

MODULE 1

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Unit 2	Determining Reader's Interests in Writing
Unit 3	Qualities of a Good Writer
Unit 4	The Paragraph and Its Structure
Unit 5	The Writing Process I

UNIT 1 Why We Write

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is designed to take you through the reasons why we write. The art of writing, you should not forget is a practice or skill that no one should embark upon without knowing why he would like to do so. It is not every writer who knows why they do so. It is also possible for you to know the principles of writing without knowing why you wish to be engaged in the art. This unit will take you through a number of reasons why you write. The writing situation is also another aspect of writing, which this unit treats. Many textbooks, we have found out, ignore/refrain from discussing the writing situation and why people write. It could be because the writers of such textbooks assume that it is insignificant. Whereas, no concept that relates to creative writing is too unimportant to be discussed.

As a creative writer, you should be able to determine the best conditions under which you can write. Are you more comfortable writing on the bus, in the garden, in a mountainous area or at the seashore? You should be able to determine the place, time, as well as tools that will give you the best support as a creative writer. Part of the creative writing exercise

is to expose the student to the various conditions under which he may prefer to write. We are normally expected to have reasons why we wish to do something. For instance, a student who prefers to be a medical doctor, rather than a teacher must have his reasons. Similarly, for any writer to excel, he/she must know the reasons why he/she intends to undertake the task of writing either in the midnight or early in the morning, by the seashore or the hill. You must be able to answer the questions of why you write and under what conditions? Below are some of the objectives of this Unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of the unit, you should be able to:

- outline three reasons why you write;
- determine the place, time and tools suitable for your creative writing;
- equip yourself with other writer's advice on writing; and
- state some possible distractions to effective creative writing.

HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

- a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
- b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
- c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
- d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
- e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Why We Write

Creative writing is considered to be any writing, fiction, or non-fiction that goes outside the bounds of normal professional, journalistic, academic, and fictional forms of literature. Works which fall into this category include most novels and epics, as well as many short stories and poems. Writing for the screen and stage, screen writing and play writing respectively; typically have their own programmes of study, but fit under the creative writing category as well (The Free Encyclopedia, Wikipedia). In addition, creative writing is anything where the purpose is to express thoughts, feelings and emotions rather than to simply convey information. It involves the skillful and imaginative production of something original (e.g. a work of art) (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English, 1995, The Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners 2007).

Writing is like a journey that you cannot just set out aimlessly. You cannot just write without having a good reason why you would like to do so. Below are some of the reasons why you may want to write.

3.1.1 Communication of Ideas

One of the reasons why you write is to be able to transmit your own thoughts or ideas to other peoples across cultures, time and age. That you live and write in Nigeria does not mean that you write for the Nigerian peoples alone. Your writing will go places; it could even outlive you the same way the works of William Shakespeare, Alexander Pope, Philip Sydney, John Dryden, Scot Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Christopher Okigbo, Ola Rotimi, outlived them. Up until now, their positions, feelings and ideas about life generally are still being read in their works.

3.1.2 We Keep Diaries through Writing

You may decide to keep a record of some of the important events or things that have happened to you in writing. When you do this, you are keeping a record through writing. Sometime in life, and as you go into the world of work, you may want to keep the date and time of some experiences, where you meet some peoples who are important to you.

This type of writing, depending on the writer does not require a very elaborate composition like the novel. You must not forget that there are some functional diaries that involve an elaborate or serious writing. You may need to visit a bookshop, your University or the public library where you will get a copy of novels written in the forms of a diary. You may also ask a friend or your facilitator for a copy of the following fictional diaries: Ferdinand Oyono's *Houseboy*, George and Weedon Grossmith's *The Diary of a Nobody*, Nelson Mandela's *No Easy Walk to Freedom*, and Kenneth Kaunda's *Zambia shall be Free*.

3.1.3 Development of Talent

You may have the natural gift to create and communicate ideas. If you do not have it, you may also acquire the skills of writing through training and practice. The type of practice we are gradually putting you through could make you a good creative writer. That is why it is important for you to know whom you are. You must also know your creative ability. You should know that your creative ability can open doors of success for you. In the end, you will feel fulfilled if you are able to create what is good. All you should do when you discover the creative gift in you is to do all you can to develop it. You may develop it by reading more creative works or by asking the right questions from

experienced creative writers. And, if you do not have it, start now to seek, to learn, and in no time, you will acquire the technique. This may be the reason why Covey (1990) insists that “what lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters, compared with what lies within us”. The truth is, you will naturally be at ease if you are a gifted writer, but you can acquire the skills for writing, the way you can be taught to know a trade or how to play a game.

3.1.4 For the Records

You may decide to write, to document issues/history/things which account might have been given through oral information. Your aim to keep a concrete reference material for other people to consult/read may inform this type of writing. Such oral records may be about the culture, religion and traditions of your people. This is what makes writing a form of documentation.

3.1.5 Writing as a Profession

You may write because it is your vocation or for the reason that you want to make it a profession. You could put your ideas down for others to read. In this case you may also decide in which of the genres (i.e. prose, play or poetry), you want to write for people to read. This also depends on the type of people (audience) you hope should read your work. You will also determine how much it would cost you to get the work published. If you wish to treat your writing this way, it has become a business. You should think of the reason why you want to be a creative writer.

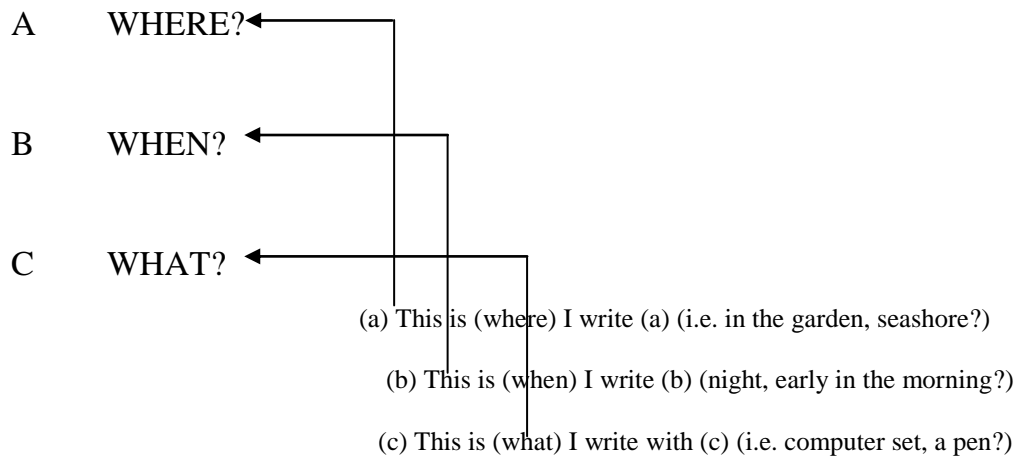
SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Give at least three reasons why you wish to be a creative writer?

3.2 The Writing Situation

You may be wondering about the need for the writing situation. You will soon realise that it is as important to you as other areas of writing. You should know the best place for you to write, the time and the tool you prefer to write with. Writing situations help you to determine a convenient take off ground for your writing. It will help you answer the helpful questions of the three Ws of creative writing. Below is a diagrammatic representation of the Ws.

