



Reading comprehension and summary By Ihejirika, R.C. is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

CORRECTNESS & STYLE

In the English Language Skills

Edited By
Polycarp Azoma Anyanwu, Ph.D

CHAPTER 9

READING COMPREHENSION AND SUMMARY

By: Richard C. Ihejirika.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the basic ways of learning is by reading. It is therefore necessary that students should improve their reading skill if they must have meaningful learning at a tertiary institution. In fact, it is believed that success at tertiary institutions depends to a large extent on the ability to read. At this level, students are faced with too many reading exercises: reading for examination, reading for pleasure, reading for critical analysis and appreciation, etc. In view of this inevitable situation, it becomes necessary that the students should be equipped with the necessary reading skills in order to enable them to cope with the demands.

The efforts put in reading are wasted if they are not rewarded with comprehension. Actual reading is said to have taken place only when what is read is understood. Therefore, reading and comprehension are complementary.

It is our aim in this section to enable students to overcome reading and comprehension problems which they are likely to face so that they would find their reading task at tertiary institutions easy to cope with.

9.2 LEVELS OF READING AND COMPREHENSION

According to T. Y. Obah, reading involves the process whereby information is passed from the writer to the reader who without the props of facial movement, gestures, or tone of voice, the ready accompaniment of speech contexts, must learn to isolate concepts that are represented by black and white symbols - marks or words on the page. Reading and comprehension operate at different levels, and they include:

9.21 WORD RECOGNITION: In reading comprehension, word recognition is fundamental. Before reading takes place, one should have the ability to recognize the letters of the alphabet or the phonemes that combine to form words. Ability to recognize many words and associate them with meaning is all it takes to read and comprehend. Therefore, if one must read and understand, one should endeavour to enrich one's vocabulary.

9.22 SENTENCE COMPREHENSION: In reading comprehension, word recognition precedes sentence comprehension. Words that exist in isolation may not have complete meaning until they co-occur with other words in a sentence structure. Therefore, to recognise words alone cannot give rise to comprehension.

The sentence is the largest grammatical unit which is made up of clauses, phrases, words and morphemes. A sentence, like other grammatical units, has its own structure. For one to decode a sentence in order to facilitate comprehension, the structure of the sentence should be examined. Basically, a sentence can be made up of one or more clauses. For example, the sentence, "The man who came here is my father", is made up of two clauses, namely, a main clause and a subordinate clause. "The man is my father" is the main clause while "who came here" is the subordinate clause.

Also, a sentence can be made up of a subject, predicator (verb), object, complement and adjunct (adverbial). For example, the sentence "He bought a new car yesterday" is made up of:

| | | |
|-----------|---|---------------------|
| He | - | subject |
| bought | - | predicator (verb) |
| a new car | - | object . |
| yesterday | - | adjunct (adverbial) |

In addition sentence can be examined from the point of view of types. A sentence can be simple, compound or complex. A simple sentence is the one that contains only one main clause. Examples:

The man comes here always.

She dances very well.

On the other hand, a compound sentence is the one that is made up of two main clauses joined together by a conjunction.

Examples:

She speaks very well but she cannot write a complete sentence.

A sentence is complex when it contains one main clause plus one or more subordinate clauses. Examples:

She was flogged because she came late.

While I was coming to the lecture, I saw the man.

9.23 PARAGRAPH COMPREHENSION:

What words are to a sentence is what sentences are to a paragraph.

A paragraph is a collection of sentences on one idea. Though we cannot analyse a paragraph in terms of structure as we have done for the sentence, we should note that a paragraph has its own internal structure. A well written paragraph has a beginning, a middle, and an end. For a paragraph to be cohesive and have unity, the three parts must be present.

A paragraph usually contains a topic sentence which states the main idea of the paragraph. Other sentences in the paragraph illustrate and elaborate the topic sentence. The topic sentence can occur in four positions in a paragraph but the two positions in which the topic sentence occurs with highest frequency are the beginning of paragraphs **and** at the end of paragraphs.

