief and to the point—don't waste the reader's time with irrelevant details.



- Make sure there are no errors in spelling and grammar.
- Always remember to be polite and courteous no matter what the situation.

Look at the following letter from a student to the principal of his college with a request for a character-cum-merit certificate.

Abbas Kader  
5-6-322 Kanak Road  
Begumpet, Hyderabad 500042

02 August 2022

The Principal  
Shastry Memorial College  
Hyderabad 500532

Dear sir,

Subject: Request for a character-cum-merit certificate

I have completed my undergraduate studies from Shastry Memorial College. I would like to apply for a suitable job for which I require a character-cum-merit certificate. I request you to please issue the same to me. I wish to furnish the following particulars for your reference.

I was a student of your college from the academic year 2019–20 to 2021–22. I completed my BA degree in July 2019 with a distinction. I am happy to say that I took an active part in extracurricular activities. I participated in inter-collegiate as well as university-level sports and cultural competitions. I was the captain of the university ball badminton team during the academic year 2019–20. I also participated in the state-level inter-collegiate debate competition and was awarded the second runner-up prize. I was the student editor of the college magazine, *Anupama*.

I would be very grateful if you could please issue a character-cum-merit certificate for me at the earliest.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

*Abbas Kader*

A letter of complaint expresses discontentment with a product or service, and requests that action be taken to rectify the situation.

- The letter should be clear and detailed, pointing out what exactly has gone wrong in the transaction and how it has caused you inconvenience.
- Provide all necessary information such as product code, order number, delivery date, payment details, quality of the product, and its condition on receipt.
- If terms agreed upon mutually have not been kept, mention these and refer to prior correspondence where the terms were agreed upon.
- Do not be angry or abusive as this might cause resentment. Your complaint is likely to be redressed more effectively if the tone of the letter is polite but firm.



Ref: Invoice no. 127/Dec/20  
15/1 Regency Circle  
Mangaluru 575003

5 January 2021

Consumer Services Manager  
Allied Electronics  
Market Road, Mangaluru 575001

Dear sir/madam,

Sub: Request for replacement of defective refrigerator

This is about a Glacier refrigerator (model: GR260; size: 175-litre; colour: blue) that I bought from your showroom on 30 December 2020 (copy of bill enclosed).

Ever since it was delivered on 2 January, the fridge has not been working. Even when set on maximum, the inside temperature remains close to just 20 degrees Celsius. Water in the ice tray does not freeze, and food kept in the fridge spoils in a day.

Your showroom has a reputation for both quality and reliability, and so I am certain that this is only a chance happening. Could you replace the defective refrigerator with a new piece in the same model, size and colour, please.

Yours faithfully,

*Amulya B.*

Amulya Bhat (Mrs)

Enclosed: Copy of bill no. 127/Dec/20

## EXERCISES

A. *The ability to write good letters improves with practice. Try your hand at the following exercises.*

1. You have completed your undergraduate studies and require a transfer certificate in order to apply for a postgraduate course at JNTU Hyderabad. Write a letter to your principal requesting her for the necessary certificate.
2. Write a letter to the registrar of your university to correct a mistake in the spelling of your name in your mark sheet while also requesting him to issue a new mark sheet to you.
3. Write a letter to the principal of your college for any one of the following: (a) permission to go on a class picnic; (b) request for the purchase of more books for the college library; (c) request for extension of the working hours of your college library for three weeks before the final examinations begin.
4. Write a letter to the Youth Hostels Association of India, asking them to send you information about their annual trekking expedition in the Himalayan region. Be specific about the kind of information you seek.
5. You are the manager of the Youth Hostels Association of India. Respond to the above enquiry (Question 4). Take care to answer all the questions asked in the letter.
6. As principal of your college, you had placed an order with Shabnam Book House for 1,000 copies of *English: Language, Context and Culture*. However, only 800 copies were delivered on the due date. Write a letter of complaint to the stocks and servicing manager of Shabnam Book House.
7. The laptop you just purchased has a problem with several keys on its keypad. It is in the guarantee period. Write to the supplier and ask for a free replacement.



