

FOUR SKILLS FOR COMMUNICATION

I SEMESTER

COMMON COURSE IN ENGLISH

BA/B Sc./B Com./BBA

(CUCBCSS - 2014 Admission)



UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

CALICUT UNIVERSITY P.O., MALAPPURAM, KERALA, INDIA – 673 635

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STUDY MATERIAL

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FOUR SKILLS FOR COMMUNICATION

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MODULE I

Communication is the act of expressing ideas, feelings and transferring data to others. It is a complex activity involving more than one person. Fluency should not be mistaken for effective communication. Communication becomes successful only when the meaning is properly transmitted from the sender to the receiver. This module deals with the specialties of human language. Other

creatures also communicate, but the human system of communication is far more complex and advanced than all of them.

Based on the medium that is used, human communication can be divided into five main forms; oral, written, visual, audio-visual and network communication.

Oral communication makes use of the medium of speech. It can be face-to-face communication or a conversation over the phone. Oral communication can be further divided into formal and informal types. Informal communication takes place in rather relaxed and casual contexts. Formal communication is more serious in nature and the participants will be conscious of their words and behavior. Example ; a job interview. Writing is another important mode of communication. Like oral communication, this can also be further divided into formal and informal varieties. Business letters are examples of formal written communication. These days, informal written communication takes place in the form of e-mail.

Visual communication is image-oriented and more effective in communicating an idea. Audio-visual communication combines both sounds and visuals. The term multi-media, often used in the context of computers, refers to the same mode of communication. Network communication makes use of computers, modem, satellites, cables etc.

Non-verbal communication

Verbal communication means the transfer of information through the medium of words. But human beings are not exclusively dependent on verbal communication. We often do not realize the fact that a major portion of communication takes place through non-verbal means. Non-verbal means other than the medium of words. Body language is an important kind of non-verbal communication method. Facial expressions, eye-contact, gestures, postures and movements of the body etc are examples of body-language. Paralanguage means changes in voice like pitch, stress etc. Proxemics refers to the degree of closeness or distance one maintains while communicating. Haptics deals with physical contact as a means of communication. Handshakes, kiss, hugs etc are examples of the haptic part of communication. Use of sign language like flags is also a type of non-verbal communication.

Features of Human Language

Human language is far more complex than the communication systems used by other creatures. One of the unique features of the human language is its creativity. Using the already existing words in a language, we can create an infinite number of utterances. Arbitrariness of the human language means that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the words and their meanings in a language. It is only a matter of chance that a particular animal is called a 'dog' and another one a 'cat'. It could have been the other way around. Or in other words, it is only a linguistic convention. Reflexivity of the human language means that language can be used to describe itself. For example, this module on the specialties of human language is made possible through language.

'Displacement' means another unique feature of the human language that it can be used to talk about the past and the future; not only to talk about the immediate present. Language can be even used to talk about abstract topics.' Duality 'of the language means the existence of linguistic units at two levels. Sounds that do not have any meaning of their own are instrumental in giving meaning to a word. Similarly, words enter into different combinations produce sentences. Cultural transmission aspect of the language means that humans are the only creatures that consider language as a part of their cultural heritage.

English as a Global language

English has a prominent place among the languages in the world. It is the language of global communication, global trade and technology. That is why English is called a global language. In addition to the natives who use English as their mother tongue in countries like the USA and the UK, there are people who use it as a foreign language in countries like India. This has created a situation where English gets influenced by the native tongues. These Englishes are different from the so-called standard English. Linguists call these hybrid languages 'Englishes'

The global family of English today has two main branches; the British and the American. Differences among the Englishes are in terms of pronunciation, spelling and meaning.

Generally, there is a tendency to brand a particular variety (dialect) of a language as the standard one. In Britain, this status is given to R P (Received Pronunciation) and in America, The standard variety is 'Standard American English'.

Formal and Informal English

There is a lot of difference between the formal and informal varieties of a language. Formal language is used in serious and official contexts like job interviews, conferences, classes etc. Informal language or slang is used in unofficial contexts. For example, a conversation between two friends.

Questions (weightage is given in brackets)

1. What is communication? (2)
- 2 What is meant by the term verbal communication?(2)
- 3 Write a note on 'body language' (2)
- 4 Define paralanguage (2)
- 5 What is proxemics? (2)
- 6 Define haptics? (2)
- 7 Write an essay on the various types of non-verbal communication methods? (4)
- 8 'Touch' is an aspect of ----- (proxemics, paralanguage, haptics, sign language) (1)

- 9 Television is an example of ----- (mass communication, interpersonal communication, intrapersonal communication, extrapersonal communication) (1)
- 10 Write an essay on the important features of human language (4)
- 11 The communicative system of honeybees has creativity (True/False) (1)
- 12 What is meant by the term arbitrariness in the context of human languages? (2)
- 13 Explain 'reflexivity' as a feature of human language (2)
- 14 Animal communication is superior to human languages in many respects (True/False) (1)
- 15 What is meant by the term 'hybrid English' (2)
- 16 ----- is a native speaker of English (American, Indian, Sri Lankan, Pakistani) (1)
- 17 Canadian English belongs to -----variety of English (British, American, African) (1)
- 18 What is R. P. ? (2)
- 19 Write a note on the formal and informal styles in English (2)
- 20 Explain Braj B Kachru's classification of English in terms of circles (2)
- 21 What is SAE ?(2)
- 22 Australian English belongs to the -----branch of English (American, British, Canadian) (1)
- 23 Write a paragraph on the difference between formal and informal speech (2)
- 24 ----- is an example of hybrid English(pidgin, standard English, formal English) (1)
- 25 An official meeting is an example of -----communication.
a) informal b) visual c) formal d) network (1)
- 26 -----is a form of visual communication
a) graph b) conversation c) debate d) lecture (1)
- 27 Communication with oneself is called -----
a) interpersonal communication b) intrapersonal communication
c) extrapersonal communication d) mass communication (1)
- 28 What is meant by kinesics ?
a) intonation b)body language c) paralanguage d) stress (1)

- 29 Voice modulation is also called -----
a) haptics b) paralanguage c) proxemics d) sign language
- 30 The feature of language which allows infinite number of utterances is called
a) displacement b) arbitrariness c) duality
d) creativity
- 31 Listening is -----
a) a passive performance b) an active performance
c) casual performance d) involuntary performance

MODULE II

Listening

Some of us are good at listening ,yet others are no effective listeners. Effective listening is an essential quality of for a productive individual. 'Hearing' is different from 'listening'. Hearing is a casual activity that does not require the full involvement of the person. Listening, on the other hand,is a conscious activity that demands concentration on the part of the listener.

Conversations, being spontaneous and extempore, makes a lot of demands on the listeners. One can become a better listener with a little practice and patience.

Listening to a conversation

Listening to a conversation and comprehending it involve certain difficulties due to the following reasons.

- 1 Spoken language is not well-structured.
- 2 There may be pauses and incomplete utterances in it.
- 3 Jargon and colloquial expressions.
- 4 The incongruity between the speed of speech and the speed of processing by the listener.
- 5 Speakers may leave certain things unsaid.

These difficulties can be overcome by following the tips given below.

- 1 Focus on the meaning-carrying words
- 2 Note the linking expressions.
- 3 Infer the meaning from the context.
- 4 Understand the significance of hesitation and pauses.
- 5 Use the gaps effectively

Listening to a Speech

To be an attentive listener of speeches, you have to do the following things

- 1 You have to understand the purpose of the speaker. It can be to inform, to persuade or to entertain.
- 2 You should anticipate the probable course taken by the speaker.
- 3 Listen intently by minimizing distractions.
- 4 Make a note of the important points.
- 5 Use the time gap between speaking and listening in order to process the speech.
- 6 Interact with the speaker and seek clarifications.