Paragraphs cannot be understood in isolation from sentences and words. The three should be understood in order to have a comprehensive comprehension of the text where they occur. In a situation where the reader cannot decipher the meanings of some words and sentences in a text, the meanings of such words and sentences can be deduced from the context.

For the position of the topic sentence in paragraphs, read the following passages:

- i It was a day everything went wrong with John. He woke up in the morning and had severe headache. He opted to walk across the road and pick some analgesic from a nearby medicine store. On his way, he was knocked down by a reckless "ina aga". He got one of his limbs broken. It became necessary that he must be rushed to a nearby hospital for first aid before taking him to the Orthopaedic hospital for necessary treatment. A vehicle was immediately chartered for that purpose. As the driver approached the hospital gate and wanted to negotiate a bend, the vehicle summersaulted. Unfortunately for John again, his second limb was broken. Although the second accident occurred in a hospital premises, there were no doctors to give John first aid because they were on strike. As a result John was not attended to for several hours. When John was taken to a private hospital later that day, it was diagnosed that John's limbs had gone terribly bad because of the delay and that there was no alternative to amputation.
- ii. Ngozi is not only tall but fair in complexion. Her face is so perfectly built that her smiles are like the rays of the morning sun. Her impeccable legs are a piece to watch. Ngozi rarely talks, but when she does, her golden voice gladdens the heart or all that hear it. No man passes Ngozi without turning to see her the second time. She is undoubtedly a beautiful lady.

In passage one, the topic sentence is the first sentence while in passage two the last sentence is the topic sentence. In fact, every well written paragraph has a topic sentence. The ability of the reader to identify the topic sentence in each case would go a long way in enabling him to read and understand better.

9.3 READING COMPREHENSION QUESTION

The comprehension question is designed to determine the extent the reader has been able to understand the passage in question. In examination situation, comprehension questions take different forms

depending on what the examiner intends to achieve. Basically, comprehension questions can be in form of objective (multiple choice) or subjective (essay). In the objective questions, multiple choice answers are provided out of which one is correct. This form of question is what is usually obtainable in the University Matriculation Examination (UME), Poly JAMB and other examinations. The subjective type of comprehension question gives more freedom for the expression of oneself. The comprehension question in the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) is usually in subjective form.

For the objective and subjective forms of comprehension questions, none is superior to the other. The choice depends on the examiner and what he intends to achieve. All it takes for success in any of these questions is absolute comprehension of the passage in question.

According to T.Y. Obah (1981), comprehension questions can be structural questions, factual questions, inferential questions, conjectural questions and vocabulary development questions.

Structural questions are designed to test the reader's understanding of the structure of the material concerned. Such questions which have to do with stating the grammatical name of a given expression and its function in the context where it occurs are structural questions.

Factual questions are the ones that ask for the facts contained in the passage. For instance, in a passage on a scene of accident, a question that asks to know how many people that died in the accident is a factual question.

Inferential questions are meant to test the reader's understanding of the implied meaning of the content of the passage.

One level at which a passage could be comprehended is the conjectural level. That is a situation where a reader is able to use the ideas grasped from a given reading material to generate ideas outside the reading context. Any question that requires this kind of comprehension is referred to as conjectural question.

Vocabulary development questions are designed to test the reader's level of vocabulary in the story. In some comprehension tests, especially in the SSCE English Language, words are listed from the passage and the candidates are asked to give their meanings according to how

they are used in the passage. Such questions are vocabulary development questions.

9.31 ANSWERING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

The knowledge of the rules governing answering comprehension questions is indispensable if one must do very well in comprehension tests. The following rules should be noted:

- i. Errors of grammar and expression are penalised at each scoring point in a comprehension test. In answering comprehension questions, therefore, effort should be made to avoid all forms of grammatical and expression errors.
- ii. For each questions, only one answer should be given unless otherwise stated. The reason is that where one gives two answers for a question that requires only one answer, if one of the answers is wrong, the person would score zero for that question, the reason being that the wrong answer vitiates the correct one.
- iii. Some comprehension questions require words or phrases to be used to replace words or phrases in the passage where they occur.

In a situation like this, the words and phrases must fit in perfectly in the passage.