## E-mail Etiquette

E-mail is one of the most popular means of communication today, especially in official and work-related contexts. It is therefore important to learn how to use this medium effectively and in a manner that does not hurt your professional image or your professional relationships. In this unit, we will discuss e-mail etiquette for communication for official purposes (related to work, money, government and so on).

- Always keep the reader in mind. This helps you use the **appropriate tone and language** in your writing. E-mails are public documents, and official correspondence is saved for the purposes of keeping a record. Therefore, include only those statements in an e-mail that you can openly defend, should your message be circulated or shown to other parties. **Consider the audience and the context** when using humour, colloquialisms, slang, and emoticons—especially when writing to a stranger or in a group e-mail chain.
- If you send an e-mail to a set of several people regularly, you should create mailing groups so that the recipients do not need to scroll through names before they can get to the content of the e-mail. It also helps to keep e-mail addresses anonymous—most people would prefer to not have their names and e-mail addresses visible to strangers.
- The ‘Subject’ line must give a clear idea of the content of your message. Do not skip the subject line. Make it **short but specific**, so that the recipient will immediately know what the letter is about, and can quickly estimate its priority (or, later locate a particular message among others).
- The body of the e-mail must be brief. **Stick to the purpose mentioned in the subject line**. When you need to write a long e-mail, you could try the following:
  - *Include an executive summary at the beginning*, which quickly sums up everything in the e-mail, including the main purpose. (For example: ‘This e-mail contains important information about Team Work Activities Week. You will find the five-day schedule, names of the speakers, the menu, hotel arrangements, and testimonials from employees who previously participated.’)
  - *Use bullet points and/or sub-headings*, if possible. These could make your message easier to read and faster to scan through.
  - When you have a lot of written material to convey (e.g., reports), *send it as an attachment* instead of typing it into the body of the e-mail.
- **Include a line indicating the response required from the recipient and how soon you need it**. (For example: ‘Please let me know by Wednesday whether you are attending the meeting.’) In long e-mails, this could be stated right in the beginning, since your reader is most likely to read the first few lines of your e-mail thoroughly and skim through the rest.
- When responding to e-mails, **consider carefully whether you need to use ‘Reply’ or ‘Reply All’**. Do not use the latter option unless everyone copied into the e-mail chain needs to be aware of your response.
- **Do not type in all caps**: it is the digital equivalent of yelling at the reader. Be sparing with exclamation marks in formal e-mails.
- **Clearly list all attachments in the body of your e-mail**. Rename the files that you are attaching in a way that is easy for the recipient to find once downloaded to their hard drive. The file name should reflect its contents.
- **Do not send unnecessary attachments**: it wastes time and uses up the recipient’s storage space (which can cause other e-mails to bounce). Never attach files infected with computer viruses.



Avoid sending overly large attachments unless you are sure that your recipient's internet connection and e-mail client can handle them. When sending large attachments (above 15 MB), warn the recipient. Large attachments (e.g., videos) can take a long time to download. Some file types may be incompatible with the software of the recipient's computer. If you suspect there may be file compatibility issues, tell your recipient what type of software was used to create the document and the version.

- Take the time to proofread your e-mail (and the attachments) before you send it. (It is usually a good idea to add the e-mail IDs of the recipients after you have finished re-checking your e-mail, so that you don't accidentally hit 'Send' it before it is ready.)
- Respond to e-mails in a timely manner. Although you do not need to reply to e-mails immediately, it is best to respond within 24 to 48 hours (depending on the context). If you do not have the necessary information required to respond, send a brief, polite reply acknowledging receipt of the e-mail and let the sender know when you will be able to respond.
- There are times when using e-mail is not a good idea. Last-minute cancellations or very bad news, for instance, should ideally be conveyed through phone rather than e-mail (which may not be read immediately). If something complicated needs to be explained or negotiated—which will likely result in a lot of back-and-forth exchange of messages—discuss it over a phone call or in person, rather than in an e-mail chain which may cause confusion and waste everyone's time.

