



**UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND
GENERAL STUDIES**



COURSE TITLE: WRITING AND LITERARY APPRECIATION

COURSE CODE: GNS 201

UNIT: 1 Unit



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COURSE LECTURE NOTES

LECTURERS

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PART A: WRITING

What is writing?

Writing is a careful compilation of thoughts, ideas, information or speech presented on paper. It uses language in a formal and meaningful way, applicable to both the writer and the reader. Among the four skills of a language: listening, speaking, reading and writing; writing is the most tasking and challenging aspect. Ability and intelligence of the writer are clearly tested in writing. It is an important skill required in tertiary level of education.



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Requirements for Effective writing

- Title/topic/subject matter
- Audience – decoder of a writer's information or ideas.
- Correct use of grammatical structure
- Careful use of punctuation marks
- Clarity of expression
- Logical arrangement of points in sentences and paragraph formation
- Suitable style(manner of writing)
- Correct use of language to ensure communicative interaction between the writer and the readers.



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Three basic points to bear in mind for a good piece of writing include:

i. Composing

Getting and organizing suitable and relevant materials for writing. The testing ground for composing is an intimate knowledge of context of writing (which considers the audience, medium and occasion of writing).



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ii. Crafting

Concerns the structuring or logical arrangement of a piece of writing. This relates to the use of words to form sentences and sentences to form paragraphs which are logically crafted in a piece of writing or text. To do this effectively, a writer should:

- identify and be familiar with various forms of writing.
- ensure proper organisations of ideas into units of expressions (sentences and paragraphs).
- arrange information logically and coherently.
- demonstrate accuracy in the use of words, sentences and paragraphs.
- edit (proofread) piece of writing to ensure correctness of language and clarity of purpose or expression.



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iii. Communicating

Both interactional and transactional aspects of writing are important for effective communication between the writer and the reader. Therefore, the writer must ensure that:

- Choice of appropriate style and register should be used.
- Audience of a piece of writing must be united with the purpose, content and form of writing.
- The type of writing (essay types and letter types) is determined.



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Planning a piece of writing

A purposeful writing requires effective and adequate planning. An unplanned writing lacks purpose, direction and organisation. Such a piece of writing may be boring, repetitious and out of the writer's control. A good writing must achieve the goal of communication. Effective writing undertakes some pre-writing activities such as:

Adequate preparation to search and collect information through literary search, survey, research interview, questionnaire, focus group discussion or through laboratory experiments



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- Undertake a brainstorming exercise by analysing the requirements of a topic and how to organise relevant information sequentially.
- Effective outlining done should be through jotting down of suitable/relevant points and arranging them in the order of importance.
- Re-arrangement of relevant points to produce first draft. Thorough editing of grammatical structures, spelling, punctuation marks and vocabulary are very essential to the production of a second or final draft.



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Parts of Essay writing

Essay writing can be divided into three main parts:

i. Introduction

The writer introduces the topic/subject in few sentences organised into a paragraph which may contain general statement, question, definition or specific explanation. Introductory part must be catchy to capture the attention of the readers.



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ii. Body

This aspect should consist of more sentences arranged into paragraphs. Every relevant point must be arranged in single paragraph with detailed explanation. A topic sentence (conveying the main idea of the paragraph) may be written in the introductory part, middle or concluding part of each paragraph.

iii. Conclusion

Expresses the summary, re-statement or emphasis of basic information or ideas in a piece of writing. Conclusion can also include recommendations and suggestion for future research or direction of a discourse.



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Paragraph Development

A paragraph is a unit of expression. It consists of sentences expressing relevant ideas or information about a subject or topic. A good paragraph must possess three basic features:

- Unity

Every paragraph must comprise of sentences discussing same idea, information or subject. To enhance unity the rule is one topic or subject should be discussed in each paragraph. An introduction of another subject destroys the unity of a paragraph. The use of **topic sentence** promotes the unity in a paragraph. It is both restrictive and precise by discussing a single subject and at the same time, providing information on the writer's intention about the topic. For example, the paragraph below illustrates the use of a single idea:



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The Locust

The locust is a species of grasshopper. Locusts are found in all continents of the world except Antarctica. In Africa, there are ten species of locusts. They are very common in tropical areas, except where it is wet. Locusts live in two forms, or phases as they are called: the solitary phase, and the gregarious phase. In the solitary phase, they live alone like any other grasshopper, and cause little damage. But if their numbers increase, they enter the gregarious phase. In the solitary phase, they live alone like any other grasshopper, and cause little damage. But if their numbers increase, they can become swarms big enough to darken the sky, and they are very dangerous.



