DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AND GENERAL STUDIES
GEN 103: COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Lecture 1 – Communication

Communication refers to the dynamic and complex process of message exchange and interpretation. It is an activity in which information of some sort – an idea, a thought, belief, opinion, emotion, feeling, attitude, etc. is transmitted from one 'system' to another by means of some physical embodiment. It is a means of exchanging messages, or an act of giving information and receiving response. 'System' is used here because communication can occur among both human and non-human entities. Our concern however is in human communication. In this regard we may consider a definition of communication as presented by Stuart Sillars (1988)[1]. He defines communication as:

> the giving, receiving or exchange of information, opinions or ideas by writing, speech or visual means – or any combination of the three – so that the material communicated is completely understood by everyone concerned. (p 1)

'Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages, and it occurs whenever we express our selves in a manner that is clearly understood'
McCutcheon, Schaffer and Wycoff.*Communication Matters.*New york, West Publishing. (1994:5)

Types of Communication
1. Intrapersonal Communication
This is communication within the individual; e.g. when the tactile sense organs communicate feelings of coolness or warmth to the brain, or the thought processes involved in making one decision or another.

2. Interpersonal Communication
This refers communication between one person and another or others or among several persons.

3. Mass Communication
Mass communication involves the use of media that reach large numbers of people, usually far removed from the sender; e.g. radio, television, newspapers, books, film, internet, etc.

4. Others types
Social communication
Business Communication
Inter-cultural Communication

Forms of Communication
Communication may be in three main forms:
Forms of Communication
Among humans, the most obvious means of communication is language, which may be in the form of speech or writing. Other means by which human beings communicate are the use of gestures, facial expressions, eye-movements, nods, smiles, frowns, ringing of bells, playing of musical instruments, dressing, drawings, maps, etc. Communication is thus categorized as

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[1]Stuart Sillars (1988) *Success in Communication.* London. John Murray.

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Spoken Communication, (whichmay also be referred to as verbal or oral communication)
Written Communication, Body Language (or non-verbal communication)**, and Other forms.**

a) Oral communication – In oral communication spoken words are used to exchange ideas and information.

       e.g. one-on-one conversation
       meetings
       interviews
       teleconferencing

Characteristics of oral communication:
       information exchange is instantaneous;
       there is ample opportunity to make one's point again;
       there is possibility of immediate feedback;
       there is often little opportunity to reflect on what is said;
       the need for the mechanics of writing (spelling, punctuation) does not arise.

b) Written Communication: includes letters, faxes, memorandums, electronic mail, news releases, tables, charts and graphs.

Characteristics of written communication:
       Provides proof that the information was sent.
       Ample opportunity to organize information
        Immediate feedback may not be possible.
       Requires attention to mechanics of writing (spelling, punctuation, paragraphing)

Medium of Communication
Medium refers to the larger group of ways in particular form of communication may be carried out :
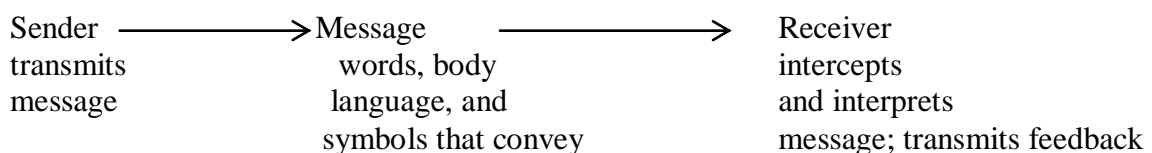   *Written communication:* letters, memos, books articles, notices, posters.
       Oral Communication: any method using the spoken word – meetings, telephone calls, lectures, informal discussions.
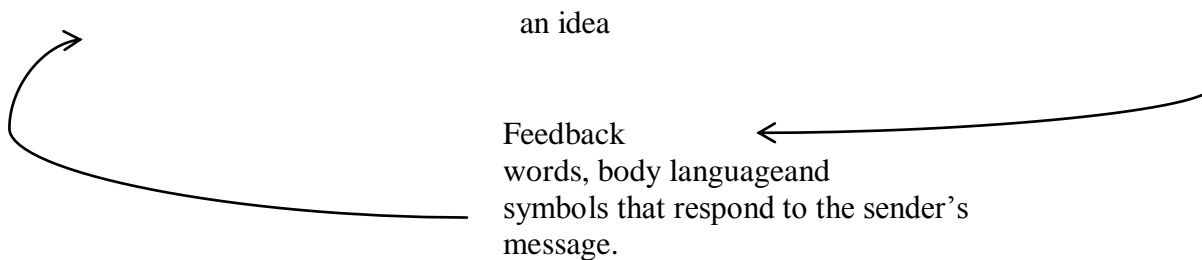
Channel of communication
Channel is the physical means by which the message is conveyed. Channels used in written communication include; notice-board, internal mail service or public postal service, e-mail, facebook wall, twitter, book, open letter/personal letter.
Channels of oral communication: telephone call, face-to-face interaction.

The Process of Communication

Sender	→	Message	→	Receiver
transmits		words, body		intercepts
message		language, and		and interprets
		symbols that convey		message; transmits feedback

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an idea

Feedback
words, body languageand
symbols that respond to the sender's
message.