It is *vital* to go through one's work before submitting in an examination.

If the question requires that the word *vital* in the passage be replaced with another word that has the same meaning, the words "important", and "essential" can fit in very well in the passage. We can therefore say:

It is *important* to go ...

It is *necessary* to go ...

It is *essential* to go ...

Note that in this kind of question, the word or phrase to be used to replace the one in the passage must agree with it in class, number, and tense. Thus, if the word in the passage is a noun, the one to be used to replace it must be a noun; if it is in plural form, the substitute must be plural; and if it is a verb and it is either in present or past, the replacement must also be in present or past.

- iv. Comprehension answers need not be written in full sentences unless otherwise directed. What this rule implies is that if a question says, for instance,

What is your name?

instead of prolonging the answer by saying

My name is John.

One can simply answer

John.

The one-word answer is better for several reasons. First, it saves time. Secondly, the chances of committing grammatical and expression errors are reduced.

Exercises

PASSAGE 1

Reading the following passages carefully and answer the questions that follow:

How often have you faced a wardrobe full of clothes, yet unable to find a suitable outfit to wear for an occasion? The fact is that when you have too many clothes, you could get confused when it comes to choosing what to wear. In order to avoid such situation it's always best to make clothes that suit you and make you feel comfortable, not necessarily what's in vogue.

According to Mrs Blessing Inyambe of Men's Accessories on Opebi Road, "a wardrobe is a personality thing. If you walk into a woman's bedroom, you should be able to tell her character when she opens her wardrobe. Just as people differ in character, so do our wardrobes".

A practical wardrobe that can serve you for all seasons therefore, she says, is a wise choice for every woman.

So, what's Mrs Inyambe idea of a practical wardrobe? "Basically, a wardrobe should consist of working, outing, and casual wears.

For the corporate woman, her working clothes should actually depend on the kind of job she does. Ideally, I think her working clothes should include, ten very good skirt-suits, five skirts in basic colours like black, navy blue, white etc. in long and short lengths with about ten blouses for various colours to mix and match the skirts.

In addition, working clothes should include about three to five gowns as well as three good blazers. A woman that owns such working clothes is assured of a good working wardrobe to carry her for a full year".

"Outing clothes depend on the kind of occasions one gets invited to. Most Nigerians don't attend cocktails except the proper upper-class, so there's no need to *load* your wardrobe full of evening gowns. It is wiser to concentrate on native outfits. This also depends on the part of the country you come from.

In the South, we are more into Gorge wrappers and iro and buba. I favour Gorge because it hardly goes out of fashion. Considering the high cost of clothes presently, it's not wise buying clothes you can't convert into working outfits, it's more like tying down so much money as they'll just be there *staring* you in the face once they're out of fashion. Boubous and caftans are also essentials in the wardrobe, they cut across every part of the country.

"Shoes and bags - at any point of time, it's good to go for very good leader working shoes in the basic colours of black, brown etc. then have about five party shoes of various colours with bags to match.

Your working bags shouldn't be changed too often in order not to misplace your documents. A fairly spacious black or brown leather bag is ideal for the office.

Jewellery is very expensive but they should not be found missing in any woman's wardrobe. They don't have to be in excess, particularly with the high rate of robbery these days. I recommend stones and very good dainty jewellery, they complement the clothes nicely.

Costume jewellery, *particularly* the designer makes are very good. Some of them can be used for several years. It's wiser to wear costume jewellery on your day-to-day outings and preserve the expensive jewellery for special outings.

Other items which should not be missing in your wardrobe are sunshades - they complement your dressing nicely.

Belts - Italian belts are best because you could use one for years. Most of the other makes in the market are more of shiny things *which go dark or sharp with usage*. So it's best to invest on good leather belts with gold placed buckles.

(Culled from Sunday Vanguard, February 23, 1997).

