

STUDY AID 4: WRITING SKILLS

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APPENDIX 1: A '*communication chain*' and its vulnerability to '*noise*'

APPENDIX 2: The impressions formed by good and bad writing

Aims

The study skills learnt in this section should enable the student to: -

- Become familiar with a variety of writing styles
- Pick out the characteristics of effective writing
- Understand the contrasts between the written and spoken word
- Follow the '*golden rules*' of effective writing
- Employ '*link words*' and '*signposts*'

- Avoid those traits that make for bad writing
- Improve upon an initially poor writing style

Section 1: Opening Comments

Semantic skills are those which help gain artistry in words, shown in greater powers of expression and often leading to written work of a high standard.

The main types of writing are: -

- 1.1 Expository:** to describe, explain, objectively argue with and comment upon a person or thing.
- 1.2 Expressive:** to convey a sense of emotion – sometimes in poetical form.
- 1.3 Legal:** used (often in great detail) for constitutional rules, government regulations, organisational codes of practice and conditions of contract.
- 1.4 Narrative:** to recount an event or to tell a story.
- 1.5 Polemical Writing:** to vigorously propagate (or demolish) a viewpoint; to expose an abuse or to provoke controversial discussion, is often characterised by the use of strong language.

All of the above types of writing involve the transference of thoughts from the writer to the reader's mind, via the written word. Hence, as **Appendix 1** shows, a '*communication chain*' exists between the writer and his/her audience. At every point this '*chain*' may be broken by '*noise*' (which denotes any factor in either the writer or the reader which may hinder effective communication). '*Noise*' affecting the writer may include a poor choice of words, ill health or interruptions; whilst '*noise*' on the reader's part also includes a limited comprehension. The writer's role is to greatly reduce the amount of '*noise*' by acquiring and practising all of the skills needed for effective writing. These are listed in **Section 2**.

Section 2: The Characteristics of Effective Writing

Effective writing is: -

- 2.1** Accurate
- 2.2** Adequate and concise
- 2.3** Appropriate
- 2.4** Balanced

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