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Compare the above with:

The locust is a species of grasshopper. Locusts are found in all continents of the world except Antarctica. In Africa, there are ten species of locusts. They are very common in tropical areas, except where it is wet. Bees are also very dangerous and they can, as they are said to have done before, wipe off a generation of farmers. Locusts live in two forms, or phases as they are called: the solitary phase, and the gregarious phase. In the solitary, they live alone like any other grasshopper, and cause little damage. But if their numbers increase, they can become swarms big enough to darken the sky, and the they are very dangerous.



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Transitional phrases/words/devices

To achieve coherence in paragraph development, transitional words/phrases are employed. Sentences are linked together through the use of transitional words to form a paragraph and to link one paragraph to another. Linking words are also used to put ideas together and properly connect parts of a sentence. Their uses establish coherence in a piece of writing. For example, *because, as if, for, as, though, since, for the purpose, as though*, are used to indicate relationship of causes or reason(s). Moreover, *also, at the same time, in the same vein*, show a relationship of addition.



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Types of Letter-writing

There are three types of letters: formal, semi-formal and informal.

- Formal writing - application for job placements, invitation letters, report writing, articles for publication, letters to the Editor. etc
- Semi-formal – articles or letters to acquaintances or distant relations.
- Informal letter – letters to parents, friends, family members.

Note: Basic differences between the three types of letter feature under organization, opening/salutation, body, conclusion and closing.



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Types of Essay Writing

A consideration of the content of writing relates significantly to types. There are five types of essay/composition. These are:



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1. Definitive Writing

A type of writing which provides meaning(s) of words, phrases or sentences used in a piece of work/work of art.

It defines clearly technical/specialised terms for reader(s) to understand.

A good definition must contain:

- a concept
- the use of article a/an/the
- a class/device
- feature of the concept e.g.

A square is a figure which has four equal sides and four right angles.

an atom is the smallest piece which has the same qualities and can combine with other substances.



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NOTE

Wh-words (e.g which, who, whom, where) are used in writing definitions. Who is used for persons; which for animals and inanimate objects; where for places/locations; when for time period.

2.Descriptive Writing

A good descriptive piece create precise mental picture of events. It is imaginative and it appeals to the intellect of the reader. To write a good description:

- Provide accurate details related to the topic/subject matter.



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- Present ideas/information/facts that are verifiable objective not points coloured by author's feelings.
- Arrange ideas or events as they occur chronologically.
- Use present passive verb forms e.g. are made, are refined, are established, are formed, are looked e.t.c.
- Use sequence markers/linking words e.g. first, second, next, in addition e.t.c.



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3. Narrative Writing

Provide an account of events or story in chronological order. It is interesting and close to reality. A good narrative piece uses apt descriptions and expositions.

- It uses transitional devices for proper sentence and paragraph developments.
- It is commonly used in prose writing (fiction).
- It creates vivid, clear, accurate and imaginative writing. E.g. Bayo Adebowale's *Out of His Mind*, gives lucid and vivid description of events and story line
- The simple past tense is used (e.g. failed, opted, ended, wanted and prepared, etc).
- The active form of a verb is mostly used.



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4. Argumentative Writing

It is based on intelligent and clear/logical reasoning to influence/convince the reader.

- It presents balanced views on the two sides to an argument.
- It advances logical reasons in favour (support) or against a topic with supporting evidences leading to meaningful conclusion.
- It considers advantages and disadvantages of an idea.
- It evaluates action through comparison and contrast.



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It is concerned with honest presentation of facts and arguments for a proposition or opposition.

Note :There are certain pitfalls to avoid in argumentative piece. These include; tautology, - unnecessary repetition; over simplification which may lead to distortion of facts; false comparison; attack on personality rather than ideas; over/sweeping generalisation



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Writing Instructions

It gives direction about a particular thing. It can also give information on how to carry out task or gives a recipe on how to cook a particular meal, how to bake etc.

- The instruction /direction must be clear and concise
- Use time linkers such as first, then, next, after, etc.
- Use the imperative form.
- Include only information needed.
- Use simple language.
- Do not use subject pronouns e.g. you



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Report Writing

Gives accounts of events, investigations, research and incidents.

It requires effective communication.

Simplicity and coherence are its focus.

Types of Report Writing

- Eye witness accounts to the police, report of burglar or fire incident.
- Work reports, may be progress, final or one-time report. Investigative reports are divided into technical and non-technical reports. Under technical type, we have (1) Laboratory report and (2) Project report e.g. Dissertation or Thesis writing, while term paper is a type of non-technical report.