- a. What problem does a person who has a wardrobe full of clothes often face?
- b. How can the problem be taken care of?
- c. What can you consider a practical wardrobe?
- d. What determines the clothes of a working woman?
- e. "... which go dark or sharp with usage"
 - i. What is the grammatical name given to the above expression?
 - ii. What is its function in the sentence?
- f. For each of the following words, find another word or phrase that means the same and can replace it as used in the passage:
 - i. trendy
 - ii. Corporate
 - iii. to load
 - iv. staring
 - v. particularly

PASSAGE 2

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow:

During her days of mourning, Ihuoma wept *when she plastered her husband's grave* and thought of him as she gathered one item after the other for his second burial. She saddened and sorrowed at the mere look of her sackcloth, but sadness and sorrow go well with loneliness.

With the termination of her days of mourning the *pangs* of solitude redoubled their sting. It was lucky she had three children and the farm to look after. She threw all her energies into them. Her children were neat and well fed and her farm was so *thoroughly* weeded that, as Nnenda remarked, one could feed off the ground. But in the evenings, the blank was hard to fill. She developed the habit of going to bed soon after the children had stopped their chatter and dropped off to sleep.

Her long nights' rests soon restored her. She put on a little more weight and her cheeks filled out again. The tired look on her face paved way to a sweet youthful expression, softly *alluring*, deeply enchanting, which had a bewitching subtlety that only deep sorrow can give. *Ihuoma's beauty had returned*. Young men and even the old gazed at her again *irresistibly*.

On some Eke days, Ihuoma went to Omuigwe to see her parents. On one particular day, her mother Okachi invited her specifically. She went along with her three children. On arrival they were received by the usual hugs and greetings. Ihuoma's little brother and sisters enjoyed her visits most. They liked the presents of dried fish and nuts which she invariably brought them, and in addition they enjoyed *romping* with Nwonna and the other two children.

(Culled from *The Concubine* p. 36)

- a. What made Ihuoma to put on weight and have her cheek filled out again?
- b. How did Ihuoma ameliorate her solitude?
- c. Give two reasons why Ihuoma's siblings enjoy her visit.
- d. "Ihuoma's beauty had returned"

- i. What figure of speech is the above expression?
- ii. What is the meaning?
- e. "... when she plastered her husband's grave ..."
 - i. What is the grammatical name of the above expression?
 - ii. What is the function in the sentence?
- f. For each of the following words, give one word or phrase that means the same thing and can replace it as it is used in passage.
 - i. pangs
 - ii. thoroughly
 - iii. Alluring
 - iv. irresistibly
 - v. romping

PASSAGE 3

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow:

Unemployment and under-employment in developing countries are most acute in the areas outside a few metropolitan cities; so there is massmigration into these cities in a desperate search for livelihood: and the cities themselves, in spite of rapid economic growth, become infested with ever-growing multitudes of destitute people. Any visitor who has ventured outside the opulent districts of these cities has seen their shanty towns and belts of misery, which are often growing ten times as fast as the cities themselves.

Current forecasts of the growth of metropolitan areas in India, and many other developing countries, conjure up a picture of towns with 20, 40 and even 60 million people - a prospect of 'immiseration' for a rootless and jobless mass of humanity that beggars the imagination.

No amount of brave statistics of national income growth can hide the fact that all too many developing countries are suffering from the twin diseases of growing unemployment and mushrooming metropolitan slums, which is placing their social and political fabric under an intolerable strain.

The suspicion has been voiced (and cannot be lightly dismissed) that foreign aid, as currently practised, may actually be intensifying these twin diseases instead of mitigating them; that the heedless rush into modernization extinguishes old jobs faster than it can create new ones; and that all the apparent increases in national income are eaten up, or even more than eaten up, by the crushing economic burdens produced by excessive urban growth.

E. G. Schumacher: (How to help them help themselves') Observer.

- a. According to the passage, name one basic problem of developing countries.
- b. What is one cause of 'strain' mentioned in the passage?
- c. In what way might foreign aid be directly used so that it is of more help than it is now?
- d. "... which is placing their social and political fabric under an intolerable strain".
 - i. What is the grammatical name of the above expression?
 - ii. What is the function?
- e. For each of the following words, find another word or phrase that means the same and can replace it as used in the passage:
 - i. opulent
 - ii. shanty
 - iii. voiced
 - iv. intensifying
 - v. extinguishes and
 - vi. eaten up

SUMMARY WRITING

9.4 INTRODUCTION

Summary writing is an exercise that pre-supposes reading and comprehension. That is to say that before summary takes place, reading and comprehension must have taken place. You can only summarize what you have read and understood.

