

## PREFACE

With its grounding in the “guiding pillars of Access, Equity, Equality, Affordability and Accountability,” the New Education Policy (NEP 2020) envisions flexible curricular structures and creative combinations for studies across disciplines. Accordingly, the UGC has revised the CBCS with a new Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes (CCFUP) to further empower the flexible choice based credit system with a multidisciplinary approach and multiple/ lateral entry-exit options. It is held that this entire exercise shall leverage the potential of higher education in three-fold ways – learner’s personal enlightenment; her/his constructive public engagement; productive social contribution. Cumulatively therefore, all academic endeavours taken up under the NEP 2020 framework are aimed at synergising individual attainments towards the enhancement of our national goals.

In this epochal moment of a paradigmatic transformation in the higher education scenario, the role of an Open University is crucial, not just in terms of improving the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) but also in upholding the qualitative parameters. It is time to acknowledge that the implementation of the National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) National Credit Framework (NCrF) and its syncing with the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) are best optimised in the arena of Open and Distance Learning that is truly seamless in its horizons. As one of the largest Open Universities in Eastern India that has been accredited with ‘A’ grade by NAAC in 2021, has ranked second among Open Universities in the NIRF in 2024, and attained the much required UGC 12B status, Netaji Subhas Open University is committed to both quantity and quality in its mission to spread higher education. It was therefore imperative upon us to embrace NEP 2020, bring in dynamic revisions to our Undergraduate syllabi, and formulate these Self Learning Materials anew. Our new offering is synchronised with the CCFUP in integrating domain specific knowledge with multidisciplinary fields, honing of skills that are relevant to each domain, enhancement of abilities, and of course deep-diving into Indian Knowledge Systems.

Self Learning Materials (SLM’s) are the mainstay of Student Support Services (SSS) of an Open University. It is with a futuristic thought that we now offer our learners the choice of print or e-slm’s. From our mandate of offering quality higher education in the mother tongue, and from the logistic viewpoint of balancing scholastic needs, we strive to bring out learning materials in Bengali and English. All our faculty members are constantly engaged in this academic exercise that combines subject specific academic research with educational pedagogy. We are privileged in that the expertise of academics across institutions on a national level also comes together to augment our own faculty strength in developing these learning materials. We look forward to proactive feedback from all stakeholders whose participatory zeal in the teaching-learning process based on these study materials will enable us to only get better. On the whole it has been a very challenging task, and I congratulate everyone in the preparation of these SLM’s.

I wish the venture all success.

**Professor Indrajit Lahiri**  
Vice Chancellor

# **Netaji Subhas Open University**

**Four Year Undergraduate Degree Programme**

**Under National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) &  
Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes**

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**Course Title : Creative Writing and Literature**

**Course Code : NMD-EG-01**

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## **Module-1**

# **Introduction to Creative Writing**



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## Unit-1 □ What is Creative Writing?

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### *Structure*

- 1.1.1. Objectives
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- 1.1.8. Suggested Readings

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### 1.1.1. Objectives

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This is the first unit in the module on “Introduction to Creative Writing”. In this Unit we will learn—

- The history of creative writing
- What's “creative” in creative writing?
- The three choices of creative writing :
  - ✓ Choice of Content
  - ✓ Choice of Structure, Form and Genre
  - ✓ Choice of Style
- Advice for creative writing from creative writers

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### 1.1.1. Introduction : The History of Creative Writing

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The art of creative writing is deeply rooted in the ancient tradition of storytelling and is as old as the tools of human communication. With the invention of written language, estimated to have begun around 3200 BC depending on the region, oral narratives were transformed into written texts. Some of the earliest transcriptions of

oral stories include texts like the Mayan Codices in Central America, the Indian Vedas and Sanskrit epics in the Eastern tradition and the Bible and Homer's Odyssey in the Western tradition.

Whether inscribed on papyrus, written on paper, or digitized on screens, humans have continually found ways to preserve spoken words through writing. Tools such as ink, quills, printing presses, typewriters, and keyboards have all facilitated this enduring practice. By setting spoken words into a readable format, people across history have ensured their ideas, stories and arguments transcend time, effectively transforming oral traditions into written legacies. This enduring practice exemplifies our fundamental drive to share stories across generations, making storytelling a timeless and universal aspect of human civilization. Creative writing is therefore the skill of using words to emote life creatively and imaginatively—to amaze, amuse, inform, inspire, instruct, forbid and foretell.

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### 1.1.3. What's the "Creative" in Creative Writing?

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Creative writing encompasses any form of writing that inspires imagination and evokes emotion in its readers. It goes beyond adhering to grammatical rules and structural norms, focusing instead on using language to craft vivid worlds, stir feelings, and establish meaningful connections with the audience. This versatile craft spans an array of genres and styles, including poetry, fiction, memoirs, and screenplays, each offering unique ways to engage and captivate readers. **Authors engagingly conjure up ideas, characters, narratives, places, times and feelings that transport the readers into a world—a world, which is not their own and yet feels like theirs in ways that the author her/himself might not have apprehended. This is probably the most important distinction between what we understand as creative writing and what isn't.**

The focus of non-creative writing, often referred to as technical or expository writing is delivering information clearly and accurately. Whether it be academic, journalistic, business, official or legal writing—each genre of non-creative writing serves a unique purpose and adheres to specific conventions to effectively communicate information—information that's intended to be understood the same way no matter how many readers read it or how many times a reader reads it. This clarity and fixedness of meaning is often an outcome of the rigidity of rules, structure, form and vocabulary. If you ever have written an email, a complaint letter, minutes of meeting, a newspaper



article covering an incident, an advertisement brochure or a user manual—you might have understood what I mean by “rigidness of rules, structure, form and vocabulary”. **This is what creative writing refuses to do—fixing meaning and/or rules of writing.** Whether it be fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama or other hybrid genres like graphic novel, screenplay or the script of a stand-up comedy show—the mastery of a creative writer lies in expressing ideas in words that could invoke different emotions in different readers and sometimes even connect differently with the same reader when she/he reads it several times. This universal, ephemeral and timeless appeal is the hallmark of great specimens of creative writing.

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### Activity 1

Most of you are students of humanities. Can you pick any one of your favourite texts that you read as part of your syllabus and list out the qualities of the texts that make them timeless? Do you think this is what makes them literature?

### Discussion

No matter whichever creative writing text you choose, in all probability it will demonstrate the following features :

- It will have descriptions filled with details and metaphors. Detailing helps readers to conjure up the scene, image or person and metaphors help readers understand, connect and remember what they are reading
  - It might have critical and complex ideas presented in a simple manner or might have simple everydayness presented in the most extraordinary way. Boris Pasternak, a Russian poet, novelist, composer, and literary translator—the author of the novel, *Doctor Zhivago* (1957) says that “literature is the art of discovering something extraordinary about ordinary people and saying with ordinary words something extraordinary.”
  - It most probably would have references to other texts, authors and or characters/ situations in previous works. This inherent fluid citationality is the most engaging way of storytelling that informs the readers about the critical and/or conflicting history of ideas, styles and genre that the present work deals with.
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### 1.1.4. The Three Choices of Creative Writing

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- **Choice of Content**

You might want to share a story with the world that is based on facts and actual incidents/ occurrences. Such kind of creative writing would be categorized as non-fiction. However, if you have an imaginary story that might or might not have close resemblances to your life or someone you know or to events you have been part of or have heard about—means you are presenting your interpretation or point of view. This would mean you are writing fiction. So, **this must be clearly understood that creative writing can be of both kinds—fictional and non-fictional, depending on the choice of content.** Autobiographies, biographies, memoirs, essays and dairies are genres of creative writing as much as is the novel, short story and drama.

However, **masterful writers have always blurred this delicate distinction and broken the moulds of what can be superficially classified as fiction or non-fiction.** In her 2001 novel *Bel Canto*, Ann Patchett blurs the line between fiction and reality, drawing inspiration from the 1996-1997 hostage crisis in Peru. The event, where terrorists took over the Japanese ambassador's residence, became the foundation for Patchett's novel. In *Bel Canto*, terrorists storm a party in an unnamed South American country, aiming to capture the president, who is absent. Over time, both hostages and terrorists lower their defences, and an opera singer becomes central to the plot, a fictional addition that Patchett felt was needed to enhance the story. Patchett said in an interview later that "about 98 percent" of the book was fiction, including the presence of the opera singer. "I thought 'this is so operatic what's happening in Lima. The only thing that's missing from this story is an opera star hung up with the rest of these people,'" she said, "which is the nice thing about being a novelist instead of a journalist. When you see a story that is crying out for an opera singer, you just stick an opera singer into the story."

So, **to begin with, it's best to decide what's going to be your guiding content—a factual event, a real person or a fabricated character, plot or setting.** That way we will not lose our path often. However, when in flow, no one can be sure of how our stories are going to unfold. In fact, American cartoonist, Linda Barry in *What it is* (2008) says that memory is a good place to start, because once we know what real images feel like, it's easier to recognize that sensation when writing fiction. She insists that it will work for anyone who has any kind of curiosity about writing or

remembering, especially people who always wanted to write but were too confused about how to even start. Just the advice we need, right?

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## Activity 2

Now that you know that what fiction and non-fiction means, where would you place poetry?

## Discussion

The classification of poetry as fiction or nonfiction has been a long-standing topic of discussion among scholars and critics. The language, structure, style, and tone of a poem play key roles in determining whether it reflects fact or creative interpretation.

Poetry is typically divided into three types depending on its content: lyric, narrative, and dramatic. Lyric poetry emphasizes the poet's emotions and personal experiences. Although it may include factual elements, its focus is mainly on the poet's subjective perspective. Narrative poetry tells stories, often featuring characters and events that may draw from real life. Through vivid descriptions, the poet creates engaging and immersive narratives. Dramatic poetry, true to its name, is written in a theatrical style, incorporating characters, dialogue, and plot, much like a stage play.

Fiction poetry relies on imagination and creativity to convey stories, abstract ideas, and emotions. Using literary devices like imagery, symbolism, allegories, metaphors, illusion, satire, sarcasm, personification among others, it often portrays the writer's inner feelings in an evocative and dramatic manner. Though it may draw from real events, fiction poetry is presented in a highly imaginative and abstract style, designed to engage the reader's psyche and emotions.

Nonfiction poetry focuses on facts and realism, often exploring history, culture, and other societal events. It avoids imaginative elements, emphasizing accurate documentation of events, their causes, and effects. This type of poetry is often used for advocacy and public education, presenting facts in an engaging format. Unlike fiction poetry, it prioritizes factual accuracy over evoking strong emotions and may be written in various styles, such as free verse or rhymed verse.

Robert Frost's "*The Road Not Taken*" is a fine example of fiction poetry, celebrated for its deep reflection on life's choices and their consequences. Published in 1916 as the first poem in his collection *Mountain Interval*, it has since become

a cornerstone of American literature, admired for its simplicity, universality, and philosophical undertones. The poem explores the theme of choice and its impact on life's journey. It captures a moment of decision-making where the speaker reflects on two divergent paths in a forest, metaphorically representing life's choices. The poem examines the inevitability of choosing one path over another and the lingering curiosity and maybe even regret about the road not taken. Frost delves into the human tendency to look back on decisions with nostalgia and curiosity, pondering how different life might have been if a different choice had been made. While it draws on the universal theme of decision-making, this lyrical and contemplative poem is not meant to recount specific factual event but instead uses metaphor and vivid imagery.

In contrast, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "*The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere*" is a narrative non-fictional poem. It was first published in 1861 and commemorates the famous midnight ride of Paul Revere, a silversmith and patriot during the American Revolutionary War. The poem dramatizes Revere's journey on the night of April 18, 1775, to warn colonial militia of the approaching British forces, marking the start of the American Revolution. The poem celebrates heroism, patriotism, and the spirit of resistance against oppression. It underscores the significance of individual actions in shaping history and highlights the importance of vigilance and preparedness in the face of danger. Longfellow's portrayal of Paul Revere turns him into a larger-than-life figure, symbolizing the courage and determination that defined the American Revolution. While it may take some artistic liberties for dramatic effect, the poem remains rooted in historical realism, making it an effective example of nonfiction poetry.

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- **Choice of Structure, Form and Genre**

You will learn more about this in the next unit of this module but for now we need to understand that our choice of structure, form and genre should depend on primarily three moot questions—

- ✓ What the content demands for effective articulation of the ideas?
  - ✓ What form, genre and structure are you most comfortable writing?
  - ✓ Can an author take liberty with the structure, form and genre?
-

Genre-specific literary studies attempt to categorize creative writing under various distinct genres by imposition of rules and conventions and by advocating adherence to a specific form that has historically be ensued for similar content, but creative writers have often made it difficult to box certain pieces of creative writing under one category. So, does this mean we don't need to learn the rules of creative writing or that we must stick to the strictures of a genre once decided? Certainly not. Please remember that as an author you have complete freedom to make subtle and sometimes significant changes in the generic structure of your work. So, do not refrain from foraying into risky and unknown territories. But as it is with life, so with creative writing. Learn the rules before you break them.

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### Activity 3

This is an excerpt from a book. Can you guess the genre of this work? Reread it at least twice before you jump to a conclusion.

#### RED AND THE WOLF, AN AWKWARD RE-INTRODUCTION

*And how can you not forgive? You make a feast in honor of what was lost...\_*

(Jane Kenyon)

Feeling herself plucked from real life,  
stuck in some Hieronymus Bosch nightmare  
of a cheese factory tourist trap gone awry,

Red faces her former lover the Wolf,  
still magnificent in stature,  
and his equally gorgeous young brood.

“This is my brother’s son, Sam,” Wolf says  
indicating the handsome naval officer  
who bears him more than passing resemblance.

“And his wife Bella,” an aptly named beauty.  
“And these, my nieces, Joy and Hope,”  
he says, shouldering the freckled, giggling girls.

At a loss, Red relies on her manners.  
“I’m so pleased to meet you all.  
You must be so proud of your uncle’s fine art.”

“We are,” the nephew says,  
“But who the blazes are you?”  
“I’m so sorry,” the Wolf says, bowing

to his kin. “This is Eve Hood, my Red.”  
His Red, she thinks, as if the decade plus  
years since they’ve met amount to

no more than a blink.  
\_His\_ Red, as if she could not belong  
to herself, or belong with anyone else.

“So you’re an artist too,” Sam says.  
“Uncle Frank’s shown us photos.  
Wish we could stay and chat,

but we’re bringing the rugrats  
to their Grandma’s now.”  
Hugs and kisses all around,

the family takes their leave, leaving  
Red and the Wolf alone together,  
silent among noisy tourists, but smiling.

(192-193)

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## Discussion

Some of you might be thinking it is from a book of poems. Some of you who can identify the characters in this poem—Red and the Wolf, might think it is a

contemporary and poetic rendition of the short story Little Red Riding Hood by Charles Perrault. Well! If you have finalized on either of these options, you are not entirely wrong. But the exact answer would be: It is a “novel in verse”, as claimed by the poet-novelist, Lana Hechtman Ayers, author of this 2017 work that takes the characters of the Little Red Riding Hood story, a folklore, and sets them in a modern setting to explore girlhood, marriage, infidelity, and more.

So, you see how creative authors can bend and break rules. You can do that as well. In fact, many great authors don’t believe in a singular method that works for everyone. But before you break the rules, you need to understand what the rules are. The next unit in this module would expand on this deep connection between form and content in writing. There you will learn how to write poems, short stories, novels and more. But as for now, let’s not weigh ourselves down with the burden of the format. The more we think about form and structure, even before we have jotted down our first thoughts, the stronger will be the fear of writing. The intention of this unit is not to make you afraid but to convince you that—all of you here can be writers, creative writers. There is nothing that can stop you from becoming one—not age, not education, not expertise, not lack of resources. If you have an idea, just let it flow out.

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- **Choice of Style**

It’s best not to focus too much on fixing your style when you are beginning your journey as a creative writer. However, if you are keen on developing a signature style, it’s your reading that will guide you here. Make a note of the way your favourite authors write. Don’t just read the words to understand what they are saying. Observe how they are telling it. And for that you will have to read the texts not just twice or thrice but several times over. It’s quite instinctive to get drawn towards the fast action captured by the author, but what if you were asked to recreate a paragraph like that? For that you would need to dismantle the text, sentence by sentence, word by word. You must ask “how” questions and not “what” questions. Most of the times, if you ask creative authors how they created such characters—what has been the process—they, themselves might not be able to tell exactly because for most authors, this is an intuitive process.

John Dufresne in his 2003 book, *The Lie That Tells a Truth : A Guide to Writing Fiction* advises something similar: “You can learn more about the structure of



a short story by reading Chekhov's "Heartache" than you can in a semester of Creative Writing 101. If you read like a writer, that is, which means you have to read everything twice, at least. When you read a story or a novel the first time, just let it happen. Enjoy the journey. When you've finished, you know where the story took you, and now you can go back and reread, and this time notice how the writer reached that destination. Notice the choices he made at each chapter, each sentence, each word. (Every word is a choice.) You see now how the transitions work, how a character gets across a room. All this time you're learning. You loved the central character in the story, and now you can see how the writer presented the character and rendered her worthy of your love and attention. The first reading is creative—you collaborate with the writer in making the story. The second reading is critical. He quotes W. P. Kinsella, who says—*Read! Read! Read! And then read some more. When you find something that thrills you, take it apart paragraph by paragraph, line by line, word by word, to see what made it so wonderful. Then use those tricks the next time you write.*(267-68)"

So, the next time you get worried on the thought of curating your signature style do this—go back to your favourite books, read them again critically, make notes and annotations on the craft of the author, imitate such strategies and keep writing without inhibition. Do not be afraid of imitation. All great literature has been inspired by some other text. There is nothing bad about it. Your own style will emerge from this unique assimilation process. Trust the process and keep writing!

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### 1.1.5. Advice for Creative Writing from Creative Writers

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- **Read books by authors where they explain the craft!**

Authors who write about their craft (a few of whom I mention in this unit) have numerous techniques that allow them to write regularly and intensively. Some of these tips might work for you but that's not necessary. At the end of the day, it all boils down to as simple as grabbing a pen and paper or opening a blank document on your computer and typing away. Prompts found on the internet and writing exercises, suggested by great authors can kickstart your creativity but most authors advice to begin by writing about something you know or feel passionate about. It could be a personal experience, a vivid dream, or even an observation from your daily life. Some good ones to start with are :

- ✓ *The Lie That Tells a Truth* by John Dufresne
- ✓ *Writing Fiction : A Guide to Narrative Craft* by Janet Burroway



- ✓ *Writing Down the Bones : Freeing the Writer Within* by Natalie Goldberg
- ✓ *On Writing : A Memoir of the Craft* by Stephen King
- ✓ *Negotiating with the Dead : A Writer on Writing* by Margaret Atwood
- ✓ *What it is* by Linda Barry

- **Set your rules for writing!**

Fix a regular time (for e.g. 30mins) to write or a certain number of words that you write (for e.g. 500 words) and don't worry about perfection on your first draft. Remember, the key is to start writing and let your ideas flow. There is no one-size-fits-all approach; every writer has their own method. Some write from start to finish, while others break their work into pieces and bind them together later. Some focus on crafting each sentence as they go. Margaret Atwood, author of acclaimed novels like *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), *The Blind Assassin* (2000) and *Negotiating with the Dead : A Writer on Writing* (2002), advises in her masterclass *Teaching Creative Writing* to experiment with different techniques, voices, and styles. She reminds writers that “the wastepaper basket is your friend” – keep what works and discard the rest. Ultimately, your materials and process will lead you to discover your own rules.

- **Re-visit, Re-vision and Re-write!**

*“Anyone can write; only the writers can rewrite. Here is where the job gets done, where the crucial struggle is fought. And no one can do it for you.”*

—William C. Knott, in *The Craft of Fiction*

Burroway in *Writing Fiction : A Guide to Narrative Craft* (2019) argues that revision is a process that involves both external and internal insight. Insights from one's own critical mind, her/his creative instincts and her/his trusted readers, sometimes repeatedly, and not always in the same order. During the drafting phase, one must silence the internal critic, so that the writing happens; during the revision phase, one must welcome it back. A story improves not just through small edits and adjustments, like refining word choices or enhancing imagery, but by taking risks with its structure, reimagining it, and being open to discovering new meanings. The first round of rewrites often involves confronting one's doubts. At this stage, he asks us to focus on what feels awkward, overly long, underdeveloped, flat, or excessive—to tinker, tighten, and sharpen our work. Unclear, imprecise language, grammatical lapses that render meaning incommunicable, over-writing, unnecessary ornamental language and lengthy sentences are killjoy for readers. We might get tired and feel

stuck. At that point, he asks us to put it away for a while—days or weeks—until one can approach it with fresh eyes. This break not only gives distance but also lets the unconscious mind work on the flaws without consciously trying to fix them. So, in the early stages of revision, both grappling with the story and stepping away are essential. He acknowledges the helplessness of this state of confusion of the author, but it is this confusion itself—that leads us into the unconscious space where the solutions lie (200-203).

- **Embrace feedback and do not be afraid to write all over again!**

After thoroughly conceptualizing, drafting, and refining your story to the best of your ability, a fresh perspective can offer valuable insights. Seeking feedback is essential, and the key to making the most of criticism is to approach it with an open mind and a selfish appetite for improvement. Absorb all feedback, evaluate it carefully, and decide what aligns with your vision. Ultimately, you are in charge of shaping your story, balancing your dedication to what you've written with a willingness to reconsider and improve. While many of us instinctively defend our work and hope for unreserved praise, true revision begins when we learn to listen, accept, and apply constructive criticism.

Experienced writers often rely on agents, editors, or trusted peers for feedback. Regular writing groups or workshops provide a platform for consistent critique. If you don't have access to one, consider starting your own group by reaching out to fellow writers or posting notices online or locally. In-person meetings are ideal, but online groups can also thrive.

Be wary of feedback that is overly flattering or overly vague. Resist the urge to justify your work defensively; instead, treat even seemingly unhelpful advice as potentially valuable. Explore it thoroughly before discarding it. Be critical of your own work, even when a misinterpretation appears to stem from the reader. Misunderstandings often highlight issues in clarity, emphasis, or structure that may require attention.

- **Setting your words free!**

After revising your manuscript and completing all the steps discussed above, you might consider sharing it with a broader audience through publication. As Atwood suggests in her *Masterclass*, there are multiple paths to publication, and your personal goals will guide your choice. She asks, “Is the backing of a major publishing house important to you, or are you comfortable getting the word out through your own social

media and personal networks? How important is the physical design of your book, or does the e-book format appeal to you?” (91)

**Traditional Publishing :** If you’re not inclined to self-publish, submitting to literary magazines or university presses can introduce your work to editors without requiring an agent. These avenues often focus on nurturing emerging voices and showcasing unique perspectives. However, this path is generally arduous and long and one must not lose patience.

**Commercial Publishing :** For a broader, commercial platform, securing an agent is typically necessary. Agents act as intermediaries between writers and publishers, but finding the right one requires research. Identify agents who specialize in your genre or style to ensure a higher likelihood of success. Tailoring your queries to align with their interests increases your chances of forging a productive partnership. It’s a tight rope walk: whether to lean into agent’s demands or maintain your voice? But at the end of the day, the path to publication depends on your aspirations, research, and how you wish to present your work to the world.

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### 1.1.6. Summing Up

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This module introduces the basics of creative writing and dispels a few myths and apprehensions around it—inhibitions that top you from attempting creative writing. It gives several cues to propel yourself to writing your first draft, then revisiting it with the aid of the internal and external critics, to finally publishing your work. So, what are you waiting for?

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### 1.1.7. Comprehension Exercises

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1. Discuss the extent to which traditional literary forms either help or hinder the creative process.
2. How can a writer use form innovatively to enhance the meaning and impact of their work?
3. Examine the process of developing and conveying themes in creative writing.
4. How can writers ensure that their work has a deeper meaning or message that resonates with readers?
5. To what extent should creative writing be based on personal experiences?
6. How can writers effectively transform personal experiences into compelling works of fiction or non-fiction while maintaining authenticity and avoiding clichés?

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### 1.1.8. Suggested Reading

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Burroway, Janet. *Imaginative Writing : The Elements of Craft*. Pearson Longman, 2023.

*Writing fiction : A Guide to Narrative Craft*. Pearson Longman, 2007.

Bishop, Wendy, and David Starkey. *Keywords in Creative Writing*. 2006, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt4cgr61>.

Hall, George. “*How to Write a Paper*.” 1998, <http://blog.sciencenet.cn/upload/blog/file/2010/9/2010913171324712190.pdf>.

Kaufman, Scott Barry, and James C. Kaufman. “*The Psychology of Creative Writing*.” Cambridge University Press eBooks, Cambridge University Press, 2009, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511627101>.

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## Unit-2 □ Modes of Creative Writing

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### *Structure*

- 1.2.1. Objectives
- 1.2.2. Introduction
- 1.2.3. Modes of Creative Writing
- 1.2.4. Summing Up
- 1.2.5. Comprehension Exercises
- 1.2.6. Suggested Readings

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### 1.2.1. Objectives

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The main objective of this section is to familiarise students with different modes of creative writing which are the different literary medium through which creative and critical thoughts are expressed thereby shaping the narrative and compositional skills of a writer. The basic modes include prose and poetry which are discussed here and need to be critiqued and reviewed so that the intricacies of these genres could be understood and hence help a writer to think beyond the conventional method of writing which usually gives stress on originality, authenticity and creativity. So, the primary objective of this section is not only to focus on the ‘creativity’ of a writing but also to reflect on the pedagogic implications that these literary mediums have.

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### 1.2.2. Introduction

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Creative writing has become a part of the curriculum that needs to be taught as it is primarily a craft, a discipline that is both a combination of creativity and pedagogy. As a discipline creative writing is not only dependent on the imaginative skill of a writer but it is also a part of pedagogic learning and educational practices. There are certain methods that a writer must follow to develop one’s writing. A writer must read a lot and engage in formative criticism of each other’s work, make notes, discuss and debate topics with those who are also a part of this field and always be ready to revise the work already written. A writer must be critical of one’s work, and must try to communicate emotions in an implicit way. There are primarily two broad modes

of creative writing – prose and poetry. Under the section prose there are short story, literary memoir, novel writing, crime fiction, science fiction, and historical fiction each of these modes focus on the literary techniques of creative writing and narrative skills.

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### 1.2.3. Modes of Creative Writing

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#### (a). Prose

##### (i). Short Story

To write a short story there are no specific rules. Anything can trigger the content of a story. Our memories, an incident, a color, a smell, a sound, an object – can help to weave a narrative that engages with the readers’ idea of imagination and reveals the writer’s ability to transform these sensory experiences into words. However, we must also understand that the job of a short story writer is to create a ‘convincing’ fiction. Ideas can be conveyed in multiple ways but what becomes significant to note is the use of the vocabulary, the idiom, and the tone to express those ideas. E. A. Markham in his essay, “Reading, Writing and Teaching the Short Story published in *The Handbook of Creative Writing* (2007) refers to three guidelines such as ‘linguistic vitality,’ ‘formal innovation’ and emotional truth’ that were formulated by the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts for assessing literary works (101). ‘Linguistic vitality’ means freshness of language and the absence of cliché; ‘formal innovation’ (innovation of form) means a writer must have a knowledge of the genre in which he is working; and ‘emotional truth’ means the writer must avoid repetition of words or phrases, and try not to confuse sensibility with sentimentality (Markham 101-102). The aim of writing a short story is to convey ideas that convinces the readers, and also triggers readers’ opinions. A writer must therefore try to weave narrative in such a manner that it creates scope for the readers to engage and interact with the text.

##### (ii). Literary Memoir

In a literary memoir the writer must avoid being self-obsessed rather the writer must try to narrate life experiences by relating them with social and cultural events that were also taking place simultaneously during that period. There must be an attempt to connect the personal with the public, and hence the need to not be too personal while writing the memoir. The microcosmic world of the writer therefore then would appeal to the readers when it gets connected to macrocosmic events. A memoir that is often read as ‘true’ tale of one’s life critiques the binary that separates it from other genres

of writing. The other genres of writing are judged as a fictitious account of events whereas a memoir is fact-based. This distinction gets blurred as a memoirist too takes the help of imagination to reorganize the events. It is not possible for a memoirist to recall exact incidents and words used so there is a filling in of those memory gaps by using creativity. Judith Barrington in the essay, “Writing the Memoir” published in *The Handbook of Creative Writing* mentions:

While imagination plays a role in both fiction and memoir, the application of it in memoir is circumscribed by the facts of your life experience, while in fiction it is circumscribed by what the reader will believe (110).

The readers believe that events discussed in a memoir to be true, and hence they cannot be critically judged or evaluated. But a memoirist’s task is quite similar to that of a writer of a short story as the former too uses creative skills to transform and rearrange primary facts in to a narrative that is both fictitious and factual. Barrington mentions:

When you write in this genre [memoir], you have to wear at least three different hats: that of the narrator who tells the story, that of the interpreter who tries to make sense of the story, and that of the protagonist or hero of the story (111).

A memoirist plays the role of a narrator, an interpreter, and also a protagonist. One writing in the genre cannot be self-obsessed rather the writer needs wisely use narrative skills to decide which incident to explain and which one to summarise. While writing a memoir there should be a balance both of the life experiences and the social events that have taken place. This will therefore allow the readers to connect with the story, and make the memoir even more engaging and interactive.

### **(iii). Novel Writing**

Anything can be the starting point for a novel. The idea that triggers a writer to begin a novel may seem complex or ethereal but the best way to deal with such mental hesitation is to start writing. When one writes there is an interplay and overplay of ideas and details that helps the writer to figure the course of the narrative, and also makes the writer aware of the nitty-gritty of novel writing. Jane Rogers in the chapter, “Introduction to the Novel” published in *The Handbook of Creative Writing* mentions :

Given that, as a writer, you are choosing every twist and turn of the plot, every detail of characterisation, every sentence structure, every single



word you write, it is important to make the best choices possible – and to be able to do this, it's important to have some sense of the range of options open to you. The exercises are about playing with the way you write, and trying out different techniques (117).