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Features of Report Writing

Introduction gives the background of the topic, aims and objectives of the report, limitations of study, methodology and arrangement of topics/chapters in the report.

Body contains sections and sub-sections of materials gathered and organized to support the writer's point of view. Transitional devices are used to connect sentences and paragraphs together.

Recommendations are the writer's suggestions based on observations made on the field or in the laboratory.

Conclusion - brief summary of the report stating the main points of the findings.



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Contents of Report writing

Term paper

Preliminaries

Title page

Dedicate page

Table of contents

Acknowledgements

Preface

Abstract

Body

Introduction

Background

Body of the work divided into chapters.

Ending Part

Conclusion

Bibliography/References

Appendices.



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LABORATORY REPORT

Preliminaries

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Abstract

Body

Introduction, Background, materials, Results, Discussion.

Ending Part -Conclusion, References.

Project Report

Preliminaries -Title, Dedication, Table of contents, Acknowledgements, Preface, Abstract.

Body -Introduction, Body divided into chapters, sections and sub-sections.

Ending Part -Recommendation, Conclusion, Bibliography/References, Appendices.



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PART B LITERARY APPRECIATION

What is Literature?

- There are many definitions/ meanings of the word “literature”.
- Any printed/written work on any subject is literature. For example, English/French Literature, history of the Yoruba people, works of Shakespeare etc.
- Imaginative work of art which may be oral, written or dramatised.
- Creative (artistic) and aesthetic use of words. e.g. poetry, drama or prose.
- Recreates life through an invention of characters and events. For example, *Animal Farm* by George Orwell is concerned with human behaviour characterised by animals.



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Relevance/Benefits of Literature

Literature is a subject on the curriculum.

It expresses ideas and information on every subject area. For example, religion, philosophy, culture, morality, marriage, health. e.t.c.

It performs aesthetic function (relates significantly with beauty, entertainment and pleasure).

It performs didactic function (useful in teaching morals) e.g. children literature/stories.

It performs ideological function by projecting political views/policies through the medium of literature. E.g. Orwell's *Animal Farm* satirizes communist "principle of equality".

It uses language in a special way and enhances improvement for effective communication.

It aids the development of critical thinking.



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Classification of Literature

Kind – (i) Popular literature is a kind of literary work which develops from folk tradition/culture and meant for entertainment e.g. *Mills and Boon*, *Pacesetters*.

(ii) Canonical/Serious Literature is a kind of scholarly work. It engages the mind of the reader with issues relating to humanity e.g. *Kongi's Harvest* by Wole Soyinka.

Medium speaks of the presentation of literature through oral, written or dramatized form.

Oral literature (orature) is a spoken or unwritten form e.g. “oriki” (praise name), poetry, proverbs, folktales, myths, incantations. e.t.c.

Written literature refers to literary expressions codified graphically into prose, drama and poetry e.g. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*; Lekan Oyegoke's *Broken Ladders* and *Ill Winds* are all prose forms. Dramatized form may be spoken, written or mimed e.g. Soyinka's *The Trials of Brother Jero* and *Jero Metamorphosis* are dramatized forms of literature.

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Region classifies literature into geographical (regional) location e.g. African literature embraces works written by either Africans or non Africans about Africa e.g. Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* is a regional literature written by a non-African person; South African literature is a literary work written about South Africa etc.

There is a difference between **Literature-in-English** and **English literature**. The former is referred to as any literary piece written in the English language, while the latter is a literature of the British people.

Genres/forms. The three literary forms/structures are:

- Prose - narrates or describes events or character in written or oral expressions.
- Drama – presents a story through action by actors.
- Poetry – uses figurative language to create emotion and imagination.



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Elements of Literature

Plot – sequence of events through exposition, complication, climax and resolution. Types of plot include: comic/satirical/tragic/loose/connected/complex/romantic.

Subject matter – what the story is all about(summary of events)

Theme – central idea presented in a literary work.

Characters represent human qualities or persons in a dramatic or narrative piece. There are different types of characters – **flat, stoic, round, protagonist, antagonist, major, minor and deuteroganist characters.**

Characterization – the act of assigning roles or human qualities to characters in a literary piece. e.g. Achebe assigned certain roles to Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*, which reveal his human qualities and eventually lead to his rise and fall.



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Point of View/Narrative Technique is the mode of presenting the events of a story. There are four types of point of view: **The Omniscient point of view, First person point of view, Third person point of view, and Limited point of view.**

Style – the artistic expression or manner of presentation peculiar to a writer and the period of writing. The writer's peculiarity is shown in his diction, tone and mood.