We practise summary writing unconsciously every day. But ironically, summary writing is an aspect of English many students find

extremely difficult. This situation stems from the fact that many students read a passage without understanding it because of poor vocabulary and poor reading habits. Therefore, in order to demystify the notion that summary is a “no-go” area, attempt should be made to highlight some of the vital steps that should be taken when writing summary and in addition, some exercises will be given.

The word summary is presently used in place of a much more archaic and old-fashioned word “precis”. In terms of meaning, summary means restatement of the major idea or point in a brief form. Put differently, summary could be said to be a brief and clear statement in a connected and readable shape of the substance of a longer passage.

9.4 IMPORTANCE OF SUMMARY

The importance of summary could be summarized as follows:

- i. Knowledge becomes a part of oneself only when one is able to express it in one's own words.
- ii. Summary enables a student to confirm that information which he has gathered from books, lectures, seminars, laboratories, etc. is a part of his knowledge.
- iii. It enables one to communicate knowledge gained from other sources effectively, and this skill is useful in preparing for exams, participating in discussion or seminars, giving reports and taking notes in lectures.
- iv. It forces a student to become actively involved in the learning process.

9.5 ESSENTIALS OF SUMMARY WRITING

- i. A good understanding of the passage is a prerequisite to a meaningful summary.
- ii. In summary, there is no room for irrelevances. The main ideas should be highlighted.
- iii. Though summary is a selective extraction of information from a given passage, the writer's new points must be retained.
- iv. It must express the content, that is, key expressions and principal statements of the passage briefly but concisely.

- v. It must express the content of a passage in the order in which the author presented them, unless instructed otherwise.
- vi. A summary must not contain repetitions, illustrations or personal additions. It may, however, contain the most important detail supporting a principal statement.
- vii. It must employ a variety of sentence structures. The complex and compound sentences must be used in order to reduce the volume of the original passage.
- viii. A summary is not a mere deletion of certain words, phrases and sentences from a given passage and the addition of whatever is left behind.

9.6 RULES FOR STUDYING A SUMMARY QUESTION

- i. Read the question first before ever attempting to read the passage. This immediately focuses your attention on the essential lines of thought required by the question.
- ii. Read with concentration the entire passage carefully for at least two times.
- iii. Now read the question again and try to relate the questions to the passage read.
- iv. Read the passage again and underline words and areas specifically required by the question.
- v. Now read the questions one after the other and attempt jotting down the essence of each answer from the passage. Remember that you are required to answer the question set along the lines required and that you are not making a summary of the whole passage.
- vi. For each question now, write a short simple answer involving all the relevant words you jotted down while relating the questions to the passage.
- vii. Do not include unnecessary details such as example, instances, explanations, etc. unless so demanded.
- viii. Use compendious words where necessary in your answer.
- ix. Read your answer again to ensure that you include only the relevant words.

9.7 **THINGS THAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED IN
SUMMARY WRITING**

i. **Mindless lifting:** In examination situation, mindless lifting in summary writing scores zero. Mindless lifting has to do with a situation where a whole sentence or paragraph is copied word for word to stand for a summary answer without any form of modification. However, modified lifting is acceptable. Modified lifting is a situation whereby one or two words are copied from the sentence that contains the summary answer and blended with the writer's own words.

ii. **Inclusion of irrelevant/extraneous materials:**

In summary, what is required is the main idea not details, examples or illustrations. Inclusion of these materials in a summary answer usually attracts penalty in an examination situation. Therefore efforts should be made to avoid unnecessary materials as much as possible.

iii. **Summary answers should not be written in phrases, subordinate clauses or incomplete sentences unless there is a preamble which will make a complete sentence if taken with the rest of the answer, for example:**
The factors responsible for the fall in standard in education are:

- i. poor teaching
- ii. non availability of teaching materials
- iii. poor attitude to learning, etc.