Listening to a Speech

One has to listen to speeches in professional contexts. A bit of planning and experience will bring about positive results in one's ability to listen to speeches.

Tips for being a better listener and interpreter of speeches

- 1 Understand the purpose
- 2 Anticipate the content
- 3 Minimise distractions
- 4 Recording key elements
- 5 Listening actively
- 6 Seeking clarifications, if any

Listening to a lecture

A student who can make a best deal out of listening to lectures in the classroom is definitely at an advantage. Following some tips in the listening process will help the student to comprehend the lecture in a better way.

- 1 Find out the topic of the lecture in advance.
- 2 Gather some background information
- 3 Make notes while listening
- 4 Avoid all distractions
- 5 Try to predict what is to follow
- 6 Use established note-taking practices like numbering system while taking notes
- 7 Use mind- maps for complicated concepts
- 8 Use the margins of the page to note down queries and doubts
- 9 Listen sharply to closing comments
- 10 Revise the main points after the lecture
- 11 Read additional material to consolidate your learning

SPEAKING

Good communicators not only manage to convey the information , but also get better opportunities at the professional level. In the case of a professional language like English, Indian speakers find it difficult to speak confidently and naturally. The functions of spoken communication can be

broadly divided into four categories: Informative, instructive, persuasive and integrative.

In order to be an effective communicator, we should be well aware of the purposes of communication. It can be any one of the following

1 Informative 2 instructive 3 Persuasive 4 Integrative

Informative

Introducing oneself and others, describing products, reporting events, expressing opinions, talking about weather, talking about people and places ,past events, current activities, future plans, reporting what others have said etc will come under this category

Instructive

Giving instructions and direction, explaining concepts, giving advice etc will be termed as instructive communication.

Persuasive

Convincing people and advertising products are examples of persuasive communication.

Integrative

Greeting, making requests, seeking permission, making enquiries, apologizing, congratulating, encouraging, offering condolence etc can be cited as examples of integrative communication

Difference between spoken language and written language

Non-native speakers often fail to understand the subtle difference between the two. So, the spoken English used by non-native speakers like Indians turn out to be bookish and lacking in the colloquial ring

Spoken language is

Spontaneous, relatively informal, uses short forms, uses simple vocabulary and sentences, has hesitations, repetitions. There may be incomplete utterances and the speaker gets instant feedback. Colloquial expressions are found in plenty.

Written Questions

- 1 What is the difference between 'listening' and 'hearing' (1)
- 2 What are the barriers in listening to a conversation effectively ? (2)
- 3 How can a person be a better listener to conversations? (2)
- 4 What is meant by anticipating the content of a speech? (2)
- 5 What does the term 'psychological noise' mean in the context of listening to speeches? (2)
- 6 Write a note on the tips to ensure effective listening at lectures (2)
- 7 Write an essay on the four main functions of spoken communication (4)

8 What are the basic differences between spoken communication and written

communication (2)

9 Introducing oneself is an example of -----purpose of communication (informative,

instructive, persuasive) (1)

10 Write a note on the persuasive function of spoken communication (2)

Prepare a dialogue of 4-5 responses for the following situations

11 You are the chairperson of your college union. An eminent writer has consented to

inaugurate the function. Request your Principal to preside over the function (2)

12 You have to apply for an aadhar card. Construct the dialogue that you will have

with the person at the akshaya centre about the formalities for getting an aadhar

card (2)

13 Somebody has written slogans on your classroom walls. The teacher suspects that you are the one who did it. Explain the matter to him or her and prove your innocence. (2)

14 Your friend was not present at the annual General Body Meeting of your club. Give

him/her an account of the proceedings at the meeting (2)

15 You have forgotten to bring your mobile phone. Request one of your friends to

make a call on his/her phone. Construct the dialogue (2)

MODULE III

News Reports

The first thing that catches the reader's attention in a news report is the headline. Headline should be brief and attractive. The byline in a new report tells us who has written the report.

Charts, Tables , Schedules, Graphs

These are visual techniques of presenting data. Graphs enable us to condense large amounts of data in a manageable size. It is easily accessible to the reader. Drawing table is another visual representation technique. Schedules are drawn up for meetings, seminars, conferences and workshops. They help in effective time management. Graphs are usually plotted along two axes- one horizontal and other vertical. Graphs are generally used to record changes over a period of time.

Advertisements

Advertisements are created to sell products, services, opportunities and ideas. They are designed to evoke a response in the readers. Advertisements use catchy statements called taglines.

Official letters, Documents, Profiles

Official letters are formal in tone and are written for specific purpose like invitation to meetings, confirmation of appointments, announcements etc. official documents like certificates use a language that is clear and precise. They are legal in nature.

An official profile of an organization gives a brief description of its primary objectives, resources, history, structure, performance, reputation etc.

Internet is the primary source of information today. As the readers are easily distracted from the screen, online content writers try to present it in an attractive way.

Writing

A sentence is a combination of words arranged in a grammatical order, that makes sense when placed together. A simple sentence in English can be divided into the subject and the predicate. There are four kinds of sentences in English; declarative sentences, interrogative sentences, imperative sentences, exclamatory sentences.

A paragraph is built around a central idea. The topic sentence in a paragraph often expresses this idea. The concluding sentence in a paragraph sums up the arguments.

Descriptive paragraphs give an account of a person, object, processes etc. narrative paragraphs, on the other hand, deal with events.

Reports

Other than news paper reports, we come across other kinds of reports like progress reports, investigative reports, feasibility reports, analytical reports etc in daily life.

A few things are to be kept in mind before writing an effective report. One should have a clear idea about the audience that the report is addressed to. The relationship of the author with the reader is also important. The next important thing is the terms of references of the report i.e. what are the things that should come within its scope.

Project Reports

Project reports and research reports are usually long reports and they give details of every stage of the process. A project report will have nine parts; the title page, abstract, table of contents, introduction, main body, conclusion, recommendations, references and appendices.

Letter writing

Internet has considerably reduced the role of letters, written or printed on paper. Most of the business communication takes place over the phone and e-mail. The business letters lately have abandoned their excessively formal tone and format.

Business Letters

Following these tips will make your business letters more impressive and communicative

- 1 Divide the letter into blocks
- 2 Order the information in the logical way
- 3 Align to the left
- 4 Give a neat and accessible layout
- 5 Be particular about giving space between blocks, choosing the correct font and a clutter-free language

Personal Letters

The popularity of e-mail has rendered the personal letters almost non-existent. Still, there are people who write letters. These letters are informal in format, language and style.

Resume

Job-seekers these days cannot do without resumes. The secret of writing an impressive resume is all about projecting your strengths. It will be advisable to divide a resume into blocks. The first block, titled 'Name and Address' gives the basic information about you. The next block titled 'Education' gives a summary of your educational qualification. The third block titled 'Experience' gives an account of your previous employment, job description, responsibilities etc. The fourth block titled 'Personal Data' provides some vital details about your personality, like hobbies, interests, proficiency in languages etc

Cover letters

Resumes are accompanied by cover letters. It serves the purpose of a quick introduction to the candidate and is a way to highlight some of the points on your resume that may be relevant to the job applied for.

E-mail

E-mail is the most common method for communication today. Both individuals and companies use it. It has many advantages over the conventional methods of communication like the letter writing

1. Eco- friendly
2. E-mail is very fast. It reaches the receiver's inbox in just an instant
3. Mobility: one can access the e-mail even on a mobile phone
4. It is easy to access archives
5. Nested communication: it is easy to keep track of older mails because they are attached to the latest one
6. Multi-Mailing; One can send message to multiple recipients

Tips to make the e-mails clutter- free and readable

1. Always use the subject line
2. Include quotes from the mail received
3. Be brief and precise
4. Use a reader- friendly layout

5. Use subheads and bold typeface to highlight points
6. Mix lower case characters and upper case characters

Blogs

Blog, shortened form of 'web log,' is an immensely popular platform on the internet. Blogs started off as a record of events maintained by a person. Now there are blogs devoted to different topics and they have multiple contributors. Such blogs are called 'multi author blogs'. There are blogs devoted to book reviews, film reviews, and even hobbies like horticulture and car-racing. Blogs are interactive in nature. Its democratic format has resulted in the blogs being used as a 'virtual platform' for rebellion against repressive Governments in many countries .