### EXERCISES

B. Draft e-mails as instructed below. Remember to keep your e-mails brief.

1. Write an e-mail to a book shop complaining about receiving damaged copies of the book you had ordered.
2. An article on 'Seat Blocking' by private engineering colleges has been published in the *Deccan Herald*. The paper has invited remarks from the public about it. Address your comments to the Editor at [letters@deccanherald.co.in](mailto:letters@deccanherald.co.in).
3. Write an e-mail to invite an eminent professor to deliver the keynote address at an inter-college seminar organised by JNTU-H. Add relevant details, but keep it brief.

### Job Application Letters

Recruiters usually shortlist candidates for a job by reviewing résumés. When sending your résumé, you should also send a short letter that introduces you and your résumé. This letter is known as a cover letter.

Employers often receive a large number of applications for a few limited positions; a well-written cover letter will help you stand out from the other applicants by establishing you as a candidate with high professional standards and excellent writing skills.

The terms *job application letter* and *cover letter* are often used interchangeably, although some distinction may be made between them. A cover letter is always accompanied by a résumé. It is very brief, and its purpose is to persuade the reader to review the résumé. An application letter may be longer and more comprehensive than a cover letter when it serves as a stand-alone document unaccompanied by a résumé. Most hiring managers, however, ask for a résumé; therefore, in this lesson, we will look at job application letters that function only as cover letters.



**GUIDELINES FOR WRITING COVER LETTERS**

- Follow the conventions of a business letter. The tone should be appropriately formal. (If the work culture of the company you are applying to is relatively relaxed, your tone can be slightly less formal; however, you should still follow the format of a business letter.)
- If you are typing out the letter, choose a simple traditional typeface such as Garamond, Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri, with a font size of 10–12 points. It is preferable to type out the letter on a word processor and print it out, if you have the option to do so.
- Whenever possible, try your best to find out the name of the hiring manager or person who will be reading the letter. Address your letter to this person by name. If you don't have a name, a simple 'Dear madam/sir' will do. (Avoid the generic 'To whomsoever it may concern' as it gives an impression of laziness.)
- You could briefly mention where you found out about the opening (a newspaper advertisement, a job search site, a contact or reference, the company's website, etc.).
- Employers read through a lot of cover letters in a short span of time to shortlist candidates for a job (or the next round of the selection process). For this reason, your letter needs to attract attention immediately. State only those essential details that will get you shortlisted, or which will prompt the employer to look at your résumé.
- You can attract attention with forceful statements. What do you like about the company? Why do you want to work there? However, be sincere when making such statements; do not lie for the sake of grabbing attention.
- Say how the company will benefit from hiring you. What can you offer to the employer? Employers are looking for people who can contribute to their organisation. In just one or two sentences, state why you are the right candidate for the job.
- Employers usually mention the requirements of the position when posting about an opening. (If not, spend some time thinking about the needs of the organisation.) Compare these requirements to your qualifications, skills and strengths. Talk about those abilities that best match their needs.
- If someone in the company can act as a reference for you, mention the employee in your letter—but only if you have that person's permission.
- Be brief, so that you don't waste your potential employer's time. Your letter will be accompanied by your résumé, so there is no need to talk about your experience and qualifications in detail. Restrict the body of your letter to just 1–2 short paragraphs.
- Conclude the letter by thanking the reader, and inviting her/him to contact you (or asking for the opportunity to speak further about the position).
- Always remember to include all relevant contact details (including the URL to your LinkedIn profile, if you have one).
- If sending the letter as a hard copy/printout, end with your handwritten signature above your typed name. If sending via e-mail, your typed name is enough. (You could include a digital signature, if you have one.)

**SAMPLE COVER LETTERS**

Given below are two examples of cover letters. Pay attention to the following:

- The information included
- The way the information is arranged (layout)



- The formal tone and the kind of language used
- The statements that might attract the reader (potential employer)

You could use these sample letters as models when drafting job application letters of your own.