Fig. 1 Three W's of creative writing (situation questions)



Source: Adapted from Reid (2002)

As you read through this part of the Unit, try to identify and choose your own *three W's* or answer the three writing situation questions. If you are able to do so, you have just created a takeoff ground for your writing.

Time

You may prefer to write early in the morning. Some other people may like to write in the night. Others like to write in the evening; after their class work. The time you choose to write can affect your attitude and efficiency in writing. That is why you must know yourself and the time that is suitable for your writing. And when you have found that a particular time is suitable for your writing, you should try to practise always. Like an exercise that requires a regular practice, a repeated pattern of behaviour will provide a sense of progress for your creative work. Also, if a medical doctor places you on a diet, you must keep to it always so that it can have the expected results on you. The same way, you must always write at a time suitable for you so that you can have a mastery of the art.

Place

The place where you write is also important. If you are writing in a computer laboratory, you have to adapt to that place. If you write in long hand, you can decide to choose the place yourself. But as you do this, keep distractions at a minimum. You may not like to write where there are distractions like a television set, refrigerator, or in the cafeteria and other noisy environments. If you know this about yourself, you will avoid such places so that you can make progress in your writing. As a writer, you are not different from a song writer or a musician who may decide to write or compose his songs or rehearse by the seashore, forest, garden or a mountainous area.

Tools/materials

You will need writing materials like pen, paper, pencil, writing pads, notebooks, computer sets. You can do your writing with all of these. Only that you need to know which of the writing materials you are more comfortable writing with. Do you like to make your draft with a computer set or scribble something on a jotter to enable you take off the actual writing? You must know how you feel writing with any of these before you can say you are comfortable or not or before you can engage in a regular practice (Reid, 2002).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- 1 (a) Do you have a writing situation?
- (b) Mention and discuss your own writing situation?
- (c) Why have you chosen your own three W's of creative writing?

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed some of the reasons why you may wish to be a creative writer. We have also mentioned and discussed why the three W's or your own writing situation are very important to you.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- there are different reasons why people write
- it is important for you to know your own writing situations by answering the questions of the three W's in creative writing
- in the next Unit, you will learn how you will determine the interests of your readers.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Creative writing exists for certain reasons. Explain.
2. How is the keeping of diaries different from when you write as a professional?
3. How would you advice a young creative writer on the use of the three W's in creative writing?
4. Define the concepts, 'writing situation' and 'communication of ideas'.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 DETERMINING READER'S INTERESTS IN WRITING

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- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Write in a New Way
 - 3.1.1 Evoke the Sympathy of your Readers
 - 3.1.2 Write about the Unusual
 - 3.1.3 Conflict
 - 3.1.4 Write about Histories or Biographies of other People
 - 3.1.5 Identify a New Problem in your Writing
 - 3.1.6 Suspense
 - 3.2 Your Readers
 - 3.2.1 A Specialised Reader
- 4.0 Conclusion
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is written to take you through a necessary form of preliminary investigation before you start to write fully. Writing is a skill that should look interesting to your readers. But, it may not interest your readers if you do not know their interests before you begin to write. It is in knowing your reader's interests that will help your thinking, focus, style, language and techniques of writing. In this unit, you will be taken through some areas of interests of your readers.

One of the best ways to be successful as a writer is to know the interests of your readers. Are your readers interested in reading prose works? Are they more comfortable reading plays, poetry, letters or essays? When you ask yourself these questions, you will be relieved from the confusion or dilemma that keeps you on the stop line.

The questions which I have raised in this unit are important for you because they will give readers access to your essay and give you a sense of direction. At this point, you should imagine yourself a business man who asks questions about the needs of his customers. It is what your buyers need that you will sell on the market. In this case, your readers are your customers and you must satisfy their needs. So, the knowledge or what your audience (consumers) need will help you know what to create for them, and in which form of language. The leading questions

will also expose you to the type of audience/readers you are writing for. Are they the general reader or the specialised readers? Below are some of the objectives of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this study, you should be able to:

- determine the needs of your readers;
- plan the type of genre (i.e. poetry, prose, drama) and essay that will suit your audience/reader;
- write in a style that will appeal to the emotions, personality of your audience; and
- identify the types of audience you are (dealing with) writing for.

HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

- a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
- b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
- c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
- d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
- e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Write in a New Way

You should write in a style that will attract your readers. People like to associate themselves with new ideas, things and something that is better. If you can do this, your reader will believe in your uniqueness. He will be interested in reading your work. He may aspire to write like you if you write in a new way that is probably different from all the types of books he has read. Your writing should be able to arrest the attention of your reader.

3.1.1 Evoke the Sympathy of your Readers

You should write in a way that you will be able to evoke the sympathy of your readers. If your reader/audience likes to read children's story, or read about religion, games, people or poetry that talks about nature, you should write it. Man likes to preserve and reproduce himself. You may have read some novels, poems and plays. Which of them do you find interesting? Why? Are you in sympathy with your writer or not?

3.1.2 Write about the Unusual

Many people aspire to be different in many ways. As a result, you can gain the interests of your readers when you write about things that are extraordinary. Such a work that will take readers away from the things they do every day will appeal to a large population of readers. For example, when the English novelist, George Orwell wrote his allegorical fable, *Animal Farm* in the 20th century, the novel gained wide interest beyond Europe. This is because he made use of animal characters who behave like the real political animal called man. This satire of the ugly relationships between the leaders of the time of Orwell and the people may not be its first type; but it was not so common in his time to write a novel using animal characters. The university and the unusual style in which many writers present their works may partly be responsible for the awards they receive. For example, Wole Soyinka was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1986 as a result of the triumphant affirmation of the universality of his novels, poems and plays. Added to this is his unique creative use of language, Toni Morrison, an African American also won the Pulitzer Prize for Literature in 1988 for being able to creatively challenge the Twentieth Century American myth and illusion as well as the social tragedy of the failure of the individual and the American society.

3.1.3 Conflict

Your writing should reflect some elements of conflict. Man is naturally interested in anything that generates conflicts and competition. When you write your drama or prose work, try to evoke conflict so that you can attract the interests of your readers. Already, as a writer you are in conflict with some things you cannot help. You are in conflict with people, disease, dreams, your ambition, your work, religion, culture and the law. You are even in conflict with your marriage and if you are a bachelor or spinster, you are in conflict with yourself. This may be the reason, Daniel (2007) argues that, “all novels and creative works built around conflicts are usually best sellers around the world”. He may have said this based on the belief that every man is interested in conflict.

3.1.4 Write about Histories or Biographies of other People

You as a writer should write about other people. This is because your existence in life has something to do with other people. This means if your work discusses other people, it will win over some curious audience to your side. The nature of the person you write about does not matter. What you must know is that some people are directly or indirectly interested in that person. You may write biographies of peoples and places to arouse the interests of your readers.

3.1.5 Identify a New Problem in your Writing

You may decide to write about a new problem. In your writing, you can also see an existing problem in a new and more interesting way. You may wish to share this discovery with other people through your writing. You may want to write an article or a short novel about the political problem of your country. For instance, say in prose form, you may decide to use animal characters from your communal pool of folktales to behave like human beings as we have in *Farewell to Democracy* (Oriola, 1994). In the political fable story, the writer uses characters like the Tortoise, Lion, Lioness, Snake, Parrots, Horse, Eagle and so on. He adapts Orwell's experience to his African communal pool of folktale. You may write an article on "The tree of money in you" or on "The School of Money".