Setting refers to the place and time where events of a story take place e.g. The setting (place) of Wale Okediran's *After the Flood* is Ibadan.

Language – a medium of expressing literature. Some writers use simple language comprehensible to all literate minds, while some other use language in a specialised way. Language of poetry is usually symbolic and a vehicle of imagination. A prose writer also uses language to create vivid narration or description of events.

Other elements of literature include **atmosphere, tone, vision, allegory and structure.**



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Literary Terms

Prose can be classified into:

Size – the novel is a narrative with sufficient length to make up a volume or series of events. For example, Novelette – a short novel not more than 30,000 words; Novella is an Italian term for a piece of novel with same size and a short story which contains 1,000 to 1,500 words equally expressed in anthologies.

Fiction – imaginative stories which are usually untrue.

Faction – blends real events and characters with untrue/imagined types.

Non – fiction are real or true stories /events e.g. biography, autobiography, diary, memoir.



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Drama has three major types:

Comedy - has a happy ending e.g. *The Trials of brother Jero*.

Tragicomedy - a serious drama which ends happily e.g. *After the Flood*.

Tragedy - a serious drama that ends sadly e.g. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Travesty is a humorous play which contains exaggeration.

Character drama focuses on character in a play rather than events e.g. Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

Situation drama concentrates on events with few characters e.g.

Melodrama (sensational play which ends happily) and **Farce**, a funny play which evokes laughter.

Mime – gestural play without words.

Dance drama – uses dances and songs to communicate.

Pantomime Christmas play accompanied with dances and silent songs e.g. “Father Christmas” shows are used to express narrative situations.



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Other types of drama include: **morality plays, mystery plays**_(religious type), **opera**_(musical drama) e.g. **soap opera** – serialised radio or television drama presented in episodes e.g. **Super Story** and **Binta and Friends** are television drama pieces.

Poetry uses figurative language to express feelings or experiences, written in verses or metrical patterns. There are different forms of poetry e.g. **narrative poems, dramatic poems, dramatic monologue, lyrical poems** and **free verse**.



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Poems come in different types. For example:

Epic poem – imaginary/historic/legendary poems

Folk epic are oral poems of traditional societies .e.g. **Ijala**, hunters' poetic rendition, Incantation etc

Literary epic – a written form of epic divided into cantos - major division

Ballad – a poem that tells a story and can be sung.

Folk Ballad is oral/ indigenous poem without specific number of persons.

Literary ballad – a written poem credited to a particular person/poet.

Sonnet - a poem of fourteen lines, sung in a rhyme.

Elegy/dirge – a poem that expresses sorrow or lamentation.

Ode – a long lyrical poem.

Lullaby - a song rendered to lull children to sleep.

Panegyric/Eulogy – a poem of praise or celebration.



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Features of Poems

- i. **Rhythm** – a wave-like sound.
- ii. **Metre** – syllables divided into sounds.
- iii. **Alliteration** – repetition of an initial sound (consonant or vowel).
- iv. **Assonance** repetition of similar sounds in the middle or at the end of a line
- v. **Consonance** – repetition of consonant sounds.
- vi. **Rhyme** – identical sounds.
- vii. **Verse** – metrical line written in regular metre and end rhyme (**rhymed verse**), in ten syllables lines which runs without end rhymes (**blank verse**) or in polyrhythmic verse (**free verse**) without recurrent or regular metrical form.



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- viii Stanza** – recurring group of lines. E.g. couplet (two rhyming lines with equal length), septet – a stanza of seven lines; triplet/tercet three rhyming lines; Quintet – stanza of five lines, Quatrain a stanza of four lines; sestet and octave
- ix Figurative expressions** – Simile likening of two things using like: Metaphor direct likening of a person with an object. Personification assigning human qualities to inanimate objects. Hyperbole exaggeration or overstatement.
- x Euphemism** – a mild expression used to pass unpleasant information. Irony opposite of what is intended. Synecdoche - a part representing a whole. Litotes is an understatement which avoids the affirmative. Metonymy calling a thing by a name related to it. Allusion an indirect reference to something that is popularly known. Oxymoron two opposite words placed side by side. Antithesis contrast created by the use of two opposing words or ideas. Paradox absurd but truthful assertion. Epigram witty saying. Pun a play of words with a satirical/ironic intention. Allegory - symbolic meaning.

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Other include Innuendo (insinuation); Onomatopoeia (use of sounds), Sarcasm. Anticlimax. Rhetorical question. Analogy Epithet etc.



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