Amitha Sagari  
No. A89, Spandana Apartments  
DCM Layout, Mysuru 577002

20 August 2021

Social Welfare Department  
Paduvarahalli East  
Mysuru 570012

Dear sir,

Sub: Application for the post of a First Division Assistant  
Ref: Your advertisement in the *Times of India* dated 18 August 2021

I feel that I have the right qualifications and experience for the post of a First Division Assistant for which you have advertised. I request you to please consider my application for the post.

I have enclosed my curriculum vitae and photocopies of all testimonials for your perusal. I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss my skills and this position, and would be grateful if you could please grant me an interview to prove my eligibility and suitability for the role. I will be happy to provide any other information you may require of me during the interview.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,  
*Amitha Sagari*

Encl: 1. Curriculum vitae  
2. Attested copies of testimonials

Arun Lokesh  
No. 89, Mall Road, V-Nagar  
Chandigarh 160101

18 July 2021

Varma Trading Company  
36/B, Akash Heights  
Banashankari, Bengaluru 560050

Dear madam/sir,

Sub: Application for the post of an office assistant  
Ref: Your advertisement in the *Hindu* dated 15 July 2021

My name is Arun Lokesh. I would like to apply for the position of an office assistant at your Bangalore regional office.



I have the necessary abilities which you may require—I possess excellent verbal and written communication and inter-personal skills; I am computer savvy; and I am a quick learner. In addition, I have worked for four years as an office assistant at Surya Trading House, Bangalore. I feel that I am qualified for the above profile.

I have attached my résumé. I look forward to the possibility of a personal interview at your earliest convenience to further discuss my credentials with you and to learn more about Varma Trading Company.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,  
Arun Lokesh

## Résumé and Curricula Vitae

### WHAT IS A RÉSUMÉ?

A résumé or a curriculum vitae (CV) is a summary of a person's academic and professional history. They give an overview of one's academic qualifications, work experience, skills and accomplishments.

An employer looks at a job applicant's résumé to screen and shortlist candidates before an interview. A well-organised résumé will make a prospective employer feel that you are a better candidate than others who are competing with you for the same position.

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CV AND A RÉSUMÉ?

The term curriculum vitae (plural: curricula vitae) comes from a Latin phrase that means 'the course of one's life'—a CV describes the course of your academic and professional life to a prospective employer. Very often, the terms CV and *résumé* are used without any strict distinction made between them.

In Canada and the United States, however, a CV and a résumé are similar but different things. A résumé is the primary document used to seek employment in North America. The term 'curriculum vitae' refers to a more comprehensive document used in careers related to academics and the sciences. A CV lists in detail one's educational qualifications, positions held, publications, professional achievements and awards. A résumé is concise (1–2 pages) and mentions only those specific details relevant to the job being applied for. A CV, on the other hand, aims to give a complete picture of one's academic and professional accomplishments, and can therefore be many pages long, depending on the length of one's career. A scholar who has graduated only recently may have a CV that is just a page long, but in ten years' time her CV will have expanded to several pages to list all her journal papers, teaching experience, lab research, field work, grants and fellowships.

In the United Kingdom and the European Union, a curriculum vitae is the primary job application document—but it is usually shorter and structured like the North American résumé. In Australia and India, the words 'CV' and 'résumé' refer to the same thing (in most contexts). If in doubt, simply ask the employer to clarify what information they require.

*Note:* This chapter will use the term *résumé* for the sake of simplicity. Since the two terms are, for the most part, used interchangeably in India, the guidelines and formats given below are applicable to both—whether you are asked to write a CV or a résumé.



## TYPES OF RÉSUMÉS

There is no fixed format for a résumé or a CV. It may be laid out in several ways depending on one's need.

### *Chronological résumé*

- It is best suited for candidates with plenty of work experience relevant to the job being applied for.
- Your work experience is listed in order of date—the most recent position is placed at the top of the list, while earlier jobs/positions follow in reverse chronological order. Educational qualifications and skills are listed after work experience.
- Your work history is the main focus of this kind of résumé. The layout makes it easy for a recruiter to quickly see how much experience you have.