The **sender** is the one who **transmits.** The sender could be a writer, a speaker or a person who sends a non-verbal message through gestures and body language. The **message** is the content to be put across to the listener or reader. The sender puts the information into the best form in a process called **encoding** and sends or **transmits** it in a variety of forms. The receiver is the person who intercepts the message and then decodes or interprets it.

Feedback includes the reactions that the receiver gives to the message offered by the sender. When you talk on the telephone, write letters, or watch television, you are either sending messages or receiving them. Teachers communicate with students when they give instructions. Students communicate when they explain the assignment to a classmate.

Barriers to communication
Our attempts to communication may not always succeed because of factors, or barriers, that interfere with the communication. One of such barriers is **noise**
1. Noise is any factor which prevents the proper exchange of information apart from those caused by the sender and receiver.

> 'Noise includes anything that interferes with the success of the message exchange.' Gibson and Hanna (1992) *Introduction to Human Communication.* (p. 17).

Noise can be physical – sounds of traffic, mobile phone ring signals, or some other form of interference: bad network, poor handwriting, a computer failure which causes the loss of documents. It can be some impairment in the sender or receiver.
Noise can be psychological - prejudices, biases e.g. about the gender of the sender.

2. Distortion: Occurs when the message that is sent or received is not the information that is intended. Distortion can occur at the encoding stage (caused by the sender) or the decoding stage (caused by the receiver). Distortion by sender may be caused when your use of language differs from that of the speaker.

The receiver's understanding of language may lead to a different interpretation than the one intended by the sender. These may also be referred to as 'semantic noise' (Gibson and Hanna, 1992:17).
3) Barriers caused by sender
a) An unclear or poorly made message will create a barrier to understanding.
b) Poor grammar, wrong choice of words, illegible handwriting, etc. cause distortions
c) Use of wrong medium or channel – e.g. personal letters vs. notice board.
d) Wrong timing of a message.

4) Barriers caused by receiver
   a) Lack of attention from the receiver may be a barrier to proper understanding of the message.

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b) Psychological barriers – prejudices and biases.
c) Language deficiencies.

5) Barriers caused by external factors
Physical distractions: noise, faulty equipment, poor lighting etc.

LECTURE 2

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Purposes of Communication
The first step in planning a message is to determine the purpose of your communication. You may communicate to:

To enquire: "When did you learn to use this digital camera?"
To inform: "This digital camera is six months old."
To persuade: "You will save time and money if you use a digital camera."
To develop goodwill: "Thank you for helping me select a digital camera."

Two types of skills are used in effectively achieving these purposes:

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a) non-linguistic skills

b) linguistic (language) skills

These together make up communication or communicative skills:

a) *Non-linguistic skills:*

    i. cultural skills (norms of communicative behavior)

    ii. knowledge of the subject.

    iii. self-confidence

    iv. effective use of body language; appearance (if written this includes the appearance of the document)

b) *linguistic (language) skills*

    i) Spoken communication:

      a) listening skills

      b) speaking skills.

    ii) Written communication:

      a) reading skills

      b) writing skills.

Language Skills: Spoken and written communication both use language in the form of speech and writing respectively and both require specific language kills.

Spoken communication: listening and speaking.

Written communication: **reading and writing**.

a) *Listening skills*

Listening is more than hearing. Hearing is involuntary; once the auditory senses are properly functional and they are hit by sound waves, hearing will take place whether you are paying attention to the sound or not. Listening on the other hand involves actively tuning the mind to a sound.

There are two kinds of listening: *passive* and *active* (or critical) listening.

Passive listening

The listener concentrates at a very low level and understands or remembers little of what is said.

Passive listening is appropriate only when you are listening for pleasure (e.g. listening to music) and when it does not matter whether you retain what you hear.

In the work place, and particularly in school passive listening is inappropriate.

Active (Critical) listening: Active listening is listening for important information, to understand and evaluate the message, noting the main points for the purposes of **retaining** them. Active listening involves a higher level of concentration and mental activity because you are listening for information which you mentally evaluate. 3 elements in **active** listening are

    Comprehending

    Retaining

    Responding

a) **Comprehending**.- accurately identifying and selecting important information by paying attention to information

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b) Retaining - Information retention follows from the above. Using information immediately after receiving it; when you evaluate the information and try to draw relations between the facts you enhance retention of the information.

c) Responding: Active listening also involves responding to the information in a number of ways including: questioning, paraphrasing, (feedback) such as:

"Are you saying...?"

"Do you mean...?"

"In other words what you are saying is..."

Speaking Skills

Two of the most common purposes of oral communication or speaking which require some levels of skills to be effective include:

Face-to-face conversation

Formal speech-making

Oral communication occurs in many different forms, some used more frequently than others, and each may require some forms of skills.

Face-to- face conversation: interviews, social situations, informal discussions with friends, colleagues, etc.

Skills:

Be a good listener - Listen attentively and show interest.

Permit others to talk too.

Watch for signs that the other person wants to talk too or is becoming bored (feedback).

Formal Speeches: debates, public speaking.

Skills:

thorough preparation,

research and orderly organization of the speech

READING

It is not for nothing that we often hear the question "What are you reading at the University?" or "What did she read for her first degree?"

Reading is the most important key to academic success, and the one that takes more of our time than any other academic activity. Reading must therefore not be taken for granted. We may spend one or two hours listening to a lecture n a topic, but we have to spend several hours reading over our notes in order to be able to retain and remember the ideas in it. Furthermore we have to read several other sources to get additional information on the subject, and to understand it better. One may read for pleasure or read to study, and to remember details.

Where there is little reading there is little learning.

Other Benefits of reading:

- Reading broadens our knowledge – both in our own field, and in other fields. Every additional source you read contributes to the understanding of others, or leads you to other sources.
- Reading helps us build our stock of vocabulary and improves our language skills.
- It helps improve our spelling

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- It enriches our experience, broadens our outlook and keeps us abreast with new developments either in our fields or in general knowledge.

Effective reading: A student requires effective reading. This has to do with both the quantity and quality of what one reads.

Quantity of reading: By this we mean extensive reading, not spending hours reading or pretending to be reading. Extensive reading means reading beyond the lecture notes. It must involve references given by the lecturer, and these will include books, journals, and other reference material. Other sources include, research papers, long essays, project reports, colleagues written assignments, newspapers, magazines, e-resources – there is a lot you can get from the internet if you search well.

Quality of reading.
The quality of one's reading may be described in terms of the level on mental involvement in what one reads and the speed at which one reads; i.e.
    Active reading
    Fast reading,
The good reader must know what to look for and must be actively involved in the text by thinking, questioning, and evaluating the material. The reader's mind should be engaged on questions like:
    What is the writer saying?
    What is the main idea?
    Can you paraphrase the main idea?
The reader evaluates the ideas by asking:
    Do they seem reasonable?
    Has the writer offered sufficient support?
How does the writer's thinking accord with your own experience, values, thoughts, etc.?
Is he or she biased?

Improving the quality of reading
Five issues involved in improving the quality of your reading:
    i.   Style of reading
    ii.   Active reading
    iii. Speeding up reading
    iv.   Spotting author's navigation aids
    v.   Words and vocabulary

i. Style of Reading
There are 3 styles of reading which we use in different situations: scanning, skimming, and detailed reading.

a) scanning
The technique you use when you try to locate a specific item, like looking up a name in a list. You run your eyes quickly over the page to find particular words or phrases that are relevant to the subject you are dealing with.

b) skimming:
The technique you use when you're going through a newspaper or magazine to get the gist of a story: you read quickly to get the main points, and skip over the detail. It's useful to skim:

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To preview a passage before you read it in detail

To refresh your understanding of a passage after you've read it in detail.

Use skimming if you're going to decide if a book in the library or bookshop is good for you.

c) detailed reading:

You used detailed reading to extract information accurately. You read every word, and work to learn from the text. In this type of reading you may find it helpful to skim first to get a general idea, then go back to read in detail.

Use a dictionary to make sure you understand all the words read.

ii. Active Reading

When you are reading for your course, you need to be actively involved in the text. When you study, it is a waste of time if you use passive reading, the way you read a story book. As you read to study, you need to engage your mind in the following ways:

a. make notes to keep your concentration.
b. underline or highlight what you think are the most important parts (of course with your own copy).
c. note key words.
d. questions: Before reading, put down questions that you want the material to answer (not always easy)
e. also take note of questions that the writer raises.
f. pause after you've read a section of text and then:
- put what you've read into your own words.
- skim through the text and check how accurate your summary is
- then fill in any gaps

iii. Speeding up your reading

Use the SQ3R technique to get the most out of your reading. These are the steps you take before you do the actual reading and what you do as you read.

Survey

Question

Read

Recall

Review

Survey: Before you begin reading any text, be it a book or an article, gather the information that will help you decide if you need to read the text:

o read the title to know the subject
o read the introduction or summary to see what the author thinks are key points
o note the boldface headings to see what the structure is
o note any maps, charts or graphs.
o note the reading aids: italics, bold face, questions at the end of the chapter -they are all there to help you understand and remember

Question: Engage your mind to concentrate on the text.

Pose questions- try turning the bold face headings into questions you think the section should answer.

Your mind is engaged in learning when it is actively looking for answers to questions.

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Read

> Read the first section with your question in mind.
> Look for answers and make up new questions if necessary

Recall

> Stop and think back to your questions.
> See if you can answer them from memory.
> If not, take a look back at the text
> Do this as often as you need.

Review

> Once you have finished the whole chapter go back over all the questions.

iv. Spotting Author's navigation aids:

You can enhance your comprehension and retention of the material you read if you learn to recognize the sign posts writers use to introduce important facts. These include transitional markers and sequence signals like

> "Three advantages of ...." or
> "A number of methods are available..."

These lead you to expect several points to follow. The first sentence of a paragraph will often indicate a sequence:

> "One important cause of..."
> Followed by "Another important factor...." and so on, until, "The final cause of..."

v. Vocabulary

A good stock of vocabulary is the single most important pre-requisite for effective reading. Comprehension, retention and making inferences, drawing conclusions, evaluating- all depend on whether you know what the words in the text mean in relation to each other and in the context in which they are used. At this level your vocabulary will grow as you learn new concepts, but you must also work to expand your vocabulary. To expand your vocabulary

- o read widely
- o get yourself a good dictionary rather than a 'compact' or pocket 'dictionary'.
- o keep your dictionary at hand when you're studying.
- o kook up unfamiliar words rather than guessing at their meaning, but remember that frequent stops can disrupt comprehension.

Sometimes the context can help you get a general idea of the meaning of a word. It is important to note however, that it is not only unfamiliar words that may limit our full comprehension of a text; sometimes even familiar words used in new contexts may present a problem. Consider the use of the word 'flag' in the following sentences:

a. I've *flagged* all the names and addresses to be printed out.
b. My strength is *flagging*.
c. From the gate a *flagged* walkway led straight to the house.
d. I'm not very religious, but I do go to church occasionally just to show the *flag*.
e. Though our team did not win any medal in Sidney, they kept the *flag* flying by their presence.

You will notice that the familiar meaning of the word *flag* does not offer a clue to the meaning of some of these sentences, especially b. and c.

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Selecting what to read

Besides the books, journal articles and other references that your lecturer will direct you to read, you will also on your own search for material. How do you determine if a text is suitable for your purpose? There are places, both within and outside the main text that you can scan or skim to make a quick assessment if the text is suitable before you decide to read it. Some of these places also help you locate specific information vey easily. These places include:

1) Outside the main text

Reviews - This is usually an evaluation or appraisal of the contents of the book by a reviewer or reviewers. This will usually be on the jacket of a hard cover or at the back of the book.

Publisher's blurb - a short description of the contents of the book by the publisher; this may also be on the jacket.

Table of Contents - shows chapter headings and their page locations. A scan of the table of contents will tell you if the work contains topics that you are interested in.

Guide to the User - (especially for reference books like encyclopedias or dictionaries). This usually describes how the information has been packaged and explains the process of locating information easily.

Introduction/Preface/ Author's or Publisher's note

These may be the writer's or editor's summary of what the book is about, or the way the subject has been treated. It may usually include some useful background information.

Index - The index is located at the end of the main text of a book. It is an alphabetical list of every subject or name mentioned in the book and all pages in which the item is mentioned. The index is very useful for locating specific information without reading whole chapters.

Suppose you want a specific piece of information, like the definition of 'feedback' in a book on communication like the above. You are not likely to find 'feedback' treated as a full chapter, so the table of contents may not be helpful. However, if you turn to the index you will find the term 'feedback' listed under the letter F as shown below from a section of an index page from the book *Introduction to Human Communication,* Gibson and Hanna (19992: 475). Under 'Feedback' you will find the different aspects of feedback that have been discussed in the book and the specific pages where you will find these discussions. The definition of the term is found in pages 16-17, so you go there directly and scan these pages for it.

F
Facial expression, 104-5
Fallacies, 219-23
False authority, 222-23
Feedback
     defined, 16-17
     giving, 152-62
     immediacy of, 118
     importance of, 151-53
     obtaining, 162-65
Feelings, *See also* Emotions
     defined, 148

2. Within the text

Chapter headings and sub-headings- surveying chapter headings helps you locate specific information.

Chapter introductions – Introductions and summaries of chapters may explain what the chapter contains. The concluding part of the chapter may also sum up the main ideas discussed in it.

Some Common Reading Faults

Reading at a fast rate is essential in view of the large volume of material you require to read as a student. The following are reading habits that you should avoid because they can slow down your speed of reading:

1. *Vocalization*: audibly pronouncing words while reading. It slows down the pace of reading and interferes with mental alertness.
2. *Sub-vocalization*: saying words silently. Like the above this tends to put attention on individual words.
3. *Pointing at words*: with a pen, pencil, finger etc. This interferes with eye-movement. Reading is a mental exercise involving the coordination of the eyes with the brain.
4. *Slow eye-movement*: Results from reading individual words. A good reader moves the eyes over chunks of words. Words must be read together.
5. *Regression*: This is the practice of glancing back at words and phrases that have already been read, and is a result of lack of concentration, or lack of coordination between the brain and eyes.

WRITING

We all learn to speak our mother tongues naturally, but no one learns to write automatically. Whether it is our mother tongue or a foreign language, one must make a conscious effort to learn first how to form letters of the alphabet and then how to put these letters together to form words, and how to put words together in sentences. Skills in spoken communicating may therefore be acquired with much less effort than writing skills, especially with a foreign language. Many people who can express themselves fairly fluently in English, get into all sorts of problems when they write.

Spoken vs. Written Language

1. Spoken communication usually takes place in a 'face-to-face' context, so there is the possibility of immediate feed-back. This enables the speaker to know at once whether the message has been effectively communicated or not, and enables him or her to repeat or reshape the message. With writing there is no immediate feedback (except with those 'chatting' on the internet).

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2. The organization of casual speech is loose; we may go back and forth when we speak about something, but in writing we must deliberately organize our ideas into paragraphs. Organization of our thoughts is therefore important for good and effective writing even when the writing is on for a casual purpose.

3. Speech may be accompanied by non-verbal communication like gestures, level of voice, facial expression etc. which can add to the meaning or add emphasis. In writing, all meaning must be conveyed by the use words and by punctuation. This requires clarity and precision. The use of special features like *italics*, CAPITALS, <u>underlining</u>.**highlighting**, help to add emphasis in writing, but these must be used sparingly.

4. There is more freedom in the construction of sentences in speech than in writing. In speech we regularly use incomplete sentences or sentence fragments, phrases or single words, either because of interruptions or when we feel the message is understood. In writing, every sentence needs to be complete, except when we deliberately try to imitate real speech in writing, as in written dialogue.

5. The spoken word is evanescent, so grammatical lapses and faults in sentence construction may sometimes not be easily noticeable, unless they are particularly egregious. On the contrary, the written word is permanent; it can be read and re-read, and errors may easily be noticed. Writing therefore demands greater care and requires re-reading and editing.

MINUTES

1. Minutes are a written record of the proceedings of a formal meeting. They are a permanent record of the decisions reached and the actions that are to be taken. They serve as a legal record of events, and care must be taken to ensure that they are accurate. That is why in formal situations the minutes of the previous meeting are carefully read, corrected before they are accepted by all. Minutes also serve the purpose of informing others of what took place at the meeting.

Minutes must state the date, time and place of the meeting. It must list those present and those absent, and record the issues discussed and the decisions taken or resolutions passed.

Minutes should contain only the major points. Heated arguments over opinion should be ignored. The recorder should also avoid putting down his or her own opinions about what is said. Example, instead of:

> In a witty and incisive speech, Mr. X argued for the institution of a flexible worker scheme for all office employees, and such was his eloquence that he was given a standing ovation and the motion was voted for by all.

The statement would be better this way:

> Mr X proposed that flexible working hours be implemented for all office employees. The motion was seconded by Mrs. z and carried unanimously.

Minutes should always be written in the past tense.

> Mr X proposed that....
> Mrs Z seconded the motion...
> The Chairman announced that...

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2. There is no single format for recording and presenting minutes, but the following guidelines include features that may be present in most formats.

i) **Title:** This identifies the minutes by indicating the group holding the meeting, the type of meeting, the date and the venue.

<div align="center">

NAVRONGO STUDENTS UNION
MINUTES OF THE 10TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
30TH November 2012. GREAT HALL, NAVRONGO CAMPUS.

</div>

ii) **Agenda:** The minutes must list all the issues to be discussed. The list of issues or the agenda would normally have been circulated in advance, so that those attending can prepare themselves to make meaningful inputs. The agenda is usually sent out together with the invitation to the meeting.

<div align="center">

MINUTES OF AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE SRC (NAVRONGO CAMPUS) HELD
ON NOVEMBER 30, 2012.
VENUE: ROOM 4, SPANISH LABORATORY.

</div>

Agenda:
1. Attendance
2. Minutes of last meeting
3. Matters arising
4. SRC Week celebration
5. Report of Committee on new constitution
6. Student ID cards
7. Other matters

iii) **Attendance:** There must be a list of all those present at the meeting. This may not be possible in very large groups that run into hundreds. In smaller groups, as well as listing those present, indicate also those absent and the reasons why, if these have been communicated to the meeting.

iv)**Proceedings:** This will be the record of the discussions. Indicate the time the meeting actually commences. Proceedings of meetings in usually begin with a prayer, followed by the reading. Indicate amendments and corrections made and acceptance of the minutes.

Record only the important points in the discussions. Ifreports are presented during the meeting, copies of these should be attachedto the final minutes.

Record verbatim all resolutions and motions as well as the names of persons who introduced and seconded the motions. Such motions can be put n writing for the benefit of the recorder.

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v) Closing: Meetings are usually brought to an end by a motion and a secondment. The names of the mover and seconder should be recorded, as well as the time the meeting formally comes to an end.

Example of minutes of a meeting

MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT/STAFF ASSCIATION MEETING
Venue: AJK Headquarters on 14 April ....at 1400hrs.

Present: J. Blakey, Managing Director (Chairman)
                S. Norris, Personnel Director
                P. Appleby, Financial Director
                A, Neart, (Secretary)
                Union Representatives: P. Vale (Convenor)
                                      A. Dash
                                        P. Jewel

1. Apologies: None

2. Minutes of last meeting.
      These were agreed and signed jointly by Mr. Blakey and Mr. Vale.

3. Matter Arising
Mr Vale reported that the membership had considered the Relocation Package discussed at the last meeting and had agreed at a Branch Meeting held on 20 March to accept it.
Mr. Appleby said plans to relocate HQ from London to Birmingham were well advanced and the lease for the new building had been agreed.

4. Redundancy Scheme.
The Personnel Director had circulated a letter detailing the Redundancy Scheme for those over 55 who wished to take early severance. The union felt the terms of the scheme in certain respects were deficient and would not be acceptable to members without amendment. Mr. Norris said further discussions could take place informally on points of concern. He stressed AJK would prefer a voluntary early severance scheme than have to resort to compulsory redundancies. It was agreed the Personnel Director and Convenor would meet the union to discuss their reservations and report back at the next meeting.

5. Any other Business
The Convenor asked when they would receive a reply to their pay and productivity claim submitted in February. Mr. Appleby said he was preparing a detailed response and this would be sent to the Convenor shortly.