Each of these answers would score full marks in examination situation because when taken with the preamble, it would give a complete sentence. For instance, we can have:

The factor responsible for the fall in the standard of education is poor teaching. Where there is no preamble, summary answers should be written in complete sentence.

iv. **Grammatical errors should also be avoided in summary.** The reason is that at any scoring point in summary in examination situation any grammatical error attracts a penalty.

EXERCISES

PASSAGE 1

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow:

It is not possible to admit that there is life of any sort on the moon. It is a world that is completely and utterly dead, a sterile mountainous waste on which during the heat of the day the sun blazes down with relentless fury, but where during the long night the cold is so intense that it far surpasses anything ever experienced on the earth.

These hard facts are conveniently ignored by those who believe that it would be possible to shoot a rocket containing human beings to the moon, from which the human explorers could land and explore some portion of the moon's surface. The explorers would need to be encased in airtight suits and provided with oxygen apparatus to enable them to breathe. Even supposing that they could protect themselves against the great heat by day and the extreme cold night, a worse fate might be in store for them unless their suits were completely bullet proof. For they would be in danger of being shot by a shooting star. The average shooting star or meteor, which gives so strongly the impression of a star falling from the sky, is small fragment of matter, usually smaller than a pea and often no larger than a grain of sand. Space is not empty but contains great numbers of such fragments. The earth, in its motion round the sun, meets many of these fragments, which enter the atmosphere at a speed many times greater than that of a rifle bullet. The meteor, rushing through the air, becomes intensely heated by friction and is usually completely vaporised before it has penetrated within a distance of twenty miles from the surface of the earth. Many millions of these fragments enter our atmosphere in the course of a day, but the atmosphere protects us from them. On the moon, however, they fall to the surface and so great is their number that the lunar explorers would run a considerable risk of being hit.

The difficulties that would have to be encountered by anyone who attempted to explore the moon—assuming that it was possible to get there—would be incomparably greater than those that have to be faced in the

endeavour to reach the summit of Mount Everest. In two respects only would the lunar explorers have the advantage. In the first place movement would be less fatiguing because the gravitational pull of the moon is not very great, the weight of the moon being only about one-eightieth of that of the earth. If the moon had an atmosphere like that of the earth, a golfer on the moon would find that he could drive his ball for a mile without much difficulty and a moderate batsman would hit sizes with the greatest of ease. The second advantage the lunar explorer would have over the climbers on Mount Everest would be the absence of strong winds to contend against. The moon having no atmosphere, there can be no wind; nor, of course, can there be any noise, for sound is carried by the air. The moon is a world that is completely still and where utter silence prevails. (Sir Harold Spencer Jones: *Life on Other Worlds*).

- a. In three sentences, one for each disadvantage, state the disadvantages to be encountered by men exploring the moon.
- b. In two sentences, one for each advantage, state the advantages to be encountered by men exploring the moon.

PASSAGE 2

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow:

For the first time in the history of the world, every human being is now subjected to contact with dangerous chemicals, from the moment of conception until death. In the less than two decades of their use, the synthetic pesticides have been so thoroughly distributed throughout the animate and inanimate world that they occur virtually everywhere. They have been recovered from most of the major river systems and even from streams of ground-water flowing unseen through the earth. Residues of these chemicals linger in soil to which they may have been applied on fish, birds, reptiles, and domestic and wild animals so universally that scientists carrying on animal experiments find it almost impossible to locate subjects free from contamination. They have been found in fish in remote mountain

lakes, in earthworms burrowing in the soil, in the eggs of birds - and in himself. For these chemicals are now stored in the bodies of the vast majority of human beings, regardless of age. They occur in the mother's milk, and probably in the tissues of the unborn child.

All this has come about because of the sudden rise and prodigious growth of an industry for the production of man-made or synthetic chemicals with insecticidal properties. This industry is a child of the second World War. In the course of developing agents of chemical warfare, some of the chemicals created in the laboratory were found to be lethal to insects. The discovery did not come by chance: insects were widely used to test chemicals as agents of death for man.