### *Functional résumé*

- It is best suited for recent graduates who do not have much job experience, or those who have long gaps in their employment history, or those who are switching career types or fields.
- Qualifications and skills are listed first. An optional (but desirable) work experience section could give examples of how the candidate used the listed skills to accomplish professional goals.
- This layout shifts focus from employment history and instead showcases the applicant's skills and accomplishments.

### *Combination résumé*

- It is best suited for applicants who may need to provide employment history (e.g., at the request of the employer), but for whom the traditional chronological résumé is unsuitable (e.g., due to unrelated work experience, or long breaks between employment).
- Qualifications and skills are listed first, followed by employment history in reverse chronological order.
- The purpose of this format is to emphasise those things that make you an ideal candidate (qualifications and skills) while also including the work history information that an employer requires.

### *Non-traditional résumé*

- It is best suited for people in creative fields.
- This could be either a digital or a physical paper résumé, with eye-catching visual elements like graphics, photographs and illustrations. It could even be a video résumé, a personal website or a LinkedIn profile.
- Non-traditional résumés often demonstrate one's aesthetic sense and design abilities, and therefore help the candidate to stand out from other professionals in creative industries (film, design, fashion, architecture, etc.) or in jobs such as marketing.

## HOW TO CREATE A RÉSUMÉ OR CV

### **Step 1: Gathering information**

First, collect information about yourself under the heads mentioned below. These heads will later be organised and modified as necessary.



*Personal information*

- Provide full name, address, telephone number, and e-mail ID. Date of birth is optional unless relevant to the job.
- Do not include private information such as nationality, marital status, photograph, and religious and political affiliations, unless specifically asked for by the employer.
- Personal e-mail IDs with facetious or quirky usernames are inappropriate for work purposes. Create a professional-looking e-mail ID that uses some combination of your first name, surname, and/or initials (with dots, if required, to make it easy to read). For example:  
Xsonal\_the\_champ@outlook.com → ✓sonal.k.patro@outlook.com

*Education and qualifications*

- List your education in reverse chronological order, beginning with postgraduate degrees (if applicable), then graduate degree, and then schooling certification.
- Against each degree, list the name of the institute (university/college/school) attended (or still attending), the course of study, the year of graduation, and (optionally) the grade/marks received.

*Work experience*

- List your present occupation(s) and the jobs you held in the past, working your way backwards from most recent to earliest.
- For each organisation you worked for, mention its name and location (city), the years you worked there, and what you did (the responsibilities of your position).
- Use this section to also mention your achievements in each role, especially those that highlight initiative and creative problem-solving. E.g., 'Successfully cut costs and used the budget surplus to create a fund that financed employee skills development programmes'. As much as possible, quantify the achievement using facts and figures. E.g., 'As Materials Manager, introduced systems to reduce lead times from 1.5 months to 10 days', or 'Exceeded sales targets for three consecutive years'.

*Skills*

- List your skills (i.e., those which may be of interest to employers), particularly language abilities, skills developed through experience and training, and computer skills.
- Mention diplomas and certifications that may serve as proof of abilities.
- Apart from 'hard skills' (e.g., database management, market research, book-keeping, financial modelling, search engine optimisation), you could also mention 'soft skills' that you are very confident about (e.g., time management, teamwork and leadership skills, adaptability, organisation skills, attention to detail).

In addition to the four main sections above, you could also compile the following information in case it is required.

*Personal statement*

- This optional section answers the question 'Who am I?'.
- Write 2–3 high-impact statements that describe the kind of person you are and reflect personal strengths which make you suitable for the job.
- An example of a personal statement is: 'A motivated graduate looking for an entry-level sales position that will utilise my interpersonal skills and business aptitude honed through internships at multiple firms.'



*Interests and achievements*

- This optional section lists your interests, hobbies and aptitudes, to show you in a positive light by painting a picture of a well-rounded personality.
- Do not create a long list of hobbies. Mention only those pursuits which may be of interest to employers. E.g., writing a regular blog ties in neatly with certain careers like journalism; club memberships might be relevant if applying for a people-oriented position like customer care.
- Instead of simply naming a hobby in one or two words, provide a brief snapshot-like detail that reveals your commitment or level of interest. E.g., instead of merely stating 'Badminton', write 'Semi-finalist in Karnataka state inter-college badminton tournament (2021)'.
- You could also list personal accomplishments that are not directly career-related, such as publications, awards, scholarships, etc.

*References*

- List two or three references, who know you either as a student (college professors) or a colleague (previous employers, supervisors, etc.), and can therefore attest to your qualifications and abilities. Mention their full names, affiliations and contact information (phone number and e-mail ID). The organisation you are applying to may get in touch with them to enquire about you.
- Always talk to the people you wish to list as references and seek permission before including their names and contact details.

**Step 2: Organising information**

After you gather relevant information, the next step is to select, edit and organise the information in a fitting manner.

*Target your résumé*

- A good résumé is tailored to the specific job and organisation you are applying for. Before beginning to organise and prepare the résumé, you need to find out more about these things.
- Research the company and the job requirements. What kind of person is the employer looking for? Look at the job advertisement carefully and note down the academic qualifications, skills and experience that the employer wants.
- Go through all the information you have listed in Step 1. Closely examine your qualifications, curricular and extra-curricular activities, work experience, skills and achievements. Now match this information with the requirements of the company, job and position. Select the information that is relevant; leave out details that might be irrelevant. The better the match, the more likely you are to be called for an interview.

*Create the layout*

- The next step is to order and arrange the selected information such that it is logically laid out and reads well.
- As already mentioned, there is no set format for a résumé. Re-read the section on 'Types of résumés', and decide if you want to follow any of those formats. You need not include every section mentioned in Step 1: some can be emphasised more than the others, some can be modified or dropped entirely, and some can be combined with other sections.
- You could begin with the heading 'Curriculum Vitae' or 'Résumé' at the top of the page, centred to the page width. (This is optional.)



- The personal information section usually comes first. Place it in a prominent position (e.g., on the top of the page, below the heading) so that your name and contact details are clearly visible at a glance.
- Decide the order of the remaining sections (education, work experience, skills, etc.). Remember that what you list first will probably receive the most attention. Arrange the sections such that they highlight your strengths in relation to the position you are applying for.

#### *Tips for students and recent graduates*

- If you are a student, or have only recently graduated, you may not have a lot of work experience to include in your résumé. Choose a layout that emphasises the skills, achievements and qualifications that you do have.
- Mention projects, seminars and extracurricular activities—and highlight the skills you've picked up through these that might be useful to employers. E.g., being in a debate club could mean that you are good at persuasive speaking, making you a candidate for client-facing jobs such as sales, customer service, front-desk positions, etc.
- Include any work experience that you have had—including internships, part-time jobs, work-study programmes, or volunteer work. Focus on valuable lessons that the experience has taught you. However, remember that vapid, generalised statements may come across as an attempt to fill up space; instead add specific details to make the experience feel authentic.

<i>Instead of writing...</i>	<i>It is better to write...</i>
Learnt the value of professionalism	Was responsible for opening the store every morning at 5am
Improved time management skills	Time management: completed class assignments and projects within deadlines while working two shifts at the store daily

### **Step 3: Presenting information**

The final step is to fine-tune the information you have selected and organised, so that it is easy to read.

#### *Write as concisely as possible*

- The employer may have to go through several résumés—sometimes, hundreds—in a limited time. Don't make her/him search for the information she/he needs. Cut out repetition. Omit unnecessary words. (But do not sacrifice clarity or key details for the sake of brevity.)
- Instead of paragraphs and long sentences, use bullet points so that the reader can quickly pick out the details that you wish to convey.

#### *Write impactful statements*

- Use the active tense and strong 'action' verbs (rather than nouns, adjectives and adverbs) when writing statements about yourself, your experience and your skills.

<i>Instead of writing...</i>	<i>It is better to write...</i>
Responsibilities included organising meetings each month and preparation of the budget	Organised monthly meetings and prepared the budget

- Re-write vague statements to make them more precise.

<i>Instead of writing...</i>	<i>It is better to write...</i>
I have a lot of experience in training administrative staff	Trained 2–3 batches of administrative assistants each year



*Pay attention to formatting and readability*

- Choose simple typefaces and bullets. The font size could be 10–12 points. Avoid using more than two typefaces in one document.
- Headings should be easily visible and distinct from the rest of the text. You can do this by using a slightly larger font size and/or formatting them in bold/italics.
- Keep the formatting consistent. E.g., if you use italics for the name of one company, keep every company name in italics. Consistent formatting keeps your résumé organised and easy to read.
- Do not cram too much material on a single sheet. Leave enough space between sections and around all margins so that your résumé does not look cramped or too dense.
- Double check grammar, punctuation and facts (e.g., contact information). Triple check spellings (e.g., names of organisations and people).

*How long should a résumé be?*

- A new graduate's résumé is usually one page long, and should not be more than two sides of an A4-sized sheet of paper. A more experienced applicant may write a longer résumé/CV. It is desirable to restrict yourself to two sides of a single sheet of paper. However, you should not leave out important items or crowd your text too closely together in order to fit it into that space.
- If you have a long career history, include only those experiences pertinent to the job you are applying for.
- Academic and technical CVs may be longer as they have to show technical qualifications, publications, research areas, etc. in detail.

*An important note on honesty and accuracy*

- Do not lie or exaggerate.
- If you find it difficult to match your résumé to the job requirements, then perhaps you are not suitable for the position. Do not distort your résumé to fit the job. If you falsify your résumé, you will not be able to provide the necessary proof of your claims at the interview stage, which will diminish your chances of employment.
- Apart from being ethically wrong, lying about your qualifications is a risky strategy as it can be discovered easily—especially in this age of digital information and social media. Discovery of a lie leads to loss of reputation, which damages career building permanently.
- Avoid the temptation to embellish or overstate your skills, achievements, interests, etc. Do not use vague language or misleading words and phrases. Back up your statements with facts, figures, and dates. Adding details that can be verified by the employer creates a sense of transparency and builds trust.

**SAMPLE RÉSUMÉS**

Pay attention to how these sample résumés/CVs are written and organised. You could use these samples as models when creating your own résumé.

Note how headings have been used to organise information. Headings tend to draw the eye of the reader. Therefore, choose your headings (and their positions) with care. Remember that headings of the same kind should be formatted in the same way. Consistency in formatting not only makes your résumé look good, but also makes it easier to read and understand.

Likewise, try to maintain consistency in language (e.g., use the same tense, keep the sentence structure similar, etc.), especially among bulleted items that fall under the same sub-heading.

Note, also, how easy it is for the reader to spot the name and contact details of the person who has submitted the résumé. Never make the reader hunt for essential information.



## RÉSUMÉ

*Name* Romi Matthew  
*Address* 852, Kadri Layout, 5th Cross, Mangaluru 575010  
*Mobile* 9434252352  
*E-mail* rmatthew@outlook.com

*Qualifications*

EXAMINATION	BOARD / UNIVERSITY	RESULT
BCom	Mangalore University	67.21%
PUC	PU Board, Karnataka	78.18%
SSLC	SSLC Board, Karnataka	87.56%

*Skills*

- Languages known: Kannada, English, Hindi
- Computer skills: Microsoft Office and other essential apps

*Personal qualities*

- Organised and punctual
- Good mathematical ability
- Committed to working long hours
- Ability to work independently with minimal supervision, as well as in a team

*Volunteer experience*

- St Joseph's Home for the Aged (Hosur)
- The Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy (Mangaluru)

*Areas of interest*

- Member of school and college basketball team (starting line-up)

*References*

- Prof. Swaraj Madhusudan  
 Head, Department of Commerce  
 Basaveshwara First Grade College, Mysuru, 570024  
 E-mail: commerce.dept@bfgcmysore.com
- DM Kundra  
 Lecturer, Department of Commerce  
 Basaveshwara First Grade College, Mysuru, 570024  
 E-mail: dineshkundra@bfgcmysore.com



**RAZIA SULTANA**

**Address:** Ahalya Enclave, Flat 2, Kashi Bagh, Kolkata 700016  
**Cell:** +91 9886361055      **E-mail:** raziasultana@protonmail.com

**Date of Birth:** 26 January 1996

**Work Experience**

- JetStream Airlines, Hyderabad  
Role: Accounts Executive (February 2019–present)  
Responsibilities:
  - o Maintain daily cash book and bank book
  - o Conduct banking transactions
  - o Prepare vouchers, cheques, etc.
  - o Document GST, TDS, professional tax, PF, ESI
  - o Generate client billings
  - o Manage sundry creditors and debtors
  - o Assist in weekly audits
- Cavill House Private Limited, Kolkata  
Role: Junior Accountant (November 2017–December 2018)  
Responsibilities:
  - o daily cash book and bank book
  - o Handled petty cash transactions and reporting
  - o Assisted at management meetings
  - o Prepared MIS

**Educational Qualifications**

- Currently pursuing MCom (Finance and Taxation), University of Hyderabad (School of Distance Learning)
- CMA Intermediate certificate (2018)
- BCom (Hons), University of Calcutta (2017), graduated with distinction
- Higher Secondary (ISC), Lilawati School, Kolkata (2015)

**Computer Skills**

- Diploma in Computer Financial Accounting (6-month course) from the Institute of Professional Accountants, Kolkata
- Good working knowledge of Tally.ERP 9 and FACT ERP.ING
- Excellent knowledge of Microsoft Office; well versed with spreadsheet software
- Internet savvy

**Activities and Interests**

- Attended two-day workshop on 'Advanced optimisation of payroll efficiency' organised by Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (Hyderabad, January 2020)



- Attended seminar on 'GST and government regulation' organised by Institute of Cost Accountants of India (Hyderabad, September 2019)
- Member of the JetStream Recreation Club Committee
- Former VP of Calcutta University Cultural Events Organising Committee (2015–17)
- Represented Lilawati School (Kolkata) in Inter-High Chess Tournament (2010–14)
- NCC junior cadet in high school

#### Language Proficiency

- Proficient in English, Hindi, Bengali
- Basic knowledge of Spanish (Completed the CEFR A2 level examination in Spanish from the Ramakrishna Institute, Kolkata)

#### EXERCISES

C. Answer the following questions.

1. You are a graduate in chemical engineering from the National Institute of Technology, Trichy. You have three years of experience as an assistant project engineer with a fertiliser company. Write a job application letter in response to an opening for the post of project engineer in a well-known petrochemical company. Also prepare a résumé/CV for the same.
2. You have worked as a software developer for two firms for a couple of years each. You would like to take up the position of an assistant IT manager at a larger firm which has advertised such an opening on their company website. The company prefers someone with a master's degree, but you have only a bachelor's degree in computer science with no other diplomas or certification. Prepare a résumé/CV and a cover letter for the same.

D. Prepare a résumé/CV and a job application letter for any one of the following job advertisements.

1. Wanted an office assistant for a reputed company based in Delhi. The candidate must be a graduate with an experience of at least two years. Computer knowledge and communicative English are necessary. Apply within a week to Post Box No. 5665, c/o Indian Express, SK Marg, New Delhi 110046.
2. Wanted a Technical Assistant for a reputed company based in Bangalore. The candidate must be a science graduate with physics as one of the optional subjects. Proficiency in the use of computer essential. Candidates with inquiring temperament and diligence preferred. Apply with all the necessary details to Post Box No. 5965, c/o the Hindustan Times, Brigade Road, Bangalore 560001.

E. Prepare a résumé/CV and a corresponding cover letter for any one of the following positions. The details of the company and the exact position you are applying for are up to you. Assume any qualifications or experience that is appropriate. Include other details you see fit.

- |                             |                                     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. human resource executive | 4. laboratory technician            |
| 2. team leader in a BPO     | 5. PWD assistant engineer           |
| 3. R&D analytical assistant | 6. assistant administrative manager |



**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