6. Date of next meeting
      This was scheduled for 12 June at 1400hrs at AJK Headquarters.

REPORTS

A report is a statement recording an event or a series of events or circumstances, with an indication of an action or actions taken or to be taken in response. It may include an explanation

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of the cause or causes of such circumstances, if known, or suggestions of possible causes, and recommendations for future action.

Some types of reports require some investigation of some sort, or research involving interviews, observation, experiments in a laboratory or in the field, or research in the library. The information obtained is presented in as a written document that may combine narrative with graphic representations like tables, pictures, maps, etc. The writer of a report should be able to interpret the facts to produce a clear and comprehensive set of conclusions and recommendations.

Skills required for report writing include.
> a) The ability to record facts clearly and objectively
> b) The ability to interpret and attribute them to causes
> c) The ability to formulate and present opinions – based on facts - as to ways in which the situation can be remedied or improved.

Types of Reports
1. Regular or routine reports
Some organizations and positions require regular reporting of events, situations or activities at specified intervals. Such regular reporting may be done in a specified format and may be completed in a pre-printed form. At work places examples of regular reports may include:
> Equipment maintenance reports
> Sales reports
> Safety inspection reports
> Production reports

Others are Medical reports, and in High School, Term Report.
The events reported occur regularly and the information required is specific. The prepared form therefore standardizes and simplifies the reporting process.

2. Occasional Reports
Special events may sometimes also require a report. In the UK, all organizations are required by law to keep records of industrial accidents (Sillars 1988) which occur on their premises. This report may also be done on an accident form or written as a short report.
  Short occasional reports may include
> Accident reports
> Disciplinary report
> Status report

3. Special Reports
Special reports may be needed in an organization on occasions when a complex matter requires some kind of investigation or research. These are reports designed to answer specific questions, sometimes be referred to 'terms of reference'. Detailed information may be required on the possible cause of the events under investigation along with recommendations on how the situation may be remedied so that similar occurrences can be avoided in the future.
> Investigatory report
> Commissioned report
> Market Research report
> Reports of Committee of enquiry

Such reports may cover several pages or run into several volumes.

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4. Academic Report –Thesis, Dissertation, Long Essay

These are reports in which a researcher presents data from a research and the analysis of the data. Theses (plural of *thesis*) long essays or dissertations are the terms used for reports that present research results.

Structure of a Report

An organization may specify a layout to be used when writing a report; others accept any layout which is logically and clearly structured. Where a specific format is not prescribed by an organization, a report will generally include the following:

1. Short Report

i) ***Title*** – must include the name of the organization and date of the event.

ii) ***Background/Terms of reference*** – A brief description of the circumstances under discussion.

iii) Procedure – An outline of the procedure or method of enquiry/investigation used by the writer(s) of the report – interviews, visits etc.

iv) ***Findings*** – This may be in two parts:

(a) The factual account of the events of concern. This should be clear, factual and concise.

(b) Conclusion – an interpretation of the facts, identification of causes based on information given.

v) ***Action/Recommendation*** – If you are required to take action, indicate the action taken. If you are only reporting, then all you may do is make recommendations for action.

vi) ***Identification of writer*** – Signature, name and position of writer.

2. A Committee Report

i) ***Title;*** include recipient i.e. the person, organization that commissioned the report.

ii) ***List of tam*** or committee members and their designations (Chairman, member, secretary, etc.

iii) ***Table of Contents***: List of the various sections and their page locations.

iv) ***Summary***: Gives an initial brief ides of the content of the report; the problem under investigation and the key points in the findings and recommendations.

v) ***Terms of reference*** – States clearly all the issues the investigation set out to examine. The terms of reference are usually spelt out to the committee by the person or body that requires the investigation.

vi) ***Procedure*** – Describe the procedures or methods used in the investigation. Mention persons interviewed, places visited or inspected and all sources of information, like written memoranda, literature, newspapers etc. Some of the information gathered from these sources, if in written form, may be attached as appendices at the end of the report.

vii) ***Findings*** – This is the most important part of the report. It presents the answers to the terms of reference i.e. the facts as they are revealed by information that has been gathered. This will usually be organized in numbered sections with headings.

viii) ***Conclusions*** – The conclusion tries to draw a link between the facts that have been found and causes. These must be based on the facts and not on opinions of the writer.

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ix) Recommendations – The writer may make recommendations for action.

x) Appendices **–** The writer may attach any written evidence or information that was examined. This is not necessary for all reports. Also not every written evidence needs to be attached.

3. The Academic Report: long essay or thesis.

The structure of the thesis may be considered as having three parts:

I. Front Matter
II. Main Body of Thesis
III Back Matter

I. **Front matter**: This part provides general information about the thesis, includes the following:

i) *Title*

ii) *Declaration* - A statement confirming that the work is the original effort of the writer and that sources that have been cited have been duly acknowledged. (2 or three sentences)

iii) *Acknowledgements* – Statement of appreciation to all persons who have been of assistance in the work, e.g. supervisors, research assistants, respondents, etc.   (just about a page and a half)

iv) *List of Contents* – Titles of Chapters, sections and sub-sections and their page locations.

v)List of Tables, Maps etc.   - Where there are no tables this is not required.

vi)List of Acronyms and abbreviations - In dealing with some topics or subjects you might use several abbreviations or acronyms. A list of these and their explanations may be provided.

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II. **Main body:** This is the full write-up of the thesis itself which will be presented in a number of chapters decided by the writer. The numbering below does not represent chapter divisions but indicate the relevant sections that will be expected to be included in a thesis.

i) *Introduction*- Gives the background to the study

ii)*Problem Statement* – A statement of the issue to be researched and the questions that you seek to find answers to.

iii) *Goal and Objectives* State the purpose of the research. What do you hope to achieve at the end of the research?

iv) *Relevance of the Study***-** state how the results you get will answer your research questions.

v) *Literature Review* – Research of any kind must be linked to related research and theory in the field. In your research you are expected to do extensive examination of existing relevant literature, showing how well you have understood the relevant body of knowledge in your research area.
You may indicate how well other scholars answer the current problem or fall short in providing suitable answers.

vi) *Methodology*- In this section you describe in detail the research methods that you used in collecting your data. Every academic field has its own methods of collecting data or conducting experiments and tests for research. The methods that you use must be acceptable in your field and must be

clearly detailed in your work.

Note: The sections outlined in *i-vi* above do not constitute chapters. At the first degree level all of the above could constitute just one chapter, but at the graduate level where there is a need for more in-depth discussion they may make up at least two chapters.

vii) Findings– This is the heart of the thesis. This is where you present the data, results or findings of the research and do a thorough analysis and discussion of the results. This may be in two, three or four chapters depending on the data you need to present and the instructions of your institution.

viii) Conclusion and Recommendations- After presenting the data, you draw conclusions and make recommendations. This may also be put into one chapter.

III. Back matter: This is also outside the main body of the thesis, but is nonetheless very important, especially the references, or bibliography or works cited.

i) References – As indicated earlier academic writing and research requires extensive reading. As you read you make notes of information from several works and sources. You may make use of some of this information either as direct quotes, summaries or references. At the end of the thesis you are required to provide a list of all the sources that you consulted. This is the references, bibliography or works cited. The details that you must include when you list references are discussed below.

ii)Appendices **–** If a questionnaire was used in the research, a copy must be attached as an appendix. Other relevant documentation like maps, letters etc. relevant to the research may also be attached.

4. Using and Documenting sources

The sources that you will read or consult in research (assignment/thesis) or as part of the learning process for your course of study may include some or all of the following:

Books
Articles in Journals
Unpublished theses
Magazines
Newspapers
Official or private documents
Internet resources
Film/Video
Radio

When you read you need to take down notes. You also need to take down the publication information about the work. The information you take down may be used in your essay. In using material from your sources you may

quote directly
summarise, or
paraphrase; i.e., you try as much as possible to restate the information from your source in your own words.

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Write direct quotations exactly as they appear in the source. Indicate source of information, including page number(s) within the text as in the two examples below.

> These are aimed at achieving what Pauwels calls 'linguistic equality' at word level and eliminating sexism at discourse level (Pauwels 2003:556).

> The other alternative is to rephrase proverbs as 'a form of deconstructive re-interpretation' (Ssetuba 2005:46).

No page number is required if the material you use from your source is not a direct quote. In the two examples below the writer duly cites the sources of information (Peek and Yankah 2004; Sacks et al 1974) but no page numbers are indicated:

> Peek and Yankah (2004) also note that while planting, harvesting, decorating walls or milling corn, Builsa women use song to communicate indirectly to their husbands, co-wives and difficult in-laws about various problems.

> Sacks *et al* (1974) have observed that conversation is structured on a principle of speakers taking turns, and that the basic structural unit in conversation is a string of at least two turns.

In the second example above the expression *et al* is used after the name when there are three or more writers. In listing this work at the references all the writers may however be named as shown in *(b)* below.

References/Works cited/Bibliography
All the sources that you consulted in your research must be listed at the end of the paper or thesis. The list may be titled References, Works Cited, or Bibliography. A Bibliography is usually a more extensive list and is used for Masters or Ph.D. theses.
The list is arranged in alphabetical order of the surnames of authors. This means that anytime you read and take notes you should always take down details of the source from which you make notes.

Details of publication included in references
The details that must be included when you list references are:
  i.   Name(s) of author(s) - in the order:
                 Surname, Other name(s) or initials.
                 Agyekum, Kofi
                 Soyinka, W.
  ii. Year of publication
  iii. Title of work (article, book, magazine etc.)
  iv. Place of Publication
  v.   Publisher (i.e. the company or institution that published the work)

Types of works
The following provides examples of how you would list different types of works in your references. Remember that this is not the only style of listing; different academic areas and different publishers of books or journals may use different styles. As you get familiar with the literature in your area of study, you will get to know the preferred style.

a) A work by a single author
  Holmes, Janet. 1995. *Women, Men and Politeness*. London, Longman.
  Kolawole, M. E. M. (ed.). 1998. *Gender Perceptions and Development in Africa*.

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Lagos, Arrabon Academic Publishers.

b) A work by two authors
Where a work has two authors, the first writer must be listed by surname first, the second name may begin with an initial before the surname.

Berger L. Peter and T. Luckmann.1972. *The Social Construction of Reality.* Hammondsworth: Penguin Books.
Peek P. M. and K. Yankah (eds.) 2004. *African Folklore*. New York. Routledge.

The (eds.) indicates that the two are editors of the work; they are not the sole authors, but other writers have contributed to it or it is a collection of chapters by other writers put together by the two. Where there are three or more authors, all may be named.

Richie, B. S., Fassinger, R. E., Linn, S. G., Johnson, J. Prosser, J. & Robinson S. 1997. Persistence, connection and passion: A qualitative study of the career development of highly-achieving African-American-Black and White women. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 44(2). 133-148.

This is the reference of an article written by six writers. The title of the article is followed by the name of the journal in which it was published- *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. The figures 44(2) stand for the issue number the figures 133-148 stand the page numbers where the article is located in the journal.

c) An article or chapter in a book
Goodwin, Majorie, H. 1998. Cooperation and Competition across Girls' Play Activities. In *Language and Gender– A Reader*. Jennifer Coates (ed.) Oxford. Blackwell Publishers Limited (121-146).

d) An article in a journal
Mbaya, Maweja. 2002. Linguistic Taboo in African Marriage Context: A Study of the Oromo Laguu. *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 11(2): 224-235.

e) An article in a newspaper or magazine
Yakubu, Afi. 1997. Women and Traditional Authority. *West Africa Magazine*. 27th Dec. 1997- 11th Jan. 1998 (2031-2033).
Zoure, Stephen. 'Witches' Trapped. *Daily Guide,* No. 118/10.Monday, May 24, 24, 2010. Accra: Western Publications. (p. 10).

f) An article or document from a website
Churchill, Allegra. 1997. Under the Kapok Tree: Explorations in Dagbon *African Diaspora ISPs.* Paper 26.
http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/african_diaspora_isp/26 (accessed 3.6.10)

g) A document from an Organization
Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). 1990. "Strengthening Animal Health Services in Developing Countries. Rome. Processed.
Ghana Statistical Service. (GSS) 2000. Population and Housing Census – Northern Region. Analysis of District Data and Implications for Planning.

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h) An unpublished thesis

Hudu, F. 2010. Dagbani tongue-root harmony: a formal account with ultra-sound investigation. PhD. Thesis. University of British Columbia. https://circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/.../ubc_2010_fall_hudu_fusheini.pdf (accessed16.12.11)

Nabilla P.A. 2000. Traditional Socialization and Women's Empowerment: A Study of Adolescent Gender Socialization in Dagbon. Unpublished MPhil Thesis, University of Ghana.

Titles of books and articles

Note that titles of books and journals are distinguished by the use of different font styles. Titles of books and titles of journals are typed in *italics* while titles of articles are in normal type.

(i) Peek P. M. and K. Yankah (eds.) 2004. *African Folklore*. New York. Routledge.

African Folklore is the title of a book by Peek and Yankah.

(ii) Mbaya, Maweja. 2002. Linguistic Taboo in African Marriage Context: A Study of the Oromo Laguu. *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 11(2): 224-235.

"Linguistic Taboo in African Marriage Context: A Study of the Oromo Laguu" is the title of an article; it is in normal type. *Nordic Journal of African Studies* is in italics because that is the name of the journal in which this article appears.

When you use hand writing the titles of books and journals should be underlined while the titles of articles are placed within quotation marks.

(i) Peek P. M. and K. Yankah (eds.) 2004. African Folklore. New York. Routledge.

(ii) Mbaya, Maweja. 2002. "Linguistic Taboo in African Marriage Context: A Study of the Oromo Laguu. Nordic Journal of African Studies 11(2): 224-235.

Arrangement of list of references

Remember to arrange your list of references in alphabetical order, as shown below. Lastly, the list must not be numbered.

Abercombie, D. 1968. Paralanguage. *British Journal of disorders of Communication.* 3 (55-9)

Adetunji, Akinbiyi (2010) Aspects of Linguistic Violence to Nigerian Women. *The International Journal - Language Society and Culture.* Issue 31, (10-17).

Barker, Peter. 1986. *People, Languages and Religion in Northern Ghana.* Asempa Publications. Accra

Pauwels A. 2003. Feminist Linguistic Activism – Non-sexist Language Reform. In J. Holmes and M. Meyerhof (eds.) *The Handbook of Language and Gender.* Malden. Blackwell Publishing

Peek P. M. and K. Yankah (eds.) 2004. *African Folklore*. New York. Routledge.

Sacks, H., E. Schegloff and G. Jefferson. 1974. A simplest systematic for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language.*50 (696-735).

Sherzer, J. and R. Darnell. 1972. Directions in Sociolinguistics. In Gumperz J. J. and D. Hymes *The Ethnography of Communications* NY. Holt. Rinehard and Wiston. 548-554).

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Ssetuba, Isaac. 2005. The Hold of Patriarchy: An Appraisal of the Ganda Proverb in Modern Gender Relations. In *Gender, Literature and Religion in Africa*.CODESRIA Gender Series 4. Dakar. (37-47)

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