Rogers is hinting at the trial-and-error method that allows a novelist to explore and play with the materials, and also critiques the conventional method that follow a certain pattern and structure thereby making the novel writing a mechanical process. Basically, he is suggesting the significance of the 'period of exploration' that every writer should experience before writing one's thoughts on paper. This 'period of exploration' according to him is one of the initial stages of novel writing, and within this period a novelist gets the scope of exploring whatever materials the writer has gathered thereby helping the writer to have a sense of what to use and how to use them in the actual writing.

There are multiple ways of telling a story as details often interplay and overlap between themselves, and so it is always suggested that a novel must have more than one theme. There are some basic features of novel writing – subject matter, narrative voice, characterization, and setting. The narrative voice or voices that narrate a story can be in first person ('I'), second person ('you') or third person ('he' or 'she'). The first person narrative voice is preferred by most of the writers while the second person narrative voice is rarely chosen. Rogers while discussing the function of third person narrative voice mentions it restricts the narration to the point of view of one character thereby making it easier for the readers to understand what is there in the protagonist's mind (Rogers, 119). Apart from narrative voice, characterization is also an important part of novel writing. To create a character that must appear real to the readers a writer must try to highlight all the shades of that character, all its complexities, and contradictions. When that is done that, the writer is able to sketch a 'convincing' character which will therefore appeal to readers' imagination, and hence the fictionality of the character gets overshadowed by authentic description that reassures us of the wider reality of the story. Along with narrative voice and characterization, another element of novel writing that determines the course of the narrative is 'setting.' Matthew Morrison in his book, *Key Concepts in Creative Writing* says :

The term 'setting' refers to where and when the events of a story unfold. It most commonly refers to physical or geographical locations, infused with their social and cultural associations. The term may also be used to describe a period or era (the sixteenth century, for example) (125).



Setting not only provides information related to the time frame or era in which the events are set but also helps in the development of a character's psychology. A character's development and behavior are often determined by the setting of the novel, and so it needs to be understood that this term not just refers to physical location but also affects and shapes the emotional and psychological make-up. These technicalities of writing a novel differ from writer to writer but what is common among them is the art of reading. At the beginning of this part, I have referred to Roger's suggestion of utilizing the 'period of exploration' where a writer is advised to explore materials before writing a novel. This is also the phase when a writer must engage with novels, read them and try to understand the novelist's art of creating a character, using a language or setting to express his ideas. Reading prepares a writer to write, and helps the writer to create novels that not only have pedagogical value but also have creative implications.

#### **(iv). Crime Fiction**

Crime fiction has always fascinated readers because of the presence of a series of intense climaxes and suspense that produces a gripping narrative thereby heightening readers' curiosity in the fiction, and also makes them desperate to discover the solution to a problem which has been intentionally delayed by the writer. The technique of delaying plays a crucial part in crime fiction as readers desperately wait for 'something to come or happen,' and interestingly when a writer takes time to disclose the outcome, the narrative gets even more compelling which therefore has a lasting impression on the readers. John Dale in the chapter, "Crime Fiction" published in *The Handbook of Creative Writing* mentions :

Reversals or turning points work well in crime fiction especially where the readers' expectations are turned around. This is not to advocate using tricks. Stay true to the fictional terms of the piece. Don't use surprise endings that come from nowhere. As a novel or story draws to a close, each word gains weight. Think carefully about the words you use to end a piece. Although ambiguity is closer to real life, closure in crime fiction is often believed to be more satisfying. But not closure that is rushed and contrived. Many detective novels end badly because the writer strives to tie everything up neatly (129).

Dale here advises writers not to incorporate endings or have closure that has no connection with the story. A crime fiction is expected to end by resolving all the

conflicts in the fiction but what is more important to understand is ambiguous endings are better than illogical ones. One can know the ability of a writer's writing skill by reading the ending of a fiction as endings reflect a writer's sense of reality, and also his treatment of suspense and tension in crime fiction. Therefore, the aim of a crime fiction writer should be to incorporate endings that are true to reality, and true to events discussed in the fiction, and not something that is illogically introduced or forcefully drawn.

#### **(v). Science Fiction**

While writing science fiction there are certain points that a writer must follow to reach out to wider audience. The depiction of events that involve spaceships and extraterrestrial aspects in science fiction must help in advancing the story where both hindrances and solutions are managed thereby making the narrative critically approving to readers. Crawford Kilian in "Writing Science Fiction and Fantasy" published in *The Handbook of Creative Writing* mentions :

When you consider 'what if and what's more', don't forget your critical element: the implications of some aspect of science, or the function of magic. Both grant us a power over the material world, but it's a power that reflects our own psychology (139).

While dealing with a world of extraterrestrial activities in science fiction a writer not only introduces materials borrowed from physical world but also exercises power over those materials by using them according to his authorial choices. In doing so he is actually controlling the materials, and in this process his own psychological inhibition gets reflected in fiction. Therefore, a writer of a science fiction must avoid stereotypical thinking, and engage in writing practices that allow him to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of his work. Hence this kind of meta writing helps him critically evaluate his work where he gets the scope to readdress and rewrite his ideas thereby producing a fiction that is both critically engaging and creatively meaningful.

#### **(vi). Historical Fiction**

Historical fiction too follows a self-conscious method of understanding the past. The new fictional historiographic thinking mingles history with fiction, and recreates a work that reflects a revised version of past imbued with creativity. It becomes difficult to recall and produce accurate historical moments while writing a historical fiction so to reconnect those moments a writer uses his imaginative skills. This skill can be achieved

by rereading secondary and primary texts, and by referring to them a writer rewrites work which therefore falls beyond the history-fiction debate. The fictionality of that work no more becomes a matter of criticism as the work is seen and judged through a different perspective and lens. Exact representation of historical events is not possible so the role of a historical fiction writer becomes important as he has to bridge the gap that exists between ‘what had happened’ and ‘what might have happened.’

### **(b). Poetry**

While writing a poem, the poet requires to play the role of a reader, critic, advocate and also a performer. The idea of ‘poet’ needs to be critically analyzed, and the conventional notion that self-expression is identical with artistic success needs to be problematized. ‘Authenticity’ and ‘truth to feeling’ are often connected with the process of poetry writing but this process needs to be critically understood as the social position of the poet, language, vocabulary, gender, and political affiliation do have an impact on the writing. Therefore, the process of writing poetry involves a certain practice which involves engagement with the social issues as well as with senses that balances both creative and critical elements. The romantic notion of understanding poetry as ‘art’ hence needs to be problematized as poetry serves two purposes – pleasure and knowledge. Imaginative and intellectual intervention in poetry writing makes it even more true to reality, and the gap between the possible and the actual is bridged. Another important aspect of poetry writing is to read. To write a poetry we must read not only contemporary or modern poets but also the ancient ones.

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### **1.2.4. Summing up**

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Creative writing as a discipline focus on multiple perspectives related to writing and reading. Based on these practices certain traditional notions are therefore challenged and critiqued. The term ‘creative’ is misjudged and misinterpreted which makes the whole tradition of creative writing an elitist category or genre. The notion that creative writing is meant for few people is what has been critiqued here. Also, the fact that creative writing primarily focuses only on ‘creativity’ or self-expression and sensibility has nothing to do with this kind of writing is too has been discussed in detail and in an analytical way. Instead of understanding it as a complex genre this section tries to examine the genre of creative writing as something uncomplicated and easily approachable. The significant part of creative writing is the practice of reading. Reading shapes a writer’s linguistic and thematic senses. The ‘period of exploration’

that Jane Rogers mentions while discussing novel writing do play a crucial role as it gives the writer the scope to observe, unlearn and relearn both figurative and literal techniques required to write a piece. A writer must avoid being didactic rather his narratives must trigger readers' opinions and allow them to engage with the text. Creative writing hence must be both creative and critical in subject. Both emotion and intellect must be balanced through words and vocabulary. A writer therefore should try not to confuse sensibility with sentimentality rather he should weave a narrative that is close to reality as well as depict emotions that he feels is relevant to the topic.

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### 1.2.5. Comprehension Exercises

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1. What are the primary modes of creative writing?
2. What is the different literary medium under which prose style of creative writing can be explained?
3. How is a literary memoir different from a novel writing?

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### 1.2.6. Suggested Readings

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Earnshaw, Steven, editor. *The Handbook of Creative Writing*. Edinburg University Press, 2007.

Morrison, Matthew. *Key Concepts in Creative Writing*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Cowan, Andrew. *Against Creative Writing*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2023.

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## Unit-3 □ Defining Key Concepts

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### *Structure*

- 1.3.1. Objectives
- 1.3.2. Introduction
- 1.3.3. A Writer's Working Method : Key Concepts
- 1.3.4. Summing Up
- 1.3.5. Comprehension Exercises
- 1.3.6. Suggested Reading

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### 1.3.1. Objectives

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The primary objective of this section is to make students aware of certain but important technical terms relevant to the craft of creative writing. The debate on whether creative writing can be taught has garnered attention both from critics and scholars. Most of them argue that creative writing should not only be a product of imagination but should also be introduced to students as a 'craft' that needs to be understood in a critical way. These key concepts or terms are basically the writer's working methods that they follow to convey their ideas, and also critically analyse their literary significance in the text.

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### 1.3.2. Introduction

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The key concepts which are discussed here shape a writer's craft of writing where he tries to articulate his feelings, convey fragmented ideas, and communicate his thoughts to readers. By following these key concepts, a writer is able to frame his argument or mention a topic that he wishes to discuss in his writings. These concepts or literary devices would therefore help the writer to define and present his network of ideas and debates, and also help him to have a clear understanding of what his piece of writing ultimately tries to say. The key concepts are arranged alphabetically so that the students do not find it difficult to understand.

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### 1.3.3. A Writer's Working Method : Key Concepts

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**(i). Action :** Characters must 'act' in response to the crisis thrown up by the plot. Choices define their actions so the more active those choices are, the more an audience or reader will be gripped. Any action that a character takes must be believable and well knitted. Dramatic action also determines the tension in a novel or play – the bolder the action the greater the tension.

**(ii). Antagonist :** A character who hinders the forward progress of a story's main character (a hero or a heroine) is labelled as an antagonist. Sometimes this term is interpreted in terms of 'antagonistic force' which is often linked to the psychological factors which influence a character's dramatic actions in a play or novel. He is therefore seen to represent all evil forces that create negative impact on the other characters especially, the 'good' ones. Later the term 'antagonist' offers a different meaning. It often becomes difficult to categorize or label a character with such terms as every character has both good and bad traits, and it is the circumstances that forces them to make choices according to which they act or behave. Change in a character's inner quality is inevitable so instead of judging the characters based on these definitions and terms we need to complicate them, and try to depict them in an authentic way.

**(iii). Concrete Poetry :** This kind of poetry primarily focused on the visual qualities of individual words. Arrangement of the words on the page play a crucial role as it makes the poetry visually appealing and aesthetically pleasing. This kind of experimentation with pattern and typographical devices is not something new in the world of poetry. Seventeenth-century poet George Herbert in his poem 'Easter Wings' arranges words and sentences in such a way that the poem forms an image of the wings. Concrete poetry not only captivates readers' minds through its visual content but also redefines the conventional style of writing words on page.

**(iv). Conflict :** Conflict is the condition of human life. It is an integral part of the story, and the characters make progress primarily by dealing with the conflicts that arise from social, personal and environmental settings.

**(v). Defamiliarisation :** The word 'defamiliarisation' is borrowed from the Russian term '*ostranenie*' meaning to 'make strange'. Viktor Shklovsky in his 1917 essay "Art as Technique" argues that the aim of art is to reveal the essential qualities of things – to make the stone stony. He believes that the role of artist is not simply to observe and record but to depict art in a new or different way that has not been done previously.



**(vi). Draft :** In creative writing draft plays an important role in shaping the ideas that are usually in scattered form. Matthew Morrison in his book, *Key Concepts in Creative Writing* (2010) mentions draft is the “product of a rush of inspiration,” and so most of the writers argue that “this first expression of their idea is the truest,” while most of them also “endorse the old saying that ‘writing is rewriting’” (39) The importance of draft making therefore lies in writing those fragmented thoughts on paper which are formed after the first reading and so this kind of practice not only shapes the writer’s writing skill but also helps him to gain clarity on the topic that he intends to discuss in his book.

**(vii). Flash Fiction :** It is basically a brief fictional narrative – usually less than a thousand words long. “Economy is essential and not a word can be wasted” – is how Morrison in his book, *Key Concepts* describe this genre.

**(viii). Metaphor :** In a metaphor, a word or expression that in literal usage denotes one kind of thing is applied to a distinctly different kind of thing, without asserting a comparison. In a metaphor two distinct things are associated without using a connector such as ‘like’ or ‘as.’

**(ix). Plot :** M. H. Abrams in his book, *A Handbook of Literary Terms* (2009) mentions “the plot (which Aristotle termed the mythos) in a dramatic or narrative work is constituted by its events and actions, as these are rendered and ordered toward achieving particular artistic and emotional effects” (227) To understand ‘plot’ we need to know what a ‘story’ is. A story is a sequence of events whereas a plot is the organization of those events, with respect to the principle of cause and effect.

**(x). Point of View :** It is primarily the ‘positioning’ of the narrative voice. It indicates the way a story gets told – the mode established by the writer by means of which the reader is presented with the characters, dialogue, actions, setting, and events that constitute the ‘narrative’ in a work of fiction. Writers have classified three different ways of presenting a story: first-person points of view, second-person points of view, and third-person points of view. In the first-person narrative the narrator speaks as “I”; in the second-person narrative the story gets told by the second-person pronoun “you” who is represented as experiencing that which is narrated; and in the third-person narrative the narrator is someone outside the story who refers to all the characters in the story by name or as “he,” “she,” “they.”

**(xi). Protagonist :** The protagonist is the story’s central character whose trials and tribulations readers follow most closely. The protagonist is the chief character on whom the readers’ interest centers. There can be more than one protagonist in a story but their personal journeys are essentially separate.

**(xii). Setting :** Setting is the general locale, historical time, and social circumstances in which its action occurs; the setting of a scene is primarily the physical or geographical location in which it takes place. It basically addresses the ‘where’ and ‘when’ the events of a story unfold.

**(xiii). Theme :** Theme is also known as “motif” and it primarily refers to a general concept or doctrine which a fictional work is designed to involve and make persuasive to the reader. While writing a creative piece the primary work is to decide the ‘theme’ of the book. This will then help the writer to make progress in his work, and accordingly he will understand the importance of other elements required to develop a writing.

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### 1.3.4. Summing up

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Writers rarely learn to write in a vacuum. Experienced writers too have to put a lot of effort and hard work into writing. It is a craft where elements of which can be learned. It requires practice. Imagination and empathy influence the writer’s understanding and enable him to enter the project of writing but to build one’s range of expertise one needs to follow the certain methods. A writer’s working method implies the use of certain key concepts that are dealt in this section.

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### 1.3.5. Comprehension Exercises

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1. Discuss five key concepts relevant to the craft of creative writing.
2. State the difference between ‘story’ and ‘plot’
3. Significance of draft in creative writing.

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### 1.3.6. Suggested Readings

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Abrams, M. H. *A Handbook of Literary Terms*. Cengage Learning, 2010.

Anderson, Linda, editor. *Creative Writing : A workbook with readings*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2006.

Morrison, Matthew. *Key Concepts in Creative Writing*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

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## **Unit-4 □ Literary Devices and Figurative Language**

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### *Structure*

- 1.4.1. Objectives**
- 1.4.2. Introduction**
- 1.4.3. How can we use Literary Devices in Creative Writing?**
- 1.4.4. Figures of Speech**
- 1.4.5. Few Key terms to understand Literary Techniques**
- 1.4.6. Summing Up**
- 1.4.7. Comprehension Exercises**
- 1.4.8. Suggested Readings**

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### **1.4.1. Objectives**

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This Unit shall introduce the learners to literary devices and techniques used in creative writing. We shall start by understanding what literary devices are and how they function. This will enable learners to engage in creative writing projects that require the conscious use of specific literary devices. This hands-on approach can help the learner to better understanding and appreciation of their effects in creative writing.

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### **1.4.2. Introduction**

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Literary Devices are the building blocks of creative writing, playing a crucial role in elevating the language and evoking emotions in the reader. Language evolves through the literary devices in poetry and prose. These stylistic devices, such as metaphors, similes, and personification, allow writers to express ideas in fresh, vivid, and imaginative ways. What is the use of figurative language? Figurative language goes beyond the literal meaning, using symbols and abstractions to convey complex ideas more effectively.

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### 1.4.3. How can we use Literary Devices in Creative Writing?

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Literary devices are ways of taking writing beyond its straightforward, literal meaning. In that sense, they are techniques for helping guide the reader in *how* to read the piece.

Central to all literary devices is a quality of *connection* : by establishing or examining relationships between things, literary devices encourage the reader to perceive and interpret the world in new ways.

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### 1.4.4. Figures of Speech

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**(i). Simile** : Simile is a comparison between two unlike things, using **like**, **as**, or **than** in the comparison. A simile is a figure of speech that directly compares two different things, using the words “like” or “as”. It’s a great way to create vivid imagery and make your descriptions more engaging.

For example, “Her smile was as bright as the sun” or “He ran like the wind”. Each of these comparisons brings a clearer picture to the reader’s mind.

Here are a few famous examples of similes in literary poetry :

- William Wordsworth in “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud”: “I wandered lonely as a cloud / That floats on high o’er vales and hills.”
- Robert Burns in “A Red, Red Rose”: “O my Luve’s like a red, red rose / That’s newly sprung in June.”
- Lord Alfred Tennyson in “The Eagle”: “He clasps the crag with crooked hands; / Close to the sun in lonely lands, / Ringed with the azure world, he stands.”

It is not that simile can be only used in poetry; it can be suited to literary prose as well.

In Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* : “Old Marley was as dead as a doornail.”

From Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* : “The old man was thin and gaunt with deep wrinkles in the back of his neck. The brown blotches of the benevolent skin cancer the sun brings from its reflection on the tropic sea were on his cheeks. The blotches ran well down the sides of his face and his hands had the deep-creased scars from handling heavy fish on the cords. But none of these scars were fresh. They were as old as erosions in a fishless desert.”

In Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* : "She looked and smelled like a peppermint drop."

Each of these similes brings out vivid imagery and helps deepen the readers' connection to the text.

**(ii). Metaphor :** Metaphor is a suggested comparison between two unlike things in order to point out a similarity; a metaphor does not use the word **like, as, or than**.

**Examples :** In Langston Hughes' "Dreams" : "Life is a broken-winged bird / That cannot fly." This vivid line from Langston Hughes' "Dreams" is a poignant example of a metaphor because it directly compares life to a "broken-winged bird" without using the words "like" or "as." In doing so, it conveys a deeper, symbolic meaning.

By equating life to a bird with broken wings, Hughes communicates that a life without dreams or aspirations is severely limited, unable to reach its full potential or soar to great heights. The metaphor paints a clear and emotional image of frustration and stagnation, allowing readers to feel the weight of a life devoid of purpose or hope. It transforms an abstract concept—life without dreams—into something tangible and relatable.

**Activity :** Analyse these lines from the poem, "Hope is the thing with feathers" by Emily Dickinson, "Hope is the thing with feathers / That perches in the soul." Discuss with your counsellor how metaphor as a literary device works in this case.

**(iii). Hyperbole :** Hyperbole is all about exaggeration for effect. It is not meant to be taken literally but rather to emphasise a point.

Examples of Hyperbole in literary texts :

**William Shakespeare** in *Macbeth* : "Will all great Neptune's Ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather / The multitudinous seas in incarnadine, / Making the green one red."

This passage from *Macbeth* is a brilliant example of hyperbole, as it uses deliberate and extravagant exaggeration to convey the depth of Macbeth's guilt and torment.

When Macbeth asks whether "all great Neptune's Ocean" could wash the blood from his hands, he dramatically overstates the magnitude of his guilt. The reference to Neptune, the Roman god of the sea, symbolizes the vastness of the oceans, and yet even this immense force is portrayed as insufficient to cleanse him. He further exaggerates with the imagery of his blood staining "the multitudinous seas" red, turning green

oceans into crimson. This hyperbolic image emphasizes the idea that his crime is so monumental that it metaphorically corrupts nature itself.

The purpose of this exaggeration is not literal but psychological—it reveals the unbearable weight of his conscience. The hyperbole magnifies his internal struggle, illustrating how his guilt feels overwhelming and inescapable.

Do you think Shakespeare’s use of such extreme imagery enhances the emotional resonance of Macbeth’s turmoil?

**Gabriel Garcia Marquez** in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*: “He was so hungry he could ha-ve eaten a horse.”

**(iv). Personification** : Personification is a figure of speech that is used to attribute human characteristics to something that is not human. It can also be used to personify an abstract quality.

**Examples** : In William Wordsworth’s “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,” the line “Tossing their heads in sprightly dance” is an example of personification because it gives the daffodils the human action of “tossing their heads” and ascribes to them a “sprightly dance” (Batoool et al., 2016). Flowers don’t literally toss their heads or dance, but Wordsworth uses these actions to convey their lively movement in the breeze, making the scene more vivid and relatable.

In Emily Dickinson’s “Because I could not stop for Death,” the lines “Because I could not stop for Death – / He kindly stopped for me” personify death by portraying it as a person who can stop for someone (Green, 2024). Death is an abstract concept, but Dickinson treats it as a courteous being who can offer a ride in a carriage. This personification makes death more approachable and less frightening, which is a common theme in Dickinson’s poetry.

**(v). Apostrophe** : Apostrophe is a figure of speech that is used to address someone who is absent or already dead. It can also be used to address an abstract quality or idea, and even a non-living object.

**Examples** :

“Death, be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;”

The above lines are from the sonnet, ‘Death, be not proud’ by John Donne. He addresses death, an abstract idea, in the sonnet.

“Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!  
No hungry generations tread thee down;”

The above line from ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ by John Keats is a recalling of an experience he had. It speaks about the song of the nightingale he had heard. This is an example of apostrophe as the bird is absent when it is being addressed.

**(vi). Alliteration :** This literary device uses repeated consonant sound at the beginning of words or within words; used to establish mood and rhythm in a story; true alliteration has three words beginning with the same sound (two words beginning with the same sound would be called **alliterative**).

“**The Rime of the Ancient Mariner**” is Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s longest poem, featuring rhythmic groupings of alliteration throughout. In the following excerpt, sun/sea/sea, beat/breast/bassoon, red/rose, and merry/minstrelsy are examples of alliterative devices.

‘The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,  
Merrily did we drop  
Below the kirk, below the hill,  
Below the lighthouse top.  
The Sun came up upon the left,  
Out of the sea came he!  
And he shone bright, and on the right  
Went down into the sea.  
Higher and higher every day,  
Till over the mast at noon—’  
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,  
For he heard the loud bassoon.

(Coleridge, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, 1834)

**(vii). Assonance :** Assonance is a figure of speech that is characterised by the use of words having similar vowel sounds consecutively. It can be said to be a variation of alliteration.

**Examples :** Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Raven”: “And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtai-n.” In this line from assonance is present through the

repetition of similar vowel sounds, which creates a melodious and haunting quality. Specifically :

- The long “i” sound appears in “**silken**” and “**uncertain**,” subtly linking the words and producing a musical flow.
- The short “u” sound in “**uncertain**” and “**rustling**” adds a soft, almost whisper-like texture that mirrors the movement of the curtains.
- The overall combination of repeated vowel sounds contributes to the eerie and melancholic atmosphere, enhancing the poem’s tone of unease and sorrow.

This deliberate use of assonance emphasises the unsettling mood of the scene, making the imagery more vivid and immersive.

Alfred Lord Tennyson’s “The Lotos Eaters” : “The long day wanes : the slow moon climbs: the deep / Moans round with many voices.” In this assonance is skilfully employed to create a rhythmic and meditative quality that complements the poem’s dreamy atmosphere. Here’s how:

- The repeated long “o” sound in words like “**long**,” “**slow**,” “**moons**,” “**climbs**,” and “**moans**” unifies the line, producing a melodious and hypnotic effect. This repetition mirrors the languid and lethargic mood of the Lotos-Eaters’ world.
- The soft, elongated vowels echo the calm but melancholic rhythm of time passing slowly, reinforcing the poem’s theme of weariness and detachment.
- Additionally, the sound lends a musical and almost tidal quality to the lines, resonating with the imagery of the sea’s “**moaning**” and enhancing the immersive atmosphere.

Tennyson’s assonance here is not merely decorative; it deepens the sensory experience, aligning sound with theme.

**(viii). Oxymoron** : An oxymoron is a rhetorical device that uses two opposite or contradictory terms one after the other in order to project an effect. According to the Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, oxymoron is defined as “a phrase that combines two words that seem to be the opposite of each other.”

#### **Examples :**

(a) William Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet* : “Parting is such sweet sorrow.” An oxymoron pairs contradictory terms to reveal a deeper or paradoxical truth. Here, “**sweet**” represents the joy and tenderness of love, while “**sorrow**” signifies the sadness

of separation. Together, they illustrate the bittersweet nature of parting from someone deeply cherished—the sorrow of goodbye is tempered by the sweetness of their shared affection and the promise of meeting again.

(b) John Milton in *Paradise Lost* : “Darkness visible.”

(c) George Orwell in *1984* : “War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength.”

**(ix). Euphemism** : The term ‘euphemism’ refers to those words or a phrase that can be used to convey something unpleasant, sad or considered taboo. It is the art of communicating something in a much lighter tone or in an indirect manner.

**Example :**

(a) **William Shakespeare** in *Macbeth* : “He that’s coming / Must be provided for” – Here, Lady Macbeth uses “provided for” as a euphemism for murder.

(b) **Shakespeare’s Hamlet** : In Act III, Scene I, Hamlet uses euphemism for death when he refers to it as “the undiscovered country.” This phrase softens the starkness of death, framing it as an unknown realm rather than a definitive end.

(c) **John Milton’s Paradise Lost** : Milton describes Satan and his followers as being “with loss of Eden driven,” a euphemistic way of expressing their expulsion from Heaven, making the divine punishment sound less severe.

**(x). Aphorism** : An aphorism is a concise, memorable phrase that articulates some truth; it can be a **moral**, or **proverb**, or **maxim**.

**Examples :**

(a) Don’t count your chickens before they’re hatched.

(b) Everyone is afraid of something.

(c) To be, or not to be, that is the question.

**(xi). Allusion** : Allusion is a reference in one story to a well-known character or event from another story, history, or place.

Writers use allusions as stylistic devices to help contextualise a story by referencing a well-known person, place, event, or another literary work. They do not have to explicitly explain these references; more often than not, writers choose to let readers fill in the blanks.

Writers might elect to use an allusion to communicate an idea or description quickly. For example, an author might call something “Tiffany Blue”—a reference to



the specific blue the jeweller Tiffany & Co. has used in its branding since the 1800s—rather than using a full sentence to describe the precise shade.

A writer could use allusions as a way to relate more closely to their readers, by referencing people, events, or other pop culture touch points with which they are likely to be familiar. For example, an author who writes about a character with “a Cheshire grin” is taking that the readers will understand the reference to the Cheshire cat in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*.

**(xii). Dramatic Irony** is when the reader knows things that the characters in a story do not

**Example :** We learn that Mary really likes Frankie because she writes about him in her diary all the time. Frankie, however, is scared to ask Mary to the dance because she is so popular and “cool.” We wish we could tell Frankie what we, as the readers, know!

**(xiii). Hyperbole :** An obvious exaggeration which is not meant to be taken literally.

**Example :** I’m so hungry I could eat a horse!

**(xiv). Imagery :** mental pictures which are created by descriptions of the senses, so that we can see and feel what the character is experiencing.

**Example :** Even the dark, shiny leaves which usually clung to the chimney of my grandmother’s house hung dry and brittle on that hot summer day.

**(xv). Symbol :** any person, object, or action that has additional meaning beyond itself.

**Example :** As a boy sits in class on the first day of school, he stares out the window at a basketball sitting on the blacktop in the playground. As he gazes at it, the basketball reminds him of all the fun times he had over the summer. The basketball becomes a symbol of summer.

**(xvi). Irony :** contrast between the expected outcome and the actual way things turn out (see **Dramatic Irony**).

**Examples :**

**(a) O. Henry’s *The Gift of the Magi* :** This short story revolves around a couple who sacrifice their most treasured possessions to buy each other gifts. The wife sells



her hair to buy a chain for her husband's watch, while the husband sells his watch to buy combs for her hair. The irony lies in their acts of love rendering the gifts useless.

**(b) George Orwell's *Animal Farm* :** The maxim, "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others," epitomizes situational irony. The phrase subverts the farm's original ideals of equality and exposes the hypocrisy of the ruling class.

**Dramatic irony** occurs when the audience or readers possess knowledge that certain characters in the story are unaware of, creating tension, suspense, or even humor. This literary device adds depth to the narrative by allowing the audience to anticipate the consequences of actions or decisions that the characters themselves cannot foresee.

**Example :** In William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the audience knows that Juliet has taken a sleeping potion and is not actually dead. However, Romeo remains unaware of this and believes she has died. His decision to take his own life based on this false assumption heightens the emotional impact of the scene, as the audience is aware of the truth but powerless to intervene. This tragic use of dramatic irony amplifies the poignancy of their fate.

**(xvii). Pun :** a humorous use of a word or phrase that has more than one meaning (or two similarly spelled words that sound alike)

**Examples :** "If you really want to keep warm, try bear skin," said the trapper. "But won't I be really cold in my bare skin?" asked the boy.

Why is it easy for an elephant to travel? He can carry his own trunk.

**(xviii). Repetition :** the author purposely repeats words or phrases; the author is trying to create rhythm or suspense, or is trying to really emphasise a certain idea.

**Example :** It was all gone. Burned to ashes. He had no clothing, no blankets, no bow, no hatchet, no map. It was all gone.

**(xix). Imagery :** Imagery is the use of descriptive language to create vivid mental images and engage the reader's senses and to create a specific mood or atmosphere in a literary work.

**Examples :**

- "The crimson sun dipped below the horizon, painting the sky with hues of orange, purple, and gold."

- “The air was thick with the sweet scent of honeysuckle and the earthy aroma of freshly turned soil.”
- “The crashing waves roared against the shore, their icy spray stinging my face.”

**(xx). Understatement :** when the author presents something as less significant (important) than it really is.

**Example :** Mr. Brumble looked at both test papers, back and forth, back and forth, noting that all the answers were exactly the same. He put the papers down on his desk, crossed his arms and said, “Boys, we have a little problem here.”

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### 1.4.5. Few Key Terms to understand Literary Techniques

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**(i). Ambiguity :** A literary device when a single event or expression can mean two different things to two different people. Ambiguity in literature allows for multiple interpretations, adding depth and complexity to the text.

**Example :** In Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, the Prince of Denmark, responds poorly to his mother and uncle marrying shortly after his father’s death. He may be going insane, or he may be faking insanity; the play is ambiguous on that score, and different productions have to make choices about how to portray Hamlet’s madness. “Rosencrantz: He does confess he feels himself distracted; / But from what cause he will by no means speak.” (ACT III, Scene I) Where Shakespeare is being purposefully ambiguous in these lines, the one may be using ambiguity strategically to avoid having to make clear commitments. The purpose of ambiguity in *Hamlet* is to create intrigue and to make *Hamlet* a more fascinating and mysterious character.

**(ii). Analogy :** Analogy means comparing one thing to another very different thing in order to explain it better. The modern word “analogy” actually comes from the ancient Greek word for “proportionality,” and Greek scholars used analogies to directly illustrate similar relationships between two pairs of words, often for the purpose of logical argument.

**Examples :** a school is like a garden, where children are lovingly raised and cared for; the rabbit shot from its hole like a rocket; the confetti fell like snow in a blizzard as the parade passed through the city streets (these three analogies are all written as **similes**).

**(iii). Atmosphere :** We also put significance on the mood or feeling developed through descriptions of the setting and senses (how things feel, taste, smell, sound, look) while writing a piece. That mood or setting is referred to as atmosphere that is evoked in the writing. It can be in prose or poetry; fiction or non-fiction.

**Example :** Camping in those woods, time went slow. The thick forest air just sat on you, hot and wet like a wool blanket, while mosquitoes droned in your ears and stung you on the back where you could never quite reach to smack them.

**(iv). Stream-of-consciousness :** a writing style that uses an inner monologue to create a realistic depiction of characters.

**Example :** Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway* creates a bleak atmosphere of war by describing the changing attitudes of people, including a First World War veteran suffering from shell shock.

**(v). Caricature :** Caricature is the exaggeration or distortion of a physical trait or behavior, to make a character appear comic or ridiculous.

**Example :** her nose was needle sharp, with nostrils as small and black as a mouse's eyes.

**(vi). Character :** a person or player (it can also be an animal, an imaginary creature) in a story; **character** can also be used as a word meaning "personal traits," as in "Write a paragraph about the character of the Big Bad Wolf."

**(vii). Climax :** the most exciting moment of the story, where the main character faces his/her ultimate challenge

**Example :** In Cinderella, the clock begins striking twelve, and Cinderella must rush home before the handsome prince finds out her secret. That is the climax. The following day, when the prince finds her again and fits the glass slipper on her foot, is the outcome, or solution, of the story.

**(viii). Conflict :** the problem, or challenge, that the main character faces.

**Example :** The main character may be challenged by another character (two kids running in a race), by nature (a boy struggling to survive in the wilderness), or by him/herself (a girl who must get over her fear of speaking in front of an audience).

**(ix). Dialogue :** spoken lines between characters, set with quotation marks; each new speaker's lines appear in a new paragraph; when one person speaks for an extended time (to himself or the audience) it is called a **monologue**.

**Example :** "Where are you going?" Nicole asked. "To the library," replied Jeremy.

**(x). Episode :** a small event that is part of a larger story; it can stand alone as almost a “mini-story” (events which repeat are typically called episodes).

**Example :** In the *Three Little Pigs*, the wolf tries blowing down the pigs’ houses in three separate episodes; he is successful the first two times but unsuccessful the last (notice that the three events are alike).

**(xi). Event :** an action in a story that moves the story forward; usually something happens to the main character, or the main character takes action against someone or something else

**Example :** In the book *Ruby the Copycat*, Ruby sees her friend wear a certain dress, so Ruby comes to school in a similar dress. Her friend tells a story about a wedding, so Ruby tells a very similar story. Each time Ruby sees her friend do something and copies it, that is an event in the story. The most important event is called the **Climax**, and the final event is called the **Outcome**, or **Solution**.

**(xii). Evidence :** information from the text that **supports**, or **proves**, an inference or fact.

**Example :** We know that the Wolf wants to eat Little Red Riding Hood because—

- (a) Red Riding Hood’s mother warned her about wolves in the forest.
- (b) the Wolf tried tricking her once in the forest.
- (c) he has already eaten her grandmother.
- (d) he drools when he sees her.
- (e) he says things such as, “All the better to eat you with!”

**(xiii). Flashback :** interruption of the present action to insert an episode that took place earlier; this gives the reader needed information to understand a current event, or a character’s motivation.

**Example :** I could tell that Jimmy wasn’t going to back down. He stood up to bullies before, like back in first grade when Roger Neary used to eat everybody’s snack. One day Jimmy had caught Roger in *his* snack bag, and...

**(xiv). Flash-Forward :** a sudden jump forward in time, usually used to eliminate unnecessary events between the more interesting events of a story.

**Example :** Quietly, Janice slid the book into her backpack. A week later, the teacher asked if anyone had seen her copy of *The Magic Mouse*. “I’ve looked everywhere,” she explained, “and I just can’t find it.”

**(xv). Foreshadowing :** clues used to alert the reader about events that will occur later; used to build suspense.

**Example :** I laughed as we suck out the back door. The plan had worked out perfectly. Nothing could possibly go wrong now!

**(xvi). Inference :** conclusions which can be drawn by the reader based upon limited clues or facts presented by the author; the reader is encouraged to discover things for him/herself without being directed by the author.

**Example :** Mark's father was surprised the following week when, all of a sudden, Mark quit begging for a dog. He began spending much more of his time out at the old barn by the creek, and had even begun to ask for seconds and thirds at supper time.

**(xvii). Motive :** a character's reason for doing what he/she does.

**Example :** Learners follow this story-line!

"So why did you tear up Janie's paper?" demanded the teacher.

Margaret said nothing and stared at her shoes. The teacher would never understand. She could never understand how it felt to be the new kid in school, and to have one student turn all the others against you. All because you.

**(xviii). Outcome :** the last event of the story which tells how the story ends; it explains whether the main character met his/her challenge.

**Example :** "And they all lived happily ever after," is a common outcome in fairy tales.

**(xix). Paradox :** a statement that reveals a kind of truth although at first it seems to be self-contradictory and untrue.

**Examples :** It was the best mistake he ever made (he learned a lot from this error).

Good fences make good neighbours (fences *do* separate people, but they help people get along by making boundaries clear).

**(xx). Parallel Story :** a narrative or picture story enclosed within another story, where both stories are of equal interest.

**Example :** In a story about kids putting on a play, both the onstage scene is shown, and the backstage happenings.

**(xxi). Parody :** a humorous story that makes fun of another well-known story by imitating it; characters, plot, theme, setting, may all be copied or changed for humorous effect.

**Example :** *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by John Scieszka has the story of the Three Little Pigs explained from the wolf's point of view, and in his version, it was all a big misunderstanding and he was innocent.

**(xxii). Plot :** what happens in a story, told in a sequenced, chronological order

**Example :** Samantha received a new skateboard for her birthday. A week later, however, she lost it. She looked everywhere but couldn't find it. Then one day...

**(xxiii). Poetic Justice :** an outcome in a story where good is rewarded, and evil is punished.

**Example :** the wolf is boiled in the pot at the end of the *Three Little Pigs*; good Cinderella marries the handsome prince; the lazy grasshopper suffers a hungry winter because he did not work hard like the ant to store up food

**(xxiv). Point of View :** the perspective from which a story is seen or told; there are three main forms :

**First Person :** (**I** and **me** are used; the narrator is actually a part of the story) I woke up first, alarmed that I had slept too late and missed my chance. A look at my brother's bed told me he was still asleep, snuggled up under the covers.

**Third Person :** (he and she are used; the narrator simply helps tell the story, and lets all character speak for themselves).

Pete woke up first. A look at his brother's bed told him that Sam was still asleep, snuggled up under the covers.

**Omniscient :** (he and she are used; BUT the narrator not only lets characters speak, but can also "get inside their heads" to read their thoughts).

Pete woke up first, feeling somewhat alarmed that he might have overslept and missed his chance. He looked at his brother's bed and was glad to see that Sam was still asleep, snuggled up under the covers.

**(xxv). Setting :** the time and place of a story; the time may simply be "present day".

**Example :** Over a hundred years ago, Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin.

**(xxvi). Stereotype/ Reverse Stereotype :** a **stereotype** is when a person is portrayed in a fixed way.

**Example :** the old woman had gray hair, a cane, and sat in a rocking chair.

**A Reverse Stereotype** is when a person is portrayed exactly opposite to a fixed generalisation (the usual way we would consider them)

**Example :** Bobby's grandmother laced up the red boxing gloves. She danced on her toes as she approached the bully, and smiled as she said, "Okay, you big oaf. I'm gonna give you what you deserve..." And with one swing, she knocked the bully to the ground.



(xxvii). **Theme** : The meaning of a story, what it reveals about human nature; plot is what happens in the story, while theme is what it means.

**Example :**

**Plot** : young soldier fights his first battle

**Theme** : war is useless; fighting solves nothing

(xxviii). **Tone** : the author's attitude toward a subject, revealed by choice of words and details.

**Example** : The girl cast a lonely thin shadow on the gray brick wall, as her classmates tumbled merrily in the brightly flowered fields beyond the school. (the author feels sorry for the girl who isn't playing with the other children)

(xxix). **Trait** : a word which describes a character's personality, or how she/he acts in the story; it must always be backed up with evidence (support or proof) from the story.

**Example** : Beatrice is very patient with her little sister, Ramona. Ramona is sometimes stubborn and doesn't do what she is told, but Beatrice never yells or complains. Instead, she finds clever ways to get Ramona to behave. (the word **patient** is the trait; the second and third sentences provide the *evidence*, or proof, from the story).

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### 1.4.6. Summing Up

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We hope that the brief introduction to the key literary devices as discussed in this Unit will enable you to locate them in literary texts that you read. Consider the impact of these devices on the tone, mood, and overall meaning of the work. Look at how devices contribute to character development or emphasize specific features of a character. You may also consider in-depth exploration of specific devices. For example, understanding of the stylistic devices can contribute to the creation of a character's artistic image. Remember, the goal is to not only recognise these devices but also to understand how they contribute to the overall effectiveness and impact of a literary work.

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### 1.4.7. Comprehension Exercises

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**Questions for Discussion :**

1. How do literary devices such as metaphor, simile, symbolism, and allusion enrich creative writing?

2. How can these devices add depth, complexity, and nuance to a piece of writing?
3. How does the effective use of stylistic devices contribute to the creation of a character's artistic image?
4. How do the social and cultural backgrounds of writers affect the use of nature and figurative speech in their poetry?
5. Discuss the importance of establishing a distinct and consistent voice in creative writing.
6. How does the choice of point of view (first person, third person, etc.) affect the reader's experience and understanding of the story?

#### **Activity for Learners :**

1. Select a single **literary device** (e.g., metaphor, simile, symbolism, personification). How can this device be used to enrich creative writing?
  - (a). Create a short story or poem that prominently features these devices.
  - (b). Analyse the impact of the chosen device on the tone, mood, and overall meaning of your work.
2. **Point of View Experiment :** How does the choice of point of view affect the reader's experience and understanding of a story?
  - (a). Rewrite a scene from an existing story (or write an original scene) from multiple points of view (e.g., first-person, third-person limited, third-person omniscient).
  - (b). Discuss how each perspective alters the narrative and the reader's connection to the characters and events.

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#### **1.4.8. Suggested Readings**

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Bishop, Wendy, and David Starkey. *Keywords in Creative Writing*. Utah State University Press, 2006.

Kaufman, Scott Barry, and James C. Kaufman, editors. *The Psychology of Creative Writing*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.

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**Module-2**

**Creative Writing and Literature**



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## Unit-5 □ George Orwell : “Why I Write?”

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### *Structure*

- 2.5.1. Objectives
- 2.5.2. Introduction
- 2.5.3. Context
- 2.5.4. About George Orwell
- 2.5.5. Summary of “Why I write”
- 2.5.6. Detailed Analysis of “Why I write”
- 2.5.7. Comprehension Exercises
- 2.5.8. Suggested Reading

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### 2.5.1. Objectives

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The objective of this segment is to explore George Orwell’s essay “Why I Write” and understand its thematic concerns. It also scrutinises the intersection of politics and literature in his works while focusing on the broader aesthetics and politics of writing as discussed by Orwell.

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### 2.5.2. Introduction

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“Why I Write” (1946) offers an insight into process that has shaped Orwell’s writing, charting his growth as a writer and scrutinises the complex dynamics of personal, political and aesthetic aspects that have informed his identity as a writer. As one of the most politically conscious and socially aware critics and writers of the 20th century, Orwell is primarily known for his satirical works such as 1984 and Animal Farm, which have sustained their relevance as critiques of totalitarianism and political oppression.

Written during the context of the interwar and post-war era, marked by the rise of authoritarian regimes, ideological conflicts and economic upheavals, the text serves as a reflective manifesto that maps the course of Orwell’s creative and political consciousness. Therefore, the essay not only articulates the author’s personal notions

about writing, but also posits his aesthetics within broader societal concerns. Orwell discusses how his lived experiences - ranging from his time as a colonial officer, his involvement in the Spanish Civil War, and his encounters with poverty - constructed his perceptions about the motives of this writing. The essay expressed the inherent tension between the desire for artistic freedom and moral imperative to address the socio-political crises of the era.

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### **2.5.3. Context**

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The culmination of World War II resulted in the decline of the European colonial powers and catalysed the emergence of new global conflicts between the capitalist West on the one hand and the communist East on the other. This trajectory would ultimately culminate in the Cold War, a geopolitical and ideological battleground that redefined global power dynamics and laid the foundation for future political conflicts and ideological realignments, fundamentally reshaping the contours of the modern world. Orwell's essay, written at a time when the war was nearing its conclusion, embeds the ideological anxieties of the time, grappling with the precarious balance of power and the rise of authoritarianism that would come to dominate the global narrative in the post-war era. Hence, "Why I Write" should be read against the backdrop of a this political and social instability that witnessed the emergence of competing narratives of freedom, control, and power.

The post-war years saw increasing debates about the role of literature in a politically contested world. Orwell belonged to a generation of writers who grappled with reconciling artistic expression with the moral and political imperatives of the age. "Why I Write" reflects these tensions, providing a personal account of how the contemporary political realities led Orwell to combine art with activism, moving beyond the aesthetic ambitions to engage directly with the pressing issues of his day. His involvement in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) exposed him both to the atrocities of fascism as well as to the internal betrayals and propaganda of communist factions. Orwell's growing disillusionment with ideological dogma—be it fascism, communism, or uncritical nationalism—became a defining feature of his writing. By the time he wrote "Why I Write", he had already witnessed the consequences of unchecked political power during the rise of Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, and the global conflicts that resulted in the death of millions of people. These experiences reinforced his conviction that literature could potentially serve as a tool against oppression and writers carry an ethical responsibility to unravel the socio-political injustices and question power

structures. The essay's publication coincided with Orwell's evolution as a thinker and writer, as he transitioned from more journalistic endeavors to writing the politically charged works—*Animal Farm* (1945) and *1984* (1949)—that would secure his legacy as one of the most potent critics of totalitarianism.

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#### 2.5.4. About George Orwell

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Born Eric Arthur Blair in 1903 in Motihari, India, George Orwell was a British novelist, essayist, journalist, and critic whose work remains influential in both literary and political contexts. Orwell's writing is known for its clarity, moral urgency, and staunch critique of authoritarianism, social inequality, and the abuse of power. His ability to transform complex political realities into accessible yet profound narratives has secured his place as one of the most celebrated writers of the 20th century. Orwell's early life and career were instrumental in shaping his ideological perceptions. Educated at Eton College, he opted against university and joined the Indian Imperial Police in Burma (now Myanmar) in 1922, an experience that left him disillusioned with colonialism and the dehumanising structures of imperial power. This discontent fueled much of his later writing, including his early works like *Burmese Days* (1934) and his essay "Shooting an Elephant," (1936) which critique the moral and psychological toll of colonial rule on both the colonised and the colonisers.

Orwell's years of poverty and itinerancy in Paris and London in the late 1920s and early 1930s also played a formative role in his evolution as a writer. These experiences, chronicled in his first major work, *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), not only deepened his empathy for the underprivileged but also solidified his commitment to exposing social injustice through his writing. This period marked the beginning of Orwell's lifelong exploration of class dynamics, inequality, and the vicissitudes of the marginalised. The Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) proved to be a turning point in Orwell's political consciousness. Fighting with the anti-fascist militia of the POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista), he witnessed the brutal realities of war, the fragility of alliances, and the treachery of Stalinist factions. These experiences profoundly formed his distrust of ideological extremism and his belief in the importance of individual liberty and truth. His time in Spain informed his memoir *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), which remains a poignant account of both the ideals and disillusionment of revolutionary struggle.

Orwell's later works, particularly *Animal Farm* (1945) and *1984* (1949), solidified his reputation as a political thinker and storyteller. *Animal Farm*, an allegorical novella,

critiques the corruption of socialist ideals in Stalinist Russia, while *1984* depicts a dystopian future marked by surveillance, propaganda, and totalitarian control. Both works underscore Orwell's enduring preoccupation with the ways in which language and ideology can be utilised to manipulate and oppress. Beyond his novels, Orwell's prolific essays and journalism reveal his keen observational skills and unwavering commitment to intellectual honesty. Essays like "Politics and the English Language," "Shooting an Elephant," and "Why I Write" exemplify his ability to merge the personal with the political, offering insights into the broader societal forces that shaped his era. Orwell's life and work are a testament to the power of literature as a tool for social and political critique. His experiences—as a colonial officer, a witness to poverty, and a soldier in the Spanish Civil War—inflicted his writing with sharp observations that prompt readers to confront uncomfortable truths about power, inequality, and human nature.

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### 2.5.5. Summary of "Why I Write"

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(You can read the essay by going to this link: <https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/why-i-write/>)

In the essay, Orwell begins by tracing his early experiences as a child and adolescent, detailing how isolation and a desire for self-expression engendered his interest in storytelling. He recounts his childhood fascination with words and his early experiments with writing poetry, nature descriptions, and imaginative narratives. These early efforts laid the foundation for his later literary ambitions, where he sought to reconcile artistic creativity with a sense of moral and social purpose.

In the essay, Orwell identifies four primary motives for writing :

1. Sheer Egoism : The desire to be recognised, remembered, and to assert one's individuality.
2. Aesthetic Enthusiasm : The appreciation of beauty in language and the pleasure derived from well-crafted prose and evocative imagery.
3. Historical Impulse : A commitment to preserving truth and documenting events for posterity.
4. Political Purpose : A drive to influence society, expose injustices, and advocate for ideological change.

Orwell acknowledges that these motives often conflict and varies in their intensity but emphasises that his writing, particularly since the 1930s, has been shaped by a definite political purpose. The essay reflects on how key experiences - his service in Burma, his exposure to poverty in Europe, and his participation in the Spanish Civil War - deepened his understanding of injustice and the mechanisms of power. These events, coupled with the rise of fascism and totalitarianism, propelled Orwell to use his writing as an instrument to critique oppressive systems and advocate for democratic socialism. He discusses the challenges of balancing artistic integrity with political commitments, citing his efforts in works like *Homage to Catalonia*, where his efforts to expose the truth at times clashed with literary form. Orwell underscores his belief that good writing requires both aesthetic quality and ideological clarity, asserting that his most successful works, such as *Animal Farm*, achieved this fusion. The essay concludes with Orwell's reflections on the act of writing itself. He describes it as a deeply challenging yet compulsive endeavor, driven by a mysterious internal force. He acknowledges the vanity inherent in writing but insists that a writer's best work arises from a genuine sense of purpose. For Orwell, writing without a political aim often results in lifeless, meaningless prose. Thus, "Why I Write" is both a personal manifesto and a broader commentary on the role of literature in society. It traces Orwell's development as a writer, the interplay between politics and art, and his enduring commitment to truth and justice in an age of ideological turmoil.

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### 2.5.6 Detailed Analysis of "Why I Write"

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"Why I Write" stands as a reflective exploration of the intricate and often conflicting motivations behind the act of writing. Blending personal narrative with broader philosophical musings, Orwell articulates his journey as a writer while situating his work within the political and historical contexts of his time. The essay offers not only an intimate portrait of Orwell's development as an author but also a meditation on the broader responsibilities of art and its role in shaping society. Through elaborating on his motivations, influences, and political awakenings, Orwell provides readers with an enduring framework for understanding the complex interplay between personal ambition, aesthetic creativity, and social engagement in writing.

Orwell opens the essay with an account of his childhood, a formative period that sowed the seeds of his literary ambition. From an early age, he was aware that he was destined to be a writer. However, this realisation did not stem from a romanticised love for the craft but from his loneliness and sense of alienation. As a middle child

with little connection to his father and a difficult relationship with his peers, Orwell felt undervalued and isolated. Writing became a means of asserting his individuality and controlling his environment, providing him with a private world where he could “get my [his] own back” on reality. This psychological foundation highlights how writing, for Orwell, was initially rooted in personal needs—an emotional outlet for his feelings of insignificance and frustration. The vivid anecdotes from Orwell’s early life add depth to his reflections on the origins of creativity. He describes his childhood habit of crafting an imaginary story about himself, a mental exercise that persisted until adulthood. This “diary existing only in the mind” reveals the early formation of Orwell’s narrative instincts and his compulsion to make sense of the world through storytelling. However, Orwell acknowledges that his literary output during this time was sparse and largely derivative, such as his juvenile poetry inspired by William Blake’s *The Tyger*. This self-deprecating humour reflects Orwell’s larger reluctance to romanticise his creative process. Instead, he presents writing as a continuous struggle, shaped by trial, error, and the evolving influences of his life experiences.

Orwell’s discussion of the motives behind writing forms the intellectual core of his essay. He identifies four primary motives that, in varying proportions, drive all writers: sheer egoism, aesthetic enthusiasm, historical impulse, and political purpose. These categories serve as a universal framework for understanding the writer’s psyche, providing understanding that extend beyond Orwell’s personal experiences. A brief analysis of these four aspects are as follows:

I. Sheer egoism, Orwell argues, is an unavoidable aspect of the writing life. He describes it as the desire to “seem clever, to be talked about, to be remembered after death.” This admission sets Orwell apart from writers who attempt to cloak their work in altruistic intentions. He acknowledges the inherent vanity of writers while situating this impulse within the broader human desire for recognition and legacy. By linking egoism to the universal human condition, Orwell normalises this otherwise unflattering aspect of the writer’s identity, challenging readers to reconsider the moral implications of artistic ambition.

II. Aesthetic enthusiasm, meanwhile, reflects Orwell’s enduring love of language and form. He writes of his fascination with the “sounds and associations of words” and his desire to craft prose that is clear and evocative. This emphasis on clarity - a theme he revisits throughout the essay - is central to Orwell’s literary philosophy. He famously describes good prose as being “like a windowpane,” a metaphor that underscores his commitment to transparency and precision in writing. Yet Orwell also acknowledges



the limitations of aesthetic enthusiasm as a solitary motive, critiquing his early works for their reliance on “purple passages” and decorative language devoid of purpose. This self-critique reveals Orwell’s belief that art must be grounded in substance to avoid lapsing into self-indulgence.

III. The historical impulse, or the desire to “see things as they are” and preserve truth for posterity, is perhaps the most neutral of the four motives Orwell identifies. This impulse is rooted in a deep respect for facts and an ethical commitment to honesty. However, Orwell argues that historical writing cannot escape the influence of the writer’s biases and world view. Even the most factual accounts are shaped by the writer’s choices about what to include and emphasise. This insight resonates with Orwell’s broader critique of the illusions of objectivity in literature and journalism, foreshadowing his later works that explore the manipulation of truth by authoritarian regimes.

IV. Orwell discusses the political purpose, which he defines in the broadest sense as the desire to “push the world in a certain direction” and influence others’ ideas about society. Orwell’s political motivations became increasingly central to his writing as he matured, reflecting his belief that art cannot exist in a vacuum. He rejects the notion that art should be apolitical, arguing instead that even the decision to avoid politics is, in itself, a political stance. This perspective challenges conventional dichotomies between art and politics, emphasising the inseparability of the two. For Orwell, writing is inherently a public act, shaped by and responsive to the socio-political context in which it is created.

Orwell’s transition from a writer primarily motivated by aesthetic enthusiasm to one driven by political purpose is a central theme of the essay. This shift was catalysed by Orwell’s personal experiences, particularly his time in Burma as part of the Indian Imperial Police and his involvement in the Spanish Civil War. These experiences exposed him to the brutality of imperialism and the ideological conflicts of the 20th century, solidifying his commitment to democratic socialism and his opposition to totalitarianism. Orwell describes the Spanish Civil War as a turning point after which “every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism.” This declaration reveals Orwell’s belief in the ethical responsibilities of the writer, particularly during periods of political turmoil. He does not view political writing as a betrayal of his earlier motives but as an evolution of them, a way of aligning his personal values with the demands of his time. Orwell’s works from this period, including *Homage to*

Catalonia, *Animal Farm*, and *1984*, exemplify his ability to fuse political purpose with artistic integrity, creating literature that is both ideologically powerful and aesthetically compelling.

While Orwell's essay celebrates the power and purpose of writing, it also acknowledges its inherent difficulties. He compares the act of writing to a "horrible, exhausting struggle" and likens it to "a long bout of some painful illness." This unflinching portrayal of the creative process demystifies the act of writing, presenting it as a laborious and often frustrating endeavor. Yet Orwell also recognises that this struggle is driven by an inexplicable inner compulsion, a "demon" that forces writers to confront their truths and express themselves despite the difficulties involved. Orwell's reflections on the challenges of writing are closely tied to his views on language and truth. He criticises the use of vague or euphemistic language, particularly in political writing, as a tool for obscuring reality and manipulating public perception. This critique reflects his broader commitment to clarity and honesty in prose, which he sees as essential to the ethical responsibilities of the writer. Orwell's insistence on truthfulness in writing is a recurring theme in his essay, shaping both his literary philosophy and his critique of the political and cultural forces that threaten it.

"Why I Write" is a deeply personal yet universally resonant essay that captures the complexities of the writing life. Through his candid reflections on his motives, influences, and struggles, Orwell offers readers a framework for understanding the interplay between personal indulgences, aesthetic aspects, and political engagement in literature. His insights into the inseparability of politics and art remain profoundly relevant in an age when writers are increasingly called upon to navigate the tensions between self-expression and social responsibility. Ultimately, Orwell's essay is not just a defense of his own career but a critical reflection on the broader purpose of writing. He challenges writers to confront their biases, acknowledge their contradictions, and strive for honesty and clarity in their work. In doing so, Orwell provides an enduring testament to the power of literature as both a personal act of self-expression and a public act of social engagement. It is this duality - the personal and the political, the aesthetic and the ethical - that consolidates the relevance of the essay as a timeless critique of the responsibilities and possibilities inherent in the act of writing.

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### **2.5.7. Summing Up**

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"Why I Write" traces the trajectory of Orwell's inspirations and growth as a writer. His essay presents a critical exploration of the intersection between aesthetics,

ego, and political purpose, arguing that all writers are, to some extent, political beings. Orwell's reflections continue to resonate with contemporary readers, particularly his belief that literature is a tool for confronting societal ills and pursuing truth in a world rife with deception. His work maintains that writing is not only a personal pursuit but also a means of influencing and shaping the world around us.

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### 2.5.8. Comprehension Exercises

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1. What are the four main reasons Orwell gives for why writers write?
2. How does Orwell's political experience shape his approach to writing?
3. Analyse the tension between aesthetic enthusiasm and political purpose in Orwell's essay.
4. In what ways does Orwell's "Why I Write" reflect his commitment to truth-telling in literature?
5. Do you agree with Orwell's assertion that all writing is political? Why or why not?

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### 2.5.9. Suggested Readings

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Burke, Seán. *The Ethics of Writing: Authorship and Responsibility in Plato and Nietzsche*. Edinburgh University Press, 2008.

Chomsky, Noam. "The Responsibility of Intellectuals". 1967. <https://archive.org/details/The-Responsibility-Of-Intellectuals>.

Ferrall, Charles. *Modernist Writing and Reactionary Politics*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Hitchens, Christopher. *Why Orwell Matters*. Basic Books, 2002.

Meyers, Jeffrey. *George Orwell : A Biography*. Perlego, 2001.

Orwell, George. "Politics and the English Language". 1946. <https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/politics-and-the-english-language/>

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## **Unit-6 □ My Mother's Tongue by Zavi Kang Engles**

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### *Structure*

- 2.6.1 Objectives**
- 2.6.2. Introduction**
- 2.6.3. Zavi Kang Engles**
- 2.6.4. Summary of “My Mother's Tongue”**
- 2.6.5. Detailed analysis of the Text**
- 2.6.6. The Genre of Personal Essay**
- 2.6.7. Summing Up**
- 2.6.8. Comprehension Exercises**
- 2.6.9. Suggested Readings**

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### **2.6.1. Objectives**

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The Unit takes up for detailed discussion a personal essay by Zavi Kang Engles titled “My Mother's Tongue”.

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### **2.6.2. Introduction**

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An important genre of creative writing is the personal essay. It is a prose work that recounts an important idea or aspect or a significant event of the writer's life and comments on how that event or incident has influenced the writer's life. Written in a variety of styles, from the thought provoking to the humorous, the genre of the personal essay draws from the writer's personal experiences. This Unit begins with a brief bio of the author, Zavi Kang Engles and a summary of the essay, “My Mother's Tongue”. It then goes on to discuss various important ideas and themes that Zavi Kang Engles brings up in the essay. The Unit also addresses issues of the genre of the personal essay, contrasting its differences and similarities with the genre of the memoir. The Unit ends with questions on the essay and a list of recommended readings.

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### 2.6.3. Zavi Kang Engles

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Zavi Kang Engles is a poet, writer and activist. She has a B.A. in English and Urban Studies and an M.A. in Social Sciences. While her family is originally Korean, she has grown up and lives in the United States of America. Engles is a Korean American and this aspect of her identity is an important idea in understanding the essay, “My Mother’s Tongue”.

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### 2.6.4. Summary of “My Mother’s Tongue”

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(Please read the essay by accessing this link: <https://therumpus.net/2019/04/25/my-mothers-tongue/>)

Zavi Kang Engles’ essay “My Mother’s Tongue” is a personal essay that speaks of language and an individual’s relationship to it. It speaks of the way the narrator feels about the language of her mother, Korean, a language that she learnt growing up and spoke with her mother. The author speaks of the personal to reveal the way in which her identity as a Korean woman growing in the United States of America is defined. Beginning with a reference to a photograph of the author and her mother, a photograph that has to do with an accident and one that appeared in a newspaper, the essay goes on to speak of how the author is made aware of the fact that she looks different. This is a reference to her hyphenated identity; she is born of mixed parentage. Her mother is Korean and her father American. The Korean part of her identity is one that she is made aware of and embraces too. In America that part of her identity is kept alive through her knowledge of and use of the Korean language. This is a language that she learns and even when she does not get a chance to speak it and much later, she realizes that it remains an important part of her. This, she becomes aware when she travels to South Korea to visit her ailing grandfather and on this visit, she speaks the language well. This surprises her as well. People in South Korea are surprised to hear her speak the language as she looks different from them. To them she looks like an American. The author is hence, always made aware of the fact that she is ‘different’. However, she is at home both in the United States of America that is home to her and in South Korea as she embraces both parts of her identity. The essay speaks of cultural differences, of the complicated nature of identity through issues of language and culture.

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### 2.6.5. Detailed Analysis of “My Mother’s Tongue”

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The essay begins with a reference to a photograph of the author and her mother, a clear reference to the way one looks. Engles then goes on to speak of how there were several times when people wanted to take photographs of her. The reason is clear – she looked different “Maybe we were eye-catching in small-town Georgia, my mother a gorgeous, boldfaced immigrant, her daughter with improbably light hair and dark eyes, features that danced between familiar and “exotic,” that word that has come to say far more about the speaker than the described object.” The little Zavi would speak to her mother about such requests in what she calls her “secret language. It is obvious that the author is referring to a time when she was younger. the reason why Korean is referred to as “secret language” is because most people in the US did not speak that language and hence it was a language that would not be understood by most people.

While she addresses her mother using the Korean word for mother, *umma*, her father is always ‘dad’. He was American and both of her parents had joined graduate school in the US, “two bewildering new worlds converging on my mother at once” – life in America and at graduate school. In order to deal with her immigrant identity, her mother “poured her emotions into painting, and her language into me”. This is how she learns the Korean language and songs as well. Each time the little child says words correctly the mother is delighted. “I glowed with her love, basked in the warm security of what I thought was a language between us”, a language they would use to speak to one another, a “secret language”. “Perhaps this is why strangers asked for our photos, in an attempt to capture a secret world between two people” – this line also speaks of the difference in language and culture and in the way the mother and daughter look.

Engles speaks of another occasion when people are surprised at the way she looks. This time it takes place in Korea when she visits the country. When she speaks in Korean with the shop-owner, the shop-owner is surprised that she speaks Korean so well. This time it is her white identity that is the reason for this surprise —“My mom is Korean,” I offered. She nodded and said, “You’re so pretty, your father must be American!”” The way she was looked at as being different was common in both the US and South Korea. In South Korea she was perceived as a foreigner and when she spoke Korean people viewed her with surprise – “Growing up, I was accustomed to the quizzical looks and double-takes as my speech sparked a recognition contradicted by my appearance, revealing a sameness that hadn’t been seen before.” There people commented on the way she spoke Korean – “Your *barim* is wonderful, I was told over and over”. Zavi uses the word *barimas* it is not only means pronunciation but has



several other meanings as well – “In speaking well, I commanded the air, shaped the elementary force into a magical token that proved I belonged.” The idea of belonging is an important one for people one of mixed parentage and for immigrants.

Engles speaks of how her Korean cousins perceived her as an American. For them she was an outsider. Her English was better than theirs and they spoke what critics referred to as Korean English. She is told by a cousin to “First you have to get rid of all that American fat” making it clear to the young girl that she did not fit it. As she says, she often looked into the mirror as she did not have “almond-shaped eyes”, something that is often used to describe the eyes of an Asian women in English literature. The difference in her looks made her ask the question, “Where was the Korean in me?” She had always believed it was an important part of her identity and yet in South Korea she spends time looking for it. She is different there and does not fit in.

To add to all this her parents separated and that meant that they did not travel to South Korea as they did before. Cousins from South Korea now began to come to their home in the US. There was no longer any Korean being spoken as her father stopped practicing to speak it. She now was no longer Korean-American, the hyphen was gone as she writes. She was American and was reading “dead white women who gave voice to the sense of loss that I could not contain nor name”. Her mother moved away, taking Korean with her and Zavi’s only contact with the language was now through Korean language films. There were several times when she did not understand all the words spoken in the films she watched.

Zavi speaks about language and how it is an important aspect of national identity. A little bit of the historical context regarding the Korean language is also mentioned in the essay – the Japanese occupation and Korean War. It is because of these that the issue of language is important for Koreans - “For native Koreans, the language is so intertwined with cultural belonging that some dismiss returning adoptees as not really being Korean at all.”

In spite of all the changes in her life, Zavi speaks of how important the Korean language has been for her. She refers to certain words that come to her mind reflexively, noting the cadence and meanings of them. There are some Korean words that she finds it difficult to translate, they can only be interpreted, she notes – “which reminds me of the saying that each language is a way of reaching for the sky and so I think of myself as having not an extra pair of hands but maybe one more outstretched palm.” It is the idea that she is Korean, that she retained that identity as strongly as she could that always made her feel as if she had that little extra bit, something that she held onto.

The next time she travels to Korea is when she is a freshman and one thing that she did as she readied to travel is to write down a list of Korean words that she might need to use. She notes with surprise of how her pronunciation, her *barim*, was still the way it used to be earlier. When she meets her relatives, she is at a loss of how to speak to them, of what to say. The Western way of expressing sorrow would not work here, she notes – “I opened my mouth but my heart leapt up to stop my tongue—what do I say to a mourning elder?” She needs to think before she can find the right words and when she says she is given, what Zavi calls an “American hug” and answers to her in English.

As she joins everyone for a meal, memories flood her, memories of her grandfather, of how he would kill a chicken to be cooked for her, though she had a rather distant relationship with him and found much of what he spoke difficult to understand. Yet, she knew him through her mother, through the stories her mother had told her and of how much of what had happened to Korea had a great impact on his life. In spite of being there, meeting people and being with all in the moment of loss, she writes that she “didn’t know how to mourn in this country”. The disconnect becomes clear.

Engles speaks of the way English and Asian languages are different, of how the same thing when said in English and in Korean might have different ways of expression which make the sentences completely different in meaning to one another. She speaks of a study done on the Japanese and English languages to make this point. This difference has to do with culture, with the way ideas and beliefs work in the Asian countries. What when said in English would be an assertion of individuality, would in Korean be interpreted as a sign that one was selfish.

As she walks around Seoul with her cousins, she notices and hears several ways in which Korean was spoken, “Seoul now teemed with diversity, reflected not only in the people but also in the language.” There were several languages heard in the city as well. As she travels to her aunt’s home, away from the hustle of city she hears a child at play and as she looks back she notices “her familiar face, a bronzed face, a face of multiple origins”. The familiarity is something that resonates with her, with her physical appearance – “She called out to someone, “*Oppah, iriwah*,” tossing the language out in the air like a bright beach ball.” Amid all the different heritages that the child might have in her, she does speak Korean, a language that Engles has, in spite of not using it for quite some time, not forgotten. All that she hopes for the child is a longing that several people who straddle different cultures, languages and identities have, a longing for home, a place of warmth and comfort.



The United States of America has been variously described as “a melting pot”, “a salad bowl” as it has become home to people of diverse linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. People from several parts of the world immigrated to the United States of America and made it their home. Inter-racial and inter linguistic marriages are common and this has created a section people who have multiple cultural and linguistic identities. The narrator in the essay has two – Korean which she inherited from her mother and American from her father. Her identity is a mix of them. While she is an American, her Korean identity is an integral part of her identity as well. An identity that is preserved through the Korean language. As a child she went to Korea frequently, something that changes after her parents divorce. While people could lose fluency in language due to unuse, or find it difficult to find the right words at times, yet one does not forget a language altogether. This is so because it is an integral part of one’s identity. “My Mother’s Tongue” shows this wonderfully – “. . . each language is a way of reaching for the sky, and so I think of myself as having not an extra pair of hands but maybe one more outstretched palm.”

Engles uses flashbacks to speak of the way things had been. She also uses memories to recreate experiences that reveal ideas of language, culture and belonging - “Humid days stretch long in my memory, listening to cicadas scream, growing fat on the many culinary expressions of love prepared for me by my aunts and my grandmother.”

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### **2.6.6. The Genre of the Personal Essay**

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A personal essay is a prose narrative that tells a significant event/events or incident/incidents in the life of the writer. It is a piece of non-fiction writing that could be interesting, humorous, thought provoking and entertaining and is based on the experiences of the writer. It is also referred to as narrative essay and is different from other forms of the essay in that it tells a story. There are certain elements that characterize the personal essay –

- a compelling hook that could be an interesting story or character or an incident, an opening line or any other thought provoking or compelling element that will hold the readers’ attention.
- a good story that draws the readers’ attention and holds it.
- interesting characters. The author could be a character as well as the personal essay is usually a first-person narrative.

- While the setting is determined by the story/incident recounted it is nevertheless an important aspect of the essay and is one that will hold the reader's attention as well.
- there could also be a message or a theme.

While several of these elements are shared by both the genres of the personal essay and the memoir, a memoir is a one that has several voices unlike the personal essay that will have only one voice narrating the story/events. Both forms focus on the self but the personal essay seeks to relate with ideas of culture, place and time. The memoir focuses on changes that the self has undergone. While the personal essay just explores, the memoir tries to delve deeper to find meanings and connections.

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### 2.6.7. Summing Up

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Zavi Kang Engles' "My Mother's Tongue" is a personal essay that brings in the idea of the importance of language and culture. As one reads the essay the idea that the author's rootedness to the language of her mother, Korean, remains. In spite of the fact that she speaks it far less as she grows up, she realizes that it never goes away as she finds out when she is in Korea while in college. It is an important part of her identity just as the American part of her identity. A child of mixed parentage she is one who easily straddles both the culture and languages – Korean and American. While there are times when she is looked upon as exotic in America and looked at as an American in Korea, nevertheless the two parts of her identity are what creates her sense of identity. Both are essential elements to who she is. Ideas of belonging and rootedness, of acceptance of difference, are important aspects of the essay. "My Mother's Tongue" speaks of language and an individual's relationship with it - "I had thought Korean was an ocean inside of me, its tide ebbing and flowing in conjunction with my proximity to other Koreans."

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### 2.6.8. Comprehension Exercises

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❑ **Long Answer Type Questions :**

1. Critically analyse the essay "My Mother's Tongue" focussing on the ideas of language and identity.
2. How does Engles situate the ideas of trying to fit in?
3. Discuss the way Engles describes the two cultures that form an integral part of her identity and how she tries to navigate them?
4. Discuss "My Mother's Tongue" as a personal essay.

**❑ Medium Length Questions :**

1. Describe the narrator's experiences when she goes back to Korea after she hears the news of her grandfather's illness?
2. Discuss the way the essay begins commenting on the way people react to the author and her mother.
3. Briefly discuss the Korean Japanese relations that Engles refers to in the essay.
4. "I hope she feels at home" – Explain.
5. Discuss the historical references used in the essay commenting on the purpose they serve.

**❑ Short Answer Type Questions**

1. How do the author's parents meet and marry?
2. Why does Engles' use of Korean reduce after a period of time?
3. What changes does the narrator see when she visits Korea as a freshman?
4. Comment on the use of the image of the "photograph" in the essay.

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**2.6.9. Suggested Readings**

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Ahluwalia, Pal "When Does a Settler Become a Native?" – Citizenship and Identity in a Settler Society" by, in *Postcolonialisms* ed. Gaurav Desai and Supriya Nair, Berg, Oxford, 2005

Pulugurtha, Nishi. "From Kakinada to Calcutta : Finding a Way through Languages" *Café Dissensus*, July 23, 2019. <https://cafedissensusblog.com/2019/07/23/from-kakinada-to-calcutta-finding-a-way-through-languages/>

Rath, Sura P. "Home(s) Abroad : Diasporic Identities in Third Spaces." <http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/Jouvert/v4i3/rath1.htm>

Ruiz, Neil G, Luis Noe-Bustamanet and Sono Shah. "Diverse Cultures and Shared Experiences Shape Asian American Identities" <https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/2023/05/08/diverse-cultures-and-shared-experiences-shape-asian-american-identities/>

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## **Unit-7 □ Sandra Cisneros : “On the Private Act of Writing Poetry”**

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### *Structure*

- 2.7.1. Objectives**
- 2.7.2. Introduction**
- 2.7.3. “On the Private Act of Writing Poetry”**
  - (a) Text**
  - (b) Critical Analysis**
  - (c) Cisneros’ Understanding of Poetry**
- 2.7.4. Summing Up**
- 2.7.5. Comprehension Exercises**
- 2.7.6. Suggested Readings**

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### **2.7.1. Objectives**

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The objective of this unit is to introduce you to Sandra Cisneros and her thoughts about poetry and the act of writing. While Sandra Cisneros is already celebrated as an author of Chicana literature, her poetry is also the subject of much academic analysis.

According to Cisneros, writing poetry, in particular, is a private act. This unit tries to introduce readers to Cisneros’ ideas and opinions on creative writing, the kind of mentality which she advocates for creative endeavours and the veil that exists between the writer and the world around them.

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### **2.7.2. Introduction**

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In order to understand this text, it is important to know Sandra Cisneros and her works. Sandra Cisneros is a renowned Mexican-American writer best known for her novels, short stories, and poetry that explore the lives of Latin characters, particularly women. Born on December 20, 1954, in Chicago, Illinois, Cisneros often draws on her own experiences growing up in a working-class Mexican-American family.

Her most famous work is *The House on Mango Street*, a novel published in 1984. It is a coming-of-age story written in a series of vignettes that capture the life and struggles of a young Latina girl named Esperanza Cordero in Chicago. Cisneros' writing is known for its lyrical prose, rich imagery, and exploration of cultural and gender identity. Her other notable works include the short story collection *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* (1991), which continues to explore themes of cultural heritage, family dynamics, and the lives of Latinas in the United States.

As a poet, Cisneros frequently explores the complexities of being a woman within the context of both Mexican and American cultures. She delves into the nuances of family relationships, the immigrant experience, and the challenges of navigating multiple cultural identities. One of her notable poetry collections is *Loose Woman* (1994), where she confronts themes of sexuality, desire, and empowerment with raw honesty and lyrical language. The poems in this collection challenge traditional gender roles and societal expectations, offering a bold and unapologetic exploration of female experiences.

Overall, Sandra Cisneros' poetry is celebrated for its emotional resonance, cultural insight, and powerful portrayal of personal and collective histories. Her work continues to inspire readers and poets alike, inviting them to explore the intersections of identity, culture, and the human experience. Throughout her career, Sandra Cisneros has received numerous awards and honours, including the American Book Award, the MacArthur Fellowship (also known as the "Genius Grant"), and the PEN Center USA Literary Award. She continues to be a significant voice in American literature, influencing writers and readers alike with her poignant portrayals of the Latinx experience.

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### 2.7.3. "On the Private Act of Writing Poetry"

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**(a) Text :**

I am living since the year began in a great mental chaos, feral as an unmade bed. I don't know if it's me reflected in my surroundings, or if it's my surroundings that make me chaotic. Some of this chaos are the books and papers leaning ominously everywhere I look, demanding I make time for them. They are worse than housework. They are homework. At least I can dodge housework; I can hire someone to help. But there is no one who can help me unpack the suitcases in my brain.

I call this management of the self, poetry. If I neglect it too long, I start to feel as if critters will move in. Call the exterminator!

Oh—I am the exterminator. That mouse trap is called my pen.

I consider poetry a dialogue with myself, a conversation more private than a journal. I am constantly in dialogue with myself and have been since I was a child. This comes from spending so much time alone and loving my time alone. Sometimes when I develop close friendships, I feel guilty I'm simply using them as an ear for the endless monologues going on in my head. Does everyone feel this way? I don't know. I only know myself and how experience can only be understood when I translate it into words.

I write what I think, but how do I know what I think till I write it down? I'm not an abstract thinker. Ideas present themselves to me in vague, blurry emotions, as if everything I write comes to me by way of the heart, a muscle as strong as a python but as fragile as a lemon meringue pie. It's only by running after poetry, because it takes a certain amount of stalking, that I find myself catching a hold of something furiously in motion that sweeps me up and carries me surprisingly aloft.

Every day, poetry summons me in the same way that the minarets let loose their silk call to prayer. I believe I could write several poems daily if I only answered the call. But I'm often distracted by an appointment I cannot cancel, or by a temperamental email tugging for my attention, or the body's nagging need for a nap.

Poetry is a refuge from the mundane, an invitation to the sacred. That's why I love reading poets who inspire poetry, who send me scurrying for my pen. If I am reading Bashō or Issa, I give myself permission to write shorter poems about nature. When I read Rumi, I'm moved to explore the spiritual.

Writing poetry is a most private act. It surprises me that my poems can be of any use to anyone else but me. Poems are so personal I regard them as I would X-rays of my uterus. It's hard to imagine who would want to look at them besides me.

An unspoken rule that allows me to write poetry: I write poems as if I could not publish, print, read, or speak them in my lifetime. That's why poetry is the one room in the house of the spirit where I am allowed to think anything I want. I find this startling, delightful, frightening, and hilarious, all at once. In this time of book banning and mistrust of truth, I find writing poetry a most subversive act.

It's my personal aim in my lifetime to arrive at some semblance of empathy and kindness and acceptance of the difficult people in my life—my gurus, I'm certain. Poetry is my constant confessor. Non-judgmental. Indulgent. Benevolent. With faith

that I will move from where I begin with my petty, small perspective and transform myself into a wannabe Boddhisattva.

If a poem is easy for me to write, I know I'm not trying hard enough. Poems are suspect when they present themselves easily.

That's why so many of my poems are tossed under the bed for months and years, because I'm never sure if a poem has reached the door. By door, I mean taken me to a place I didn't expect to go. That's what a poem needs to do.

It is the job of scientists to explore black holes in the universe, but the job of a poet is to explore black holes in the psyche. I am still on a journey of self-discovery though I am sixty-seven years old and a half as I write this. I am serving my apprenticeship.

I'm lucky when poetry comes calling on a Harley, begging to take me on a spin—just around the block. But when I've gone missing for several days and return with my good clothes ruined, then I know I should've known. Poetry is part seduction, part abduction.

It's thrilling, funny, and joyous, and I'm grateful to my readers. You are welcome to come along for the ride.

### **(b) Critical Analysis :**

Cisneros begins by saying that she does not know whether the environment creates chaos within her or whether it is the other way around. This chaos and the realisation within her that she needs to devote her time to the books and papers leaning ominously around her also lend a sense of haste and urgency. They are homework. It cannot be delegated to anyone else.

This flowing of the self into surroundings gives the impression of a meditative state where the surroundings become an extension of the mind, and the author has attained a dimension of oneness with everything. However, she is tied down to the rigours of reality and cannot always let herself answer the call of poetry, which is why she writes later, "But I'm often distracted by an appointment I cannot cancel, or by a temperamental email tugging for my attention, or the body's nagging need for a nap".

Poetry, Cisneros maintains, is as natural an urge as hunger or thirst — a bodily requirement that must be fulfilled for her mental well-being. The act of putting one's deepest thoughts and feelings into words can be both cathartic and exposing, which is why Cisneros suggests that true poetry comes from an authentic place within the writer. This, however, comes at a cost. She wonders whether the poetic mind hampers



her ability to connect with people and feels a tinge of guilt at using her close friendships as “an ear for the endless monologues going on in my head”. However, for Cisneros, there is also a spiritual side to poetry. This response to spirituality is a matter of feeling rather than practice, which is why she writes, “... poetry summons me in the same way that the minarets let loose their silk call to prayer.”

Cisneros emphasises the solitary nature of writing poetry, which allows for a deeper exploration and understanding of the self and emotions. She expresses it in the following words — “It is the job of scientists to explore black holes in the universe, but the job of a poet is to explore black holes in the psyche.” Additionally, she describes the act of writing poetry as an act which is so personal in nature that perhaps others would not find any relevance.

The essay has a reflective and contemplative tone. Cisneros spends her time contemplating the essence of poetry and its importance in her life, allowing readers to follow her thought process. The essay is written in a personal, conversational tone. Cisneros often uses anecdotes from her own life to illustrate her points, making the piece relatable and engaging.

### **(c) Cisneros’ Understanding of Poetry**

For Cisneros, the act of writing poetry is a very personal enterprise, equating her writings to X-rays of her uterus because she feels that it is not particularly relevant to anyone else. She considers poetry to be a kind of mental dialogue even more personal than writing in a journal. It is something that is done in moments of solitude, away from the prying eyes of others. This privacy is essential for the writer to explore their innermost thoughts and emotions.

While discussing the role of the poet in society, Cisneros identifies the poet as an astute observer — someone who not only captures and reflects the world around them but does so with a sensitivity and a keen awareness of both the self and the external environment. Many of her poems carry a strong narrative element, reflecting her storytelling roots. These poems often feel like brief stories or moments captured in verse, which mirror the vignettes she is known for in her prose. Some of her poems, like ‘Abuelito Who’, in particular, are excellent examples that contain an essence of universality within them. In ‘Abuelito Who’, Cisneros highlights the special bond that children share with their grandparents. The poem primarily concerns itself with the increasing distance between a grandfather and his grandchild as he grows old, becomes sick and eventually dies. The poem vividly captures the sense of confusion in the mind



of the child, who is unable to grasp the suddenness with which their grandfather dies. However, the poem continues as the absence of the grandfather leaves a deep mark on the child.

Cisneros' unspoken law of writing poetry is quite intriguing. She says that she writes poems as if she could not print, publish, read or speak them in her lifetime. By assuming that all these other acts of distributing her expressions are unavailable, Cisneros lets the raw, unadulterated stream of emotions flow into her poems without caring for anything else. This becomes a rebellious act in the times of political correctness.

In addition to being unapologetically raw, poetry should help us understand the elements of our psyche. This is also the reason why Cisneros is wary of those poems which are easily written because such poems do not have much to offer in terms of understanding our psyche. On the other hand, poems which create considerable difficulty while writing offer a glimpse into the innermost workings of the mindscape.

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#### 2.7.4. Summing Up

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To conclude, this Unit provides learners with an in-depth understanding of the intimate and deeply personal nature of writing poetry. Through her reflective and meditative prose, Sandra Cisneros explores themes of authenticity, vulnerability, and cultural identity, providing readers with a deeper understanding of what it means to be a poet. Her emphasis on the private, solitary nature of writing underscores the importance of introspection and emotional honesty in creating meaningful poetry.

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#### 2.7.5. Comprehensive Exercises

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❑ **Short Answer Type Questions :**

1. If the job of scientists is to discover black holes, what then is the job of poets, according to Sandra Cisneros?
2. Why does Cisneros compare her poems to X-rays of her uterus?
3. How does Cisneros discuss the role of memory and sensory details in her poetry, and how does this contribute to the vividness and emotional impact of her work?

❑ **Medium Answer Type Questions :**

1. Why does Sandra Cisneros become suspicious if a poem is too easily written?
2. What is Cisneros' unwritten law of writing poetry?

3. How does Cisneros emphasise the individualistic aspect of writing poems?
4. Cisneros emphasises the role of emotions, particularly vulnerability and healing, in her writing process. How does she convey the therapeutic and transformative power of poetry in her essay, and what specific examples does she provide to illustrate this?

❑ **Long Answer Type Questions :**

1. How does Cisneros describe the interplay between her identity, her sense of belonging, and her poetry?
2. Discuss how writing serves as both an act of personal healing and a means of understanding the world around her. Use specific examples from the essay to support your answer.
3. How does Sandra Cisneros conceptualise the personal and private nature of poetry in *On the Private Act of Writing Poetry*?

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### 2.7.6. Suggested Readings

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Cisneros, Sandra. "Abuelito Who", *Best Poems Encyclopedia*, <https://www.best-poems.net/sandra-cisneros/abuelito-who.html>. Accessed on 13 Sep 2024.

Cisneros, Sandra and Marcienne Rocard. "An Amphibian: An Interview with Sandra Cisneros", *Revue Française d'Etudes Américaines*, no. 66, Editions Belin, 1995, pp. 585-589. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/20872601](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20872601).

Estill, Adriana. "In Father's Footsteps: Bad Girls in Ana Castillo's and Sandra Cisneros's Poetry", *Confluencia*, vol. 16, no. 2, University of Northern Colorado, 2001, pp. 46-60. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/27922794](http://www.jstor.org/stable/27922794).

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## Unit-8 □ Rabindranath Tagore : “Creative Ideal”

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### *Structure*

- 2.8.1. Objectives
- 2.8.2. Introduction
- 2.8.3. Tagore’s Concept of Metaphysical Unity in Diversity
- 2.8.4. Tagore’s Aesthetic Synthesis
- 2.8.5. Art: Functions and Purposes
- 2.8.6. Primacy of Emotion in Tagore’s Idea of Creativity
- 2.8.7. Emotion, Rhythm, and the Transcendence of Disciplinary Boundaries
- 2.8.8. Tagore’s Concept of ‘Decoration’ and ‘Sentiment’ in Art
- 2.8.11. Moderation and Balance in Creative Expression
- 2.8.12. Theory of Artistic Detachment
- 2.8.13. Transcendent and Emanatory Power of Poetry
- 2.8.14. Summing Up
- 2.8.15. Comprehension Exercises
- 2.8.16. Suggested Readings

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### 2.8.1. Objectives

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In this Unit learners will be introduced to Tagore’s conceptualisation of creative aesthetics. We will try to understand Tagore’s concept of the transcendental and emancipatory power of poetry and analyse Tagore’s view on the transformative nature of suffering in art. We will analyse how Tagore has delved into the emancipatory power of art that helps to transcend human emotions and align them with the larger and greater, therefore aligning the individual with the universal.

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### 2.8.2. Introduction

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Rabindranath Tagore’s perspective on poetry, as explored in this document, reveals its profound ability to transcend the individual and specific, reaching towards

the universal and timeless. He argues that poetry achieves this by lifting human experiences out of their immediate material context and transforming them into something greater. This transformation is particularly evident in the way suffering, often seen as a deeply personal and isolating experience, can be transmuted into art, connecting us with shared human emotions and the infinite. Through the analysis of diverse examples, including Shakespearean tragedies and the insights of ancient Vedic texts, this exploration illuminates Tagore's belief in the emancipatory power of poetry and its potential to foster human betterment.

(Learners are requested to use the following link to access the essay: <https://tagoreweb.in/Essays/creative-unity-218/the-creative-ideal-2629>)

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### **2.8.3. Tagore's Concept of Metaphysical Unity in Diversity**

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At the very start of the essay on "The Creative Ideal," Tagore talks about the concept of "separateness of forms." He is essentially borrowing the idea from a book of Sanskrit aesthetics to suggest how as with a picture, the first of the essential elements of art is form. Yet, form is far from unvarying across all pictures. So, the unifying principle of art is the variety as opposed to uniformity of forms. Form, then, cannot be the basis for postulating a defining principle of art. Conversely, the multiplicity of forms should not be made a premise for arguing that artifacts are too various to admit of any underlying unity. It is simply that the essence of art ought to be sought in some other common element, not form. In a Tagorean paradox, the diversity of forms does not indicate their limitlessness. Rather, it reflects the limitations of each form. Conversely, the singular element that defines art despite the multitude of forms and art-objects is a sign of art's inherent infinitude. As the title itself suggests, Tagore's theory of art is not formalist, nor materialist. The very fact that he should draw upon ancient Indian aesthetics to proffer the reality of an ideal that lies beyond visible form, i.e. appearance, suggests that art for Tagore has a metaphysical objective. Now, this position ought not to be confused with Plato's theory of art. Instead of disparaging art as a dabbling in appearances and a distortion of the metaphysically real Idea, Tagore regards art as being of ideal origin and as having an ideal purpose. His philosophy is non-dualist, not seeing the physical and spiritual worlds as in conflict. Drawing on Sanskrit aesthetics, he acknowledges the diversity of artistic forms while asserting the immanence of a shared ideal. Tagore uses the example of the human body's intricate coordination to explain the "responsibility" of the part to the whole. He expresses a mistrust of modern urban alienation and avoids an individualist definition of art, instead seeking a connection with unitary, integrated wholeness.

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### 2.8.4. Tagore's Aesthetic Synthesis

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To this extent, Tagore is a conservative and classicist theorist of art. While Plato dismisses all art indiscriminately, Tagore is implicitly wary of any and every art staking a claim to that label. This approach is intrinsically classicist, as Bharata Muni's *Natyashastra* or the ancient Tamil compendium of parameters for poetry, *Tolkappiyam*, will corroborate. It enjoins initiation into a discipline, craftsmanship based on learning, conformity to precepts laid down by authoritative precedents, and adherence to classifications, as required, qualifying conditions for designation as art. Tellingly, he differentiates between march and crowd. Notably also, Tagore uses the word "properly" to describe the function of body parts in sustaining the "living unity" of the whole body. Propriety is an inherently classical tenet and one that is also shared by ancient European aesthetics. Horace's verse epistle, *Ars Poetica*, may be recalled in this context. Tagore endorses the same idea of congruity as Horace when he pits against propriety the prospect of "some monstrous" disproportion. That this concept has a political component to which is evident from Tagore's analogy of rebellion as the outcome of the non-adherence or violation of the law of proportion. This critical disapprobation of aesthetic randomness is anti-anarchic in politics. Tagore's allegorical drama often upholds revolutionary uprisings against repressive and unjust regimes. However, the outcome in these plays is never a regression into anarchy as an extreme expression of either individualism or mobocracy. It is important to understand this fundamental balance in Tagore's aesthetics and politics, between the autonomy of the individual and the stability of the collective. It is not imposed by any coercive law of the state but rather assimilated by the society of individuals through consensus. This is also Tagore's argument for distinguishing between India and Europe, the former being a society, and the latter a collective of states. It is interesting that the same alternative principle of harmony in diversity is perceived by Tagore as an implicitly Indian aesthetic. Hence his reference to ancient Indian texts in art, just as in education and pedagogy, his frame of reference is the *tapovana* of ancient Indian life. In maintaining, further, that these aesthetic tenets are also logically proven, Tagore also contends a congruence between reality and art, truth and beauty, between principles of epistemology and the rules of aesthetics. This too is radically anti-Platonic. Strikingly, Tagore speaks of logic as a guarantor of relationships. The connection may not seem obvious, but careful consideration of the instruments of logic, words, syntax, language, as well as its methodology, comparisons, derivations, inferences, are indeed all functions of relationship. Tagore quotes Keats's chiasmus

from “Ode to a Grecian Urn” in support of this assertion, and in doing so, attempts a surprising merger of European Romanticism and Indian Classicism. The chiasmus helps avert a possible aestheticist insistence, such as Walter Pater’s in the concluding section to *The Renaissance*, on beauty as the sole criterion of art and sole arbiter of art’s relationship with reality. Instead, the two parts of the chiasmus offer to harmonise the tension between the aesthetic needs and the accountability to truth by conveying the desired proportionality in the form of a syntactical balance between the two sides of the medial caesura marked by the comma. It is as though there were no intrinsic conflict between the two categories, beauty and truth, despite their distinctness as categories. This is also a kind of aesthetic idealism which implicitly privileges the truth attained through artistic creation over ordinary realism.

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### **2.8.5. Art : Functions and Purposes**

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Tagore envisions the idea of “the truer” in Lipika, something akin to Oscar Wilde’s hyperreal. Even as Tagore uses the comparison of a march by soldiers, he does not equate the army in its function and utility with that of art. The military analogy serves him only to the extent that both an army and an art-object is constructed with discipline. The difference is that the organisational unity of an army is a means to an end. In art, the expression of that unity is the end in itself. The former, in other words, is expression with a purpose. The latter, expression as purpose. Tagore perhaps detects a degree of frivolity in the possibility of art being altogether unpurposive, even as in “The Meaning of Art,” he has already defined art as the surplus over and above needs, necessities and utilities. He is thus identifying a different kind of functionality and purposiveness for art, one that is outward and upward in direction though inmost in its source. Revelation entails making visible what is otherwise not apparent, and to that extent Tagore’s choice of words suggests the locus of the truth, which is at the same time, the truth of unity, within the human consciousness. From this locus, this fundamental truth about the fundamental unity of being then manifests itself through art. To unravel further, the truth is interestingly universal in scope but needs to be intuited within before it can be revealed without. The route of revelation is art, notwithstanding the many forms that art might take in deference to the diversity that Tagore feels impelled to acknowledge as an essential aspect of culture and society. Further, in order to be art, Tagore also implies, that truth which is also unity must also be compatible with beauty, which in turn is subject to standards cultivated, endorsed and passed on by the same absorbent culture and society that has endured even as it has allowed itself to



be nourished by its own inclusivity. Tagore not only locates art at the intersection of categories such as truth, unity and beauty, where the measure and definition of all three is both given on authority and intuited as valid. There is a formidable boldness in this double bind. Tagore the philosopher of art is almost reactionary in his understanding of what may be considered as art, even as he is profoundly romantic and unorthodox in his conceptualisation of what art is and what its function in human life, both individual and communal, is *when* it is indeed art.

Having established this triangulation, then, Tagore goes on to state another conjunction, between the creative ideal and what he calls “an emotional ideal.” Just as the creative impulse is essentially an extension of the presence of a consciousness in the human being, the expression of this creative impulse will naturally be inflected by human personality. This is where Tagore introduces the subjectivity germane to artistic creation. Subjectivity or personality for him are ultimately shaped by emotion. What goes into the making of art is thus emotion, just as what art generates outside of itself is emotion. Typically, Tagore is wary of giving reason or rationality, insofar as it can be presented as an non-affective category of the human consciousness, any place as a generative principle with regard to art. Such an order reason or rationality Tagore implicitly associates, once again, with the mechanistic, and hence scientific, pedantic, and urbane in a modern, European sense. Hence his use of adjectives such as crystal, passive and inert, consistent with his earlier contrast between the operative purposes of an army or a joint stock company and that of art. Hence, also, his careful differentiation between creation and production. Production, for his, bears the taint of unregulated mechanisation or inadequate scope for the human consciousness to intervene with due subjectivity. The subtle bias against the word “produce” helps underline the Whatever is utilitarian in an exclusively materialist context Tagore tends to dissociate and disjoin from the creative ideal. Art and utility are at cross purposes, and utility, functionality are perceived by him as concerns of non-affective reason. Presumably, there is a reason at work in the creative act, as well, such as in the determination of form and proportion. However, in art, that kind of reasoning function cannot define the purpose of art, even as it contributes to the making of it. More importantly, such reasoning is in deference to what Tagore calls “the emotional ideal.” Now emotional ideal as a phrase would imply that expression of emotion is an important element, and that this expression of emotion is what makes art beautiful and truthful. For Tagore, beauty cannot be understood without considering its emotional impact. Moreover, when this emotional impact is genuine and arises from the inherent “consciousness of personality” of the individual or collective human creator, it represents truth.

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### 2.8.6. Primacy of Emotion in Tagore's Idea of Creativity

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Ideal may be read as both as objective and standard and that begs the question as to whether the poet is here also endorsing a certain pre-defined spectrum of admissible emotions that will not veer from the 'truth' and the 'beauty' principles of art. *Natyashastra*, for instance, classifies emotion and matches expressions and performative gestures to each. The implication may well be a tendency to repeat the admissible and reject the unclassifiable. Alternatively, the hitherto unclassified might be expected to conform to some component that does not deviate from the rules of proportion and unity. In other words, emotional ideal as a concept also begs the question whether truth, beauty and emotion are sufficiently inclusive categories in Tagore's curated classicism. However, these are not questions Tagore addresses in the essay. He goes on, convincingly, to demonstrate how the outward form of a poem, in all its structural components, and the emotional idea or *bhāvah*, a term from Sanskrit aesthetics, of the poem interact symbiotically to create the meaning of the poem. Here he introduces a detail about the function of art in respect of the world as also the function of the emotion in art vis-à-vis the nature of this world. The world, by which Tagore connotes not simply the world of humans on earth, but the cosmos and the universe outside of it as well, is "eternal" but not static. There is a kind of artistic expression in this cosmos too, in that it constitutes an unceasing series of succeeding pictures, i.e. something akin to cinema. Tagore argues that in order to qualify to form part of this motion picture, the "idea" of the emotion, of which rhythm is an incarnation, attains the necessary quality of dynamism. Now, this is a surprising inversion of conventional thought. We would have thought emotion was dynamic while the world insofar as it is timeless is static. In Tagore's perception, however, the spectrum of emotions is finite while the motion of things in the universe is infinite.

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### 2.8.7. Emotion, Rhythm, and the Transcendence of Disciplinary Boundaries

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As in the famous song, "mamo chitte niti nritye", rhythm is given the principal mediatory role in assimilating the emotional idea into the eternal motion of pictures. Why? Rhythm is repetitive and its structure is potentially repeatable without cessation. Also, rhythm translates the potential "energy" of emotion into kinetic energy. What is further worthy of note is that Tagore refers not to emotion per se, but the emotional



idea, which is to say emotion too has a concept at work within in. Emotion too has its own reason, its own organising principle. Emotion too is an expression of something within it. The use of the visual metaphor here is worth nothing. Pageantry, insofar as it is a succession of pictures, is inherently a category of time and space, i.e. of rhythm and visuals. The universe then is not a negation of visibility. Its visibility, as also its rhythm, are simply not the same in magnitude or measure to the visibility in the human frame. Rhythm helps transcreate the emotion of human art into the eternally moving infiniteness of pictures that is the universe. Typically, Tagore does not see the arts as separate or discrete. Rhythm, which is a signature of time, and pictures, which are form in space, merge in this cosmic art. Such synaesthesia is typical of Tagore's reluctance to subject art to scientific taxonomy. His understanding of art is fluid and porous rather than ruled by rigid disciplinary boundary. Discipline and rules are foundational in an implied hierarchy which is at once aesthetic and moral, not laterally in terms of formal tool or mode. With his next example, Tagore makes precisely such a hierarchical distinction, arguably, between the calendar rhyme and proper poetry as a demonstration of the kind of coalescence between emotional idea and rhythmic form. The former relies only on the latter but is without a emotional core to it. Yet again he applies the parameter of "convenience" or easy functionality to what he disparages by implying that the calendar rhyme uses rhythm only as an aid to memorisation of what he will refer to as "facts." To this register may be added the contrasting terms, constructive and creative.

It is in the context of reiterating the creative element in the "world-verse," as he will shortly call it, as a whole that Tagore goes beyond the principle of rhythm alone to speak of the symphony. It is interesting and apt that he should introduce a concept of music from European classical music because he has spoken earlier of harmony, which he himself elsewhere distinguishes carefully from the simplicity of melody, the forte of Indian lyric music. Evidently, then, the music of the world is complex and intricate, even as the human contribution to it, Tagore would recommend, need not be so as a rule. More than complexity, perhaps, it is the diversity of the symphonic arrangement, the harmonisation of the various, that is serviceable to Tagore's conceptualisation of a world music in this context. Even a symphony has a single emotion at its core, which takes different forms within the symphony with the help of diverse instruments. Conversely, the different instruments and the music made with them simultaneously or in succession converge to evoke this one emotional ideal that holds its all in place. Tagore's metaphor of heart-strings in the context of a symphony, again, is an implicit

note of preference, i.e. string instruments resonating with the delicate chords of the heart. If this is not already an allusion to Coleridge's idea of the aeolian harp, then the following paragraph invokes it more clearly through a conjunction of "living idea" and "eternal symphony." Emotion then is a vital sign of livingness and to that extent germane to the creative process. This position is implicitly Romantic. As discussed above, where Tagore also admits of a classical discerningness is in its selectivity in respect of emotion. It is possible to argue, then, that Tagore's theory of art, both in terms of the creative process and the creative ideal, is a combination of the Romantic and the Classicist. Further, the reader will note how seamlessly the author has moved from the concept of a pageantry, which is visual, to that of symphony, which is musical.

In contrasting a bridegroom spontaneously breaking into a song to please his bride with a solicitor negotiating with his client for a fee, the poet is once again privileging the non-transactional, non-utilitarian relationship between the maker and the receiver of art over the mercantilist motive of receiving something in return in other kinds of professionalised relationships. It may be argued though that Tagore is essentialising art itself as not only pre- but also anti-mercantilist in its economy, and hence not subject to changes in the modalities of production, transmission and circulation. Indeed, there is an insinuation that the moment art becomes part of this process, it relinquishes its autonomy.

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### **2.8.8. Tagore's Concept of 'Decoration' and 'Sentiment' in Art**

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For Tagore, decoration is more than just a functional or utilitarian element. Instead, it is an addition to utility, and it becomes an expression of emotion. Decoration, as he defines it, is a statement whose truth comes from the pleasure it brings. This pleasure also ensures the beauty of the output. Rather than having a meaning, decoration is the idea itself. Decoration is not excess, nor an allurements. It *is* beauty in itself. The impression one forms is that the poet is more wary of the functionality of verbal language than of their visual or musical variants. Since there is more likelihood of verbal language being used for material purpose, Tagore is more stringent in his differentiation of the verbal language of art and the verbal language of fact and use. Tagore asserts that the quality of a lyric is not equal to the value of the material used in its creation, i.e. the sentiment. His use of the qualifier "indefinable" to suggest the gap between the final outcome and the contributing "sentiment," as opposed to "emotion" is telling. It indicates that the creative process is not entirely deliberate or rule-driven. That is what makes the difference between an average poem and one that excels. In true art,

Tagore appears to maintain, the matter is so completely assimilated into the form as to be unidentifiable as a separate entity. The fact that Tagore should use the analogy of the carbon in the plant that can be extracted only upon the decay and death of the plant itself leaves the impression that he is also ambivalent about critical interventions that are too analytical in nature. Such reservations are consistent with his scepticism about pedantry and punditry, professed in numerous poetic and dramatic texts.

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### **2.8.9. Moderation and Balance in Creative Expression**

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The poet goes on to observe how an excess of passion is incompatible with art and tends to destabilise the creative unity at the heart of any artistic object or text. Now, we have already noted how Tagore favours free flowing, organic expression. That is not to say, however, that he is indulgent towards the possibility of intensity in the quantum of emotion any art-form might find itself enjoined to express. Tagore's choice of words, "boisterous," "storm," "bulk," "pressure," "thrust," "athletic" and "arrogant" suggests a resistance to any hypermasculine definition of art. So, even as he has used the analogy of a symphony earlier, in the context of religious or patriotic mass music, Tagore detects a lack of delicacy and subtlety. According to him, the deliberateness of matching a musical form to an artificially whipped up collective sentiment gets the better of the music itself. Typically, the poet uses analogies as figurative explanation because he believes that it helps in the process of understanding abstract concepts. So, his reference to the waterfall more mindful of the bed it will fall into than of the pleasure of the fall suggests a prioritisation of the product over the process. For Tagore, such an approach is not natural to art. Now, we might read a contradiction in this. For he has already claimed that the material that goes into art is not as important as the artistic idea or the final artifact, whether visual or musical. To this, presumably, the answer would be, discounting the minutiae of the building material does not amount to overlooking the journey or the process of making. Further, it is not so much an analysis of the process that is needed as a pleasurable immersion in it, one that ensures both that the right quantum of emotion is conveyed and the right form-matter fusion is executed. Behind this reservation, one senses Tagore's reservations about organised religion and the political entity called nation.

Religiosity and patriotism relate, respectively, to these two collectives. By contrast, it may be inferred, in community art, the impulse is the shared spontaneous creative expression rather than any material functionality. Else, one might question, how Tagore would approve of the ritualisation of anthems and songs in an *ashrama*

*community*. The answer, it is possible to speculate, is that he is not rejecting such occasional music altogether. Rather, his own aesthetic preference is towards the lyric mode in poetry, subject to its own optimal proportion of spontaneity and restraint, feeling and order, matter and form.

In his essay “On Lyric Poetry,” the poet will write at length about the minimalist richness of lyric expression in an age when the epic is no longer culturally attainable. In that essay, he designates the modern age as one given over to petty commerce and therefore far removed from the grandeur of the epic timbre. In this essay, he disparages the same material and commercial matrix as a corrupting influence on art. The phrasing, “should never be tempted to barter her soul” casts the allurements of lucre with regard to art as almost a Faustian trap, even when it comes in the garb of public good.

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### **2.8.10. Theory of Artistic Detachment**

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After all his talk of emotion, then, Tagore puts forward a surprisingly contrary tenet, namely that of detachment between art and artist. This postulation may be analysed as suggesting that in converting an emotional idea, subjective because the maker is an individual human, and universal because it is a shared human one, into art, the emotional subject-matter notwithstanding, the artist’s approach or method demands a certain detachment. That is why a patriotic song or a religious hymn does not make the cut. Both these forms do not allow for such a detachment of execution, Tagore seems to argue, since the burden of the emotion to be conveyed does not allow sufficient room for the creator to engage with the artistic aspects. Money is not the only distraction from the needful preoccupation with art over and above the sentiment embodied. Any kind of utility can take its place as distraction. Paradoxically, the detachment an artist can afford to cultivate and ought to cultivate to attain excellence in artistic expression comes from love of art rather than attachment to some passion she wishes to use art as a vehicle for. Detachment and immersion are both required and mutually compatible states of mind for such artistic creation: immersion in the value and the pleasure of art for its own sake and the readiness born of such commitment to cultivate a degree of detachment in execution. The phrase, “making use of love” underlines Tagore’s refusal to associate use value with love. It is implied that love is always of the intrinsic value. This is where he introduces the Arnoldian term, “disinterestedness”, which may not be confused with lack of interest. In Tagore’s perception, art alone has the power to free us from the cycle of daily self-interest and self-absorption. Art unfetters us from such worldly concerns and releases us into the non-utilitarian rhythm of life in the eternal

sphere. With yet another metaphor of contrast – and interestingly, all of the poet’s metaphors and analogies so far have been formulations of antithesis, i.e. comparing for difference and emphasising through such difference – Tagore offers a vision of the fire or light exuded by stars and orbs as reflecting the Infinite’s creative energy. In a mystical convergence, Tagore locates the script of creation in that cosmic fire. What he contrasts the prospect of this fire with is the disaster of watching our homes burn. Now, the flatness of the choice helps underline how obvious Tagore’s preference is. Tagore’s metaphors, then, are entirely coloured by the force of his own thought or argument, rather than common sense or fact. They follow his wand. This is a unique quality of his simultaneously argumentative and figurative prose.

With the excerpt from Matthew Arnold, the first poet Tagore directly attributes, the same binary analysis is carried on. This time, the contrast is between the negative experience of personal pain engulfing individual human lives in their quotidian aspects and the affirmative, liberating experience of the pain of martyrdom in some greater cause. Since such pain is directed towards an end outside of itself, it actually brings in its train the detachment that mitigates the intensity of suffering. Once again, Tagore takes recourse to an inversion of common sense. Sacrifice may be counter-intuitive in a practical sense, but its dividends are not only disproportionately large, its rewards are ultimately joy rather than pain. The analogy is similar to the one we just analysed, between a house fire and cosmic light. This time, the contrast is between a live wire emitting sparks in a laboratory set-up, the equivalent of private pain, and the grandeur of a lightning strike in the sky. The very magnitude of the latter, the poet argues, has the paradoxical effect of blunting the pain and suffering and transforming it into a totality that can be understood only as integral to what he calls “great love.”

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### **2.8.11. Transcendent and Emanatory Power of Poetry**

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As a method, Tagore’s persistent contrasts in scale turn out to be predicated upon opposition in quality and kind, rather than in mere difference in quantity or degree. So, great pain is not an enlarged form of small pain. It is altogether different from small pain, and its effects are also often opposite. The greater, which Tagore invariably connects to the eternal Infinite, is always life-affirming, while the smaller, an extension of finite worldly Time, may or may not be so. The dichotomy between a calamitous loss in business, for Tagore, is ultimately a material eventuality, and its pain is destructive because it is material, even it is experienced as an emotion. In other words, pain is differentiated with reference to the fount of its origin rather than the immediate



experiential manifestation it might have. Loss that is emotional in origin and stems from an act of selflessness is ultimately redemptive, because there is an element of the voluntary in it. Loss that is material in its immediate context is involuntary and does not transcend into something greater than itself. Aligning with what is larger, greater is for the poet a decisive route to human betterment. Indeed, as he also maintains in "The Religion of Man," alignment with the infinite is the only available evolutionary route left to mankind after having saturated their physical, technological and material growth. The pain that aligns is thus emancipating and unifying. The pain that is material is limiting and alienating. As the ultimate validation for this argument, Tagore draws upon the Vedic assertion that the universe is the transcreation of the pain of the Infinite. Thus, the Infinite may not be identified as the apathetic consumer of human suffering and sacrifice. He is a co-participant, not an impassive onlooker. He is the exemplar of this creative, transformative process around pain and suffering. Here Tagore steps out of the binary figuration and offers his first oxymoron or juxtaposition. Insofar as creation is not an addition, but a form of sacrifice or voluntary loss, it entails both pain and joy. In the following paragraph, he will come up with a further clarification as to why such suffering is ultimately joyous. It becomes so through the recognition that it is identical to all other sufferings. So, the totality of these sufferings leads to the comfort, relief and joy of companionship, rather than a sense of isolation and depletion. This is yet another implied paradox. Sufferings of a certain kind add up to make joy, rather than sorrow. Sufferings of a lesser, material, more self-serving kind add up only to greater sorrow. Tagore does not glorify pain or suffering for its own sake. He projects a certain kind of pain and suffering as a means towards attaining the joy of existence. This is joy rather than pleasure. This hierarchisation of joy over pleasure becomes more apparent in the excerpt from a medieval Indian poet. Criss-crossing the cartography of English poetry as he has been so far, in these final pages of the essay, Tagore comes to the medieval poetic tradition that his poetry and ethos are so deeply inspired by, via the example of a Bengal village mystic. This is suggestive of the organic structuring of Tagore's thought. As he approaches the end of the essay, his metaphors also draw closer home. Tagore's style is not just figurative, but also intuitive. In the concluding paragraph, Tagore sums up the function of poetry. It is transcendental and emancipatory in its trajectory and goal. It entails the alignment of the individual to the universal through a separation of the former from its immediate time-driven material, factual underpinnings. This is where Tagore introduces the two Shakespearean tragic heroes, Othello and Macbeth, as his clinching examples. It is poetry that transforms their lives into high literature, even as the facts of their lives when presented in a court of law would have shown them as mere and bare criminals.

For Tagore, any transformation is a gesture towards the timeless and instinctively imagined as elevation rather than expansion. Using a metaphor reminiscent of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Tagore envisions the ambitious Macbeth and the jealous Othello finding their place in the pulsating, living creative fire of the stars. There, their petty crimes are portrayed as tragic passion and pain. Tagore does not attribute Macbeth and Othello's suffering to material motivations. To the extent they qualify for poetry, the sources of their suffering are identified as elements of their personality, such as ambition and jealousy. The contexts are not implicitly territorial or driven by material greed in either case. Their desires for power and overwhelming possessiveness, respectively, are essential aspects of their personality, rather than obvious materialistic drives.

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### 2.8.12. Summing Up

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Tagore's view on poetry emphasises its transcendental and emancipatory power. He posits that poetry elevates individual experiences to the universal by separating them from their immediate material context. The transformation of suffering into art, illustrates this concept. For Tagore, true suffering originates from within, rather than from external, material drives. Poetry, therefore, allows us to connect with the timeless and infinite, offering a path to human betterment through the exploration of these deeper, internal struggles. Tagore's perspective on poetry is truly Wordsworthian in the sense that the view of creative ideal that is reflected in the essay coalesces with Wordsworth's understanding of poetry as the, "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility."

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### 2.8.13. Comprehension Exercises:

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1. How does Tagore differentiate between material and emotional suffering, and how does this relate to his understanding of "great love"? Explore the paradoxical effect of magnitude on pain and suffering.
2. How do contrasts in scale, quality, and kind contribute to his understanding of the eternal Infinite versus the finite worldly Time?
3. How does this alignment connect to his views on the evolutionary path of mankind and the Vedic assertion about the universe's creation?
4. How does poetry, according to Tagore, elevate individual experiences to the universal and liberate us from the confines of the material world?

5. How does poetry, according to Tagore, achieve this connection by separating the individual from their immediate material context? Consider the examples of Shakespearean tragic heroes like Othello and Macbeth in this context. Consider how Tagore's view compares to Wordsworth's theory of poetry as "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings."
6. How does his intuitive and figurative style reflect this influence, particularly in his metaphors and the organic structuring of his ideas?

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### 2.8.14. Suggested Readings

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Tagore, Rabindranath. *Gitanjali: Song Offerings*. Macmillan, 1913.

Tagore, Rabindranath. *The Home and the World*. Translated by Surendranath Tagore, Macmillan, 1919.

Tagore, Rabindranath. *Sadhana: The Realisation of Life*. Macmillan, 1913.

Dutta, Krishna, and Andrew Robinson. *Rabindranath Tagore : The Myriad-Minded Man*. Bloomsbury, 1995.

Sen, Amartya. "Tagore and His India." *The New York Review of Books*, vol. 45, no. 8, 1997, pp. 44-49.

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**Module-3**

**Creative Writing in Practice**



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## **Unit-9 □ Writing for Print and Other Media**

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### *Structure*

#### **3.9.1. Objectives**

#### **3.9.2. Introduction**

#### **3.9.3. Writing for Print Media**

##### **3.9.3.1. Writing for Newspaper**

###### **3.9.3.1.1. News Report**

###### **3.9.3.1.2. Feature Writing**

###### **3.9.3.1.3. Editorial Writing**

###### **3.9.3.1.4. Column Writing**

###### **3.9.3.1.5. Headlines and Intro**

##### **3.9.3.2. Writing for Magazine**

###### **3.9.3.2.1. Feature/Article**

###### **3.9.3.2.2. Interviewing and Profile Writing**

###### **3.9.3.2.3. Short-Form Content: Columns, Reviews, and Essays**

#### **3.9.4. Writing for Visual and Broadcast Media**

##### **3.9.4.1. Writing for Television News**

##### **3.9.4.2. Writing for Radio and Podcasts : Narrative Structure, Dialogues, and Storytelling**

##### **3.9.4.3. Scriptwriting for film and documentaries**

#### **3.9.5. Writing for Online Media**

##### **3.9.5.1. Blogging and Online Articles**

##### **3.9.5.2. Social Media Writing**

###### **3.9.5.2.1. Facebook**

###### **3.9.5.2.2. Instagram**

###### **3.9.5.2.3. Twitter**

**3.9.5.3. Writing for Online Magazines and E-zines****3.9.5.4. SEO and Content Writing for Online Platforms****3.9.6. Summing Up****3.9.7. Comprehension Exercises****3.9.8. Suggested Readings**

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**3.9.1. Objectives**

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Writing for print and other media involves crafting content which should catch attention of the readers. It requires a clear, concise, and engaging style to capture readers'/viewers' attention quickly.

After completing this unit, learners will be able to :

- Understand the unique requirements and style of writing for newspapers and magazines.
- Identify the structural and stylistic differences between various forms of newspaper writing.
- Learn to structure a news report using the inverted pyramid model.
- Recognize the purpose and style of editorials as opinion-based pieces.
- Develop skills to articulate well-reasoned arguments and perspectives on current issues.
- Craft effective headlines that grab attention and convey the essence of a story.
- Write content tailored to magazine audiences, focusing on in-depth analysis, creativity, and engagement.
- Develop skills in conducting effective interviews and gathering personal insights.
- Write compelling profiles that present subjects' personalities, achievements, and experiences.
- Understand the principles of writing for visual and broadcast media, focusing on audio-visual storytelling techniques.
- Adapt writing styles for different formats, such as television, radio, and documentaries.

- Develop an understanding of writing styles suited for digital platforms, including blogs, social media, and SEO-based content.
- Adapt content for different online audiences and platforms with a focus on engagement and discoverability.
- Recognize the unique requirements of different social media platforms and tailor content accordingly.
- Create concise, engaging social media posts with platform-specific techniques.
- Understand the structure and style of content for online magazines, focusing on multimedia integration.
- Learn SEO principles to write content that ranks well on search engines.

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### 3.9.2. Introduction

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Any writing, especially those written for the general reader, should be simple, direct, precise and brief. The main aim of the writer should be to comprehend the idea in a few words. But, it is easier said than done. Most of us, when we put pen to paper or sit at our computers to write a piece, tend to get pompous and verbose. Too often, clarity and simplicity are marred by pompous words, long sentences and endless paragraphs. We forget that most readers are in a hurry to get to the point and don't want to get stuck in a verbal traffic jam. Still, many writers tend to be ponderous instead of being brief, prefer unfamiliar words and phrases. This is especially true of official reports and correspondence and what is known as "business writing". In such writings, the writer appears to be hiding his thoughts rather than expressing them.

Any writer aspiring to be a journalist should aim at being simple, direct, concise and brief. Never ever use two words when one would do. Avoid jargon and clichés. Explain abbreviations, if any. Use short sentences wherever possible. Long sentences are not entirely ruled out, but use only when absolutely necessary. Short sentences can have a great impact. The Reuters report on man's first landing on the moon began with a sentences consisting of only six words : **"The man is on the moon."** Use words and phrases about which you are absolutely sure. It is tempting to use vogue and fashionable words and phrases. Avoid them unless they are essential.

Writing for print involves crafting content for physical publications such as newspapers, and magazines. It requires a clear, concise, and engaging style to capture readers' attention quickly. Print writing often adheres to specific guidelines and formats,

emphasizing accuracy and credibility. Headlines and leads are crucial, as they draw readers into the story. The content should be well-researched and structured logically, with a strong focus on grammar and punctuation. Understanding the target audience and the publication's tone is essential. Despite the digital age, writing for print remains a valuable skill, preserving the impact of tangible, authoritative media.

Radio involves speaking. It's a medium of words, oral language. Therefore, it doesn't come to mind that there's a need for writing for such a medium. But in reality, it's different. Writing a script for radio is extremely important. Simply speaking into a microphone is sufficient, as it can be recorded or broadcasted live. There's no direct need for anything written. However, it's crucial to write a script for radio. The closer the words in the script are to the spoken words, the better for recording or broadcasting. Clear understanding of language suitable for radio scripts is necessary. Rushed or hurried script writing doesn't assist the speaker or presenter.

Television is an audiovisual medium. Writing news for this medium differs slightly from writing for newspapers. In television, we primarily write news keeping visuals in mind, meaning visuals are the primary focus. Words are used to complement these visuals. In this unit, we will discuss how to write script for television news.

To say the Internet is a crowded space is like saying there are a lot of stars in the sky, sand on the beach or atoms in a cell. According to Internet Live Stats, there are more than 1.9 billion websites in existence, more than 3.5 billion Google searches every day and roughly 350,000 tweets sent every minute.

Capturing readers' interests in this exploding digital universe can be immensely challenging. A study from analytics service Chartbeat found that 55 percent of visitors spend 15 seconds or fewer on a webpage.

Good website writing is the key to beating these statistics. Well-written content that's optimized for the web rises to the top of search results and holds readers' attention.

When writing for the web, using plain language allows users to find what they need, understand what they have found and then use it to meet their needs. It should also be actionable, findable and shareable.

It's important to understand how what you are writing fits into the overall content strategy, what the content lifecycle entails and who is involved in the process.

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### **3.9.3 Writing for Print Media**

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#### **3.9.3.1 Writing for Newspaper**

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Newspaper readers are generally in a hurry. They want to acquaint themselves with the stories of the day before they go out for work. Also, the educational and cultural levels of all newspaper readers are not the same. Even more educated and sophisticated readers will like to go straight to the point than wading through verbiage.

As the International Press Institute Manual suggests, while writing or editing for a newspaper, the writer/ editor must ask himself a few questions: Does this story tell the most important news in the simplest way? Is it immediately clear to anybody who has not been reading the newspaper for, say, about a week?

He/ she must always assume that the reader is always new to a story. It should not be assumed that the reader will remember even the news of a couple of days ago. So, when following up a story, the reporter must inform the reader in brief what happened earlier.

The rules of brevity and simplicity will especially apply to the introduction- or “intros” of a news report. The first paragraph is commonly known as the “intro”. The sentences should be short and sharp, as should be the paragraph itself. It should try and convey “a maximum fact in a minimum of phrase”. Long intros not only look shabby but are also difficult to read. It should be possible to read the “intro” without much effort.

According to expert, “the A.B.C. of Professional journalism” can be said to be Accuracy, Balance and Clarity. Failing in accuracy means failing the reader. So a journalist must always present his or her facts right. Balance is another important requirement. A reporter should always strive to give two sides to a story, especially when the issue is controversial. If one of the parties is not available for comment, it should be clearly mentioned. And, last but not the least, is clarity. A combination of Accuracy, balance, and Clarity will lead to Credibility which is publications’ greatest asset.

One of the most crucial differences between journalism and other forms of writing is the way reporters obtain the information they write about. Reporters obtain information from variety of sources, which can include news agencies, government documents, researching old articles, and observing events first hand.



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### 3.9.3.1.1 News Report

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Defining news is challenging, as what constitutes “news” can vary widely. News often depends on societal needs; for example, the focus differs between developing and industrialized nations. While Lord Thomson humorously suggested news is merely filler between ads, journalists view it differently. One popular interpretation defines NEWS as information from all directions – North, East, West, and South – but not all information qualifies as news. Key questions include: Is it new? Is it significant? News value varies based on factors like location and impact. For instance, a national leader’s death is more newsworthy than a local one.

News also needs to be timely and relevant to readers’ lives. Local events often hold more appeal than distant happenings, and small changes in essential goods may capture more attention than broader economic shifts.

News typically highlights “bad news” or disruptions from the norm, such as accidents or natural disasters, as these changes pique interest. News criteria include novelty, unusualness, significance, and human relevance. Newsworthy events often impact people directly, emphasizing personal experiences or community effects.

Most of the space of newspaper is taken up by news, whether political, government, sports, business, crime or entertainment. Whatever may be the subject, the basic rules of simplicity, precision and brevity will always be happy.

When a reporter is writing a story or a sub-editor is editing it, he should see to it that the answers to the following questions are found in the copy: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How (five Ws and one H). It is a good formula for working on any news story, because these are the questions a reader is likely to ask when he reads the story.

Before writing a story, a reporter goes to the scene of news, observes, talks to people, collects some additional information from files, reports, etc., if necessary. He/She has to seek the answers to the above-mentioned questions before he/she sits down to write his/her copy.

The technique in news writing is different from that of literary writing. In fact, it is exactly the opposite.

In a short story, for instance, first comes the introduction, then the developments in increasing importance and finally, the climax and the ending. The flow in a news story

is just the reverse. Here, the climax comes at the very beginning. the main elements in the story is the climax and that's the news.

For example, an ODI match between India and Australia may begin in the morning, continue through the day and ended with India's victory. The report to be published next morning will not begin from the beginning of the match, but will tell the reader what was the final outcome.

**It will lead with a sentence such as this: "India's Thrilling Eight-Run Win Over**

**Australia In Second ODI." Only then will follow the details.**

The form of news writing is popularly known as the **"Inverted Pyramid"** style of writing, as the most important part goes at the top.



So, the form of news writing can be described as (i) starting with the most important element and (ii) then providing the other elements in a diminishing order of importance. The advantage of this form is two-fold: if the reader is in a hurry and doesn't read the full story, even then he will get the more important points. Again, if there is pressure on space, the editors can easily delete the less important paragraphs towards the end.

In journalism, the beginning sentences of a news story are everything. Called leads or "intros," they must convey essential information, set the tone and entice people to continue reading. If you're interested in becoming an expert journalist, understanding how to write a lead is a key skill for your toolbox.

### **Tips for Writing Leads**

Below are some helpful hints to keep in mind.

### **The Five W's and H**

News writing strives to answer "The Five W's and H:" that is, *Who*, *What*, *When*, *Where*, *Why* and *How*. Good leads answer as many of these questions as possible in a

single sentence. When writing a lead, it helps to think about which of these facts is the most vital for readers to know.

### **Keep It Short**

A good lead provides all the information the reader requires in just a few words. Ideally, a lead should be between 25 and 40 words.

### **Keep It Simple**

Don't clutter up the lead with unnecessary adjectives or adverbs. Also make sure that your lead only discusses one idea to avoid confusion.

### **Write in Active Voice**

Avoid all forms of the verb "to be." Common exceptions including writing about fatalities ("two people were killed Thursday") and when discussing police activity ("two people were arrested"). Passive voice is often the result of incomplete reporting.

### **Structure Your Lead Properly**

Put your most crucial information at the very beginning of the sentence. Important secondary information can go in subsequent sentences. If you need attribution in your lead, make sure it goes toward the end of the sentence because it is less important than the information itself.

### **Understand the Context**

Keep in mind what your readers may already know about your story based on previous media coverage. Write in a way that speaks to these realities and adds relevant, useful information.

### **Be Honest**

Never mislead the reader. If you promise a certain type of information with your lead, you should be ready to deliver.

Once you understand these cardinal rules, you can begin to experiment with style.

### **Active for the Learner**

**Assignment** - Write a lead based on the following set of facts:

Who? Two men

What? robbed a jewelry store

Where? Royal Gems, at 55 West 47th Street, in the heart of Manhattan's diamond district

When?	Saturday, March 13
Why?	No information
How?	The men carried pistols, police said, adding that the men bound three employees and a customer and stole gems and money. The police also said that no one was injured in the holdup.

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### 3.9.3.1.2 Feature Writing

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The staple of a newspaper is, of course, news. We read newspapers mainly for news. But as every reader knows, a newspaper contains many other items other than news-features, articles, photographs, cartoons and so on.

A feature is a piece of writing that is not concerned with the spot coverage of news or daily reporting. All readers are interested in what is called “hard news”, but there are events beyond daily reporting which are also likely to attract them, if properly presented. They are also interested in analyses of events and background information.

A report on a train accident is “hard news”, but if a newspaper carries with it a write-up on the bad conditions of railway tracks which cause accidents, it will be in the nature of a feature. When an important personality like Ratan Tata died, every daily carried various news items: his obituary, an assessment of his business stories, his philanthropic activities, Ratanji as a person and so on. Many of these will come under the category of features.

Features can be on any subject/topic, ranging from health, civic, and educational institution to business, entertainment, women affairs, and crime. Features can be written on all sorts of personalities-writers, actors, scientists, singers, men with usual professions. Readers will always be interested to know what is it like being married to famous persons, what is a politician’s normal day or what it is like running a big company, to give a few examples. These features are often based on interviews.

A feature is written in a style which is different from that of a “hard” story. While the rule of simplicity and brevity is applicable here as well, the style can be a little more leisurely. The main point need not always be in the first paragraph. There is a scope for gradually building up the story and creating the necessary ambience.

#### **Activity : Feature Story Assignment for Newspaper**

##### **Instructions :**

**Choose a Local Topic :** Each learner should select a topic of local interest, ideally

something with a human element or that affects the community. Examples might include :

- A unique cultural event
- A profile of an inspiring local figure
- A feature on a small business or startup with an interesting story
- An investigation into a community issue, such as traffic, public spaces, or environmental concerns

Interview relevant people (at least 2) connected to the story. These could be experts, residents, or individuals directly affected by the topic.

Gather background information and statistics (if applicable) to add **depth and context**.

Draft the Feature with a captivating headline.

- o **Headline :** Write a captivating headline that reflects the essence of the feature.
- o **Lead :** Begin with an engaging lead that draws the reader in.
- o **Body :** Develop the story with a clear structure, weaving in quotes, facts, and descriptions.
- o **Ending :** Conclude with a memorable ending, leaving readers with a lasting impression or call to action.

**Incorporate Visuals (Optional) :** Learners can add one or two relevant images or suggest potential visuals that would complement the feature.

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### 3.9.3.1.3 Editorial Writing

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Editorial writing is a form of journalism where editors' express opinions on current issues, aiming to inform, persuade, or provoke thought among readers. An editorial reflects the viewpoint of the publication, focusing on subjects of public interest and often advocating for specific actions or responses. Unlike news reports, editorials are subjective, blending factual information with analysis, commentary, and opinion. They are typically concise, well-argued pieces that present the editor's stance on a particular matter, intending to influence public opinion or inspire discussion within the community.

### How to Write an Editorial

Writing an effective editorial involves a few key steps. Start by choosing a relevant and timely topic that resonates with your audience. Research thoroughly to gather facts, statistics, and examples that support your viewpoint. Begin with a strong, clear opening statement that outlines your position. The body should provide supporting arguments, addressing different perspectives to show a balanced understanding, while reinforcing your main stance.

Use persuasive language and maintain a logical flow to make your argument convincing. Wrap up with a powerful conclusion, summarizing your stance and possibly suggesting a course of action or solution. Remember to keep the tone professional yet engaging, aiming to influence or engage readers in meaningful dialogue.

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#### 3.9.3.1.4 Column Writing

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Column writing is a journalistic style that allows writers to share opinions, insights, and personal observations on a specific topic or theme. Unlike news articles, columns are often subjective and reflect the writer's unique voice and perspective. Columns can cover a range of subjects, from politics and culture to lifestyle and entertainment, and are usually written by columnists with expertise or a distinctive viewpoint. The goal is to engage readers, provoke thought, or entertain, while establishing a connection through relatable, conversational language. Columns often appear regularly, allowing readers to follow a writer's ongoing analysis and commentary.

#### Tips to Write a Good Column for a Newspaper

1. **Know Your Audience :** Understand who your readers are and tailor your tone and content to resonate with them.
2. **Pick Relevant Topics :** Write about timely or evergreen topics that are either currently in the public eye or have lasting interest.
3. **Develop a Strong Voice :** Columns should reflect your personality, so don't be afraid to showcase your unique style and opinions.
4. **Be Concise :** Make your points clear and avoid unnecessary jargon. Keep sentences and paragraphs short for readability.
5. **Use Anecdotes and Examples :** Engage readers by adding real-life examples, stories, or relatable scenarios to illustrate your points.

6. **Conclude with Impact:** End with a memorable statement, call to action, or thought-provoking insight that leaves readers reflecting on your message.

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### 3.9.3.1.5 Headlines

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Each news story, in fact, all other items (articles , features), must have a headline, which will tell the story's most important point in crisp, brief and direct language. The newspoint should be in the first paragraph and the headline should usually be on this point. The reader shouldn't be kept waiting for the justification for the headline. Generally, it should carry a verb A sub-editor should always try to write an active headline. Headlines must live. Without a verb, a headline is a label headline. Sometimes, a verb is understood. For example:

NEW PLANET IN DISTANT GALAXY

a label headline doesn't tell the reader much. Here is the correct version:

SCIENTISTS DISCOVER NEW PLANET IN DISTANT GALAXY

In this headline, "Discover" is the active verb that makes the headline dynamic and engaging. It tells the reader what action is happening, making it more compelling.

Verbs in the active voice should be preferred. The following headline

PM URGES MORE AID FROM INDIA is better than

MORE AID FROM INDIA URGED BY PM

Headline words must be short, striking words. Short and simpler words are always preferable, words are easily intelligible to an average reader. A reader enters a story through the headline. It must attract his attention.

UNPRECEDENTED EXODUS FROM MALDA

A headline such as above is to be avoided. The following would be better:

HUNDREDS LEAVE FLOODED MALDA

Many stories, especially the longer ones, will also have Subheadings. These are basically used to break the monotony of grey type on a page . But good sub-headings may also be points of interest for the reader. The sub-headings types will be larger than the text type. They may also be in bold face or italics. The following example :

SCIENTISTS DISCOVER NEW PLANET IN DISTANT GALAXY



***GROUNDBREAKING DISCOVERY OPENS DOORS TO POTENTIAL ALIEN  
LIFE BEYOND OUR SOLAR SYSTEM***

In this case, the headline grabs attention with the main news, while the subheading adds more detail and context, encouraging the reader to dive deeper into the story.

Here's a brief summary or key points from a news story. Here are a couple of examples :

1. **Story Summary 1 :** Scientists have developed a new, more efficient method of recycling plastic waste, reducing harmful emissions in the process.
2. **Story Summary 2 :** A team of researchers has discovered a new species of bird in the Amazon rainforest that was previously unknown to science.

Create a headline for each story summary.

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### **3.9.3.2 Writing for Magazine**

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The magazines are logical extensions of newspapers. Like newspapers, they also inform the readers, influence and entertain them. Among the magazines, weeklies, fortnightlies and monthlies are more in vogue.

Magazines can be of general interest or can cater to specialized readers. A general interest magazine can devote itself to current affairs. They examine and analyze contemporary issues and cover news, sports, business entertainment and social trend. India Today, The Week, Outlook and Frontline are familiar example of general interest news magazines. Magazines can also devote themselves to special area like films (Filmfare), or business ( Business Week/The Mint).

Guidelines to write in a magazine :

- Magazine articles often aim to entertain, inform, and engage readers over a longer period of time. The content can be more in-depth, with a focus on providing context, analysis, or human- interest angles. Magazines may explore features, trends, and opinion pieces, which don't need to be as immediately time-sensitive as newspaper articles.
- Magazine writing allows for more creativity and personalization. Writers can use a conversational or descriptive tone and may incorporate literary techniques like storytelling, humor, or first-person perspectives. The structure is less rigid than in newspapers, and long-form features are common.

- Magazine articles are usually longer and can range from 1,000 to several thousand words. Writers can delve deeper into a subject, providing extensive background information, interviews, and analysis.
- Magazine writing has a flexible structure. It can include a compelling lead (often anecdotal or descriptive), followed by a well-organized body of content. Features may include pull quotes, sidebars, and profiles. A magazine article is more likely to incorporate subheadings and visual elements to break up the text.
- The content is often tailored to specific interests, such as fashion, politics, science, or lifestyle. Writers can use more specialized language, and there's often an assumption that the audience has a certain level of background knowledge or interest in the topic.

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### 3.9.3.2.1 Feature/Article

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A feature is written in a style which is different from that of a “hard” story. While the rule of simplicity and brevity is applicable here as well, the style can be a little more leisurely. The main point need not always be in the first paragraph. There is a scope for gradually building up the story and creating the necessary ambience.

Features can be on any subject/topic, ranging from health, civic, and educational institution to business, entertainment, women affairs, and crime. Features can be written on all sorts of personalities-writers, actors, scientists, singers, men with usual professions. Readers will always be interested to know what is it like being married to famous persons, what is a politician's normal day or what it is like running a big company, to give a few examples. These features are often based on interviews.

#### **Activity : Feature Story Assignment for Magazine**

##### **Instructions :**

**Choose a Local Topic :** Each learner should select a topic of interest, ideally something with a human element or that affects the community. Examples might include:

- A unique cultural event
- A profile of an inspiring local figure
- A feature on a small business or startup with an interesting story

- An investigation into a community issue, such as traffic, public spaces, or environmental concerns

Interview relevant people (at least 2) connected to the story. These could be experts, residents, or individuals directly affected by the topic.

Gather background information and statistics (if applicable) to add depth and context.

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### **3.9.3.2.2 Interviewing and Profile Writing**

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Profile writing involves encapsulating the essence of an individual, and the key to drafting captivating profiles is becoming proficient at the art of interviewing.

To prepare for an interview, a questionnaire must be developed – specifically tailored to the unique achievements and experiences of the interviewee. It is important to build rapport with the subject with the aim of encouraging honest and coherent responses. Active listening techniques are extremely useful in picking up on follow-up opportunities through noticing subtle cues. Effective interview techniques include using open-ended questions (which encourage personal anecdotes and detailed responses), follow-up questions (which aid in delving deeper and clarifying ambiguous speech), observing body language aiming to identify non-verbal cues about the attitudes and emotions of the interviewee, and using silence from time to time to allow the subject enough time for reflection (which allows them to provide increasingly thoughtful responses).

To capture the subject's authentic anecdotes and quotes, seek permission to record and use direct quotes for preserving their personality, gather anecdotes and employ descriptive language to paint a vivid picture of the subject's experiences and character. Furthermore, building rapport and trust is extremely crucial, which can be achieved by displaying empathy, active listening, and respecting boundaries of the interviewee.

To craft a compelling profile, highlight the subject's personality traits by using sensory details and vivid language to illustrate the subject's personality on paper. Furthermore, it is important to showcase the subject's milestones and achievements by providing vital context – including lessons learned and challenges conquered, along with balancing major milestones with minor, meaningful moments to paint a completed picture of the subject's journey.

A captivating narrative structure must also be developed – including a strong opening hook, a compelling theme or angle for framing the profile, thematically or chronologically organised information for coherent storytelling, and a reflective conclusion on the legacy of the subject or her/his future aspirations.

**Activity for the Learner :**

- Choose a subject for the profile—this could be a teacher, family member, local business owner, or an inspiring personality in the community.
- Research background information on the person to tailor your questions.
- Develop at least 10 open-ended questions focused on personal achievements, challenges, inspirations, and future goals.

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### **3.9.3.2.3 Short-Form Content : Columns, Reviews, and Essays**

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Columns are often personal (in first or second person) short-form content which typically answers the how and why of news items, and puts forward an opinion. They can be general and impersonal as well – such as “how-to-do-it” segments, “upcoming events”, or “new ideas” pieces.

To write a column, its purpose must be identified first – whether it is to inform a community regarding a particular event, if its aim is to entertain, inform, or educate, or if the writer is seeking exposure or an identity through the publication of the column, and so on. A specific audience must then be targeted, focusing on which the level of writing, language, and information must be structured. It is crucial to maintain that content in a column is accurate and based on facts.

Good columns provide readers with helpful and timely information, adhere to a distinct structure, and are published on a regular schedule. Passages and sentences must be short and simple for ease of comprehension, and complex or technical words, jargon, or unfamiliar phrases (unless necessary) must be avoided. Local places and names are crucial components of personal columns. Furthermore, the inclusion of references and quotes of others provide a comprehensive outlook on a topic; however, excessive detail focusing on a single topic must be averted in order to hold on to the reader’s interest till the end.

Reviews provide a concise summary of a commodity (product or service) structured to succinctly convey key areas of a user’s experience avoiding extensive

details. They must be kept precise, underscoring only the most crucial facets of a user's opinion regarding a commodity – such as its strengths, weaknesses, and overall utility and satisfaction. For enhancing engagement, reviews can be accompanied by short videos or images to provide context. They must be adapted to suit the platform where they are being published – such as in newspapers or social media platforms – to optimally influence purchasing decisions.

Essays as short-form journalistic content is a blend of reporting with personal insights, storytelling, and analysis. They are specifically instrumental for investigative narratives, opinion segments, and reflective commentary which provide readers with in-depth knowledge through concise content, enhancing the engagement and accessibility of complex topics.

Essays should focus on a specific topic, crafted with a strong opening hook, sustain a clear structure (introduction, body, conclusion). Incorporate facts with analysis, have a distinctive voice, and most importantly, be concise and engaging.

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### **3.9.4 Writing for Visual and Broadcast Media**

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#### **3.9.4.1 Writing for Television News**

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There are many similarities between writing for TV and writing for radio, but there are a few important differences as well. Both the media demand more clarity and simplicity than the print medium. Both require immediacy and a conversational style. But writing for television differs from that for radio in that in the latter we have only sound whereas in the former we have both sight and sound. In fact, in TV, the primacy is that of the images, though sound is very much there. Television tells a story primarily through images. The more the images the more interesting the story.

Television tries to make best possible use of pictures. Whenever it mentions a person or an institution, it will try to show a visual of the same. Words will only supplement what is seen. A TV writer's main job is to match the words with sight and sound.

Let's now discuss how important writing is for television.

When a piece of news first appears on television, it is initially presented as a breaking news or news flash at the bottom of the screen in the form of a scroll.

## 1. Breaking News or News Flash

These are written in very short sentences (3-4 words). Each sentence provides one piece of information. For example :

- Road accident claims 9 lives, injures 22 (first sentence)
- Bus overturns in Gangarampur (second sentence)
- Bridegroom's bus overturned (third sentence)
- Groom dies in accident (fourth sentence)
- Driver's negligence causes accident (fifth sentence)
- Injured being treated at local hospital (sixth sentence)
- Senior police officers at accident site (seventh sentence)

(The above example is fictional and used to explain the concept to students.)

The above example is about a road accident. After receiving the initial news, it is displayed in small sentences at the very bottom of the television screen (Lower Third). Notice that each sentence conveys a separate piece of information and is structurally very simple, almost like spoken language.

When writing breaking news, conjunctions are generally not used. Another important aspect is that numbers are used only when writing breaking news or news flashes, e.g., 9 dead in road accident.

## 2. Full Screen Breaking

After the news breaks on the lower third, it might start being discussed based on its importance. If visuals have not yet arrived, the news is displayed as full screen breaking. Meaning, the news moves from the lower third to the main television screen. But as I mentioned earlier, television is an audio-visual medium. So, what happens if there are no visuals for an important piece of news? Do we wait for the visuals to arrive?

The answer is no. In this case, before the visuals arrive, the news is displayed in full screen breaking format, or the discussion begins. This format is called dry news, meaning there are no visuals, but the news is important enough to inform viewers through full screen breaking until the visuals arrive. How is this format presented?

Here, the main screen of the television is filled with small sentences about the news, and the anchor/news caster asks the reporter for more details.



For example :

- Double murder in broad daylight in Kolkata (first graphics plate)
- Bodies of elderly couple found in Behala (second graphics plate)
- Throats slit (third graphics plate)
- Long-time servant missing (fourth graphics plate)

(The above example is fictional and used to explain the concept to students.)

In this way, the news is shown across the screen in short sentences while the voice of the anchor can be heard in the background. The anchor asks the reporter for more details about the news.

However, there is an important rule regarding full screen breaking. Since this is a dry format (no visuals), it is used only for very important news and should not be used repeatedly. It can be used at most once or twice.

### **3. Anchor Voice Over (AVO)**

Anchor Voice Over, or AVO, is a crucial format in television journalism. Once the visuals of an incident arrive, the first task is to quickly show them to the viewers. But it's not enough just to show the visuals; the viewers need information and explanation about them. In this case, the anchor explains the visuals. The viewers see the visuals on the screen while hearing the anchor's voice in the background.

For the Behala incident, if an AVO is done, the news might be written as follows:

AVO: An elderly couple was murdered in broad daylight in Kolkata. This morning, their bodies were found in a renowned housing complex in Behala. It has been learned that Nitish Bagaria and his wife Meena Bagaria had been living there for nearly seven years. Neighbors last saw them during their evening walk yesterday. This morning, their driver, after repeatedly knocking and getting no response, informed the neighbors. The police later broke down the door and recovered the elderly couple's bodies. Nitish Bagaria's body was found in the living room while his wife's bloodied body was found in another room. An old servant who had been taking care of the couple for a long time is missing. The police are investigating if there is any connection between the servant's disappearance and the double murder.

(The above example is fictional and used to explain the concept to students.)

Suppose the visuals of the above-mentioned incident have arrived. As the visuals are shown, the anchor provides various information about the incident in the background. This format is called AVO or Anchor Voice Over.



#### 4. AVO-Bite (Anchor Voice Over and Sound Bite)

Humans are curious by nature. We have an innate curiosity for new information. After watching the visuals and learning about the incident, viewers might want more details. They might want to know what the police are saying or the neighbors' statements. This format is called AVO-Bite or Anchor Voice Over and Sound Bite.

In this case, after showing the visuals, the statements of a police officer and a neighbor are shown as sound bites. The viewers can see these individuals' statements directly on the screen. This format is called AVO-Bite. The news can be written as follows:

**AVO-Bite :** An elderly couple was murdered in broad daylight in Kolkata. This morning, their bodies were found in a renowned housing complex in Behala. It has been learned that Nitish Bagaria and his wife Meena Bagaria had been living there for nearly seven years. Neighbors last saw them during their evening walk yesterday. This morning, their driver, after repeatedly knocking and getting no response, informed the neighbors. The police later broke down the door and recovered the bodies. An old servant who had been taking care of the couple for a long time is missing. The police are investigating if there is any connection between the servant's disappearance and the double murder.

Pranab Pal O.C., Behala Police Station (super)

Pulkit Kapoor Neighbor (super)

(The above example is fictional and used to explain the concept to students.)

AVO-Bite creates more credibility about the news among viewers because, in addition to seeing the incident's visuals and learning about it, they also get to see statements from people related to the incident. When showing someone's statement on television, viewers naturally wonder about the speaker's identity. Therefore, when showing someone's statement, it is always advisable to display the speaker's identity through a graphics plate (super or aston).

In the above example, when the police officer and neighbor are giving their statements, it is advisable to display their identities on the screen.

#### 5. Package or Capsule

When an important topic is presented very coherently, it is called a package or capsule in television journalism.

For example, in the case of the above-mentioned incident, there might be statements from not only the police officer and neighbor but also many others. There might be visuals of the incident site, the inside of the flat, old photos of the deceased, etc. With so much information, visuals, and statements, it is necessary to present everything coherently and within a short time. The copy needs to be properly organized. This format is called a package or capsule in television journalism. For example:

**Package: Voice Over 1 :** An elderly couple was murdered in broad daylight in Kolkata. This morning, their bodies were found in a renowned housing complex in Behala. This morning, their driver repeatedly knocked and got no response, so he informed the neighbors. The police later broke down the door and recovered the bodies.

Pulkit Kapoor Resident (super)

**Voice Over 2 :** The bodies of Nitish Bagaria were found in the living room with injuries, and his wife's bloodied body was found in another room. The old servant who had been taking care of the couple is missing. The police are investigating if there is any connection between the servant's disappearance and the double murder.

Pranab Pal O.C., Behala Police Station (super)

There is naturally fear among the residents due to such a double murder in a renowned housing complex in Kolkata. Despite CCTV surveillance, questions are being raised about how the attacker managed to escape after the murder.

Sayantani Mukherjee Resident (super)

**Final Voice Over :** The Bagaria couple's only child lives in the United States. The police have also contacted him.

Bureau Report, NSOU TV

(The above example is fictional and used to explain the concept to students.)

In the above example, I want to emphasize the last line. Bureau Report, NSOU TV - this is a necessary element at the end of any package. In television language, this is called sign off.

What is sign off? It serves a function similar to the dateline in newspapers, indicating the source of the news. Often, it includes the reporter and cameraman's names along with the organization's name. This is called sign off.

For example, a report from Saurav Biswas with cameraman Arko Majumder from Behala, NSOU TV.

(The above example is fictional and used to explain the concept to students.)

Now let's discuss the actual format of the package or capsule. While discussing AVO or Anchor Voice Over, I mentioned that the anchor explains the visuals in the background. In the case of a package or capsule, it's a bit different. Here, all inputs or information about a piece of news are organized coherently and written down first. Then, the voice-over parts are recorded. For example, in the above example, the voice-over parts are read and recorded. In this case, someone with a good voice records the voice-over parts. After that, the recording is sent to the video editors. The video editors create the entire package based on the written script and recorded voice-over.

The example provided above is not the only way to write a package or capsule. The structure of a package or capsule entirely depends on the copy editor. How the copy editor organizes the news is based on their logical reasoning. They might arrange the package with two voice-overs and intervening bites in succession, or they might write a package or capsule without any bites at all. This entirely depends on the relevance of the incident.

These are the various formats in television journalism. Now, let's discuss another important aspect: duration. Just as word count is important in print journalism, duration is crucial in television journalism.

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#### **3.9.4.2 Writing for Radio and Podcasts: Narrative Structure, Dialogues, and Storytelling**

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The narrative structure of radio and podcast shows generally aligns with the structure of a classic story with a clear introduction, main events, and conclusion. This beginning includes setting of the stage, the middle segment develops on the main conflict or topic, and the conclusion or resolution in the end ties up the entire narrative. The narrative often incorporates an order of elements – elucidation, escalating action, high point or climax, culminating action, and finale – depending on the nature of the story.

Dialogues in radio and podcast shows may include conversations, discussions, and interviews relative to a range of topics. Some common types of dialogues include – Host-guest discussions where celebrities, experts, or everyday individuals are interviewed through flexible yet structured questions; Co-host banter where two or more hosts engage in discussions which may be casual or driven by specific topics; Panel discussions, which are typical in business, political, or cultural podcasts, where multiple experts or guests evaluate a certain topic from multiple angles; and Dramatic

Dialogues where dialogue is used to craft immersive experiences via sound design and voice acting (used in radio dramas, scripted storytelling podcasts, or fictional series).

Storytelling through podcasts and radio programmes transforms audio content into emotionally engaging and mentally immersive experiences. Effective storytelling is achieved through the amalgamation of various elements such as a structured narrative, captivating characters, efficient use of sound design, timing and pacing, and effective voice acting. Audio storytelling may in the form of personal narratives, fictional dramas, documentary-style, or true crime stories.

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### **3.9.4.3 Scriptwriting for film and documentaries**

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Scriptwriting in films lays down the bedrock for storytelling, visual elements, and character development – all of which make a film come alive. The first step to film scriptwriting is generation of ideas or concepts which shall form the backbone of the script. After this, create captivating characters which will drive the story, engage the audience, and make the narrative come to life. The next step is to build the plot which serves as the roadmap guiding the story from the opening hook to the finale. It is important to sketch out the major events of the story before diving into dialogue to ensure a smooth narrative flow. Once the beats of the story have been created, it is time to work on the dialogue – which is more than just people conversing – it is a cogent tool which advances the plot, reveals the personalities of characters, and provides smooth exposition. The final round of film scriptwriting is creating an initial draft with all the previously made components and reviewing it over multiple rounds to gradually strengthen the script for its final use.

Documentary scriptwriting is not too different from film scriptwriting. In the process of documentary scriptwriting – which involves little to no fiction – the first step is to find a story the writer is passionate about. The selection involves identifying the event, theme, or message one is trying to convey and if they are a good fit to do the same. The next step is the most crucial, which is conducting extensive, thorough and accurate research. When it comes to documentaries, the input of experts on the selected topic becomes vital – especially in aiding fact-checking and providing salient background information. Once exhaustive research has been conducted, it is time to blueprint the documentary which involves organising and planning the manner of transmission of the story to its audience through a sequence outline. Then comes the final step of writing the script which involves lining up the visuals with the audio content (interview, music, narration, etc.) which shall be played over them.

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## **3.9.5 Writing for Online Media**

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### **3.9.5.1 Blogging and Online Articles**

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Writing for blog posts and online articles are vastly different. While a blog post mostly contains the writer's own opinions, an article should contain facts and not any personal input. Blogs do not require extensive research or interview input, while articles often involve thoroughly researched material from research firms and credible experts, along with interview content. Blogs are generally short and precise, while articles are mostly long-form content (typically at least over 300 words). Keywords are not of very high significance in news articles, while blog posts are specifically built around SEO (Search-Engine Optimisation) keywords for reach. Blog posts do not require exceptionally good grammar and spelling, while articles must involve impeccable writing – including flawless grammar and spelling. Because blog posts are personal and opinion based, the writing style involved is casual; whereas articles are written in a much more sophisticated style of writing. Blog posts do not involve any input from editors and are self-published by individual authors or bloggers, while the job of an editor is to specifically edit and clean up an article before it is published by an organisation.

Therefore, blog posts are focused on niches, and are informal and personal which generally contain personal insights conveyed through a conversational tone. On the other hand, online articles are more journalistic and structured, where emphasis is on credibility, factual accuracy, and strict adherence to digital editorial standards.

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### **3.9.5.2 Social Media Writing**

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#### **3.9.5.2.1 Facebook**

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Facebook posts must be able to engage the audience, provide any form of information, and appeal to the audience's visual perception. It is important to utilise a captivating opening hook, keep the content of the post concise within a paragraph or two, and enhance the post by adding striking photo or video. Audience interaction can be engaged through the use of polls or asking questions. If the aim of the post is to promote a commodity, it is advisable to include call-to-action elements such as "sign up" or "shop now". Emojis must not be over-used and post timings should be optimised upon evaluation of audience activity.

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### 3.9.5.2.2 Instagram

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Instagram posts typically involve strong visuals with short captions which instantly engage the audience. The opening hook is crucial to captivate the user's attention. Strategic use of hashtags (preferably 5-10) and emojis help in gaining extensive reach on the platform. Captions must be kept conversational or driven by engaging storytelling methods. Audience engagement can be amplified through strategic call-to-action elements such as "save this for later" or "tag a friend". For posts of shorter or temporary formats such as reels and stories, any text involved must be impactful yet to the point. Brand identity can be further enhanced through maintaining a consistent aesthetic of the brand's profile on Instagram.

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### 3.9.5.2.3 Twitter

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Twitter posts, known as 'tweets', must be precise, to the point, and equally impactful. The best tweets are concise, involve punchy combination of words, and use a strategic blend of hashtags (preferably 1-3). Audience interaction can be boosted by consciously asking engaging questions or tweeting about trending discussions across the platform. Engagement can be further intensified through the strategic utilisation of GIFs, images and links. Concision and lucidity are key elements when it comes to professional content, along with replying or "retweeting" followers with the aim of expanding community. Judicious utilisation of wit, humour, or striking statements are resourceful in standing out amidst a rapidly-moving global feed.

#### **Activity For The Leaner**

Crafting Engaging Social Media Posts-Select a topic for your social media post. It can be :

- Promotional (e.g., a product launch, event announcement)
- Informative (e.g., tips, industry insights, awareness campaign)
- Engaging/Interactive (e.g., a poll, user-generated content)

#### **1. Facebook Post**

- Write a concise yet informative paragraph (50-100 words).
- Start with a captivating hook to grab attention.
- Add a high-quality image or video relevant to the content.



- Include a call-to-action (CTA) like “Sign up now” or “Tell us in the comments!”

## **2. Instagram Post**

- Choose a high-impact visual (photo, carousel, or reel).
- Keep the caption short, engaging, and conversational (1-3 sentences).
- Use 5-10 relevant hashtags to increase reach.
- Add a CTA like “Save this for later” or “Tag a friend” for engagement.
- Maintain brand consistency in tone and aesthetic.

## **3. Twitter Post (Tweet)-X**

- Keep it short (max 280 characters).
- Use a punchy, witty, or thought-provoking statement.
- Include 1-3 relevant hashtags for visibility.
- Add a GIF, image, or link to increase engagement.
- Encourage replies, retweets, or quote tweets for interaction.

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### **3.9.5.3 Writing for Online Magazines and E-zines**

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The writer must foremost form a thorough understanding of the magazine’s audience and unique style and tone. Based on these, the article must have a catchy and engaging headline for encourage clicks, following with a strong introduction must establish the purpose of the article. The article’s body must be thoroughly researched, have a coherent and logical structure, and should effortlessly able to blend with subtitles. The conclusion must offer final insights and takeaways. It is important to amalgamate evidence-based insights and opinions of experts with relevant personal narratives to showcase credibility as well as depth of writing. The articles must be optimised for digital reading through the utilisation of subtitles, concise paragraphs, multimedia such as infographics or photos, and bullet points. Visibility can be further intensified through effective SEO optimisation.

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### **3.9.5.4 SEO and Content Writing for Online Platforms**

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It’s important to target your audience when writing for the web. By knowing who you are writing for, you can write at a level that will be meaningful for them. Use



the personas you created while designing the site to help you visualize who you are writing for.

- Use the words your users use. By using keywords that your users use, you will help them understand the copy and will help optimize it for search engines.
- Chunk your content. Chunking makes your content more scannable by breaking it into manageable sections.
- Front-load the important information. Use the journalism model of the “inverted pyramid.” Start with the content that is most important to your audience and then provide additional details.
- Use pronouns. The user is “you.” The organization or government agency is “we.” This creates cleaner sentence structure and more approachable content.
- Use active voice. “The board proposed the legislation” not “The regulation was proposed by the board.”
- Use short sentences and paragraphs. The ideal standard is no more than 20 words per sentence, five sentences per paragraph. Use dashes instead of semi-colons or, better yet, break the sentence into two. It is ok to start a sentence with “and,” “but,” or “or” if it makes things clear and brief.
- Use bullets and numbered lists. Don’t limit yourself to using this for long lists. One sentence and two bullets is easier to read than three sentences.
- Use clear headlines and subheads. Questions, especially those with pronouns, are particularly effective.
- Use images, diagrams, or multimedia to visually represent ideas in the content. Videos and images should reinforce the text on your page.
- Use white space. Using white space allows you to reduce noise by visually separate information.
- It’s also important to create an editorial calendar. You can encourage visitors to return to your site by keeping your content fresh and up-to-date, especially when working with blogs, social media or dynamic content websites.

### **SEO for Online Platforms**

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is integral to web writing because it is highly imperative to stay competitive of other websites in results of search engines like, Google, Yahoo etc. Effective SEO leads to favourable page ranking. According to Webopedia, “Search engine optimization is a methodology of strategies, techniques

and tactics used to increase the amount of visitors to a website by obtaining a high ranking placement in the search results page of a search engines.”

A webpage in a webpage can be more assessable to people across the globe if SEO is done properly.

### **Guidelines for SEO Writing**

#### **1. Improve Readability**

- Format your content for skim readers.
- Use shorter sentences.
- Break long paragraphs.
- Highlight the most interesting parts of your content (through effective use of subheadings, bold texts, and whitespaces).
- Use active voice.
- Use transition words to give better direction to readers.

- 2. Topic :** As somebody who has been part of the industry, you might have an idea about the relevant issues that need to be talked about so we are open to any of the topic that you may recommend to us. Although in case you feel that our recommendation on a viable topic can make things smoother and faster, we can do that as well.

### **KEYWORDS**

Writing for the web demands some keywords or phrases to be repeated throughout the article to make it easily searchable in search engines. Keywords in an article cannot be randomly placed. The techniques to be followed for placing keywords in your article are as follows :

- It should not be randomly placed
- Should come with the flow
- Avoid keywords back to back
- Use only 3 to 6% of a page as keywords
- It can be large, bold and can appear in bulleted points
- They are best placed at the top or middle of a web page

Tools like Google AdWords Keyword Planner help in searching for relevant keywords in relation to a document. This keyword planner provides a fair idea about the keywords in an article for high visibility.

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### 3.9.6 Summing UP

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1. News writing should prioritize brevity, clarity, and accuracy, ensuring that stories are concise, immediately understandable, and answer the essential five Ws and one H (Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How) to maintain reader engagement and credibility.

2. A feature is a piece of writing that is not concerned with the spot coverage of news or daily reporting. All readers are interested in what is called “hard news”, but there are events beyond daily reporting which are also likely to attract them, if properly presented. They are also interested in analyses of events and background information.

3. Headline words must be short, striking words. Short and simpler words are always preferable, words are easily intelligible to an average reader. A reader enters a story through the headline. It must attract his attention.

4. Magazine articles often aim to entertain, inform, and engage readers over a longer period of time. The content can be more in-depth, with a focus on providing context, analysis, or human-interest angles.

5. Profile writing involves encapsulating the essence of an individual, and the key to drafting captivating profiles is becoming proficient at the art of interviewing.

6. There are many similarities between writing for TV and writing for radio, but there are a few important differences as well. Both the media demand more clarity and simplicity than the print medium. Both require immediacy and a conversational style.

7. Writing for blog posts and online articles are vastly different. While a blog post mostly contains the writer’s own opinions, an article should contain facts and not any personal input. Blogs do not require extensive research or interview input, while articles often involve thoroughly researched material from research firms and credible experts, along with interview content.

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### 3.9.7 Comprehension Exercises

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❑ **Long Answer Type Questions :**

1. How is writing for newspapers different from other kinds of writing? Discuss with a few examples.
2. Discuss the significance of the five Ws and one H in news reporting, providing examples.

3. Analyse the role of profile writing in journalism. How can a well-written profile capture the essence of an individual and engage the reader? Provide examples of techniques used in profile writing.
4. Explain the key principles of writing for the web. How do techniques like chunking, front-loading information, and using active voice improve readability?
5. Discuss the significance of SEO in web writing. How do keyword placement and readability guidelines contribute to higher search engine rankings?

❑ **Medium Answer Type Questions**

1. What are the things you should keep in mind while writing a lead?
2. What are the things you should keep in mind while writing a news report?
3. Explain the key differences between an editorial and a column in journalism.
4. What are the essential characteristics of an effective news headline?
5. Why is clarity important in news writing, and how can journalists ensure it?
6. How does magazine writing allow for more creativity compared to newspaper writing?
7. What are some effective techniques for conducting a successful interview for profile writing?
8. Discuss in detail what are the qualities of good copywriting on television.
9. A 7.5 Richter scale earthquake struck Kolkata. Heavy damage and 5 dead. Write a television package on it.
10. Migrant workers are returning to the state due to the rapid spread of a virus infection. Write an anchor package with this.
11. What are the key elements of storytelling in podcasts and radio programs?
12. How does dialogue contribute to immersive storytelling in radio dramas and scripted podcasts?

❑ **Short Answer Type Questions**

1. What do you mean by 'Inverted pyramid style' of news reporting?
2. Write a short note on Feature.
3. What is the primary goal of an editorial in a newspaper?

4. Why should headlines include active verbs?
5. What are subheadings, and how do they enhance a news story?
6. Why is it important to use open-ended questions in interviews?
7. What role do subheadings and visual elements play in magazine articles?
8. Why is it important to use the words your users use when writing for the web?
9. What is the role of an editorial calendar in web writing?
10. How does keyword placement impact SEO optimization?

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### 3.9.8 Suggested Readings

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## Unit-10 □ Non Fictional Creative Writing

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### *Structure*

#### **3.10.1 Objectives**

#### **3.10.2 Introduction**

#### **3.10.3 What is Non-Fictional Creative Writing**

#### **3.10.4 Forms of Non Fictional Creative Writing**

#### **3.10.5 Examples**

#### **3.10.6 The Art of Non Fictional Creative Writing**

#### **3.10.7 Summing Up**

#### **3.10.8 Comprehension Exercises**

#### **3.10.9 Suggested Readings**

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### **3.10.1. Objectives**

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The objective of this segment is to define ‘Non Fictional Creative Writing’, and discuss various forms of non-fictional creative writing. The unit will also include discussion of aspects which are embedded within the practice of this genre of writing.

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### **3.10.2. Introduction**

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It is a common belief that creative writing is spontaneous, an art which cannot be learned, a special skill which cannot be acquired. Such a notion has been proven wrong with the systematic structuring of its syllabi and repeated insistence on framing creative writing course structure as part of University curricula for the implementation of NEP model. In *The Cambridge Companion to Creative Writing*, David Motley speaks of the inception of creative writing as a discipline:

The modern version of the discipline of creative writing begins in 1940 with the foundation of the Iowa Writer’s Workshop, although there were precursors, including George Baker’s ‘47 Workshop’ at Harvard from 1906 to 1925. The discipline can be seen partly as a reinvention of two great grainy wheels: ancient dramatic teaching

and Renaissance rhetorical exercises in composition. Creative writing's tale begins in Athens, with Aristotle (384–322 BC). It originates before that because Aristotle's *Poetics* is an account of creative practices accepted and used for years, and is no more than a fragment of the knowledge he gathered for study.”

Creative writing courses these days have been developed as serious fields of study with the ambition to create not only better writers, but also sensitive readers and good critics. There are several genres of writing which are as follows :

- **Fiction** : Imaginative prose that includes novels, short stories, novellas and flash fiction. Fictional writing creates characters, settings, and plots that may be entirely fabricated or inspired by real-life events.

- **Poetry** : Lines that use metaphors, expressions and imagery to evoke emotions and convey ideas. Poetry can take many forms including sonnets, haiku, free verse, and epic poetry. While metre has been used in modern days one notices the absence of it. Also the use of prose in poetry is seen in modern poetry.

- **Drama** : Plays and scripts written for performance, whether on stage, radio, or screen. Drama involves dialogue, character development, and often explores themes through conflict and resolution.

- **Creative Nonfiction** : Also known as literary nonfiction, this genre merges factual events with creative elements such as narrative structure, vivid descriptions, and personal reflection. Examples include memoirs, personal essays, travel writing, and literary journalism.

- **Screen writing** : Writing scripts for films, television shows, or web series. Screen writing involves crafting dialogue, scenes, and actions that translate into visual storytelling.

- **Songwriting** : Crafting lyrics and melodies for songs, which often convey emotions, tell stories, or express themes through music.

- **Playwriting** : Specifically focused on writing scripts for theatrical productions, encompassing dialogue, stage directions, and dramatic structure.

- **Children's/ Young Adult Literature** : Writing stories, picture books, or young adult novels meant for children and young readers, often incorporating imaginative elements and moral lessons.



- **Journalistic Writing :** Writing news articles, feature stories, and opinion pieces for newspapers, magazines, or online platforms, which require clear communication of factual information with an engaging narrative style.

The following section will attempt to present a comprehensive idea about the characteristics of creative non-fiction with suitable examples and will also examine the process involved in this form of creative writing.

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### 3.10.3. What is Non Fictional Creative Writing?

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Non-fictional creative writing is a genre that involves an aestheticisation of facts using literary devices, thereby constructing a narrative that presents ordinary life with extraordinary embellishments. Its purpose is to draw the readers closer with minute detailing that often involves personal reflections, and a narrative structure that goes beyond mere reporting.

Imagine you are sitting on a seashore and watching the glistening waves coming one after another. Non-fictional creative writing will allow you to encapsulate the fleeting moments not just as an observer, but by endorsing the emotions that underline those moments. It's about finding the extraordinary in the ordinary, quite often unearthing the inexpressible that lies within day-to-day mundane life.

For instance, if I attempt to write about my journey to a city by the sea, the rise and fall of the waves become more than just geographical features; in my narrative they often become symbolic of some deeper meaning. Through my meditative narration, I would try to create a vivid picture of my journey and associate it with my life, captivating my reader's attention and making them a part of my journey as well.

Non-fictional creative writing allows personal experiences as well. It allows one to narrate one's experiences, memories, and beliefs, combining them into a network of images that talk about universal truths and human emotions. While reminiscing about childhood days or dealing with complex social issues, this genre often enables us to share insights and perspectives that provoke thought and inspire empathy.

Moreover, non-fictional creative writing allows us to count those marginalised voices that are often suppressed. Through careful research, interviews, and immersive storytelling, we often seek to explore those narratives that have been long buried due to prejudice or indifference.

In conclusion, non-fictional creative writing is more than just a genre; it's a powerful tool for exploring the richness and complexity of the world we inhabit. It enables one to design narratives that inform, inspire, and challenge readers, inviting them to see familiar subjects in a new light. Whether chronicling personal experiences, investigating societal issues, or celebrating the wonders of nature, this genre allows one to harness the power of storytelling to create meaningful connections and foster a deeper appreciation for the diversity of human experience.

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### 3.10.4. Forms of Non-Fictional Creative Writing :

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Non-fictional creative writing encompasses a wide range of forms that may include personal essays to investigative journalism. Some of the forms have been included within the scope of this chapter:

**Personal Essay :** The essence of personal essay lies in weaving subjective reflections into the narrative to explore the author's experiences, emotions, and reflections on life. It often combines the elements of a memoir with general themes, thereby inviting the readers to have a glimpse of the author's personal journey while offering insights into universal truths.

**Memoir :** Memoirs become a repository of the author's personal experiences, memories, and self introspections. They often project a critical perspective on significant events or challenges that have shaped the author's thought process.

**Travel Writing :** Travel writing seeks to document journeys to distant lands, its geography, socio-political ambience, inhabitants and their culture. But it is not a mere conglomeration of facts and figures. Rather, it offers an insight into the interface between the traveler and the places travelled to.

**Biography :** Biographies revolve round the lives of eminent/not so eminent individuals, exploring their achievements/obstacles, and personal growth. They often employ the framework of story telling to present factual research about the subject, while highlighting his/her impact on history or society.

**Investigative Journalism :** This form utilizes storytelling techniques while dealing with investigative reporting. It does not restrict itself to mere facts but seeks to unearth the human stories underlining events, highlighting social issues, political developments, or cultural phenomena.

**Profiles and Interviews :** Profiles and interviews focus on individuals or groups, offering critical insight into someone's personality through direct engagement and dialogue. They provide readers with perspectives, and quite often revealing the complexities and nuances of human character.

**Nature and Environmental Writing :** This genre offers a deeper exploration of the natural world and environmental issues while blending poetic observation, spirit of scientific inquiry, and subjective judgment. It combines empirical data with minute detailing to convey the beauty, fragility, and interconnectedness of ecosystems.

**Historical Writing :** Historical writing probes critical gaze into past events, periods, or figures, quite often providing the readers with insights into their importance and deeper impact on society. It combines rigorous research with storytelling to enliven history thereby making it relatable to the readers of the present day.

**Opinion and Editorial Writing :** Opinion and editorial pieces express the author's viewpoint on current events, social issues, or cultural trends. They blend factual analysis with persuasive arguments, encouraging readers to consider alternative perspectives and engage in meaningful dialogue.

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### 3.10.5. Examples of Non Fictional Creative Writing:

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In this section, let us concentrate upon a few works that can be considered as suitable instances of non fictional creative writing. The first work that I fondly remember is Madhur Jaffery's memoir, *Climbing the Mango Trees* (2005) where she weaves her story of her childhood using her taste memory. Each of her family recipes, which she deliberately incorporates in the memoir, entails a story concerning the history, customs, rituals and even belief system of the family. As she tries to recreate her childhood days, her taste memory helps her recapitulating those less frequented alleys of the past.

Another writing which has stayed long with me is an anthology called *The Landour Cookbook* (2001), a compilation of long lost recipes of the bakers at Landour, a cosy cantonment area near Mussoorie, edited by Ruskin Bond and Ganesh Saili. However, the book is not a mere collection of recipes. What is intriguing is that the recipes talk a lot about the history of the place when it used to serve as headquarter of the American Missionary Community in India from 1850 to 1950. Each recipe has a story to tell which is understood by the name that it still bears. If you sift through its pages, you will come across some lip smacking items like Mrs. Strickler's Chocolate Cake or

Elma Hill's Quick Cake that recreates those long lost days of Landour when it served as a rehabilitation centre for the soldiers wounded in World War II or housed a vibrant community of students of its Language School that has fallen silent nowadays.

Before I conclude, I would cite a travel writing to elucidate how creative non fictions indulge into an aestheticisation of facts with which the present discussion began. Dervla Murphy's solo venture into Coorg resulted into a fascinating travel narrative, *On a Shoestring to Coorg*, published in 1976. Reading this travelogue is like trailing around a mountainous terrain full of sharp hair pin bends where you definitely find surprises waiting for you. She documents every factual detail of her journey but beautifully blends facts with her personal reflection on Coorg and the adjoining areas, its natural beauty, history, local inhabitants and their shared belief system along with the rituals, the settlers and the list continues. But the narrative is not at all a mechanistic catalogue of dos and don'ts for a traveler. It narrates a story which takes you as a companion to the narrator and gradually as you become immersed into it, you will be able to feel that quite willingly you have become a part of Murphy's journey as well.

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### 3.10.6. The Art of Writing Non-Fictional Creative Writing

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In his essay, "The 5 R's of Creative Nonfiction", Lee Gutkind identifies five essential elements for creative non-fiction which are real life, reflection, research, reading, and writing. Thus, it follows that non-fictional creative writing intends to document real life experience and beautifully frames it using literary techniques and creative imagination. Writing creative non-fiction is an elaborate process involving several steps. First and foremost, the writer should be a good observer. A critical mode of observation induces series of thought in the mind which captivates each and every detail. For instance, along with a vivid description of the Ray household Satyajit Ray's memoir, *Childhood Days* (1975), also attempts to offer us a glimpse of Calcutta, during his childhood, which is now lost and gone forever. A passage from the narrative would depict how Ray, as an intricate observer, could immerse himself into his surroundings:

In this age of Kwality and Farrini, who bothers to make ice cream at home? But in our time, vanilla ice cream was often made at home in a wooden bucket which had an iron handle fixed to it. The sound of this handle being turned to churn the ice cream always made my heart dance with joy. The taste of home-made ice cream was always so much better than the ones we could buy from push-carts on the streets.

This careful observation which also includes the second R, that is the author's reflection, conjures us so many things at a time: a sneak peek into the kitchen of Ray

household, push carts selling ice creams in summer afternoons and also the past and the present as two contrasting entities. The third R involves meticulousness as it refers to research and is almost a quintessential aspect in any piece of serious writing, fiction as well as non-fiction. Any curious writer possesses the zeal of a researcher which enables him to acquire a better understanding of the reality that he/she intends to captivate in writing. The fourth R involves reading which is definitely intertwined with the third R, which is research. Reading sharpens the faculty of reasoning as well and it prompts one to consider texts beyond printed books. For instance, while writing biography, the writer needs to read a human being as his text. In this context, I can fondly remember how a well written biography ceases to be a repository of information and takes its readers to explore a person just as we try to decipher the meaning of a layered text. Thus, Bonamy Dobrée's biography of Alexander Pope not only talks about Pope's major literary works but also tells the stories of Pope's conflict with grub street writers, his complicated relationship with other major literary figures of the age like Addison, the success story of his translation of Homer's *Iliad* that made him rich enough to buy a house in Twickenham, tales of his suffering due to a rare Pott's disease that dispel the monotony of facts and numbers. The final R is (W)riting which is the ultimate stage involving all the previous Rs which combine to result in a filigree of stories that the writer carves out of his observation and experiences.

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### 3.10.7. Summing up :

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In the four above sections, a comprehensive idea about creative nonfictions has been provided along with the types available to us. While trying to define some of the aspects of creative nonfictions, it is important to stress that this genre lies at the crossroadsof fact and fiction. The role of the author and the way the author engages in an elaborate process of aestheticizing facts has also been discussed along with suitable examples of creative nonfiction. In the concluding section several steps which generally constitute any process of writing creative nonfictions are discussed. To sum up, the unit tries to define this comparatively new literary genre called creative nonfiction that is gradually assuming well defined contours in our present day academia.

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### 3.10.8. Comprehension Exercises :

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#### ❑ Long Answer Type Questions :

1. Define and explain the characteristics of non-fictional creative writing with examples.

2. Describe different forms of non-fictional creative writing with examples.
3. Choose any one non-fictional creative writing that you have read and point out how it has blended fact with the author's personal reflection.

❑ **Medium Length Answer Type Questions :**

1. Write a short note on memoir.
2. What are the five steps involved in the art of writing creative non-fictions.
3. Compose a critical note on travel narrative.

❑ **Short Answer Type Questions :**

1. State the 5 R s that are involved in the art of writing creative non-fictions.
2. Why research is important for writing creative non-fictions?

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### **3.10.9. Suggested Readings**

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## Unit-11 □ Flash Fiction and Graphic Narratives

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### *Structure*

#### **3.11.1. Objective**

#### **3.11.2. Introduction**

#### **3.11.3. Flash Fiction and Graphic Narratives as Literary Genres**

#### **3.11.4. Categories of ‘Fiction’ and ‘Non-fiction’**

#### **3.11.5. Excerpts and Explanations**

#### **3.11.6. Know How to Compose: Practical Approaches**

#### **3.11.7. Comprehension Exercises**

#### **3.11.8. Suggested Readings**

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### **3.11.1. Objective**

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The objective of this unit is to introduce the emerging genres of the ‘flash fiction’ and ‘graphic narrative’. Besides giving a basic understanding of the genres, the unit will further help you to think about how the genres obey and defy the larger categorization of literature as ‘fiction’ and ‘non-fiction’. Thirdly, the unit will help you to think about how interested enthusiasts can participate in the process of writing and composition such kind of literature.

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### **3.11.2. Introduction**

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We, as readers of literature, have read and experienced literature in various forms. Along with this, one of the most noticeable traits of reading, encountering or studying literature is the context in which it is written, published/circulated and read. Our readings differ according to our contexts which in turn brings diversity in the ‘form’ of literature. Consequently, the cultural context contributes in framing our reading practices. Hence, literary genres and subgenres have adapted and emerged with time; their popularity and significance too has changed with time, depending on various factors, one being the cultural context.



‘Flash Fiction’ and ‘Graphic narratives’ are newer terms when it comes to identifying them as genres, but they have existed under other categories of genre previously. For example, ‘flash fiction’ had always been a part of short story, vignettes, legends, jokes, myths and fables and graphic narratives too have always been a part of visual studies in literature be it in the form of cave painting or the Bayeux Tapestry. The democratization of literature and the eminence of ‘popular culture’ explains why these genres have come to the fore.

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### **3.11.3. Flash Fiction and Graphic Narratives as Literary Genres**

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#### **Flash Fiction**

The origin of ‘flash fiction’ goes back to prehistory as fables and parables form a part of it. The Aesop Fables from the West, the Panchatantra and Jataka Tales from India are examples that take us back to oldest examples of the genre. Since then the history of the genre has included writers like O. Henry, Anton Chekhov, Arthur C. Clarke, John Cage, Ray Bradbury, Ernest Hemingway. The contemporary writers of flash fiction include Jamaica Kincaid, Joy Williams, Grant Faulkner, Kathy Fish, Lydia Davis who won the Man Booker Prize (2013) for her work on flash fiction. Indian writers of flash fiction in English include Shalaka Kulkarni, Kiran Bhat, Abha Iyengar and many more.

The term ‘flash fiction’ is said to be coined by James Thomas, who along with Denise Thomas and Tom Hazuka edited the 1992 landmark anthology titled *Flash Fiction: 72 Very Short Stories*. Mary-Jane Holmes, the course curator of Fish Publishing very aptly puts it that flash fiction is like having literature ‘on-the-go’. Holmes notes that ‘Flash suits the ‘on the train, between appointments’ life-style; however good Flash is not for the lazy or the inattentive; like poetry it demands a strong collaborative bond between reader and text to unpack the story from its condensed kernel. The basic understanding of flash fiction can be conceptualized in the following ways:

- Flash fiction is a very concise form of storytelling. It might range from a few words to around 1000 words and hence is shorter than a ‘short story’.
- The compressed form of the narrative makes us think of the limitations of reading and composing flash fiction. However, in this case, it is believed that with compression the intensity of the narrative increases. Hence, flash fiction is often called a ‘concentrated story’ or a ‘short short story’, ‘micro story’.

- It relies on implications rather than simple assertions. The implications create fertile possibility for the readers to read the narrative in their own way. Although flash fiction is a fast and brisk read, it keeps the readers' mind engaged beyond the formal frames of the narrative.
- There is a beginning, middle and end to such stories.
- These stories often come with an element of surprise.

### Graphic Narrative

Graphic narrative can be defined as a form of storytelling where images and words come together to tell a story. Critics like Hillary Chute and Marianne DeKoven are of the opinion that 'graphic narrative' is a term that should be preferred over 'graphic novel' as that provides us with a diverse outlook and brings to the fore the interplay of various categories like comics, comic strips, etc that in turn provides a wider range to our understanding of 'graphic narrative'. In order to trace the beginnings of the genre one might go back to cave paintings or the hieroglyphs of Ancient Egypt. However, the origin of the genre is studied in the works of printmakers like William Hogarth and artists like Rudolphe Topffer. Topffer was one of the first artists to describe his work as a combination of words and images drawing inspiration from 'novel' and 'picture stories' of Hogarth. Since then, the genre has made a lasting impact with its interesting treatment of complicated concepts and impressive 'affective' strategies on the readers. A few noteworthy work of the genre includes: Winsor McCay's *Little Nemo in Slumberland* (1905–1913; 1924–1926), George Herriman's *Krazy Kat* (1913–1944), Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* (1986; 1991), Joe Sacco's *Palestine* (2001), Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* (2003), Spiegelman's *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2004), Daniel Clowes's *Ice Haven* (2005), Charles Burns's *Black Hole* (2005), Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home* (2006). In considering the Indian context, the diversity of work is extremely intriguing. One might consider starting from *Amarchitrakatha*, continuing with impactful works like that of Orijit Sen's *The River of Stories*, Sarnath Banerjee. Parismita Singh, Vishwajyoti Ghosh, Amruta Patil, Appupen, Malik Sajjad and many more.

Another noteworthy aspect of this kind of narrative is that it shows how forms like 'comics' which was stereotypically considered to be a 'lower form' of art was uplifted with revolution of sophisticating the print industry of comics in the later half of the twentieth century. The reformation facilitated the reinvention of 'comics' in the form of 'graphic novels' which catered to the audience's demand according to

their contemporary requirements. The graphic novel or the comic is hence a ‘form’ of storytelling in the visual mode, it cannot be called a ‘genre’.

Here it is important to mention that graphic narratives should not be confused with movies as they are mostly composed by a singular author or sometimes in collaboration with another author/artist; unlike movies it does not require a huge number of people to collaborate for a project. Besides this, graphic narratives also defy the strictures of experiencing a work within a time frame.

- The ‘gutter’ of the black space between the visual frames (also called ‘panels’) is one of the most important aspect of a graphic narrative as the readers intervention is directed by the ‘gaps’/ blank space or the ‘gutter’ in the text. Hence, it demands active engagement of the reader and makes us aware of the ‘experience of interpretation’.
- Graphic narratives represent ‘time’ as ‘space’ in the text.
- The graphic narrative works on various levels both in terms of reading, observing and visualising. In its very nature, the genre is multi-layered.
- ‘graphic narrative is an auto graphic form in which the mark of handwriting is an important part of the rich extra-semantic information a reader receives.’

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### 3.11.4. Categories of ‘Fiction’ and ‘Non-fiction’

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The shape of a narrative is identified in terms of genre for many reasons. Despite genres, we often tend to categorize the narratives as either a ‘fiction’ or a ‘non-fiction’. These categories are defined by their relationship with truth. In this division, ‘imagination’ is something which is often considered to be an element necessary for the composition of a fictional narrative. However, it is necessarily not so. Imagination aids the construction of non-fictional narratives too. Autobiographical graphic narratives like those of authors like Julie Doucet show us how imagination is an inseparable part of visualizing the reality of one’s own life. Imagination, depending on the choice of the author, adds objectively true and untrue elements to the text. Hence, a ‘flash fiction’, though objectively called a fiction might depict autobiographical elements and a graphic narrative can be both a fiction or a non-fiction. For the reader, the broader categories of fiction and non-fiction are both important and unimportant depending on the perspective and purpose of reading a narrative. For example, Lydia Davis’s ‘Writing’, one of her prose pieces in *Can’t and Won’t : Stories* most reads like a non-fiction. Besides this, when we talk about ‘truth’, there have always been doubts and debates about the way the truth-value and authenticity of a narrative is decided. Auto

biography, memoirs, travel narratives are often categorized as non-fiction. However, these categorizations are fluid and do not obey rules. Often the entire oeuvre of the author might help one to decide on the author's style of writing or sometimes the decision of the reader itself remains final.

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### 3.11.5. Excerpts and Explanations

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Here are a few excerpts and examples from both flash fiction and graphic narrative that will aid in better understanding.

1. "Now that I have been here for a little while, I can say with confidence that I have never been here before." ( Davis 9)

This is a story from Lydia Davis's *Can't and Won't: Stories* called 'Bloomington'. The story's title implies the importance of 'place' in the story. The protagonist asserts his/her presence thrice within the expanse of a single line and makes us feel the importance of his/her presence in relation with the place 'Bloomington'. The author makes use of contradictory forces of presence and absence, of temporality and permanence, of 'now' and 'never before' to hook the reader to the story beyond its frame. The surprise might not be there for us to realise, however, the 'surprise' element lies in the way the author manipulates the sense of 'presence' in the story. The reader never expects that the author would make him/her inhabit the space of 'Bloomington' beyond the frames of the story. Alike the author who ponders upon her sense of belonging to Bloomington, we too inhabit the space of Bloomington within and beyond the author's shadow in understanding her sense of belonging to that place. The importance of 'place' thus extends towards implying 'space' which is also mentally inhabited. 'Bloomington' as a flash fiction depicts an intelligent use of space, symbols, language to draw the reader into the narrative.

2. It was very early in the morning, the streets clean and deserted, I was on my way to the station. As I compared the tower clock with my watch I realized it was much later than I had thought and that I had to hurry; the shock of this discovery made me feel uncertain of the way, I wasn't very well acquainted with the town as yet; fortunately, there was a policeman at hand, I ran to him and breathlessly asked him the way. He smiled and said: "You asking me the way?" "Yes," I said, "since I can't find it myself." "Give it up! Give it up!" said he, and turned with a sudden jerk, like someone who wants to be alone with his laughter. (Kafka 201)

This is a 'short short-story', i.e., a flash fiction composed by Franz Kafka called 'Give It Up!'. Below there is a graphic narrative of the story drawn by Peter Kuper.

We will read both and try to understand the nuances of both the narratives. In Kafka's story, there is a clearly defined setting with an identifiable 'beginning', 'middle' and 'end' of the story. The character presents himself in first person. The sense of time is just prompted to us, the exact time is not mentioned. Immediately, there is an important symbol of the 'tower clock' and his personal 'watch'. The shift from the tower clock to the personal watch is a symbolic shift from the macrocosm to the microcosm of the story. It is thus that the protagonist realises that he is not very 'acquainted' with the town and feels uncertain. Ironically, it is the policeman, the second human character in the story, whom the protagonist asks for help. The policeman who is supposed to know the pathways of a town that he guards remarks 'Give it up!'. The policeman's answer extends the uncertainty of the protagonist to infinity. The surprise does not come just with the answer of the policeman, it rather comes with his 'laughter' and identity as 'someone who wants to be alone with his laughter'. Besides this, the sense of uncertainty, which is gradually unravelled, ultimately becomes a powerful presence in the story that inflicts the reader. It makes us reflect on our own sense of 'uncertainty' and leaves us at that moment to experience an infinitude of uncertainty. The story with its tone, limited action, setting, characters and concise use of dialogues with effective symbols becomes a legible example of a flash fiction.

Peter Kuper's graphic illustration gives us a visual experience of the story.



Image 1



Image 2



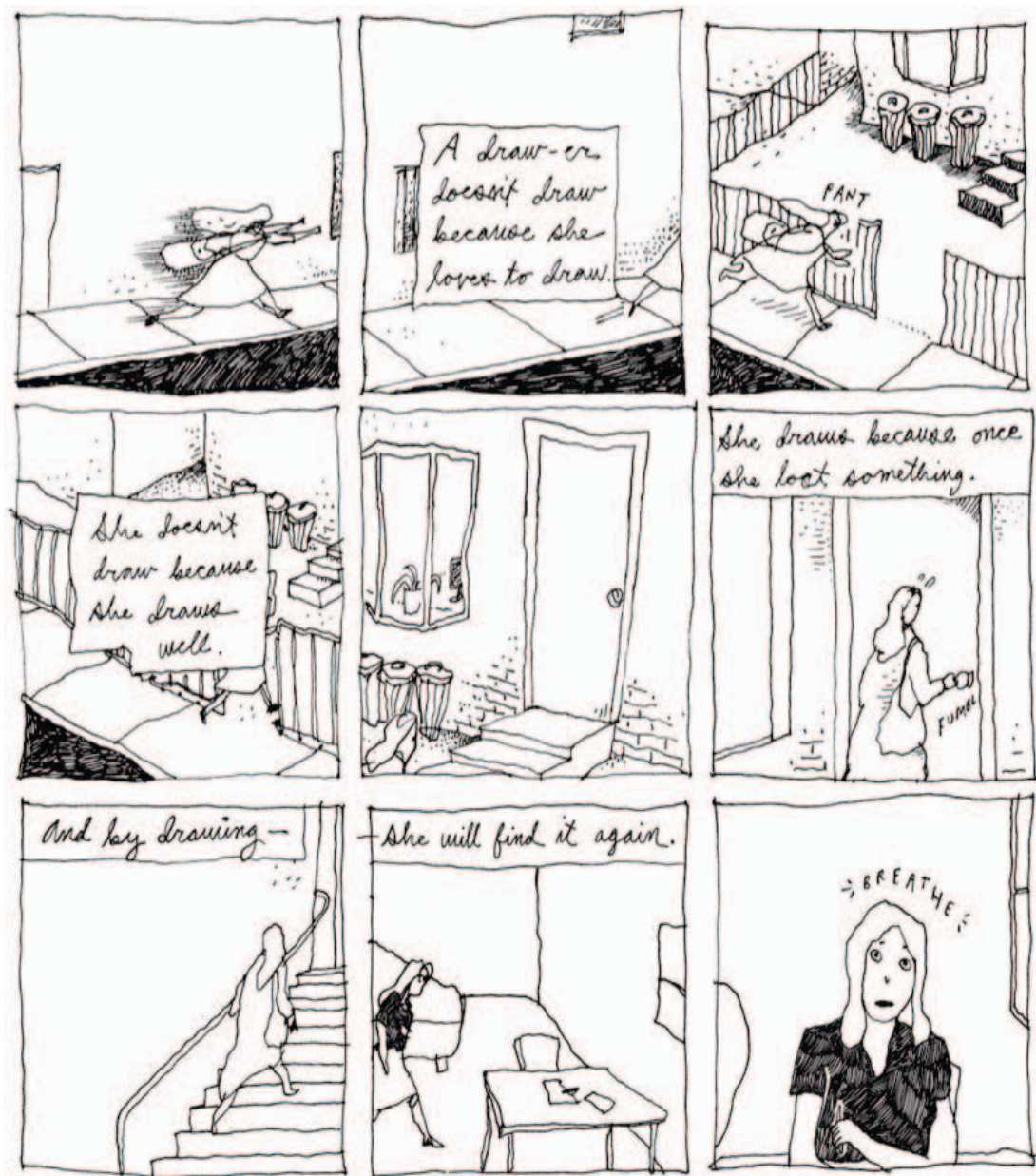


Image 3



Image 4

Uncertainty looms large in Kuper's depiction. The title of the story written in the sky of the city seems to declare uncertainty at the very outset. The second image shows the protagonist and the street as pluralistic in nature, which again is an implication of uncertainty and confusion in the story. The policeman, with a bullet nose and an overwhelming size, symbolizes state power. The appearance of the policeman is so overwhelming that the second and third image is filled with his presence and the protagonist almost disappears. The 'laughter' of the policeman in the last image is ghastly and it is from there that he seems to yell 'Give it up!'. The street gets transformed into the policeman's hand, the reflection of his face on the wall is a degraded image of the original and as the policeman shows his back to us in the last image, the protagonist too in a miniscule size takes his exit. The two characters in the story are drawn in very different geometric shapes, the protagonist's face is a rectangular one which symbolizes his fears and uncertainties, and the policeman's is circular which is an exaggeration of the uncertainty that the principal character faces on encountering the city. The city too with its hopeless sky, untimely clock and streets becomes a symbolic embodiment of uncertainty. Therefore, we see how two different genres convey one story in two different ways maintaining the mood, plot, symbols and tone of the story.



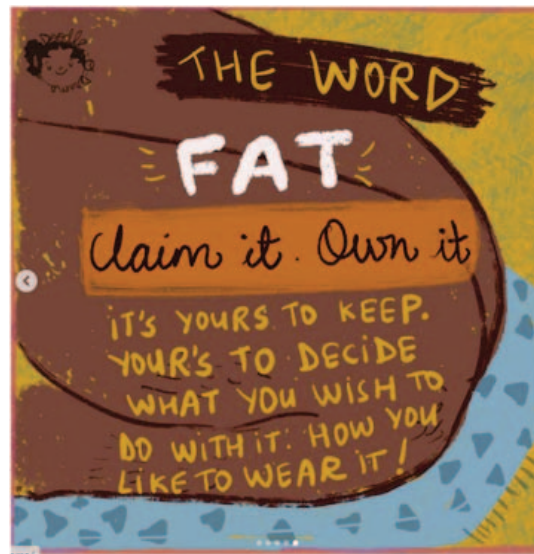
The above image is an excerpt from Liana Finck's graphic memoir *Passing for Human* where we encounter how with the use of limited lines and colours, Finck actualizes the use of blank space in her comics. The narrative clearly divided into frames and the space between them are the 'gutters' where readers are expected to fill in the gap as they reach the end to arrive at a 'closure' or a temporarily conclusive meaning of the depiction. The excerpt depicts the inner quest of an artist and the quest is physically translated into action as she runs. Across the panels her speed slows down along with her 'search' coming to a temporary end. The panting of the character



and her speech becomes more important than how she is physically represented in the text. Finck plays with the binary colours of black and white as we find the character lost when her speech is heard more than her physical visibility, whereas she can be easily located in the last panel with a black tee-shirt where her presence is represented in her physicality and there are words except 'breathe'. The use of space, gaps, time, action, character, speech, everything comes together to form the narrative impact on the reader. These nuances are to be decoded in order to understand the narrative code of such narratives.

4. This is a graphic narrative called 'Accept the Word Fat' that was posted online by the author Mounica Tata.





The comic principally addresses the issue of body image. The ‘fat’, brown body of the character appears in large and small chunks across the panels to make us feel the microscopic observation of the ‘body’ in parts. The repetition of the word ‘fat’ emphasizes the diverse meanings of the word that the author tries to depict. The macrocosmic appearance of the body and the word ‘fat’ is done in order to implicate the disgust at the normative meaning of what ‘fat’ means. The journey across the panels is that of internalizing the personalized concept of a ‘fat body’ hence the author keeps our vision and understanding stuck between the word ‘fat’ and the physical aspect of the ‘body’.

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### 3.11.6. Know How to Compose : Practical Approaches

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#### Flash Fiction

The possible ways of composing flash fiction needs to have the following points in focus :

- The effectiveness of flash fiction depends on both on ‘economy’ and ‘efficiency’, i.e, what techniques one uses to. Use short sentences.
- Use strong images to attract the readers. Try to use first-person narrative as that too helps to immediately bring the reader close to the narrative context.
- One can use the ‘title’ as a weapon to hook the readers at the very beginning.

- Concentrate on one moment and develop few characters, may be one or two. That keeps your concentration steady and has a similar effect on the reader. One can use these characters' dialogue or thoughts to imply various things to the reader. Hence, strategizing the story to create an impact is significant to compose a flash fiction.
- Try to involve your thinking in a focused conflict.
- Concise, vivid and highly charged language is another way to engage the reader.
- Do not fear experimenting with your language and ideas because that will help you to form your own writing style.

### **Graphic Narrative**

- Reading and involving yourself in interpreting them is something that will always help you with innovating and discovering new ideas further leading you to experiment with the form and content of the narrative.
- Some proficiency in drawing and visual storytelling is perhaps needed as that clears your path as per the basic needs of designing the narrative. A knowledge of digital tools like Adobe Photoshop or Illustrator might be an add-on.
- After you have the basics of the ploy ready in your mind, prepare your thumbnails of the story as that will help you to visualize the 'black space' or the 'gutters' of the story. This is the phase where the story gets translated into concepts. You might have to re-work on this continuously as the 'gaps' or 'gutters' are the most important part of the text and you might have to revise them thinking about how the arrangement of gaps might affect the readers. The thumbnails later get converted into final layouts in the process of publishing the narrative.
- As you draw the plot's setting, try to bring a 'mood' in the setting which will immediately engage the reader.
- You can try visualizing the characters and draw them separately to understand their relevance.
- It is important to keep the target audience/reader in your mind. For example, if the target audience is the young-adult group, you might try and focus on certain plot details that appeal that group of people or you might consider experimenting with colours in your narration.

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### 3.11.7. Comprehension Exercises

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❑ **Long Answer Type Questions :**

- (a) What do you mean by ‘flash fiction’? Discuss with the help of relevant examples that you have read.
- (b) Critically analyse the following story and discuss its relevance as a flash fiction:  

“ALAS,” said the mouse, “the world is growing smaller every day. At the beginning it was so big that I was afraid, I kept running and running, and I was glad when at last I saw walls far away to the right and left, but these long walls have narrowed so quickly that I am in the last chamber already, and there in the corner stands the trap that I must run into.” “You only need to change your direction,” said the cat, and ate it up. (Kafka 151)
- (c) What do you think are the key components of a graphic narrative? Discuss with relevant examples from any graphic narrative that you have read.
- (d) ‘Flash fiction helps writers practise the art of precision in the extreme’. Discuss with relevant textual references.

❑ **Medium Answer Type Questions**

- (a) How do graphic narratives create ‘emotional emersion’?
- (b) How would you define flash fiction?
- (c) Write about the differences in a fictional and non-fictional graphic narrative.

❑ **Short Answer Type Questions :**

- (a) Write a short note on the importance of ‘gutters’ in graphic narrative.
- (b) Write a short note on the importance of ambiguity in flash fiction.

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### 3.11.8. Suggested Readings

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## Unit-12 □ Copy-editing

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### *Structure*

#### **3.12.1. Objectives**

#### **3.12.2. Introductory**

#### **3.12.3. What is Copy editing?**

#### **3.12.4. Why Do We Require Copy Editing?**

#### **3.12.5. Difference Between Copy Editing and Proof-Reading**

#### **3.12.6. Some Terms Related to Copy Editing**

#### **3.12.7. Summing Up**

#### **3.12.8. Comprehension Exercises**

#### **3.12.9. Suggested Readings**

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### **3.12.1. Objectives**

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This Unit has the following objectives :

- to inform the learners about what copy editing is;
- to explain the duties and responsibilities of a copy editor;
- to sensitise the learners to why copy editing is necessary;
- to explain the difference between copy editing and proof reading, and
- to explain select terms that would help you understand the processes through which a creative writer's work go.

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### **3.12.2. Introduction**

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Dear learner, you may be a creative writer or a journalist of a newspaper. In either case, you are expected to write a piece of work intended for publication and wide readership. However, a book cannot be published in its raw manuscript form; it should go through a process of editing, formatting, proofreading and other necessary steps to become publication-ready. Each type of work—be it poetry, a novel, an essay, or

journalistic writing—has its own unique form, register, and internal coherence. It must subscribe to the prescribed grammatical standards and conform to the house style. Therefore, as a creative writer or journalist, you must be aware of these norms to produce work that requires minimal editorial intervention. This unit emphasizes that it is not sufficient to simply write a piece; you must also be familiar with the technical aspects and intricacies of the production process.

One should, however, keep it in mind that in the new millennium the whole complex of things has changed due to electronic revolution. Authors now mostly submit their manuscripts in electronic form, copy editing and proof-reading are done electronically, thereby largely doing away with the print format in the earlier stages of book production. Judith Butcher et al. rightly observe,

a book's journey from the author's mind to the printed page can follow many different routes. Most publishers are now concerned not simply with print as the finished product but also with the electronic life of a book in the form of e-books, web pages or CD-ROMs, and this influences their choice of production method and the copy-editor's part in the publication process. (3)

In the following sections, we will try to address different issues related to copy editing including its definition.

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### **3.12.3. What is Copy Editing?**

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In the publishing circle the term 'copy' refers to a text, or what is usually called 'content.' This content is developed by a writer, or a journalist, or even a designer for the purpose of publishing it. This content is to be made publication-ready, or what is often called 'camera-ready' which refers to a 'type matter' properly formatted and made ready to be photographed for plate-making and final printing (or digital publication). Copy editing which constitutes an important stage in the entire process is "the job of checking and making changes to a text in order to prepare it to be published" (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/copy-editing>). A copy editor works on the manuscript, editing and formatting it carefully, preparing it for the 'production stage.' Incidentally, the term 'production stage' refers to the phase where the editing of the manuscript is complete and it is made to go through the processes of designing, typesetting, layout, proofreading and the like. It is now ready for the next stage of printing and binding.



Copy editing thus cleanses the texts of inaccuracies of all kinds, typographical, grammatical, factual, and related to spelling, format, house-style and so on. It is the duty of a copy editor to produce an error-free copy, as far as possible, for publication. Butcher rightly comments,

You [the copy editor] must provide copy that the typesetter can follow without misunderstanding or delay. The text must therefore be complete, legible and unambiguous; passages to be distinguished typographically must be identified, and all subheadings coded; fresh pages and rectos, and the position of all text illustrations (and tables where necessary), must be marked; roughs for any line drawings must be intelligible to the artist; and so on. All these things must always be done, however rushed the book is. (32)

A copy editor's responsibility, however, does not end here. He has to ensure uniformity of style and internal coherence in the author's arguments. He also sees to it that allethical practices (such as those related to copyright and plagiarism) have been maintained. Moreover, he has to edit the copy in such a way that libel suits are not lodged in post-publication stage.

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### **3.12.4. Why Do We Require Copy Editing?**

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From the above discussion, you can guess why we need to edit a copy. The reasons are given below :

- (a) A copy may contain spelling mistakes, grammatical errors and factual inaccuracies. A copy editor is required to address these issues.
- (b) A copy may lack uniformity and consistency in terms of spelling (British/American), spelling of names (there may be different versions of a person's name or a place name), dates of events, bibliographical references and various other facts.
- (c) We need copy editing to ensure coherence in arguments all through the copy.
- (d) Copy editing is also required to ensure that there is no defamatory content in the copy, thereby preventing possibilities of legal cases.
- (e) A copy editor maintains liaison with the author as well as the other departments of publishing house in order to ensure a hassle-free production of a book.

- (f) On the copy editor rests the responsibility of producing a legible, readable book of high quality. On the whole, he “strike[s] a balance between quality, cost and time” (1).

The above are, you may rightly guess, the prime duties and responsibilities of a copy editor.

If we reflect on the factors mentioned above, we may accept the view much in currency in the corridors of publishing houses and newspapers that a copy editor has three kinds of functions :

- (a) **Creative Function** : S/he delves into the manuscript, assimilates arguments found therein, identifies areas of weakness, and suggests ways of improvement. S/he may suggest changes in the titles (book title, chapter title, unit titles etc.) and even reorganization of certain portions of the manuscript.
- (b) **Liaison Functions** : A copy editor works in harmony with the author and also maintains liaison with those involved internally in the book production process such as illustrator, book designer, proof-reader, and others.
- (c) **Surveillance** : A copy editor has to carefully survey on the entire copy and to keep tab on each and every word and statement in it. S/he must see to it that the copy adheres to all ethical codes and norms of publication, and ensure that no libelous charges arise from the publication of the proposed book.

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### 3.12.5. Difference Between Copy editing and Proof-Reading

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Etymologically, the word ‘proof’ comes from the Latin word *probare* which meant ‘to test or confirm.’ A proof is therefore a copy for a thorough checking so that mistakes are identified and corrected, and the corrected version confirmed and processed for production of the book. A ‘proof’ was thus a preliminary copy meant for verification and confirmation. You may go back in history and discover the meaning of the term ‘galley proof’ used in the days of handset letterpress printing in the early printing days. ‘Galleys’ were in fact metal trays where types were carefully laid after which a few copies of the ‘matter’ would be printed. These would then be distributed among the authors, editors and proof readers.

The proof-reading takes place after the copy editor edits the copy and prepares it for publication. The proof-reader takes it from here and checks the preliminary copies thoroughly. It is mainly a mechanical reading for checking typographical and other kinds of mistakes and no major revision is usually allowed at this stage.

Hence, the major difference between a copy editor and a proof-reader is that the former should have creative imagination and he helps producing a work that meets the highest standard of aesthetic and ethical work while the proof-reader does more or less the mechanical job of identifying and correcting the mistakes in the copy that the copy editor produced. The latter's job is thorough and creative, while former's may be meticulous but mechanical. The proof-reader is the last person to verify the mistakes of spelling, grammar, punctuation, page numbers, page breaks, layout, typos and front and end matters. Besides the proof-reader, proof-reading may be done by the author and the copy editor as well. The copy editor can compare and collate "the author's proof with the proofreader's, ensuring that the author's amendments are comprehensible and consistent with the existing material, and that they can be incorporated without great difficult or expense. The copy-editor ensures that any additional material, such as an index, is well organized and consistent" (Butcher et al. 4)

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### 3.12.6. Some Terms Related to Copy Editing

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**Typescript :** A typescript refers to a typewritten manuscript which is used as a printer's copy. Judith Butcher describes it as "the material that the copy-editor works on, whether it is a hard-copy printout, typewriter produced copy or electronic files ..." (5).

**Copy :** The term 'copy' refers to a text developed by a writer, or a journalist, or even a designer for the purpose of publishing it. A typescript can also be a copy.

**Half title :** The page called 'half title' contains exclusively the main title of the publication. It does not include even the subtitle and the author's name.

**Title page(s) :** A title page contains the full title (which of course includes the subtitle) of the publication and the author's name. Depending on the nature of the publication, it may further incorporate the illustrator's name, publisher's details, copyright information, year of publication, ISBN and the like.

**Front matter :** The very first section of a book (also called) is called the front matter or preliminary matter. It includes the title page, half title, foreword, a preface, and so on.

**Foreword :** It is a brief piece of writing on the author and/or the work written by someone else.

**Preface :** It is a piece of writing written by the author. It comes before the main text.

**Proof :** Etymologically, the term ‘proof’ comes from the Latin word *probare* meaning ‘to test or confirm.’ It is used in the publication industry now to refer to a ‘copy’ for a thorough checking so that mistakes are identified and corrected, and the corrected version confirmed and processed for production of the book. A ‘proof’ was thus a preliminary copy meant for verification and confirmation.

**Verso :** The term refers to a left-hand page.

**Recto :** The term refers to a right-hand page.

**Leaf :** The term refers to the part of a single folded sheet (in a book) when opened up – a ‘recto’ (right-hand page) and its ‘verso’ (left-hand page).

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### 3.12.7. Summing Up

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Copy editing is an important part in a book production or newspaper publication. One involved in creative writing should, therefore, have a thorough idea about the concept and practice of copy editing so that s/he can produce an error-free manuscript that would require minimum copy editing. Keeping this objective in mind, in this unit we have defined the term ‘copy editing,’ identified the duties and responsibilities of a copy editor, and explored how proof-reading is different from copy editing. Finally, we have provided a list of select terms that would help you understand the process of book production.

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### 3.12.8. Comprehension Exercises

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❑ **Long Answer Type Questions :**

1. Define copy editing and explain why it is an indispensable part of the book production process.
2. Discuss the duties and responsibilities of a copy editor.
3. Write a critical note on “a book’s journey from the author’s mind to the printed page.”

❑ **Medium Length Answer Type Questions :**

1. Explain the differences between proof-reading and copy editing.
2. Explain how a copy editor “strike[s] a balance between quality, cost and time”
3. Write a note on a copy editor’s functions of surveillance.

4. Explain how electronic revolution has brought about significant changes in publication industry.
5. How can a copy editor be creative? Explain with examples.

❑ **Short Answer-type Questions :**

1. What do you mean by 'galley proof'?
2. What is a 'proof'?
3. What is a 'leaf'?
4. What is a 'verso'?
5. What is a 'reco'?

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### **3.12.9. Suggested Readings**

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Judith Butcher, Caroline Drake and Maureen Leach. *The Cambridge Handbook for Editors, Copy-editors and Proof readers*. 1975. Fourth edition. Cambridge UP, 2006.

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