Dos and Don'ts for a blogger

1. Don't publish sensitive information on the blog
2. Remember that your blog entries are visible to the whole world
3. Record your own original information
4. Use a simple language
5. Avoid topics that are of no interest to the readers
6. Use sense of humour , if you have any
7. Don't hurt other people's sentiments
8. Be regular with your blog posts

Netiquette

Netiquette refers to the good practices and customs that are commonly followed while you are online. It is a combination of the words 'net' and 'etiquette'. Try to avoid bulky attachments while sending e-mail. Do not forward e-mails for fun. It is also not advisable to forward someone's e-mail without their permission.

Note- making

Note -making is an essential skill for students. It is the art of processing information by breaking it into manageable units. It is condensed and presented in an accessible form.

Strategies for making notes

1. Preserve the important information and discard the unimportant ones
2. Maintain the logical structure followed in the original
3. Note down one's own observations
4. Use symbols
5. Use visual data processing methods like diagrams

Questions

- 1 What should be the essential quality of a newspaper headline? (1)
- 2 What is a byline in a news report? (1)
- 3 What is the benefit of using charts in the visual representation of data? (2)
- 4 What is the purpose for which schedules are prepared? (1)
- 5 -----is used to record changes over a period of time (schedules,charts,graphs) (1)
- 6 What is an official letter? (2)
- 7 What is an MOU? (1)
- 8 What is the purpose for which an official profile is prepared? (1)
- 9 What is a sentence? (1)
- 10 Pradeep bought a new car (Identify the subject and predicate in this sentence) (1)
- 11 Write a note on the types of sentences in English (2)
- 12 What are the two types of paragraphs? (2)
- 13 What are the different types of reports? (2)
- 14 Write an essay on the structure of a project report (4)
- 15 Your company manufactures electrical goods. Due to the increase in the price of raw materials, you are forced to sell your products at a higher price. Write a letter to a distributor explaining the circumstances of price rise. (4)
- 16 Your company has purchased electrical goods from a manufacturer. Many of the delivered goods are of poor quality. Write a letter to the General Manager of the company complaining about the issue (4)
- 17 You are applying for the post of a Chemistry teacher in Kendriya Vidyalaya, Kochi. Prepare a resume for this purpose (4)
- 18 You are applying for the job of a software engineer in Infosys. Write a cover letter for the application. (4)
- 19 What are the advantages of e-mail over conventional letter-writing? (4)
- 20 What is netiquette? (2)
- 21 Write an essay on the strategies for making effective notes (4)
- 22 Blog is a shortened form of ----- (1)
- 23 What is a blog? (1)
- 24 Write a note on the characteristics of blogs (2)

MODULE IV

Grammar and Pronunciation

Part I

Grammar

1. Word Class

Words are fundamental parts in every sentence. If we analyse a sentence like *My sister learns music*, we can tell instinctively that *sister* and *music* belong to same group of words and that *sister* and *learns* belong to different group. We mean they belong to different word classes. There are seven major word classes in English. They are also called *Parts of Speech*. Word classes are broadly classified into two categories-*lexical (open)* and *functional (closed)*. The open class or lexical class admits new words readily. The words that belong to this class are Nouns, Verbs, Adverbs and Adjectives. The closed class or the functional class consists of Auxiliaries, Conjunctions, Prepositions, Determiners, Pronouns and Interjections. There are three criteria based on which word classes are established.

Criteria for word classes

1. The meaning of the word (Semantic)

Using this criterion we generalise the kind of meaning that words carry. For example, we can group together the words *sister* and *music* as well as *Jack*, *Paris* and *car* on the basis that they all refer to people, place or things. We group them under the class *Noun*. The word *learns* can be grouped with *walks* or *eat* as they denote some level of action. We group them under the class *Verb*. But this criterion has some limitations. Definition of a noun denoting the name of person, place or thing is inadequate since it includes abstract notions such as love, imagination, beauty etc. Similarly to define verbs as action word excludes a verb like *be* which denotes a state.

2. The form or the shape of the word (Morphological)

Some words can be grouped with the word classes on the basis of their form or shape. For example, many nouns have a characteristic-*tion* ending. E.g. action, condition, nation, amplification etc. Similarly many adjectives end in *-able*. E.g. acceptable, measurable, respectable etc. Many words also take inflections or regular changes in their forms under certain conditions. For example, noun can take plural inflection, usually by adding an *-s* at the end. E.g. car-cars, boy-boys. Verbs also take inflection. E.g. walk-walks-walked.

3. The position or environment of a word in a sentence (Syntactic)

Syntactic or grammatical refers to where words typically occur in a sentence and the kind of words which typically occur near to them. Compare the following sentences.

- a) I *cook* dinner every Sunday.

- b) The *cook* is on holiday.
- c) The word *cook* is a verb in first sentence and a noun in the second. It depends on the environment where the word occurs. Same word can belong to more than one class. But it can belong to one word class at a time depending on how it is used.

A sentence cannot be formed only with *content* words.

The boy in the black dress sings well

Here *boy*, *black*, *dress*, *sings* and *well* are all *content (lexical)* words. Though these are all *content* words providing the meaning component, there are three words which have a function in the making of a grammatically complete sentence: *the*, *in* and *the*. *The* is an article and *in* is a preposition. They are called *functional words*.

Lexical category

Lexical words, also known as content words, are words having concrete meaning which go beyond their function in a sentence. They have a culturally shared meaning in labelling an object or action. Nouns, Verbs, Adverbs and Adjectives belong to this category.

Noun : Milk, New Delhi, Bus, Sachin, imagination

Verb : run, drink, play, talk

Adjective : bright, fat, sharp,

Adverb : slightly, actually, besides

Functional category

Functional words, also known as grammatical words, have little definite meaning of their own and are ambiguous without context. They define the structure of a sentence and relate lexical words to each other.

Consider the following sentence:

The darkness dawned as the sun set.

The lexical words, *darkness*, *dawned*, *sun* and *set* together do not create a complete sense. The sentence make sense only when the grammatical words, *the* and *as* are used in proper place.

Pronoun : it, he, she, somebody, i etc.

Preposition : above, at, for, by etc.

Conjunction : and, but, although, because etc.

Interjection : alas!

Demonstratives : this, that, these, those

Articles : a, an, the

Auxiliary Verbs : be, have, do, will etc.

2. Subject- Verb Agreement

Subject-verb agreement refers to the relationship between the subject and the verb in a sentence. The verb has to agree with the subject in Person and

Number. A singular subject takes a singular form of a verb and a plural subject takes a plural form of a verb.

Consider the following sentences.

- 1) Mina teaches English.
- 2) Mina and Veena teach English.
- 3) I teach English.
- 4) Mina taught English.

In the first sentence, Mina-the subject is First Person Singular and the verb form *teaches* is used. In the second sentence, the subject (Mina and Veena) is Third Person Plural and the verb *teach* is used. In the third sentence, the subject (I) is First Person Singular and the verb *teach* is used.