The result has been a seemingly endless stream of synthetic insecticides. In being man-made-by ingenious laboratory manipulation of the molecules, substituting atoms, altering their arrangement - they differ sharply from the simpler inorganic insecticides of pre-war days. These were derived from naturally occurring minerals and plant products - compounds of arsenic, copper, lead, manganese, zinc, and other minerals, pyrethrum from some of the relatives of tobacco, and rotenone from leguminous plants of the East Indies.

What sets the new synthetic insecticides apart is their enormous biological potency. They have immense power not merely to poison but to enter into the most vital processes of the body and change them in sinister and often deadly ways. Thus, as we shall see, they destroy the very enzymes whose function is to protect the body from harm, they block the oxidation process from which the body receives its energy, they prevent the normal functioning of various organs, and they may initiate in certain cells the slow and irreversible change that leads to malignancy.

- a. In three sentences, one for each effect, state the effects of man's use of dangerous chemicals.

PASSAGE 3

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions on it.

In recent report, UNICEF painted the ugly side of Lagos. The report which was presented to State Administrator Col. Duba Marwa is graphic portrayal of the rot behind the glitters. It is a vivid representation

of urban decay. The type that nudges the conscience of a city which prides itself the Centre of Excellence. According to the report, 75% of Lagos population live in deteriorating conditions, unemployed and lack social welfare. Majority of its teeming population live either in the blighted slums or in the city. But this is just a fraction of the multiple faces of Lagos. There are other curious aspects of the metropolis.

Since its creation three decades ago, Lagos had passed and still passes through changing phases. Its metamorphoses have been from the simple to the complex, the familiar to the bizarre and the peaceful to the violent.

Lagos has an important political antecedent. In the years of yore, it was the seat of the colonialists in Southern protectorate. At independence, Lagos was the capital of Nigeria. Thus the city was one of the centres of political activities of the first and second republics. Most of the political intrigues and subterfuges of the first republic played out in Lagos. The political fury of that period included Lagos in the wild-wild west. During the second republic and the aborted third republic, the city remained the centre of political attraction. All successful military coups were hatched in Lagos.

Indeed, the political development of Nigeria is the development of Lagos. Despite the relocation of seat of government to Abuja in 1991, for many, Lagos is still Nigeria. That Lagos politics often generates an intense passion underscores this. Its size notwithstanding, it is seen as the microcosm of the Nigerian society.

Its location confers an unrivaled economic advantage. For one, Lagos is situated on a Coastal region. This unique geographic advantage makes Lagos Nigeria's port city. The presence of major parts, both sea and land as well as road outlets to neighbouring countries are the city's economic strength. It is not in doubt that the city is Nigeria's economic power house. Lagos is the nerve centre of the nation's commerce and industry. It is metropolis with the largest concentration of financial institutions and industries. Commercial activities are at their thriving best in Lagos. Daily, residential buildings and areas are gradually transforming to commercial centres. New trading outlets, both legal and illegal open up in

Lagos on daily basis. A combination of these opportunities have engendered an up surge in rural-urban migration in the last one and half decades. About five thousand people are estimated to be migrating to Lagos on daily basis. For them, Lagos offers infinite employment opportunities, but this has proved an illusion that is a very short distance from reality. Indeed, Lagos is a paradox of an urban reality. It advertises numerous employment opportunities but its largest population are jobless. This is one of the sordid sides of Lagos.

In the city, survival is a struggle as it is a nightmare. Residents are victims of economic exploitations. The exploitative employers, the shylock landlords, the merciless transporters and profiteering market traders are the ordeal of workers and residents. This is for a very few who can afford an average standard of living. For many, it is living below poverty line.

(Culled from Sunday Vanguard, February 13, 1997).

- a. In four sentences, one for each problem, state the three problems facing the inhabitants of Lagos.
- b. In two sentences, one for each, state two benefits the Nigerian nation gains from Lagos.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Grieve, D.W. and Pratt, K. (1968) *Certificate English Language*. Lagos: Thomas Nelson (Nig) Ltd.
2. