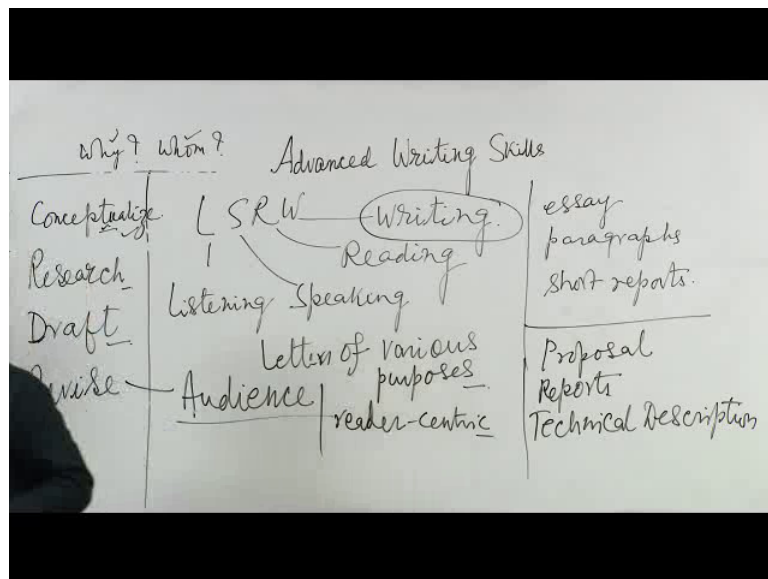


Soft Skills
Dr. Binod Mishra
Department of Humanities & Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee

Lecture – 23
Advanced Writing Skills

Good morning friends. I hope you are enjoying your lectures in Soft Skills. And now we are going to start the writing section and it will be followed by several lectures on different sorts of writing which you might come across not only in your day to day lives, but also in your professional lives. Now let me ask you a question because I have often been listening to my students and my observation says that if out of these 4 skills, you know all of you know well that we have LSRW I mean listening, then speaking, then reading and then writing.

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There are four skills we have been saying since beginning, but you know if you ask yourself also and if I ask you which of these skills comes as the last order and many of these students often say that there is one thing that they are very much a words to or they do not like is writing.

Now, most of the time they are interested to listen and if the opportunity comes they are also interested to speak, but when they are assigned the task of writing they actually feel

it quite boring and burdensome is not it. I think most of you will agree with me that they do not like writing.

But remember my dear friends if you are going to prove your metal in your professional life something that is of utmost importance is your writing now what is so, why you are so much a words to so much disinterested towards writing. But then there has been researches which say that if you want to see if you want to know a person you can know him not only by the way he speaks, but also by the way he writes and writing today has become very important whatever job you are in you will find that you have to write, gone other school days when you have to write an essay you know you remember you had to write essays paragraphs small letters short reports is not it.

Now, you are going to write something that we call advance and when we talk about advanced writing advanced writing actually has to a great extent certain difficulties which may appear to be very challenging, but it is very paying as well. How is writing treated by great people by scholars, in this connection I be reminded of Francis Bacon who was an essayist and many of you might have come across some of his essays his essays are considered to be very efforical essays these considered to be the father of essays.

Now, in one of his essays he actually talks about reading and writing and there he says reading make it a full man I mean if you want to be a person who considers himself to be a full man he has to read. So, reading make it a full man conference a ready man and writing an exact man. Meaning thereby if you want to judge yourself or judge others you can judge yourself by your writing.

Here I am not talking about your handwriting, but I am talking about your writing style how do you write and in your organizational life, in your professional life you will come across different sorts of writing where everything goes with the help of writing you have to give instructions, you have to provide some manuals, you have to provide report, you have to write letters if you are in a business, you have to write letters for various purposes and all this require a lot of qualities of writing.

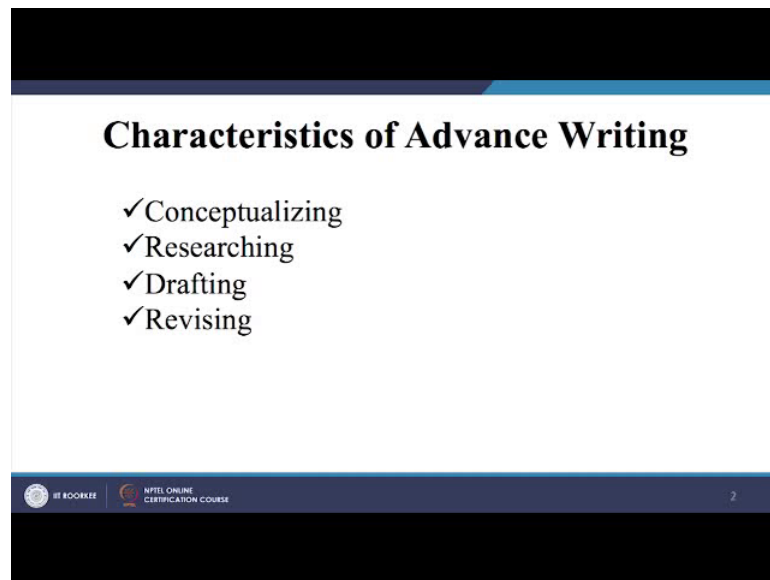
But then this writing is an advanced writing sometimes you may have to write a proposal you know nowadays when we are in organizations we write proposals, we write proposals for project, we write reports, we write technical descriptions technical

descriptions and we write letters for various purposes letters for various purposes and these letters actually are not the sort of letters or applications you wrote during your school or college this they are actually different. Letters of various purposes and sometimes they may be credit letter, sometimes they may be collection letter, sometimes they may be complaint letters, sometimes they may be adjustment letters we will see when we discuss a the types of letter, but here presently we are going to talk about what actually is writing and how can your writing be different and distinct.

First is let us try to understand what actually are this specific or the salient features of advanced writing first is conceptualizing because once you are in an organization you actually whenever you write whatever you write my dear friend you must have an idea you must have a concept. Suppose you have got new concept and innovative concept. So, what do you do you first have a concept. So, what you do you conceptualize everything is not it and when you have a concept this because this writing will be a sort of writing which will be based on the testimony of truth, it has to have a sort of objectivity because this writing is a sort of scientific and technical writing whether it is a sort of research paper or it is a sort of project report or it is a sort of project proposal or it is a sort of technical description or what. So, ever you will find first you will have to have a sort of conceptualization. So, you will have to conceptualize. Like as we when we are talking about communication we first said that you as a sender must have an idea.

But suppose you have a concept you have developed a concept that concept has to be testified on truth and that is why a lot of research is essential. Whenever you write a paper what do you do is you have a concept and then in order to support because you have an idea or you have an innovative idea. So, in order to support it you have to do a lot of research. So, it is actually your research that will support your line of thinking and when you have made the research because while going through several books, going through several research papers finally, whatever you have brought you are going to give it a shape and while giving it a shape you actually have to draft. So, how will you draft? You will draft based on the need of what you are writing.

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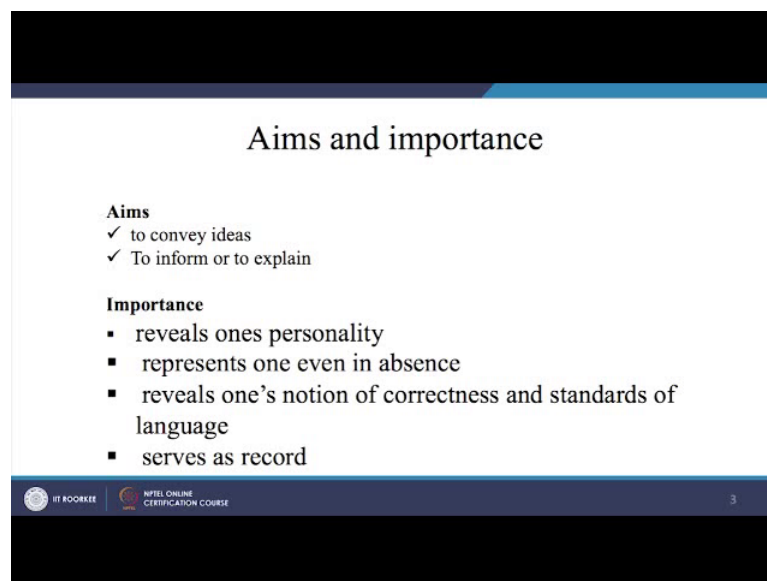


If you are writing a report naturally you will follow a particular structure, but if it is a letter it will have a different structure, if it is a technical proposal it will have a different structure, if it is a description it will have a different structure. So, and as will be drafting that once you have drafted because you know when you draft it in the first moment in your first attempt it is not so that it will be 100 percent correct. And you remember because when you are finally, draft it you must also have a time to revise it because when you revise you will find that there were certain things which ought to be added there were certain things which ought to be deleted.

Now, when you are going to revise you will find the pieces of information which actually had to be inserted have somehow or the other been left, so what you will do, you will add. Sometimes you will find because all you do when you have finally, come out with some pieces of information now you will also check whether it actually conforms to the background here it is you know any writing that you do it has to keep into consideration your audience. When I say audience here I actually mean reader is it reader centric reader centric. What do I mean by reader centric? I mean the approach which is there the pattern which is there the selection of words which you have followed is it going to affect because anything that you are going to submit in the form of writing finally, will prompt some of your bosses or some of your controlling heads to take a decision that is why you will have to check whether it is audience or reader centric.

Now, the question here is whenever you are given a piece to write first you must understand why you are writing this many people even do not ask themselves this questions why. Why you are writing it, for whom you are writing my dear friend. So, when you know the answer to this why and to answer to this whom you will finally, find yourself as to how you should write it depending upon your aim every writing has got two or three aims. The first is that you are writing to express your ideas, you are writing to communicate your ideas.

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Aims and importance

Aims

- ✓ to convey ideas
- ✓ To inform or to explain

Importance

- reveals ones personality
- represents one even in absence
- reveals one's notion of correctness and standards of language
- serves as record

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Sometimes this idea has actually to be conveyed as a piece of information, but it is not true always. Imagine there is a new product in you are going to write about this product and may be you are one of the members of the team which has develop this a product.

So, now time comes that you are going to launch this product. So, when you are going to launch it you will find that you should take the views of others or you should have a sort of conformation and during that time you have to convince others of your ideas. Meaning thereby when you convince you actually require a sort of reasoning. So, you will require a sort of reasoning. Sometimes you also may have to persuade people, persuade your readers, persuade your audience that is why depending upon the aims you will have finally, to decide which way you are going to write.

Now, why do you think writing has it importance because in the beginning I have already told you that many people they often try to keep themselves away from this task of

writing, but once they understand its importance they will really feel interested to write. Now writing reveals your personality whatever you write when a person is reading or writing no he may not see you, but in a way he is trying to see what a sort of personality you are and when I say personality I do not mean only your ideas your approach, but also your presentation style, your graph over words, your graph whole language, your graphs over the approach and even when you are not present there in your absence you are representing yourself.

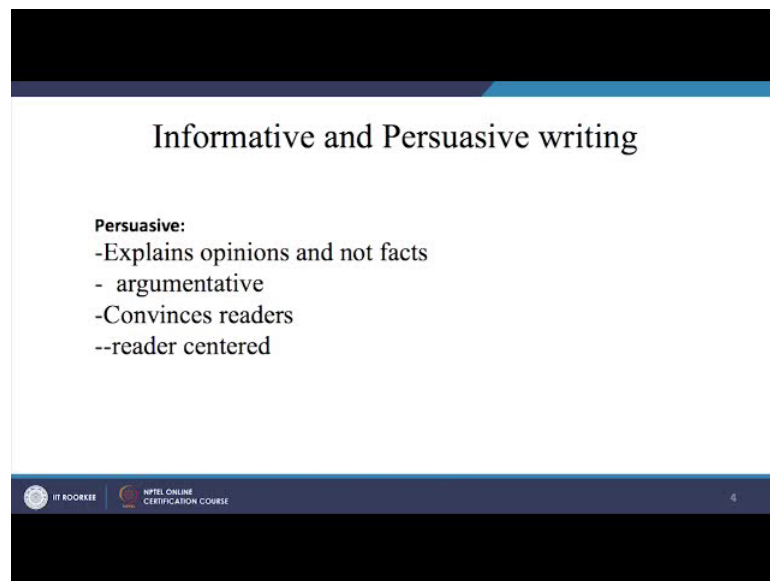
For example all the books that you might have read or are reading whenever you read that you are imagining the figure of the writer, you are thinking about the writers knowledge, you are thinking about his personality. And again the way you have written sometimes you might gets certain responses or reactions by people and they say that it needs a sort of revision. Meaning there by he has also already passed the message that you are writing does not conform to the notions of correctness and the standards of language. Sometimes you in your flow of writing that is why time it again we say when you right the first draught, let the first draught not go let the first draught be revised and unless to revise you are not able to understand what are the shortcomings because you either might be arguing or trying to convince and while arguing or convincing you might take a stand and that is why when you are giving a statement or your putting on idea it will be seen how your idea is being supported by relevant facts, how they are supported by examples and all and moreover writing is important because it serves as a recurred.

Now many people might be thinking that nowadays in this age of digitalization, in this age of computers writing has lost its relevance, but see my dear friend it is simply a transformation what really and used to write with pen and paper now it is through word processing, but then it also have a database. So, it serves as recurred hence all of us when writing should see to it that our righting reflex our personality, our reasoning ability, our convincing attitude, our persuasive faculty and all these are very important. Now what actually is the difference between an informative and persuasive writing? An informative writing simply in forms for example, you have gone to take stock of certain things.

Now, what do you do? You have actually a performer and you are simply thinking you know it is a stock verification required. So, what you; you are not going to do anything you are simply putting whatever is there. So, informative information had simply to convey the information as it is, but when you are trying to persuade the persuasive

writing has some other things to do. It not only explains some people said this other said this one scholar says like this and you are sometimes trying to contradict, sometimes trying to counter some argument and you are giving your own say arguments you also sometimes try to find out the fallacy in it. So, you are writing there becomes argumentative.

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The slide is titled "Informative and Persuasive writing". Under the heading "Persuasive:", there are four bullet points: "-Explains opinions and not facts", "- argumentative", "-Convinces readers", and "--reader centered". The slide footer includes the IIT ROORKEE logo and the text "NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE".

For example imagine you are going to write thesis you are going to write a dissertation now what you do there you are putting your own ideas, but the tone is assertive. Of course, your reasoning, but your reasoning by being assertive you are trying to convince others you have a concept as I said earlier and you are trying to extend this concept further by giving examples and, but then you have to be reader centred that is that is very important. Now there are ways of writing I mean something can be written directly something can be written indirectly. Now which way should we go? And it again will differ from one situation to other from one say circumstance to another. For example, when you are going to write effectively you must understand the various features involved first is directness.

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Effective Writing

➤ **Features**

- ☐ Directness
- ☐ Easy to understand
- ☐ Choice of words
 - Use words as per your needs
 - Use adequate words to achieve your purpose

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I mean you might have at times heard people saying whatever you want to say when I say in writing I mean express so you have to express, whenever you are saying something you have to express and here maybe you are expressing it very directly is not it. So, direct information directly. So, there should be a sort of directness because you are specifying something you have to be direct.

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Why? Whom? Serves as a record
Advanced Writing Skills

Directly
easy
Sentences
Words

LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing)

Reading

Listening Speaking

Letters of various purposes
Audience
reader-centric
reasoning
persuade

essay
paragraphs
short reports

Proposal
Reports
Technical Descriptions

I mean again here the question of language comes into consideration not saying something in a very roundabout circumlocutors language, but then in a very plain clear

candid manner. So, in this case the language used should be easy and how can language be easy no language is difficult my dear friend. It is actually the person who is using, he actually makes a language difficult or easy.

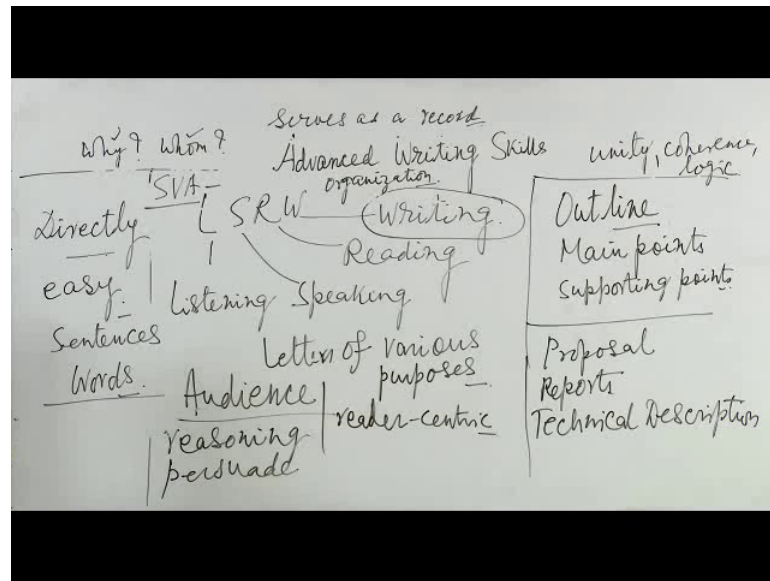
So, what can be an easy language? Again here will come how you are constructing your sentences how you are taking words. Generally it is found that a sentence if it has say 6 or 8 words, but sentence is simple, but then if somebody writes a sentence which has got 20 words 30 words it creates a lot of difficulty, it poses a threat to the reader and that is why as I have been saying sometimes you are not able to as a writer even you are not able to connect between the subject and the verb.

Moreover the choice of words, again the choice of words also should be familiar let the words be used which are familiar to your readers and how is this possible when you understand the background of your audience or reader you will be in a position to use words which they can understand. Of course, in a technical writing you may also come across the use of jargons and cleanses which we shall be discussing when you talk about the element of style or style of reports in all because there will discuss in great detail. But then a simple thing about word sees use words as simple as you can. I mean if you use a word which you know its meaning, but others do not know I think you have failed in the selection of the words.

Sometimes there are words which may have more meanings then one words are very tricky my dear friend. So, as a writer you have to be a trickier one. So, how you are going to use a word which may suit that entire if you entire topic use words as per your needs do not make your writing very pompous or very wordy that becomes when you are using too many words. But then sometimes in order because I have said that you have to be clear, but then do not sacrifice meaning in order to be clear. Sometimes you will find that some words or a simple sentence may speak less, but then some sentences may not be able to explain what you want to explain in such cases you can use words, but at the same time you have to see that this sentence length has to be sort, not a longer sentence. So, you can split sentences, so use adequate words to achieve your purpose, because you are main task is to make your readers understand.

Then when you have done all these things it is always better that once you start writing it is better to make a sort of outline.

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What do you mean by outline? As a person as a writer when you know what you are going to write about and you have the data make a tentative outline this outline will tell you how and it will also help you how long there your entire writing is going to be. Here you will put the main topics you will also put the some topics, and then you will just like an experienced tailor you are going to cut your entire pieces of information and finally, you are going to be reminded of this outline.

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Outline

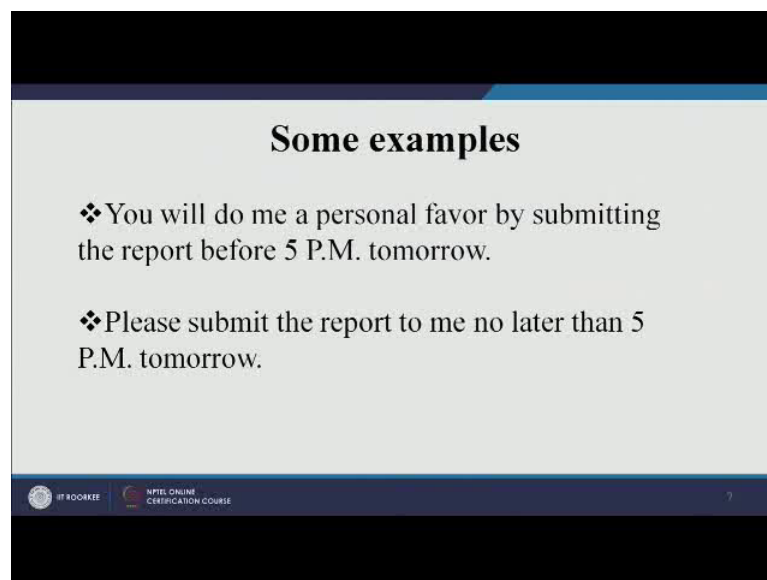
- Main Point
- Supporting points
- Restatement

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So, in the outline you not only give your main points, but you will also give supporting points. So, and that is how you will plan an outline supporting points and ultimately towards the end you should see that when you reach a conclusion, the conclusion of your writing you are to see whether you have been able to do or whether you have been able to write what you really wanted and that is possible only when you might have applied the unity the coherence and also the logic.

I mean is your writing a systematic structure, is your writing based on a proper foundation so that and that how is that possible that is possible only when you put yourself in the position of your readers. Now that can be shown through so many examples for example, let us look at these sentences.

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Some examples

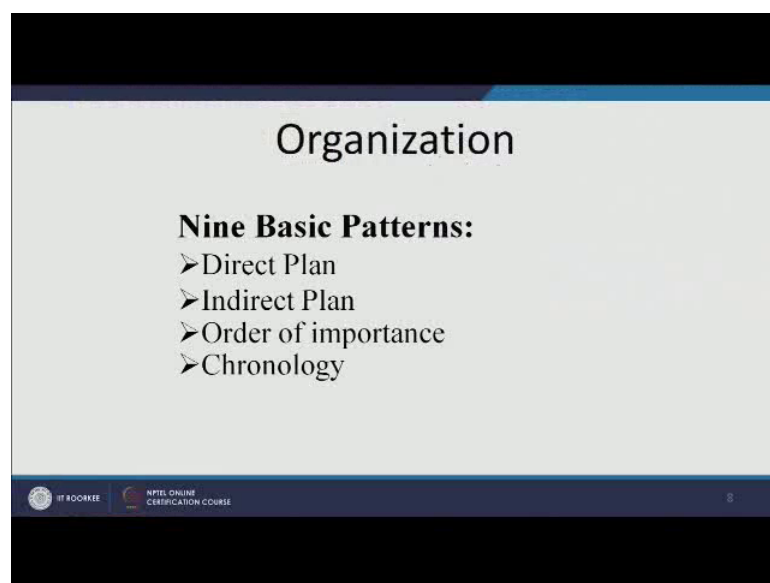
- ❖ You will do me a personal favor by submitting the report before 5 P.M. tomorrow.
- ❖ Please submit the report to me no later than 5 P.M. tomorrow.

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Now the first sentence you will find you will do me a personal favour by submitting the report before 5 pm tomorrow. Now see all the words chosen here are very simple, but then the way sentence begins it actually has become longer you will do me a personal favour. I mean when you are working in organisations and write in for organisation then you have to maintain a sort of formality and that is possible not only by making your sentences short, but my also saying that no smack of personal favours are there. So, let us revise this sentence and then say please submit the report to me no later than 5 pm tomorrow.

Now see this sentence appears to be more fresh if compared to the earlier sentence and in a way you have actually started the sentence and you will find that the worm has come just in the beginning. So, there is no question of any confusion. Now you also when you are writing you also have to be aware of the patterns. So, when I talk about patterns what I mean is since your document is technical and it has to stand true to the facts hence you have to understand the basic pattern. There are 9 basic patterns and it is up to you to decide which pattern you are going to follow. So, let us throw some light on all of these though you are already aware of these patterns from the names that they are based after.

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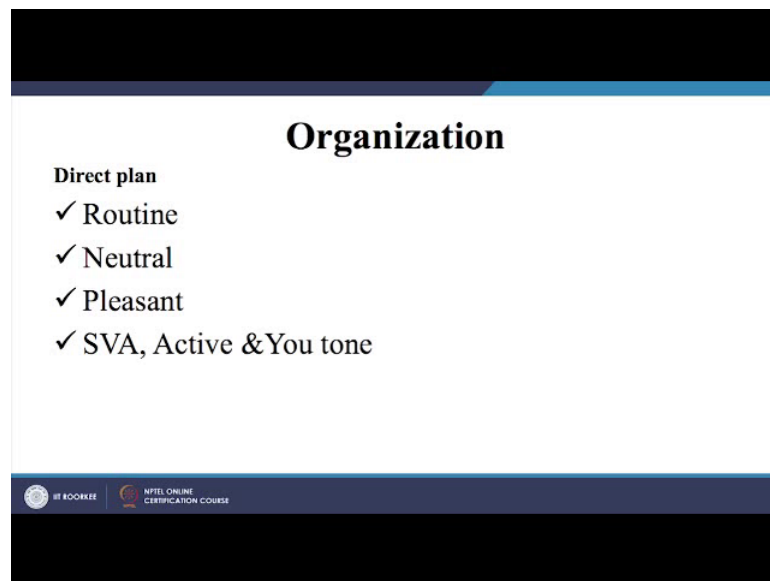


Direct plan, so a direct plan is when you are saying things in a very direct manner and indirect plan is you know when there are things which appear unpleasant to you when you listened, when you listen to a sentence which appears very unpleasant to you, you may have to write it in a very indirect manner. For example, you suppose when you are giving some good news let that good news be given in a very positive manner in a direct way, but in organizations you will find that at times you may also have to convey some bad news and while conveying the bad news it is always better to go through a go through an indirect plan of writing indirect way of expression.

Then comes order of importance and then chronology then problem solution, causal, spatial, structural, functional, topical. Now when we talk about organization and specially in terms of its direct plan you will find all sorts of routine activities they are

written in a direct plan. Remember the tone they are is very neutral and it appears very pleasant because whenever you are going to give a people some good news they had to follow the positive framework and that is possible when you frame your sentences on the pattern of SVA which we call subject verb and then agreement. I mean there should be a proper agreement between the subject and the verb and the sentence has to be active and when I say sentence has to be active keeping into consideration that this is reader centric. I mean reader centric document is one that has you tone or you approach.

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Organization

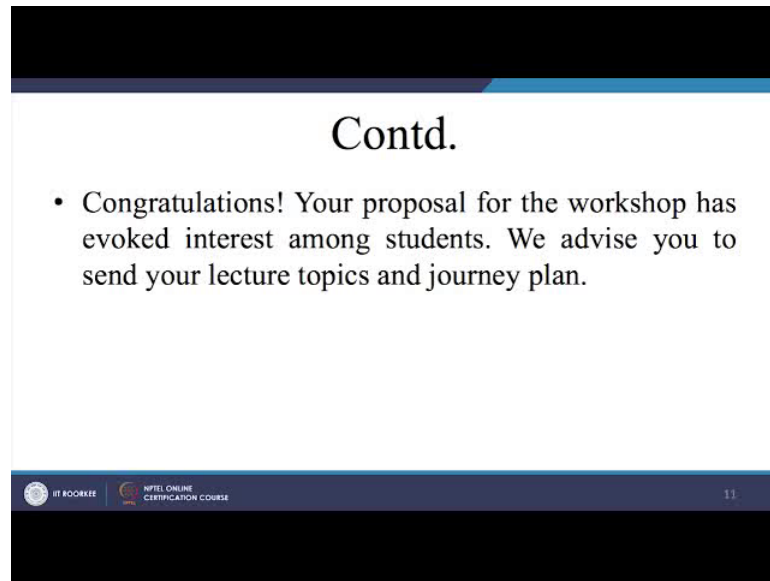
Direct plan

- ✓ Routine
- ✓ Neutral
- ✓ Pleasant
- ✓ SVA, Active & You tone

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So, when you are going to follow a direct plan you will find that your sentences are pleasant and they follow and they confirm to you tone. For example, suppose you had complained against a project that was sent to you and was not received in a proper condition or you had sent an invitation, you had sent a proposal now let us look at this sentence where it is said the sentence begins with a very positive word.

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Contd.

- Congratulations! Your proposal for the workshop has evoked interest among students. We advise you to send your lecture topics and journey plan.

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Congratulations! Your proposal, now, see your proposal for the workshop has evoked interest among students. We advise you to send your lecture topics and journey plan.

Now you had submitted workshop proposal and it has been accepted and that is why in a direct manner when the sentence has been written and the sentence appears to be very pleasant. But sometimes things do not go the right way and things have to be conveyed in such a situation the statement or the piece of information maybe unpleasant, maybe negative. So, in such a case it is better to have a delayed opening and negative things have to be sent to the last or sometimes it may be situated in the middle I mean it should be guarded on both ends.

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Indirect plan

- ✓ Unpleasant
- ✓ Negative
- Delayed opening, reasons for negative message, positive ending

❖ Thank you for your letter of application for the position of computer programmer. You are right that we are one of the largest organizations. Because of the size and reputation of our organization, we review the education, background and other characteristics of the candidates.

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But on the other hand towards the end there has to be a positive ending as in this statement you will find as this is actually the beginning of another letter thank you for your letter of application for the position of computer programmer. Now see initially they have thanked this is actually the curtsy amount which will discuss in the next lecture, you are right that we are one of the largest organizations. Now comes the real thing negative one is not it, because of the size and reputation of our organization we review the education background and other characteristics of the candidates.

Now, see how in a very subtle in a very clever manner they have told you that they are not in a position to entertain your application at the pleasant juncture. So, this is how when you write this is simply an instance from a letter. But you may also have to write for some other purposes and they are also when you are going to say something which may not be welcome that has to be done in the indirect plan. Then comes the order of importance that is also one pattern in such a situation you have to create a sort of order I mean something that is very important that will come in the first.

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The slide is titled "Order of importance" and features a light blue background with a dark blue header and footer. The main content is centered and includes a bulleted list of three points and a paragraph of text. The footer contains logos for IIT Roorkee and NPTEL Online Certification Course, along with the slide number 13.

Order of importance

- ✓ State the most important reason first
- ✓ State the second most important reason
- ✓ State the least important reason

I recommend Mr. X for the position of H.R. Manager. He has great communication skills. He has the ability to know people's needs. He can take initiatives and manage people well.

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Then the second most important reason and the third important reason for example, suppose I have to write a recommendation letter I have to recommend somebody know. So, in such a case when I write the first sentence I may say I recommend Mister X for the position of HR manager. So, in the first instance I have said the most important reason, but in the second one I have to give the second important reason and I have to support he has great communication skills he has the ability to know peoples needs, he can take initiatives and manage people well. So, you have justified your first statement. So, this is also a patterned which is called order of importance.

The next is chronology, chronology as you all know it refers to time and when you are describing something according to the time sequence sometimes while writing your resume or sometimes while describing in a incident or sometimes while answering to so cause notice about an accident that took place you were to create that writing in a very sequential manner in the manner of time frame. Sometimes a in the resume as you can see specially it is most useful while writing resume.

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Chronology

Most useful in resume
Accident reports
Instructions and directions

2006 Graduated from Galgotia Institute of Management in Finance
2009 Masters in Finance and Accounts
2010 Diploma in Company Secretary ship

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So, here it is mention year wise that in 2006 he did that, in 2007 he did that and again in 2008 or 9 he did like that. So, this is the chronological pattern then comes problem solution sometimes when you have a concept and through this concept you are going to talk about the problem, so, in such a situation what you are going to do.

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Problem Solution

First message deals with the problem and the second with the solution

Helpful in development of readers' understanding and retention

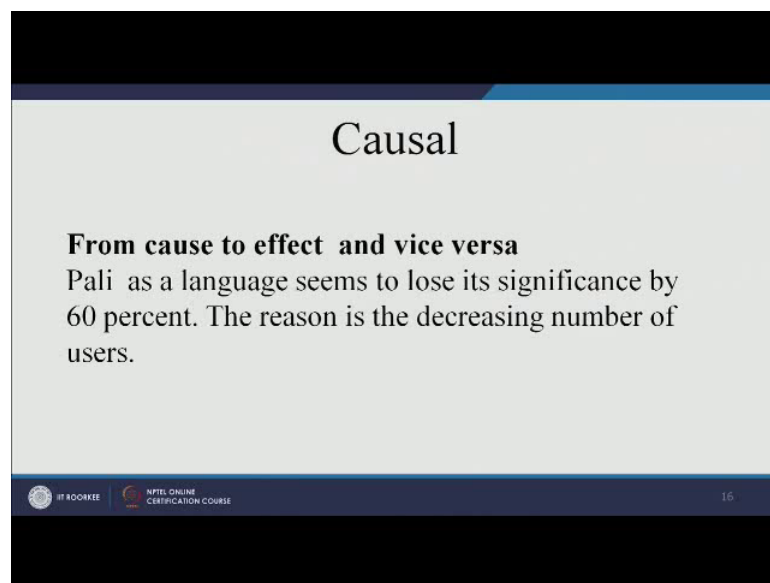
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In the first you are going to talk about the problem and the second you are offering solution because you know when you create it on when you create your writing on this

pattern the readers feel that you have been able to sustain their interest and it is also helpful in the readers understanding and the reader will also remember.

For example when you are talking about a process again your mentioning a sequence, but when you are talking about a problem again you are talking about the problem first and you are also offering your own solution.

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Causal

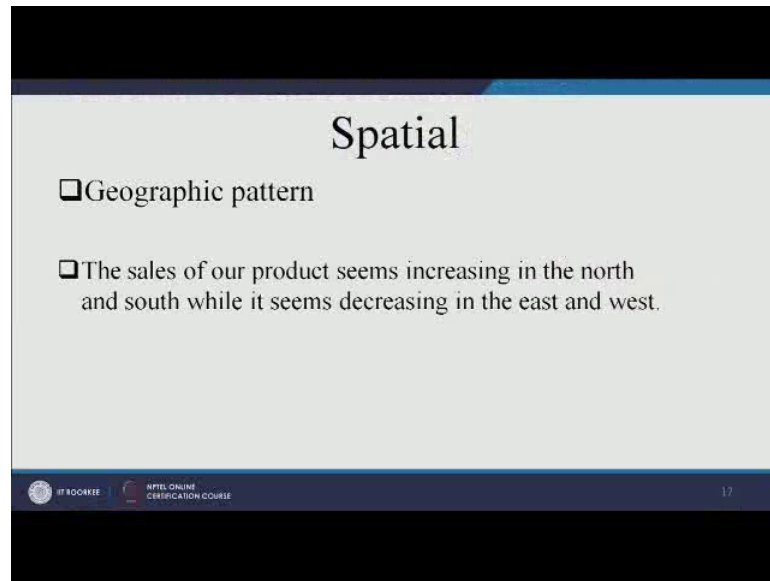
From cause to effect and vice versa
Pali as a language seems to lose its significance by 60 percent. The reason is the decreasing number of users.

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Next is causal where in the first instance either you start from the cause and then you go to the effect or you can also follow the other way round I mean the vice versa for example, let us look at this sentence Pali, Pali is a language: Pali as a language seems to lose its significance by 60 percent. So, here you have talked about an effect and then you are going to talk about the reason the reason is the decreasing number of users. So, on this pattern also you can create, you can make your writing because all these patterns they are going to help the reader not only understand, but they are also going to help the reader remember what you said.

Then come so special actually means space where you are going to talk about something in a very geographical manner and in this also depending upon your topic your style will be different, but in such a way you will follow a geographical pattern which maybe sometimes on the base of structure.

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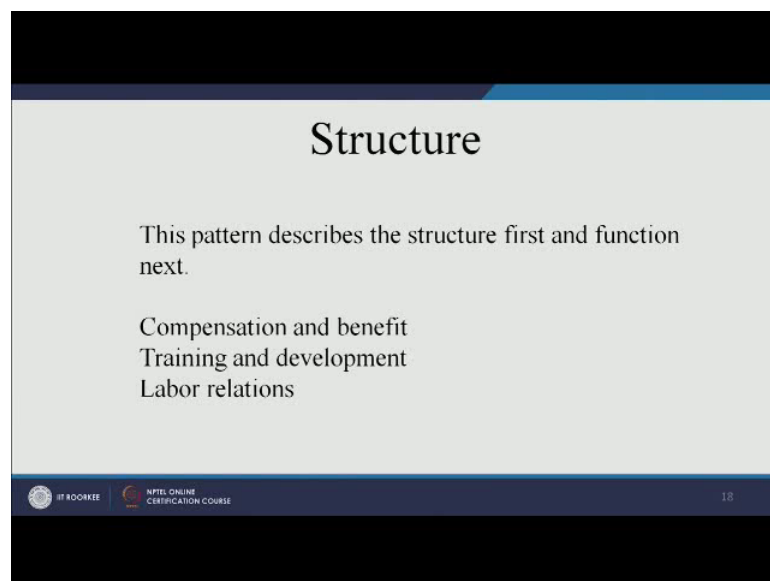
Spatial

- Geographic pattern
- The sales of our product seems increasing in the north and south while it seems decreasing in the east and west.

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The sales of a product seems increasing in the north I mean they are giving the direction and if he talks about the north in the other he will talk about the south. So, the sales of product seems increasing in the north and south while it seems to decreasing in the east and the west. And then there is another pattern which is called a structural this pattern again you know they may talk about bonus, they may talk about hike, they may talk about compensation and all. So, this is also based on if it talks about come compensation on the one hand it will talk about the benefit.

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Structure

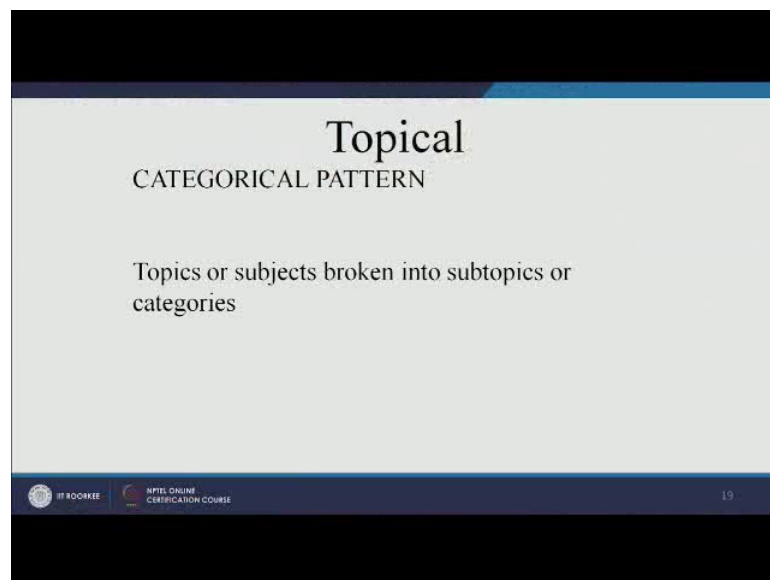
This pattern describes the structure first and function next.

- Compensation and benefit
- Training and development
- Labor relations

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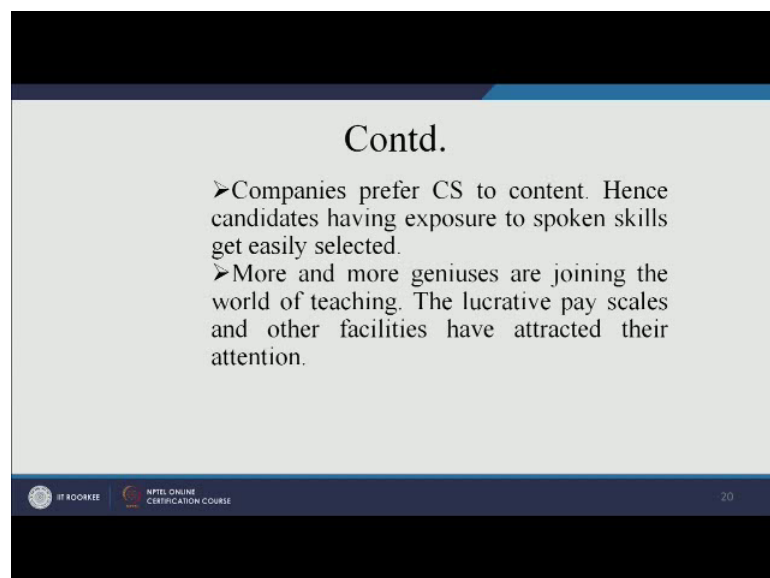
It will talk about training for example when you are proposing a course there you will provide the objective of the course and then finally, you will also talk about how it will help how it will develop and then, so there can be different ways you can describe there can be different ways you can create your messages.

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And the last one is the topical one where topics or subjects are broken into several sub topics or categories and then you are going to weave your information or your third patterns.

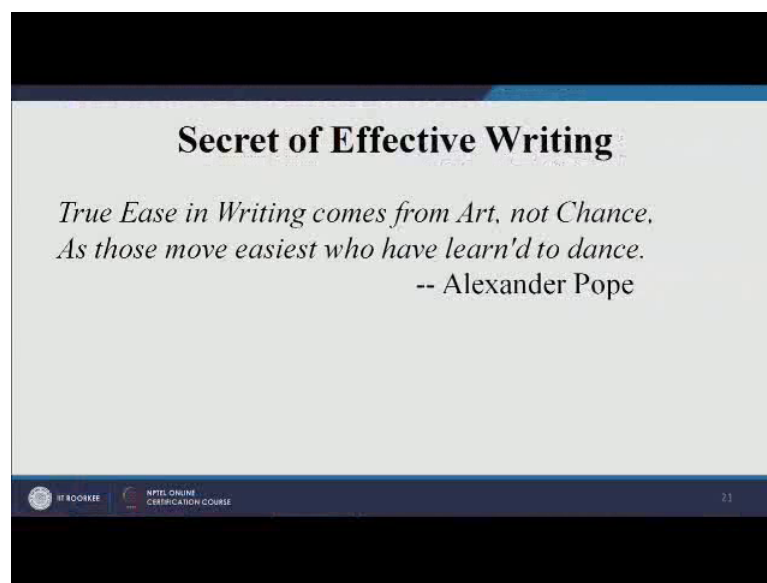
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Dear friends at times it has been seen that even good people having good knowledge they are not able to frame their sentences in the proper writing style and that is why they are not considered better. For example, here is an here is an example of a sentence where you can see more and more geniuses are joining the world of teaching. So, this is a first one and then they say the lucrative pay scales and other facilities have attracted their attention.

So, either you follow in the problem solution model or you follow the pattern of cause effect or you follow structure all you need to do is you need to think it from the point of view of your reader. Writing is an art as I have been saying and I will continue to say, but remember it is also a sort of skill and this skill has to be developed and how can you develop that skill.

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Let us take a quote from famous poet Alexander Pope's work where he says you have to feel that when you write something you have a sort of easiness and for that his suggestion is true is in writing comes from art and not chance. You cannot be a chanced writer and you cannot think that someday you will start writing suddenly very beautiful know it is actually a sort of exercise it is actually a sort of art and it requires practice as those move easiest who have learnt to dance. Meaning thereby writing is a sort of art and you have to put a lot of practice in order to make your writing not only impressive, but also expressive.

Please do remember that if we are in jobs we are in organisations it is actually the requirement of the time that we need to concentrate on our writing. We have been able to discuss what writing is and how we can try to be an effective writer, but then we will see how different occasions demand different sorts of writing, writing letters, writing reports and how what are actually the various nitty gritty of effective writing we shall discuss in the lecture to follow. Till then thank you very much, have a nice day.