General rules of subject-verb agreement

1. Subjects and [verbs](#) must agree in number. This is the cornerstone rule that forms the background of the concept.
The *dog grows* when he is angry. The *dogs grow* when they are angry.
2. [Prepositional phrases](#) between the subject and verb usually do not affect agreement.
E.g. The *colours* of the rainbow *are* beautiful.
3. When sentences start with “there” or “here,” the subject will always be placed after the verb, so care needs to be taken to identify it correctly.
E.g. There *is* a problem with the balance sheet. Here *are* the papers you requested.
4. If two subjects are joined by *and*, they typically require a plural verb form.
E.g. The cow and the pig *are jumping* over the moon.
5. The verb is singular if the two subjects separated by *and* refer to the same person or thing.
E.g. *Red beans and rice is* my mom's favourite dish.
6. If one of the words *each*, *every*, *or no* comes before the subject, the verb is singular.
E.g. No *smoking or drinking is* allowed. Every *man and woman is* required to check in.
7. If the subjects are both singular and are connected by the words *or*, *nor*, *neither/nor*, *either/or*, and *not only/but also* the verb is singular.
E.g. *Jessica or Christian is* to blame for the accident.

8. The singular verb form is usually used for units of measurement or time.

E.g. Four *quarts of oil* *was* required to get the car running.

9. If the subjects are both plural and are connected by the words *or*, *nor*, *neither/nor*,

either/or, and *not only/but also*, the verb is plural.

E.g. *Dogs and cats* *are* both available at the pound.

10. If one subject is singular and one plural and the words are connected by the

words *or*, *nor*, *neither/nor*, *either/or*, and *not only/but also*, you use the verb form of

the subject that is nearest the verb.

E.g. Either the *bears* or the *lion* *has* escaped from the zoo. Neither the *lion* nor

the *bears* *have* escaped from the zoo.

11. Indefinite pronouns typically take singular verbs except for the [pronouns](#) (few,

many, several, both, all, and some) that always take the plural form.

E.g. *Everybody* *wants* to be loved.

E.g. *Few* *were* left alive after the flood.

12. Collective nouns like herd, senate, class, crowd, etc. usually take a singular verb

form.

E.g. The *crowd* *is* turning restless.

13. Titles of books, movies, novels, etc. are treated as singular and take a singular verb.

The Burbs *is* a movie starring Tom Hanks.

2. TENSES

Tense is the form of a verb used to show:

a) The time of an action, a state of an event

b) The degree of completeness.

In English, verbs have past and present tense forms. The future is expressed in various ways with the help of auxiliaries.

The present tense refers to an action which is done at the present.

E.g. there he goes.

The past tense refers to an action completed sometime in the past.

E.g. I visited the Taj Mahal yesterday.

The future tense refers to an action to be done sometime from now.

E.g. I will meet him in the evening.

TENSE CHART

Tense	Indefinite (Simple)	Continuous	Perfect	Perfect Continuous
Present	(Write) They / I write He/She writes	They are writing. He/She is writing. I am writing.	They /I have written. He/She has written.	They/I have been writing. He/She has been writing.
Past	They/I/She/He wrote.	He/ She/I was writing. They were writing.	He/She/They/I had written.	They/I/She/He had been writing.
Future	They/I shall write. She/He will write.	They/He/I/She will be writing. They/I/She/He shall be writing.	They/I/He/She will have written. He/They/I/She shall have written.	They/He/She/I shall have been writing. They/I/He/She will have been writing.

The Present Tense

1. Use of Simple Present Tense

- a) To express habitual action.
E.g. He goes to temple every day.
They visit their home town every vacation.
- b) To express a general or universal truth.
E.g. Water boils at 100° C.
- c) To make statements of general nature.
E.g. this pen costs thousand rupees.
- d) To express a situation or fact that is permanent.
E. g. Delhi stands in the banks of Yamuna.
- e) To describe an action that is to take place in the near future.
E.g. My sister arrives from Bangalore tomorrow.
- f) To quote an author or a source of information.
E.g. Nehru says in his Discovery of India that.....
- g) In clauses showing time or condition when the main clause is in the future, we use simple present in the subordinate clause.
E.g. when I go to Dubai, I shall bring a *Rado* for you.

2. Use of Present Continuous

- a) To describe an action in progress and the continuity of the action.

E.g. boys are playing cricket.

b) To describe an action in progress but not necessary at the time of speaking.

E.g. He is writing a book on English grammar.

c) To express an action definitely planned for the near future.

E.g. the department of English is conducting a national seminar next week.

d) To express an action that has become a habit for doing it over and over again.

E.g. he is always coming late.

3. Use of Present Perfect Tense

a) To express an action that has been recently completed.

E.g. she has just returned from Hyderabad.

b) To describe a just happened action the time of which is not given

E.g. the courier has delivered the package.

c) To describe a past experience or event that has been repeated a number of times up to now. And connected with what is being spoken at present.

E.g. he has never tasted meat.

d) To express an action that began in the past and still continues.

E.g. they have lived in Calicut for two years.

I have not seen her since last Sunday.

4. Use of Present Perfect Continuous

a) To describe an action that began in the past, is still continuing and may extend in the future.

E.g. they have been working on the project for three years.

I have been living in Madurai since my childhood.

5. Use of Simple Past

a) To express events and actions that happened in an earlier time or in the past.

E.g. I visited Mysore last year.

b) To express a habitual or regular action in the past.

E.g. She offered prayers at the shrine of St. Alphonsa every year.

c) To express an event which occurred at a particular point in the past?

E.g. she returned from Hyderabad on Monday last.

d) To express an action which occupied a period of time in the past?

E.g. she stayed with her uncle for four years.

6. Use of Past Continuous

a) To express an action that was happening at some point in the past.

E.g. the boys were playing cricket.

b) To express an action that was continuous at a given point in the past time.

E.g. yesterday at 7:00 pm she was watching a TV programme.

7. Use of Past Perfect

a) When two actions happened in the past time, we use past perfect tense to refer to the first action.

E.g. the speech had ended before he reached the hall.

8. Use of Past Perfect Continuous

a) This tense is used to express an action that continued in the past for a given period of time.

E.g. he had been waiting for the parcel for two days.

9. Use of Simple Future

a) To talk about future actions or events which are part of some time table or programme.

E.g. the plane takes off at 6 O'clock in the morning.

b) To talk about future activities or events which have already been arranged.

E.g. i am going to do a lot of gardening in this week.

10. Future Continuous

a) Used when we talk about an action or event going on at a particular time or over a particular period in the future.

E.g. I shall be waiting for you at the railway station.

What will you be doing in the evening today?

11. Use of Future Perfect

a) To describe an activity or event that will have been completed by a certain point of time in the future.

E.g. I shall have finished my third revision by March.

12. Use of Future Perfect Continuous

a) To describe events or activities which have started and will continue to happen for a period or up to point of time in the future.

E.g. she will have been learning French for two years.

3. Articles

A, an and *the* are known as articles. An article is a kind of determiner. *A* and *an* are indefinite articles and *the* is the definite article.

Indefinite article *a* is used before a singular noun beginning with a consonant sound.

E.g. a pencil, a flower, a novel

Indefinite article *an* is used before a singular noun beginning with a vowel sound.

E.g. an ant, an umbrella, an Indian

There are some exceptions to these rules regarding the use of articles.

1) Indefinite article *an* is used in the following manner also

An hour, an honest man. (Here *h* is silent: the word begins with a vowel sound.)

2) Indefinite article *a* is used in the following manner also.

A uniform, a unique occasion, a university

When all do we use indefinite articles?

We use indefinite article with a noun following it for the first time. On repeating the noun the *definite article* is used.

E.g. I saw a boy yesterday. On looking closely I saw the boy was a victim of Endosulphan.

I saw an Orang-utan yesterday. The animal is supposed to be very intelligent.

A stranger came to our house yesterday. The man turned out to be my father's friend.

Indefinite article is used before a noun standing for a class. (Here the noun is generalised.)

E.g. A child is happy on seeing its mother.