3.1.6 Suspense

You should write to keep your readers in suspense. By keeping your readers in suspense, we mean arousing your readers' curiosity and you will like their burning desire satisfied. For this reason, you should let the information you will give to your readers make them want to expect/anticipate more of it in the next page, chapter or paragraph. This is because human beings naturally have interest in the unknown. Why don't you try and write to determine your readers' interests now?

3.2 Your Readers

1. A Specialised Reader

You may decide to write for a specialised reader. A specialised reader knows so much about his subject or profession. If you write an article for this kind of audience, you do not have to define the terms of his profession for him. This is because he already knows the terms that relate to his profession. For instance, if you decide to write an article for an academic institution, you do not have to define the education related terms you have used. Such readers in the discipline will already be familiar with words like school, auditorium, library, language lab, professor, and so on. There are many publications that exist today for readers who have diverse interests, so if you write for this kind of audience, you may not worry about the interest of the audience. This is because such an audience can cope with the (jargons) special language you would use.

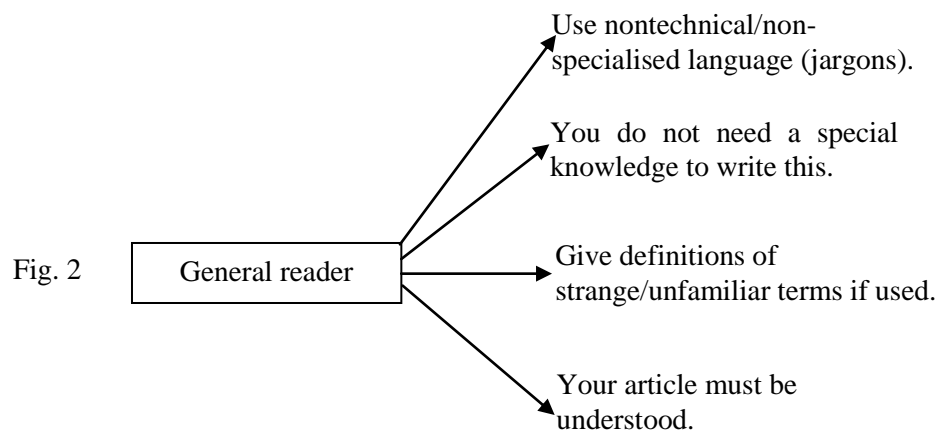
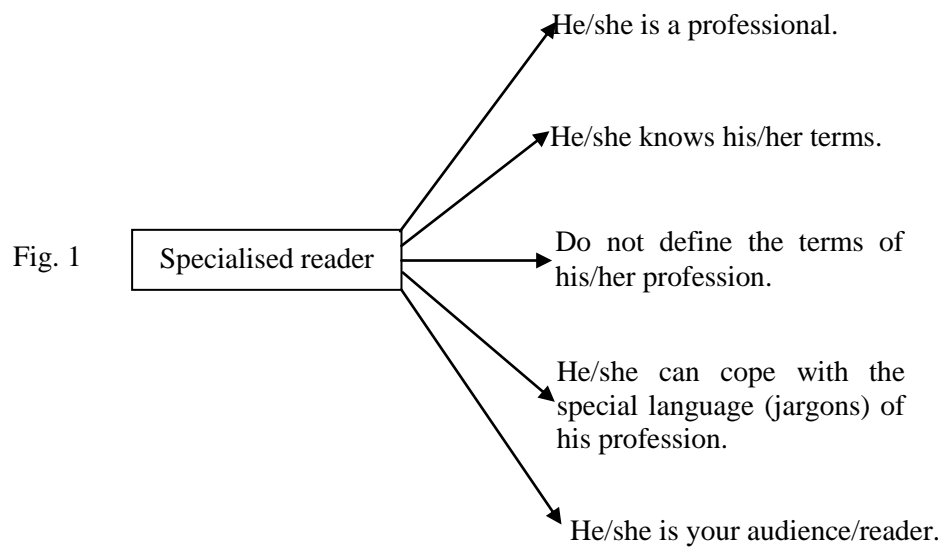
The truth about specialised audience is also true about you. That is why your modules have been written in a simple, 'home style' that will see you through your formal training in creative writing. You should write for specialised readers in their own language. For example, a bank

worker who is reading your enquiry or a medical doctor, have the expertise in the subject area you are writing to them about.

2. **General Reader**

When you write for the general reader, we expect you to use a standard format that embraces non-technical, non specialised language. Your article must be understood. Where you need to make reference to unfamiliar terms, give a definition. Your writing for this purpose must not require a special degree of knowledge about what you write on. Remember that your readers are like yourself. They want to read and understand you through what you have written.

3. Things you must know about the Categories of your Readers



Source: Adapted from Prentice-Hall Handbook for Writers (1988)

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What are some of the ways you can make your writing interest your readers?

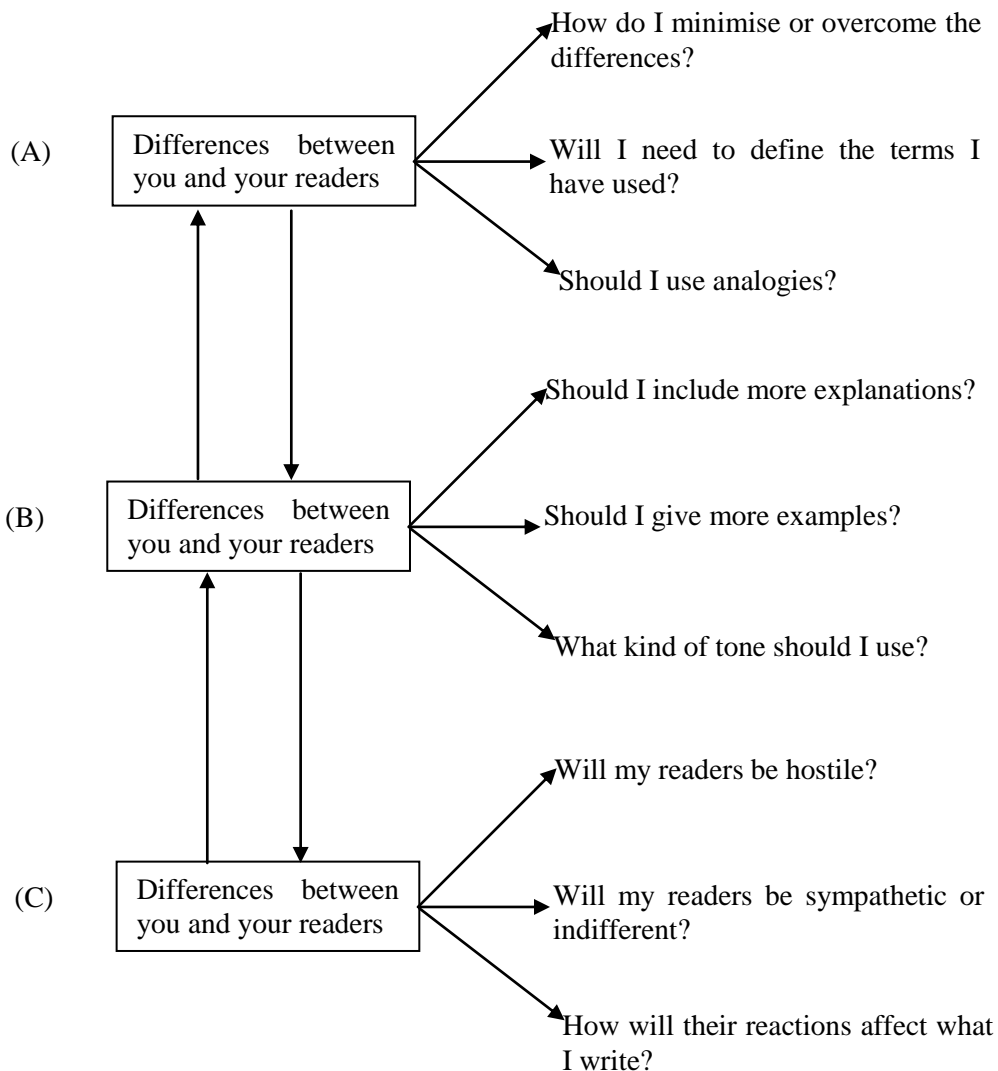
You may need to ask the following vital questions when writing for:

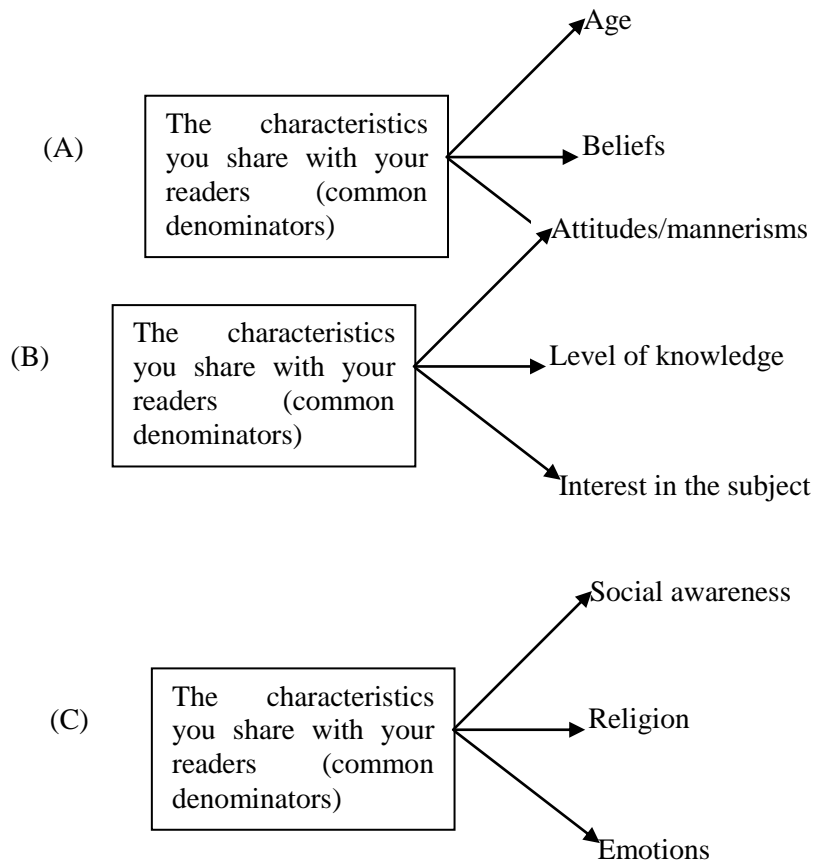
- a) Specialised readers and
- b) General readers

These questions/statements have been formed based on the obvious differences between you and your readers, as well as the common denominators of you as a personal individual and your readers.

Fig. 3: Questions/statements for your specialised and general readers

(A) Specialised ↔ General readers (B)





If you have been able to answer these questions in the boxes provided, you will not find it difficult to know the category of writing you will use in a particular article or essay. Now, as you think of writing an article, determine your audience as you go through the friendly questions in the boxes provided. Whichever way you may want to look at it, knowing the audience you are writing for is important.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

How is a specialised reader different from a general reader?

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have mentioned some interests of your reader which you must take into consideration before and while writing. We have also talked about the need for you to identify the type of audience you are writing for. Some familiar statements and questions in the boxes have some characteristics that will help you determine and satisfy your readers. You may wish to go over your work again.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- it is good to know what interest your readers before you write
- when you write, you are necessarily writing for two categories of readers (specialised and general)
- some characteristics which are peculiar to specialised and general readers have also been mentioned in the form of questions/statements in the boxes provided.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write short notes on 'biographies', 'the unusual', and 'conflict'.
2. With specific reference to your audience or reader, write two paragraphs on each of the essay questions below:
 - a) The midnight plane crash.
 - b) Abortion should not be legalised in Nigeria.
 - c) The road accident I witnessed.

Let your writing identify your audience.

3. List some of the things you should know about the categories of your readers.
4. Who is a specialised reader?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 QUALITIES OF A GOOD WRITER

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Qualities of a Good Writer (Planning)
 - 3.1.1 Economy of Words
 - 3.1.2 Simplicity
 - 3.1.3 Clarity of Expression
 - 3.1.4 “Courtship” Devices
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is designed to take you through some of the qualities which you must possess to be a good writer. The qualities which are expected of you will aid you in the mastery of the art of creative writing. As you go through some of the qualities in this unit, you will be taken through some of the things you have read in other creative writing related courses or in some textbooks in one way or the other. You may not be able to make a good writing out of your thought without understanding these qualities. This unit has been designed in such a way that you will find the facts about the qualities required of a good writer easy to learn.

One of the very important ways to be a successful writer is to know the rules of writing. You should also be able to make good use of the rules. In the knowledge of writing, there are many rules, all of which will help improve your writing. You may have been taught some of the rules of writing in your previous levels; you will still find out that you still have to continue to learn to be better writer, even when you are already familiar with the rules of writing. That is why you must always practise the art of writing so that you can get used to it.

Apart from the creative writing, there is no profession that does not have its own guiding principles. These principles to you are like the compass that shows the way to a sailor. Also, before a medical doctor can subject his patience to a surgical operation, he has to be conscious of the rules of the profession. That is when he will be able to do a successful work. You will come across situations in life that will require that you write or speak. If you do not already have the qualities of a good writer, you will have no adequate skill/knowledge to demonstrate to your employer or reader.

The most important fact about you is that you are already a writer, at least, in the general sense of the word. You are a writer because you often write. A writer is not only someone who writes National Newspaper column, publishes a bestseller or wins a *Pulitzer Prize*. You only have to be an effective writer by practicing writing often enough by first learning to practise through writing. Below are some of the objectives of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit, you should be able to:

- apply the qualities of a good writing to any type of writing;
- identify the materials needed for any type of creative writing;
- compose a creative work that is simple and meaningful; and
- provide a score card for your imaginative writing (self assessment of what you have written).

HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

- a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
- b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
- c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
- d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
- e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Qualities of a Good Writer (Planning)

Planning is the ‘corner stone’ of most research or writing. Before you embark on the imagination to boost your creative intention, you are expected to have decided on the general subject area you intend to explore in your writing. You can then think of a suitable topic, how you will organise your paragraphs, what your introduction will be and what your conclusion is likely to be.

3.1.1 Economy of Words

It is your responsibility to keep your creative work clear and meaningful. You must not forget that the reason why you write is to enable other people or your audience to understand you. You should speak to be heard through your writings. You may go into your University library or departmental library and read through the samples

of good creative works. Check the writers' choice of words. You may also ask for examples of creative works, books, and well written magazines from your lecturers. These materials will help you in your choice of words when you write. You must not form the habit of writing long and meaningless expressions. When you do this, your examiner or audience whom you have written for will not be able to understand what you have written. This is why your sentences should not contain unnecessary words. As a writer, you do not need to bother make, your writing unnecessarily difficult. Your writing should not be different from a machine which all parts combine to make a whole and work well. If a part of a machine is missing, it will either work and very badly or not work at all. When you write accurately and with precision, your writing will make a good reading.

3.1.2 Simplicity

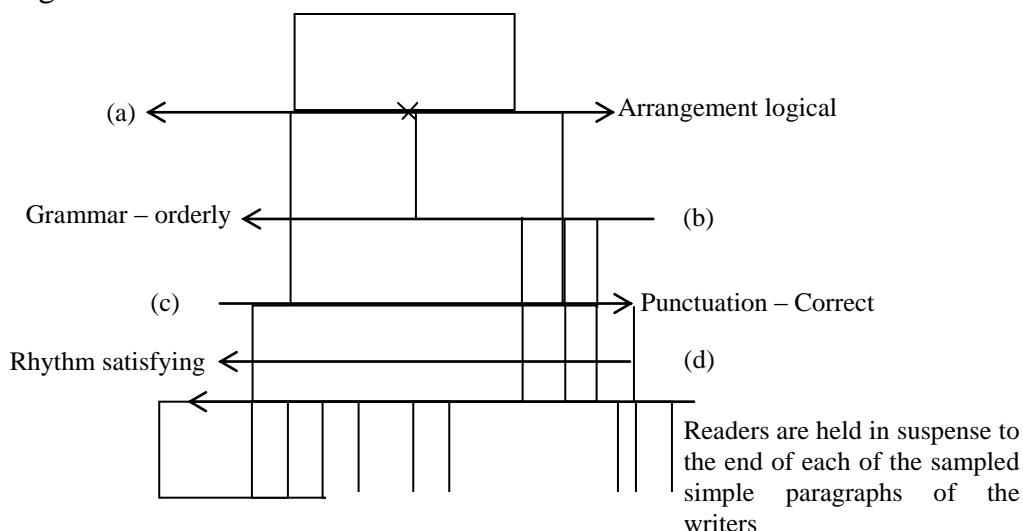
Another quality that you must arm yourself with when you write is simplicity. This does not mean that you should reduce the grammatical beauty of your work to look childish. You must say exactly what you mean in the best manner you are familiar with and in the style others will understand. You should be yourself when you write. Whether you sit at the computer set or you use pen and paper, you must be direct and clear to the point. This is the essence of the contemporary style of creative writing. In the table below are some examples of the simple and clear use of language by some popular writers. You will find the passages from their works accessible, knowledgeable and interesting. I have also provided a simple, score card chart to assess the works. You can also use the same to assess your own writing. Study the examples below.

Fig. 1: Examples of simple styles of creative writing from texts

- (a) *Zambia Shall be Free* (Kaunda 1962)
 My father died when I was eight years old and I cried bitterly when I heard of his death, for I loved him and all my memories of him are sweet ones (5)
- (b) *Songs of the Season* (Oriola 2002)
 A parrot flew in and perched on a dry branch of a tree nearby. The branch of the tree broke and he lost his grip. He flew again and reperched on another. He asked questions on behalf of the gathering of the birds' race (60)
- (c) *The Old Man and the Sea* (Hemingway 1952)
 He was an Old Man who fished alone in skiff in the Gulf Stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish (5)
- (d) Native Voices - A Collection of Essays (Brodkin and Pearson 1971)
 You have to smile twenty-four hours a day, Momma would say. If you walk through life showing aggravation you've gone through, people will feel sorry for you, and they'll never respect you. She taught us that man has two ways out in life-laughing or crying. There's more hope in laughing (1)
- (e) *Houseboy* (Oyono 1960)
 Father Gilbert says I can read and write fluently. Now I can keep a diary like he does. Keeping a diary is a white man's custom and what pleasure there is in it I do not know (9).
- (f) *Weep Not, Child* (Wa Thiong'o 1964)
 Nyokabi called him. She was a small, black woman, with a bold but grave face. One could tell by her small eyes full of life and warmth that she had once been beautiful. But time and bad conditions do not favour beauty (3)

The above are examples of the imaginative accounts of some writers. Take a look closely at each of the reproduced textual paragraphs. What can you see or feel after reading them? What is your impression of the authors' arrangement and use of language? How about use of punctuation marks? Certainly, the paragraphs have all been written in simple, grammatical, accessible and expressive language. You can also write as beautiful as these writers or better than them in some cases. We will use a score card for all the extracts.

Fig. 2: Score Card



Source: Oriola (2008)

The score cards will enable you to evaluate your piece of writing, be it speech, letters or short stories.

3.1.3 Clarity of Expression

You can make yourself clear or difficult through your writing. You have a choice, but the better choice is to avoid being unnecessarily difficult. You should convey your ideas in clear, readable prose. There may be the technical needs for one to be a bit complex in your writing, but one can still maintain coherence and give readers access to your work. You may be wondering if it is possible for one to be clear. But you will agree with me that since writing is like speaking, it should not add to or increase the difficulty of your readers. Whether the form you have chosen to write on is an essay, letter, poetry, drama or prose, you must see your reader as your next good neighbour who must not be hurt. You should not forget that the ability to communicate (language) is the essential quality that distinguishes man from other animals. Your ability to use language to be understood by other people makes you a human being.

3.1.4 “Courtship” Devices

You should write in a way that you will be able to (sustain) keep the interest of your readers to the end. That is why interesting form of writing is seen to be synonymous to “wooing” the reader so as to be able to establish/personalise a relationship (courtship) with him/her. It is when you have established an expected cordial relationship with your readers through your writing that you could be said to have conquered the fear that separates your printed page from readers.

It is not only by physical contacts or face to face discussions that you can personalise a relationship with your readers. Your friendly voice and a broad sense of personality can build a relationship for you.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What are the importance of the economy of words and courtship devices in writing?

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have treated some of the qualities you need so that your writing can be well focused. We have also given some examples of writings and provided a 'score card' in the form of self evaluation to help you. Take note of them all and put them to practise so that your work can look good before you submit to your facilitator.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- you must practice writing very often
- you must write in a simple and meaningful language
- your writing must be well arranged and coherent
- your writing must be expressive and balanced
- you should study the creative works of other good writers to improve on your own
- you should assess your writing through a simple score card.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. A budding (learner) writer just asked for your advice on how he can be a good creative writer, in not more than four paragraphs give your advice.
2. Show the use of courtship devices in any essay topic of your choice.
3. Explain the problems which the lack of clarity of expression and economy of words will create for readers.
4. Write a short essay paragraph using the score card below:
 - (i) arrangement
 - (ii) grammar
 - (iii) simplicity
 - (iv) punctuation

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UNIT 4 THE PARAGRAPH AND ITS STRUCTURE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Characteristics of Paragraphs
 - 3.2 Types of Paragraphs
 - 3.3 Transitional Devices in Writing
 - 3.1.3 Parts of an Essay
 - 3.1.2 The Body of the Essay
 - 3.1.3 The Conclusion (End of the Essay)
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments
- 7.0 Reference/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is designed to take you through on how you will structure your paragraphs. This is important for you as a creative writer so that you can know how to develop a single idea to a reasonable length of a paragraph. This unit will take you through a number of things you are already familiar with. The repetition of this will refresh your memory about some of the things you may no longer remember.

An important way to keep your memory alive is to continue to do what you have often done. You can do this by reading a novel or play, poetry or even studying or revising a lecture note of what you had been taught by your lecturer. This unit is to take you through the characteristics of a paragraph and its types and functions. You may have been taught about the paragraph in ENG 223, ENG 224 and ENG 212. You still need to be taken through its structure again so that your ideas can be controlled. You have spent a good deal of your studying years reading paragraphs. You still need to study it more until you have reached the height of expectation about what we want paragraphing to do in your writing life. You will continue to encounter situations that will require you to write in paragraphs all your life. Below are some of the objectives of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit, you should be able to:

- define a paragraph;
- describe the structural features of a paragraph;
- identify the kinds of paragraphs;

- reduce essays to paragraphs;
- use appropriate linking devices that make for smooth reading and good flow of information; and
- construct paragraphs with different expository patterns.

HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

- a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
- b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
- c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
- d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
- e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Characteristics of Paragraphs

A paragraph may be described as a group of related sentences that develops a unit of thought within an essay. It is the concept that underlies the act of structuring writing into paragraphs. It is a form of prose composition that comprises a group of related sentences developing a single central idea. A paragraph may be short or lengthy. You need to learn to practise the proper application of paragraph to a piece of essays or letters. You must be able to develop/divide your writing into paragraphs. First, below are the features/characteristics of a paragraph:

1. Topic sentence
2. Unity
3. Coherence
4. Clarity
5. Emphasis

1. Topic sentence

The topic sentence of your paragraph should be the first sentence of the paragraph. It contains the fact that you will explain to make up the whole paragraph. It holds the key to the expressions in your paragraph. You can also make your topic sentence to come anywhere in the paragraph (beginning, middle or end). This depends on your aim as a writer.

2. Unity

All other sentences in the paragraph must have something to do with the main idea expressed. Other sentences which you have used must contribute to the central idea. This will make the issues in the work relate to the main idea of your paragraph and you will achieve unity if you recognise the thrust of your own idea.

3. Coherence

Your thought must lead one to another in a consistent and sequential order. You will achieve coherence by using linkages or transitional words or phrases to connect sentences. You will be taught the transitional words/phrases later in this unit. You must write to connect the individual words, phrases and sentences so that a clear pattern of thought can emerge. You must let all parts of your writing stick together or cohere.

4. You can achieve coherence in the following ways:

- by arranging your materials in an appropriate sequence
- by providing transition from one idea to another
- by maintaining a consistent tone and point of view

5. Clarity

You must be exact or precise in your discussions. The themes in your paragraph must be presented in a way that will make your reader understand you. A paragraph should be written in short and accessible language. If you write otherwise, you are likely to confuse your readers.

6. Emphasis

This is where the relevance of the main idea in a paragraph becomes noticeable. You will use expressions that highlight the topic. You will achieve this when you repeat certain key words in the paragraph to reveal the recurrence of the topic sentence.

3.2 Types of Paragraphs

Paragraphs are categorised by their functions. According to Paul (2004) seven types of paragraphs are identified by this categorisation. They are:

1. introductory
2. defining
3. descriptive

4. narrative
5. explanatory
6. transitional
7. concluding

1. Introductory

An introductory paragraph introduces the subject of discussion. It is usually the first part of your writing. It gives an idea into what will happen in the other paragraphs.

2. Defining

This type of paragraph tells us the meaning of the concept in question. For instance, if you were to write on *culture*, you may define it so that your readers will know its meaning and why it is used in the context.

3. Descriptive

This is a description of a subject, real or imagined (concrete or abstract) thoroughly. The type of paragraph happens in expository writing in which you may need to describe concepts or how things work. In doing this, you are expected to be imagistic and picturesque.

4. Narrative

We use narrative paragraph more in Literature (play or prose) because it tells stories to keep readers interest. If you must use this style, it must be clear and vivid.

5. Explanatory

This explains concepts with detailed examples and it is often very informative in nature. It often explains concepts, and does not rely on mere definitions.

6. Transitional

This is also called a linking paragraph. It connects paragraphs as it reviews or summarises issues already explained. Also it reminds readers of previous discussions, and prepares him for the next.

7. Concluding

This normally ends a piece of writing. It reviews all that have been discussed, bringing out the main points. This ensures that the reader does not forget the main facts as the highlights of the writing are provided.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- 1 (a) What are the features of a paragraph?
- (b) Write short notes on *three* types of paragraphs.

3.3 Transitional Devices in Writing

You have the categories of transitional words or linkages/connectives that make your idea as a writer to move smoothly from one stage to the other. When you write, readers expect you to *refer to what* you have already said and also to *look ahead* to what you will say. In your writing, you should be able to *refer to the present, compare and contrast issues/concepts*. You will find these transitional words interesting to use.

Fig. 1: Transitional devices in writing

- Referring back →	{ as we have seen, as mentioned above, as I have said, as stated previously it seems then, on the whole }
- Looking ahead →	{ then, next, after, thereafter, consequently, to sum up later, now, afterward, finally }
- Contrasting, qualifying, conceding →	{ nevertheless, unless, but, despite, on the other hand, despite this, on the contrary, however, still, if, granted that, conversely, as, yet, whether, anyhow, even though }
- Place marker →	{ next to, in front, at this point, beside, outside, here, next to, inside, behind, below }
- Comparing and establishing degrees →	{ more than, and, in like manner, less than, similarly that, also, in the same way, beyond this, just as, so, also }
- Time markers →	{ at the same time, now, then, later, soon, meanwhile, finally, before, next, afterward, thereafter }
- Introducing an illustration →	{ to illustrate, for example, for instance, thus first, second, third: a, b, c, 1, 2, 3 }

- Adding and Intensifying → { to repeat, in addition, moreover, and, also still, again, similarly, furthermore, finally, really, indeed }
- Using synonyms → { you do not have to repeat a key word to avoid monotony. You can use a synonym that continue the same thought }

3.3.1 Parts of an Essay

You will begin a paragraph by indenting the first line. The next line begins at the margin. The topic sentence in the paragraph reveals the main idea. A paragraph ranges from a single sentence to between eight and or more sentences.

Now read the following paragraph, and note the *topic sentence* at the initial position/beginning of the paragraph.

Let us consider this topic sentence of the first paragraph of an essay entitled ‘A first visit to Oshodi market in Lagos’.

Topic Sentence { My first visit to Oshodi Market in Lagos was hectic. At first, we had a smooth ride half way through the Mile 2-Oshodi highway. Suddenly, our bus ran into a terrible traffic that held us down for about an hour. Our driver tuned up the bus stereo; and its wave sounds assault our ears, engaging our auditory organs like the noise from a locomotive engine. The heat from the bus was also unbearable. We were already in sweats, just as our momourings against the general uneasyness gradually became louder. But, our bus conductor who smelled faintly of cigarettes and local gin showed excitement, as he shouted orders at the driver to force his way through the long queue of the vehicular traffic. We had hardly gone a quarter of a kilometer when a police officer ordered our driver to stop. He requested for his driving license for willfully contravening traffic rules. But, our driver had none; instead, he offered a bribe to the police officer who rejected it. That was how we were delayed for an hour. So, we spent about two hours on a rather short journey from Mile 2 to Oshodi.

3.3.2 The Body of the Essay (Middle)

The body of the essay comprises the main issues or points raised in the essay. There is the use of appropriate transitions to show that you are moving from one point to another. For example, in an essay that has the title ‘The Role of Literature in the Development of Nigeria’, the body paragraphs may be introduced as follows:

The problem of reading culture affects the growth of the individual and the Nigerian nation in a number of ways.

First ...
 Secondly ...
 Another point is ...
 Again ...
 Lastly ...

3.3.3 The Conclusion (End of the Essay)

The last part of the essay is as important as the first. While the first introduces your topic, the last expresses the point which has been made in the preceding paragraphs. You have to use transitional devices here to enable your reader know that you have come to the end of the essay.

You may conclude your essay in a manner appropriate/suitable to the topic and method used. You can use any of the forms below:

- a quotation to support or end your discussion;
- a prophetic or look-ahead form of conclusion;
- reach a climax or a kind of resolution (denouement) at the end;
- end the essay by summarising all the whole points in the paragraphs as your conclusion; and
- evaluate the main points discussed so as to state how irrelevant or important they are.

Examples of transitional devices have been given in this unit. You may however use some of these to conclude your essay topic such as ‘A first visit to Oshodi Market in Lagos’.

- Finally ...
- In conclusion ...
- To end my discussion ...
- To summarise ...
- Lastly ...

In conclusion, I had spent a whole year in the city of Lagos before I got used to the swift movement, sounds of horns, and other conflicts of city life. But, I have never stopped to wander where all the people stop at nights and where the busy bus stops and markets go to sleep as well.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Write two paragraphs on any subject of your choice showing clearly the use of transitional devices.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have mentioned and discussed some features of the paragraph. We have also talked about the types of paragraph and the conditions under which you can use transitional devices to make your writing flow and easy to read for your readers.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- the features of a paragraph;
- the different types of paragraph;
- how appropriate linkages smoothen reading/writing; and
- that paragraphs are categorised by their functions.

In the next unit, you will be introduced to the writing process, leading to a more practical aspect of creative writing. This will include how you can avoid (plagiarism), the bad habit of copying another person's work. The writing process in the next unit reveals how you can make your thoughts germinate (form), through a (step by step) simple progression.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Briefly explain the features of a paragraph.
2. Paragraphs are categorised according to the functions they perform. Explain.
3. Write two essays, showing examples of (a) Narrative and (b) Descriptive types.
4. Using any essay topics, write at least two essays, showing the correct use of transitional devices.

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UNIT 5 THE WRITING PROCESS I

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Sharpening your Power of Imagination
 - 3.1.1 Thought Progression Chart
 - 3.1.2 Plagiarism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is planned to take you through some of the things you need to know before and while you do your writing. Your ability to sharpen your power of imagination will help your writing process. If you can learn the chain of thought progression, you will know the category you belong. You will also know how to take a look at the things you wish to address in your work creatively. As you read this unit, you will find it educative.

Another important way by which you can present a well written account of the things you know is to write about what you have heard and improve upon it. At times you listen to lectures on a topic and you think that is the only approach to the topic. You soon discover that there are even simpler and more creative ways you could approach such topics when you listen or read about them from other writers. That is why it is important to read different books and approaches on creative writing.

Since creative writing is a continuous practice for you in life, you have to continue to learn how you can improve on it daily. You should not hesitate to read and reread even those topics you are already familiar with. This will make you to understand the subject more. As a result, it will make you stand out from the crowd of 'schooling writers'. Some learners look vaguely into the blank space when they hold their pens to write or when they sit by their laptops. They could not find any idea to put down on paper or they put down ideas that are without focus and meaningless, in disjointed/incoherent and skewed language. This shows to a great extent the incompetence of such learners who probably were not used to writing. This is often the reason why some writers in examinations go ahead to copy other people's works (plagiarism). And such is a serious crime in creative writing.

You must sharpen your thought progression chain for your vision/imagination to complement your pen. This is because, naturally ideas flow from up, in the head to down on the paper. Below are some of the objectives of this Unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of the unit, you should be able to:

- create something out of nothing by your powers of imagination;
- illustrate your own type of creative writing;
- avoid copying other people’s work (plagiarism); and
- create your own table and identify your creative power by applying some of the levels in the “thought progression” table.

HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

- a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
- b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
- c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
- d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
- e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Sharpening your Power of Imagination

Your ability to imagine deeply and thoroughly of the subject you intend to write on/about is a very important factor in your writing process. Some students in public examinations could hardly write a line without steering at the ceiling. Some of them may hiss even kick, and curse, apparently showing their discomfort.

At the same time, some other students are versed in the imaginative thinking on whichever topic and are already scribbling away or jotting down points on how to go about their essays. This is the difference between the ability of the individual’s imaginative process. You have to probe your memory. You should make a deliberate effort. You must see things beyond the ordinary way other people will see it. You should see things beyond the general impressions people have about it. The way you look at things must be purposeful and deeply philosophical. You should let your consciousness grow and be realistic about the things you want to write. To be able to describe things/events differently requires a

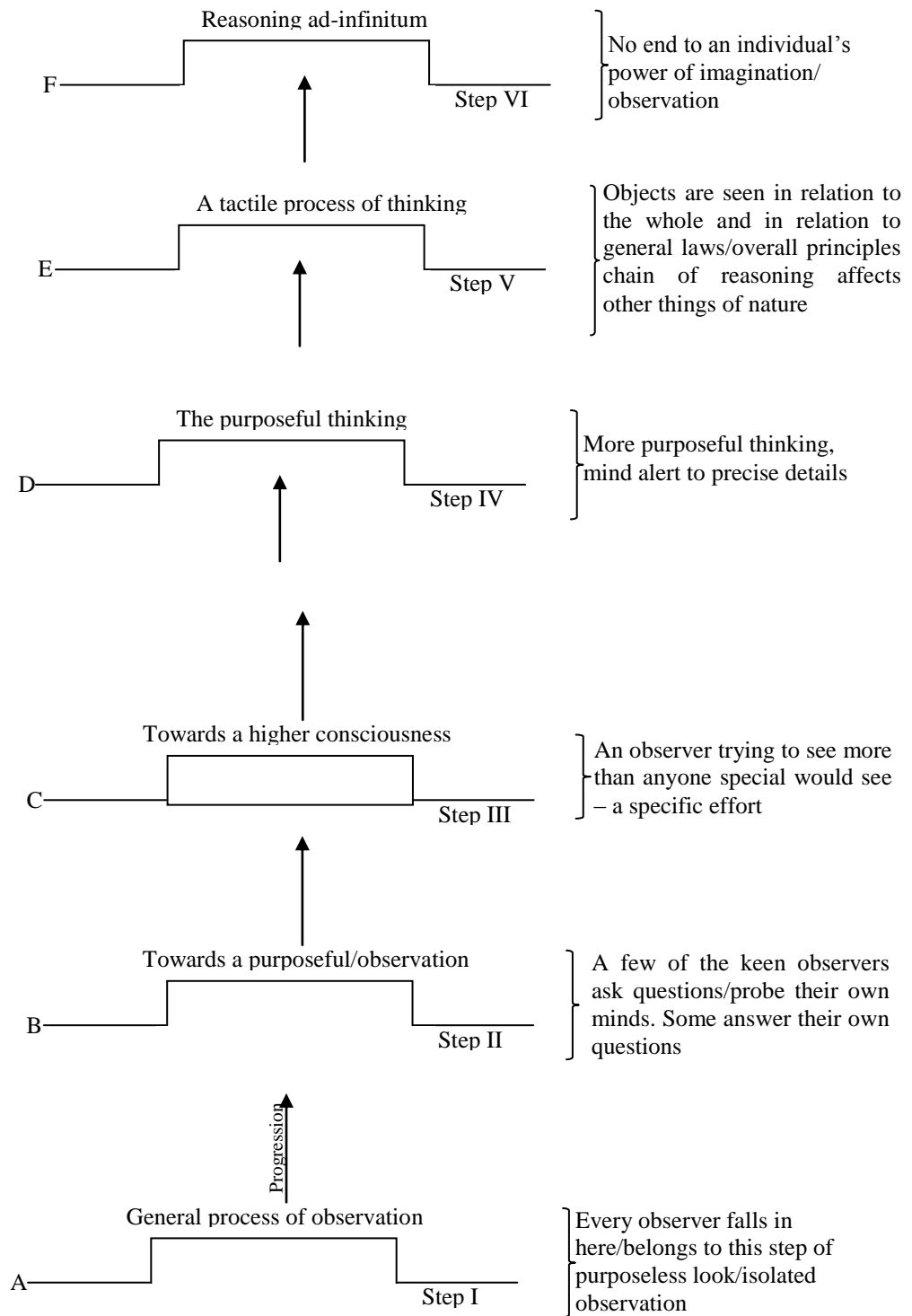
special effort. You may have been passing by an abandoned structure on your way daily and may not notice anything about it. The day you will really notice it keenly, you will know you have just seen it because your new apprehension and description will be completely different from others.

In addition, this reminds me of a similar experience I had with my creative writing class at Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo in the year 2009. I had made up my mind for a practical class for ENG 2104 - *Creative Writing* that year, so that my students could develop their creative potentials beyond the classroom as well as put their mastery of the English Language to the test. So, I asked them to walk around the different statues in our Campus - the old St. Andrew's Teachers' Training College, Oyo. The statues were the Fine Arts practical works of the Old Students of the College. I asked them to observe a particular female statue in her sitting position. My students gave their different observations in writing about the female statue. Because I had warned them against seeing the statue from a general/common perceptive, a few of them were able to say something extraordinary about the statue. Some of their ways of seeing it were really shocking and beautiful.

You can also do something powerful with the way you see things. Now walk around/take a look at your surroundings. See if you can create a fresh thing from what is physically before you. The object could be something you've always seen. Are you ready? Then, start seeing things with your inner consciousness; only then you will realise you've never seen those things. The simple chains of reasoning below will help your creative power.

3.1.1 Thought Progression Chart

Fig. 1: A simple chain of reasoning (thought progression)



The level of fact

Key to the simple thought progression table

- (A) → Step (I) — **General process of observation** - This happens when your creative/imaginative thought is at a common (narrow) level (i.e. when you see a bleating sheep as everyone else does).
- (B) → Step (II) — **Towards a purposeful observation** - This is a creative stage in which you observe and ask questions on your own or ask from other people about an object and or a creative work.
- (C) → Step (III) — **Towards a higher consciousness** - When you make a special effort to see more than anyone else would see (i.e. you may see the wheels of a bicycle as the two wheels of the society, that is, the rich and the poor).
- (D) → Step (IV) — **Purposeful thinking** - This occurs when your creative power becomes more purposeful. Your mind is alert to some precise details of what you are about to discuss.
- (E) → Step (V) — **A tactile process of thinking** - The way you think here becomes broad. You see the object you are trying to create in relation to your environment/overall principles or laws.
- (F) → Step (VI) — **Reasoning ad-infinitum** - There is no end in sight as to your power of reasoning. People invented the aeroplane, submarine, and so on. These are their levels of creative imagination. (i.e. for instance, in 1958, Chinua Achebe imagined a world of Ufonia, created his tragic hero, Okonkwo and created conflicts of culture between the whites and African culture. Achebe reduced the contacts of Nigeria/Africa in colonial situation into a fictional world).

Explanation

Study the above levels of how to sharpen your powers of imagination (creative progression table). Which step do you belong to? You can also put your level/power of reasoning to practice now by trying to create something out of nothing or something special out of that which is seen the same way by other people.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Write at least two essay paragraphs to determine your own level of creativity.

3.1.2 Plagiarism

In your pre-University days, you must have been cautioned by your teachers against copying the works of other people and saying it is yours. You must also avoid it now, and as you continue to write later in life. This is because it is criminal and punishable by law to copy the works of other people without permission from the author or publisher. Even then, when you use a work of another person, you have to acknowledge the writer. Plagiarism is what you must try to avoid because it is theft. And, if you must use the idea of another writer, you owe the writer a credit line, even when you have not used his exact words.

You do not have to even think of slightly changing another writer's statement. If you pick a single quote from someone else's statement, or a phrase, you should put it in quotes. For instance, if you are to take the description of "language as God's gift of social linguistically painful measure" from an article by Adekunle Adeniran entitled, "Nigeria as Babel—the Paradox of a sociolinguistic Blessing", you must indicate your source (i.e. Adeniran 2008:7). You cannot claim not to know who the writer is.

We expect you to have read the works of other people on your chosen subject or area of discourse before you write.

In fact, it does not mean that no one can write as Adekunle Adeniran because he has already done so. What it means is that anyone writing on a subject should know that Adekunle Adeniran said it at an earlier date you should give credit in the following instances:

- when you use someone else's ideas
- when you quote someone else directly
- when you use someone else's examples
- when your present evidence taken from someone else's argument
- when you use statistics someone else gathered.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

State the condition under which you should give credit to a writer whose work you have used.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed how you can put your imagination into use creatively. We have also talked about the stages of creative consciousness that we expect from every writer. We have provided the explanation (key) to the thought progression table. We have discussed how you can avoid copying the works of other peoples.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- you need to be extraordinary in your sense of imagination
- it is important that you know your level of awareness
- it is important to avoid copying other people's works (plagiarism).

In Module 2, Unit 1, you will learn other skills that are necessary for a good creative writer, and why you should also read bad writers.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Why do you need to develop a keen sense of imagination as a writer?
2. Write *three* different paragraphs of prose, poetry and drama to put to the test your own simple chain of creativity. Your tutor will mark, grade and return to you.
3. Write a short note on plagiarism.
4. Draw a full diagram of the imaginative progression.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Adeniran, Adekunle (2008). *Nigeria as Babel – The Paradox of a Sociolinguistic Blessing*. Ibadan: Constellation Nigeria Publishers.
- Berke, Jacqueline (2000). *Twenty Questions for the Writer: A Rhetoric with Readings*. Chicago: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Oriola, Stanley (2008). "Writing for Academic Purposes". In Joel Ayodabo & Demola Jolayemi (Eds.) *Effective Communication Skills for Higher Education. The Use of English*. Ilorin: Ajayi Crowther University.