A student today is expected to be computer literate.

Indefinite article is used with words referring to quantity, speed and measure.

E.g. I bought these apples at hundred rupees a kilogramme.

He had crossed the speed of 60 km an hour when the camera captured him.

The road was tarred at the cost of one crore a kilometre.

The definite article is used before: names of rivers, oceans, seas, ships, mountain ranges and group of islands.

E.g. The Pampa, The Indian Ocean, The I.N.S. Vikramaditya, The Himalayas, The West Indies

The definite article is used before the names of Epics and books of literature.

E.g. The Ramayana, The Bible, The Odyssey

The definite article is used before the names of families.

The Nehrus, The Guptas

The definite article is used before the names of institutions.

The Indian Parliament, the Indian Police Academy, the Reserve Bank of India.

The definite article is used before the names of titles.

The President of India, the Air Chief Marshal, The Chief Justice

If the name is mentioned the definite article is omitted.

E.g. President Barak Obama

The definite article is used before the names of heavenly bodies and the elements.

E.g. the sun, the moon, the earth, the sky

3. Phrases, Clauses and Sentences

Phrase

A phrase is a combination of two or more words that do not contain a [subject](#) and a [verb](#) pair necessary to form a [clause](#). Phrases can be very short or quite long. There are several different kinds of phrases.

1. A *noun phrase* comprises a noun and any associated modifiers.

E.g. The narrow and steep path.

Here *path* is a noun and *narrow and steep* are associated modifiers.

2. A *prepositional phrase* consists of a preposition, a noun or pronoun that serves as the object of the preposition.

E.g. The building across the street is very attractive.

Here *across* is a preposition and *building* is the noun that serves as the object of the preposition.

3. *Gerunds* are verbal nouns that act as nouns. They are frequently associated with modifiers and complements in a gerund phrase. These phrases function as units and can do anything that a noun can do.

E.g. preparing for examinations just a few days before the date is not a good practice.

Clauses

A group of words that includes a subject and a verb, and forms a sentence or part of a sentence is called a clause.

Co-ordinate clause

When two or more parts of a sentence are joined by *and*, *or* or *but* and each part has equal importance, those parts are called co-ordinate clause.

E.g. Our college quiz team won the state level power quiz and the principal felicitated them.

Here the two co-ordinate clauses are independent of each other.

Shakespeare was both a dramatist and a poet.

Subordinate clause

A group of words that form a sentence but only add some information to the main part of the sentence is called a subordinate clause. Subordinate clauses depend the main clause and do not have independent existence.

E.g. this is the girl who *has won the first prize*.

Here *has won the first prize* is a subordinate clause. It depends on the main clause *This is the girl*.

Noun clause

A clause that does the work of a noun is called a noun clause.

E.g. he told me *that he had completed the work*.

He always obeys *what his father says*.

Adjective clause

An adjective clause does the work of an adjective by qualifying a noun or pronoun.

E.g. this is the car *which I sold last month*.

Tell me the reason *why you did not attend the meeting*.

Adverb clause

An adverbial clause acts as an adverb in a sentence. It may denote time, place, purpose, condition, reason, or result.

E.g. my friend arrived *after I had left*. (Time)

I will follow you *wherever you go*. (Place)

Unless you work hard you cannot pass the examinations. (Condition)

We postponed the match *because it was raining*. (Reason)

He ran fast *so that he could catch the train*. (Purpose)

He was so tired *that he could not walk*. (Result)

Sentences

A sentence is a set of words that is arranged in a grammatically acceptable order and complete in itself, typically containing a subject and predicate, conveying a statement, question, exclamation, or command. It has two parts: a subject and a predicate.

Subject: The subject is usually a [noun](#)--a word (or phrase) that names a person, place, or thing.

My daughter is a musician.

She was waving an Indian flag.

After the final song, the *drummer* hurled his sticks at the crowd.

My friend and I both have a dog named Spot.

Sitting in a tree was a huge black bird with long blue tail.

Generally subject of a sentence is placed in the beginning. However the subject may come in the middle or at the end as shown above.

Predicate: The [predicate](#) (or *verb*) usually follows the subject and identifies an action or a state of being. The *predicate* contains information about someone or something that is the subject.

My new watch has stopped.

They are building a new house.

Object: Objects come in two types, direct and indirect. The direct object refers to a person or thing affected by the action of the verb. The indirect object refers to a person or thing who receives the direct object. Consider the following sentences:

He opened *the door*.

I gave *him* the book

The *door* in the first sentence is the direct object as it is the thing being affected by the verb to open. In the second sentence *him* is the indirect object as it receives the direct object *the book*.

Types of Sentences: Based on their nature sentences are divided into four types. They are Declarative Sentences, Imperative Sentences, Exclamatory Sentences and Interrogative Sentences.

Declarative sentences make a statement to relay information or ideas.

E.g. He is the chairman of the committee.

Imperative sentences issue commands or requests or they can express a desire or wish.

E.g. please open the window.

Interrogative sentence always ask a question and end in a question mark.

How old are you?

Exclamatory sentences express strong emotion.

Oh! What a wonderful day!

4. Voices

Verbs are said to be either *active* or *passive* in voice. In the *active voice*, the subject and verb relationship is straightforward: the subject is a *doer* and the verb moves the sentence along. In the *passive voice*, the subject of the sentence is not a doer, but is acted upon by some other agent or by something unnamed. Only a transitive verb has active and passive voices. A transitive verb is one which takes an object.

E.g. I ate an omelette yesterday.

Here the verb ate takes the noun omelette as object. Therefore *ate* is a transitive verb which can be used in both active and passive voices.

A verb which does not take an object is an intransitive verb.

E.g. He sings melodiously.

Here the verb *sings* does not have an object and therefore it has no passive form.

In passive voice construction, the object of the active verb becomes the subject. The verb is preceded by the appropriate auxiliary verb and the past participle form of the verb is used. Where needed, the 'by+ agent' is used.

E.g. This medicine kills germs. (Active Voice)

Germs are killed by this medicine. (Passive Voice)

Passive Verb Formation

The passive forms of a verb are created by combining a form of the "to be verb" with the past participle of the main verb. Other helping verbs are also sometimes present: "The measure could have been killed in committee." The passive can be used, also, in various tenses. Let's take a look at the passive forms of "design."

Tense	Subject	Auxiliary		Past Participle
		Singular	Plural	
Present	The car/cars	is	are	designed.
Present perfect	The car/cars	has been	have been	designed.
Past	The car/cars	was	were	designed.
Past perfect	The car/cars	had been	had been	designed.
Future	The car/cars	will be	will be	designed.
Future perfect	The car/cars	will have been	will have been	designed.
Present Continuous	The car/cars	is being	are being	designed.
Past Continuous	The car/cars	was being	were being	designed.

Model Questions

I. Fill in the blanks with right word given in brackets.

1. We walked as _____ we could.

(fastly/ fast)

2. The flower smells very _____. (nce/ nicely)
3. I saw some _____ swimming in the lake. (peoples/ people)
4. The man _____ down the road is my uncle. (hurries/ hurrying)
5. I am very _____ to meet you. (delight/ delighted)
6. We had our house _____ white. (paint/ painted)
7. His speech was so _____ that fell asleep. (bored/ boring)
8. I was _____ to see her at the party. (surprised/ surprise)
9. Excuse me, I _____ if you can help me. (expect/ except)
10. Now let's go _____ to our weather forecaster. (on/ over)
11. Once there was a young man who called _____ Icarus. (himself/ oneself)
12. She likes _____ running. (go to/ go)
13. _____ one of you is coming to my house later? (Who/ Which)
14. I live in the big house _____ the corner. (in/on)
15. Wild animals _____ in forests. (live/living)
16. I _____ the admission card two days ago. (received/have received)
17. I _____ non-vegetarian food. (have never tasted/ never tasted)
18. It _____ continuously since this morning. (is raining/ has been raining)
19. He came in when I _____ TV. (was watching/ is watching)
20. My father is a novelist. He _____ his third novel. (is writing/ writes)
21. By the time the police arrived, the pickpocket _____. (escaped/ had escaped)
22. We celebrated our sister's wedding last month. We _____ for a suitable alliance for two years. (looked/ had been looking)
23. Jane asked her husband _____. (where was her chain/where her chain was)
24. The teacher told us _____ our finished projects. (where we should leave/ where should we leave)
25. Science books _____ in this shop. (sold/ are sold)
26. The match _____ by our team. (has been won/ won)
27. The case _____ by the court. (will take/ will be taken)
28. The signature _____ by the police. (was verified/ verified)
29. The secret _____ by my wife. (had been given out/ gave out)

30. The work _____ by them yesterday. (is completed/ was completed)

Part-II

Pronunciation

Basics of phonetics

Phonetics is a branch of Linguistics that deals with the production, transmission and reception of speech sounds. The basic unit of English language is phoneme and each phoneme is represented by a specific symbol in phonetics. In English language there is no one- to- one correspondence between the sounds that produced and symbols used to represent them. The 44 sounds in English are graphically represented by 26 letters of English Alphabet. Twenty four of them are consonants and remaining twenty are vowel sounds. Vowels are further divided into two groups- twelve Monophthongs and eight Diphthongs. International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is used to represent all the sounds that exist in the languages of the world. IPA is based on the Latin alphabet. It is used for phonetic transcription of speech. The phonemic symbols taken from IPA that are used in English are given below.

Vowels

- 1 /i:/ as in- - Sheep tea, me, field, key, receive
- 2 /ɪ /- bit, gym, bucket, cabbage
- 3 /e/- egg, net, bet, bread, said
- 4 /æ/- bat, cat, rat, sat
- 5 /ʌ/- but, cut, shut _
- 6 /ɑ:/- car, large, march clerk, heart, guard
- 7 /ɔ/- hot, pot, pause

- 8 /ɔ:/- caught, taught, bought, paw
- 9 /ʊ/ put, truth hood, could
- 10 /u:/- cube cue, shoe, new, boot
- 11 /ə:/or /ɜ:/- fern, perfect, shirt, purple, earth, worm
- 12 /ə/- about, alike _
- 13 /eɪ/- tray, pray, train, great, eight, skate
- 14 /aɪ/- kite, bite, night, tie, fly, height
- 15 /ɔɪ/- boy, toy, noise
- 16 /əʊ/- home, bone, nose know, grow
- 17 /aʊ/- how, now _
- 18 /iə/- ear, fear ,deer
- 19 /eə/- chair, pair there, their, square, bear, wear
- 20 /ʊə/- poor, tour ,sure

Consonants

- 1 /p/ pit, pin -
- 2 /b/ bit, bat -
- 3 /t/ time, ten -
- 4 /d/ door, dog -
- 5 /k/ `kite, kit, cat, duck, chemistry
- 6 /g/ get, go -
- 7 /tʃ/ chop, chick -
- 8 /dʒ/ judge, jam, giraffe
- 9 /f/ fan, fun telephone, rough
- 10 /v/ van, vine -
- 11 /θ/ think, thought -
- 12 /ð/ that, this -
- 13 /s/ send, see, circle
- 14 /z/ zip, zoo, pins
- 15 /ʃ/ q shop, shoe invitation, sure, chef,
- 16 /ʒ/ leisure, pleasure, garage -
- 17 /h/ hen, happy -
- 18 /m/ man, monkey -
- 19 /n/ nice, night, knife, gnome
- 20 /ŋ/ ring, sing, English, tongue
- 21 /l/ leg, long -
- 22 /r/ rat, run, write
- 23 /w/ wet, wine -
- 24 /j/ yet, yes -

Received Pronunciation

English is spoken as first language in many countries in the world. In several other countries English is used as a second language or taught as a foreign language. But all of them do not speak English in the same way. English

has many varieties differing mainly in pronunciation. A variety of English which has been widely accepted across the globe is Received Pronunciation (RP). Received Pronunciation is variety of English spoken by educated Southern Britishers and has gained wide social acceptance.

Sounds in English

Speech sounds are broadly divided into two categories: Vowels and Consonants. The speech sounds are produced with lung air which is modified by certain organs in the respiratory system, phonatory system and articulatory system of human body. The lungs, the muscles of the chest, wind pipe, larynx, tongue, teeth, roof of the mouth and lips are referred to as the organs of speech. The air we breathe out passes through the windpipe and reaches the mouth where the air stream is modified by the organs of speech. Sounds without any friction in the mouth are called vowels. Consonants are sounds produced with friction in the mouth.

Vowels

Vowels are produced with the vocal tract open or open articulation. During the articulation of vowels, the lung air escapes through the mouth freely without any obstruction in the mouth. The tongue acts as the active articulator for producing the vowels. Vowels are further divided into two categories: Monophthongs (12 in Number) and Diphthongs (8 in number).

Monophthongs (Pure vowels)

Monophthongs are those vowels which do not change their quality during their articulation or a vowel that is pronounced with more or less unvarying quality without any glide is a monophthong. During the articulation of these vowels the tongue does not move from one position to another. Monophthongs are also called pure vowels as they do not change their quality during the articulation. Each vowel has different degrees of length depending upon the phonetic context it occurs. Monophthongs may be short or long depending on their duration: long vowels are approximately twice as long as short ones.

Short Vowels

/ɪ/ fit, ship, thin

/e/- end, pet, get, thread

/æ/- mat, fat, ran, sat

/ʌ/- hut, shut, cut

/ɔ/- hot, pot, pause

/u/ put, truth hood, could

/ə/- about, alike

Long vowels

/i:/ as in Sheep tea, me, field

/ɑ:/ car, large, march

/ɔ:/ caught, taught

/ə:/ or /ɜ:/- fern, perfect

/u:/- cube cue, shoe

Four of the twelve pure vowels are front vowels. They are (/i:/, /I/, /e/ & /æ/). During the articulation of these vowels the front of the tongue is raised towards the roof of the mouth.

/i:/- eat (initial), beat (medial), bee (final)

/I/- ink (initial), bit (medial), city (final)

/e/- any (initial), bed (medial). /e/- doesn't occur in the final position.

/æ/- apple (initial), bat (medial). /æ/- doesn't occur in the final position.

Five are back vowels. During the articulation of these vowels back of the tongue is raised towards the roof of the mouth.

/ɑ:/ - art (initial), part (medial), car (final)

/ɔ/- ox (initial), box (medial). /ɔ/- does not occur in the final position.

/ɔ:/ - ought (initial), brought (medial), law (final)

/u/- put (medial),

/u:/ - put (medial) does not occur in initial and final position.

/ʌ/, /ə/, /ə:/ are central vowels. During their articulation the centre of the tongue is raised towards the roof of the mouth.

/ʌ/- under (initial), won (medial)

/ə/- around (initial), forget (medial), tailor (final)

/ə:/ - earth (initial), turn (medial) err (final)

Diphthongs

Diphthongs are combination of two vowels. These vowels change their quality over the duration of articulation. The vowel sound in the word *high* is an example for diphthong. If we prolong the vowel in *high*, we can notice a change in the quality of the vowel. The vowel at the end does not sound the same as that of the beginning. The process of moving from one vowel sound to another is called *gliding*. Diphthongs can be described as vowel glides as the tongue moves from one vowel position towards the position required for the articulation of another vowel.

Diphthongs are divided into three groups based on the terminal point of the vowel.

a) Vowels gliding towards /I/.

1) /eI/- eight (initial), chain (medial), play (final)

2) /aI/- eye (initial), fight (medial), sky (final)

3) /ɔI/- oil (initial), spoil (medial) boy (final)

b) Vowels gliding towards /u/.

4 /əu/- home, bone, nose know, grow

5 /au/- how, now _

6 /iə/- ear, fear, deer

7 /eə/- chair, pair there, their, square, bear, wear

8 /uə/- poor, tour ,sure

Consonants

Consonants are speech sounds articulated with complete or partial closure of the vocal tract. Consonants are pronounced by stopping the air from flowing easily through the mouth, especially by closing the lips or touching the teeth with the tongue.

/p/ & /b/ - During the articulation of these sounds two lips come into contact with each other and tightly closed lips arrest the air stream for a while. When the lips are separated suddenly the air escapes with an explosive sound.

E.g. /p/ pin, spin, cup,

/b/	baby, best, blind
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/t/ & /d/ -The tip or the blade of the tongue make a firm contact with the teeth ridge. When the tongue is removed suddenly from the teeth ridge, the air escapes with an explosive sound.

E.g. /t/ tin, after, pat



/d/ dim, order, lad

/k/ & /g/ During the production of these sounds, the back of the tongue makes a firm contact with the back part of the roof of the mouth. When the tongue is removed air escapes with an explosive sound.

E.g. /k/ king, chemical, cat, mock

/g/ girl, eager, bag

/tʃ/ & /dʒ/ The tip or the blade of tongue moves against the teeth ridge making a firm contact with it. The tongue is removed slowly from the teeth ridge and air escapes with a friction.

E.g. /tʃ/- church, chance, nature, watch

/dʒ/- jealous, judge, giraffe

/f/ & /v/- The lower lip is brought very close to upper front teeth. The lung air escapes through the narrow gap between the lower lip and upper front teeth with an audible friction.

E.g. /f/- fat, phantom, proof

/v/- vat, velvet, wave

/θ/ & /ð/- During the articulation of these sounds the tip of the tongue makes a light contact with the upper front teeth. The air escapes through the narrow gap between the tip of the tongue and upper front teeth with an audible friction.

E.g. /θ/- thin, path, mathematics

/ð/ - that, father, breathe

/s/ & /z/-The tip and blade of the tongue are brought closer to the teeth ridge. The lung air escapes through the narrow gap between the tongue and teeth ridge with an audible friction.

E.g. /s/- soap, snake, passport

/z/- zoo, amaze, gaze

/ʃ/ & /ʒ/- The tip and blade of the tongue are brought closer to the teeth ridge. Simultaneously front of the tongue is raised against the hard palate. The lung air escapes through the gap between the tongue and the teeth ridge and the hard palate with an audible friction.

E.g. /ʃ/- sheep, nation, push, machine

/ʒ/- leisure, pleasure, mirage

/h/- It is a sound produced in the glottis. During the articulation of /h/ the lung air escapes through the glottis with an audible friction. It occurs only in syllable's initial position.

E.g. hat, house, how

/m/- During the articulation of this sound the two lips make a firm contact with each other.

E.g. man, remember, name

/n/-the tip or the blade of the tongue makes a firm contact against the teeth ridge. The air escapes through the nostrils.

E.g. nation, shine, snow

/ŋ/-During the articulation of this sound, the back of the tongue makes firm contact with the back of the roof of the mouth. The air escapes through the nostrils.

E.g. song, singing, hang

/l/- The tip or blade of the tongue makes a firm contact with the teeth ridge. The sides of the tongue are lowered and the air escapes along the sides of the tongue without any friction.

E.g. long, health, fail

/r/- The tip of the tongue is brought near the back part of the teeth ridge making sufficient gap between the two. The air escapes freely through this gap without any friction.

E.g. run, dry, grow

/w/- The tongue takes the position necessary for the articulation of a back vowel and then moves immediately to the position of the sound that follows /w/.

Eg. sweet, squirrel, watch

/j/- The tongue takes the position necessary for the articulation of a front vowel and moves immediately to the position of the following sound in the word that is articulated.

E.g. yell, university, yacht

Minimal Pairs

A minimal pair is a set of two words which differ from each other in one sound. The words *pit* and *fit* constitute a minimal pair. They differ from each other in the initial consonant. The words *mat* and *bat* also constitute a minimal pair. Similarly *bat* and *bet* constitute a minimal pair. They differ from each other in the medial vowel sound. However, the words *but* and *pun* do not constitute a minimal pair because they differ from each other in more than one sound- the initial consonants and the final consonants. So as *hen* and *pin* do not constitute a minimal pair as they differ from each other in more than one sound- the initial consonants and the medial vowels.

Syllables

A syllable is a basic unit of spoken language which consists of an uninterrupted sound that can be used to make up words. A word is made up of one or more syllables. Words like *art*, *dark*, *ant*, *ask*, *boat*, *can*, *day*, *end*, *fan*, *girl*, *hat* etc. have only one syllable. They can be pronounced with one stroke. A word having only one syllable is called monosyllabic word.

Words like *about*, *ago*, *bottle*, *canvas*, *darkness*, *enter*, *fancy*, *gentle* etc. Have two syllables. Words having two syllables are called disyllabic words. Words having more than two syllables are called polysyllabic words. E.g. *relationship*, *computation*, *transparency* etc.

Syllable division of a word can be marked with hyphen (-). The word *pencil* has two syllable and can be marked *pen-cil* (/pen-sil/). The words *remark* and *articulation* as *re-mark* (/ri-mɑ:k/) and *ar-ti-cu-la-tion* (/ɑ:ti-kju-lei-ʃn/).

A syllable consists of one or more sounds- a vowel and a consonant. A syllable may be formed with only one vowel sound. But it is not possible to form a syllable with only a consonant sound. If the syllable has more than one sound, one will be a vowel and the rest, consonants. E.g. the word *about* has two syllables- *a-bout*, the first one has only a vowel (/ə/), where as the second has three sounds- two consonants (/b/ & /t/) and the diphthong /au/. The vowel is the central element in a syllable and it is called the nucleus of the syllable.

How to count syllables in a word

1. Count the vowels in the word.
2. Subtract any silent vowels, (like the silent *e* at the end of a word, or the second vowel when two vowels are together in a syllable)
3. Subtract one vowel from every [diphthong](#) (diphthongs only count as one vowel sound.)
4. The number of vowels sounds left is the same as the number of syllables.

The number of syllables that you hear when you pronounce a word is the same as the number of vowels sounds heard. For example:

The word *came* has 2 vowels, but the *e* is silent, leaving one vowel sound and one syllable. The word *outside* has 4 vowels, but the *e* is silent and the *ou* is a diphthong which counts as only one sound, so this word has only two vowel sounds and therefore, two syllables.

Word Stress

In some languages, each syllable in each word is pronounced with the exact same stress. English is not one of those languages. English has its own rhythm, complete with its own vocal music. This means that one part of a certain word is said louder and longer than other parts of the same word. It is something that is completely natural for English speakers, but something non-native speakers can learn from practicing their conversational skills and by learning the rules for using word stress.

The words *any* and *anything* have more than one syllable each-*a-ny* & *a-ny-thing*. While articulating these words, we can notice that one of the syllables in each word is pronounced with greater prominence. The greater prominence of a syllable is determined by the length of the vowel of that particular syllable. The syllable which is pronounced with more loudness and prolongation is called stressed syllable or accented syllable. The stressed syllable is marked with a vertical line (') *before* the stressed syllable in the phonetic transcription of the word. For example, the transcription for [become](#) is /bɪ 'kʌm/.

In English, a word having several syllables each; more than one syllable may prominent. For example, the word *international* (/,ɪn-tə-'næ-ʃə-n(ə)l/ which has five syllables, the maximum force is on the third syllable--'næ- and the syllable that has next degree of prominence is the first syllable-,ɪn. Other syllables- tə, ʃə, n(ə)l are pronounced with less prominence than the two syllables mentioned above. So in a word with many syllables. The one which is pronounced with greater prominence takes the primary stress and the next prominent syllable carries the secondary stress. The secondary stress is

marked with a small lowered vertical line preceding the stressed syllable: *information* /,ɪnfə'meɪʃən/, *represent* /,reprɪ'zent/.

General rules for word stress

1. In disyllabic words which can be used both as nouns and verbs, the first syllable takes the stress when they are used as nouns and the second syllable is stressed when they are used as verbs.

E.g. addict – /'ædɪkt/ (noun) is a person addicted to something (such as heroin); /ə'dɪkt/ (verb) means “to cause someone to become addicted”.

construct – /kən'strʌkt/ (verb) means “to build”; /'kɒnstrʌkt/ (noun) is “something constructed; a concept”.

decrease – /dɪ'kri:s/ (verb) means “to become smaller”; /'di:kri:s/ (noun) is “a reduction”.

insult – /ɪn'sʌlt/ (verb) means “to offend someone”; /'ɪnsʌlt/ (noun) is “an action intended to be rude”.

2. Words with two syllables beginning with the prefix-dis are stressed on the last syllable

E.g. disarm /dɪs'ɑ:m/, dislike /dɪs'laɪk/, disturb /dɪ'stɜ:b/ etc.

3. Verbs having two syllables and end in -ate, -ise/ize, -ct take stress on the last syllable.

E.g. attract /ə'trækt/, cremate /kri'meɪt/, baptize /bæp'taɪz/ capsize /kæp'saɪz/ etc.

4. Words with weak prefixes always take the stress on the root.

E.g. aboard /ə'bɔ:d/, ago /ə'gəʊ/, ahead /ə'hed/, below /bɪ'ləʊ/ etc.

5. Words ending in -ion or tion, take stress on the preceding syllable of the -ion/tion.

E.g. application /,æplɪ'keɪʃən/, justification /,dʒʌstɪfɪ'keɪʃən/, etc.

6. Words ending in -ic, -ical, -ically, -ial, -ially take stress on the syllable preceding the suffix.

E.g. apologetic /ə,pələ'dʒetɪk/, optica /'ɒptɪkəl/, economically /,i:kə'nɒmɪkəl/ etc.

7. Words ending in -ty, -cracy, -crat take stress on the third syllable from the end.

E.g. Oppor'tunity /,ɒpə'tju:nɪtɪ/, capacity /kə'pæsɪtɪ/, democracy /dɪ'mɒkrəsi/, democrat /'dɛmə,kreɪt/ etc.

8. Words ending in -graph, -graphy, -meter, -logy take stress on the third syllable from the end.

E.g. autograph /'ɔ:tə,grɑ:f/, biography /baɪ'ɒgrəfi/, biology /baɪ'ɒlədʒɪ/, barometer /bə'rɒmɪtə/ etc.

9. Words ending with the suffixes -aire, -eer, -ental, -ential, -ese, -esce, -escence, -escent, -ee, -ete, -ade etc. Take stress on the suffix.

E.g. pioneer /,paɪə'niə/, career /kə'riə/, delete /dɪ'li:t/, questionnaire, /,kwɛstʃə'nɛə/ payee /peɪ'i:/, barricade /,bærɪ'keɪd/, essential /ɪ'sɛnʃəl/, adolescent /,ædə'lesənt/, adolescence /,ædə'lesəns/ etc.

10. Compound words written as one word take stress on the first element.

E.g. blacksmith /'blæk,smɪθ/, blackboard /'blæk,bɔ:d/, mailbag /'meɪl,bæg/ footprint /'fʊt,prɪnt/ t, postman /'pəʊstmən/ etc.

11. Compound words with -ever and -self as second elements, take stress on the second element.

E.g. himself /hɪm'self/, however /haʊ'evə/, myself /maɪ'self/, whatever /wɒt'evə etc.

Model questions

I. Choose the right answer from the answers given below:

1. A. Give the the phonetic symbol of the underlined vowel in *ample*.
a) /ɑ:/ b) /ə/ c) /æ/ d) /ʌ/
2. ----- are also called vowel glides.
a) pure vowels, b) monophthongs c) diphthongs
3. Words with two syllables are called -----words.
a) monosyllabic, b) disyllabic, c) polysyllabic
4. How many syllables are there in the word *haphazard* ?
a) two, b) three, c) four, d) five
5. Choose the correctly stressed word from the options given below.
a) 'capacity b) ca'pacity c) capa 'cityn d) capaci'ty
6. Complete the sentence choosing the rightly stressed word,
The election commission has decided to ----- a massive campaign
against
criminalisation of politics. ('conduct/ con 'duct)
7. We need to segregate the ----- before we dispose of it. (re 'fuse/ 'refuse)
8. Fill in the following with /v/ or /w/.
a) /__aɪn/ b) /__eɪn/ c) /[__el/ d) /__ɒtʃ/
9. Identify the diphthong in the word *endure*.
a) /əʊ/ b) /uə/ c) /iə/
10. Identify the diphthong in the word *shame*.
a) /aɪ/ b) /eɪ/ c) /iə/
11. Identify the diphthong in the word *height*.
a) /eɪ/ b) /iə/ c) /aɪ/
12. Identify the diphthong in the word *pure*.
a) /əʊ/ b) /uə/ c) /eə/
13. How many syllables are there in the word *remarkable*?
a) three b) two c) four d) five
14. Mark the primary stress and secondary stress in the following words.
a) examination b) articulation
15. Transcribe the following words in to phonetic script.
a) enjoy b) church
16. Transcribe the following words into phonetic script.
a) doctor b) delight

17. Which of the following word does not have the sound / i: /?
a) bean b) bead c) pick
- 18) Which of the following word does not have the sound /e/?
a) pet b) feel c) bet d) spell
- 19) Find the phonetic symbol for the first sound in each of the following words:
a) this b) knee c) usual
- 20) Find the phonetic symbol for the last sound in each of the following words:
a) hear b) church c) garage

II. Answer the following in one or two sentences each:

1. What is the difference between a vowel and a consonant?
2. What are the short vowels in English?
3. What are the long vowels in English?
4. What is a pure vowel?
5. What is meant by a diphthong?
6. Why the diphthongs are also called vowel glides?
7. What is a syllable? How is syllable division marked?
8. What is the difference between a monophthong and a diphthong?
9. What is a monosyllabic word? Give examples.
10. What is a disyllabic word? Give examples.
11. What is a trisyllabic word? Give example.
12. What is a polysyllabic word? Give examples.
13. What is stress?
14. How is the sound /p/ articulated?
15. How is the sound /tʃ/ produced?
16. How is the sound /f/ articulated?
17. How is the sound /θ/ produced?
18. How is the sound /ʒ/ articulated?
19. How is the sound /ŋ/ articulated?
20. How is the sound /j/ articulated?

III. Answer the following in about 100 words each:

Give a brief description of pure vowels in English

1. Describe the diphthongs in English with examples.

2. What is word stress? Illustrate how word stress is marked.
3. What is a syllable? How do you make syllable division of a word? Give examples.
4. What is a minimal pair? Give examples for minimal pairs.
5. What is RP?

IV. Answer the following questions in about three hundred words each: (4 mark each)

1. Describe the sounds in English with examples.
2. Give a detailed note on the vowels in English with examples.
3. Give a brief description of the consonants in English with examples.

For further reading:

1. A.C. Gimson: An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English.
2. Jones Daniel: English Pronouncing Dictionary
3. Balasubramanyam. T: A Textbook of English Phonetics for Indian Students.
4. Bansal,R.K & J.B. Harrison: Spoken English for India.
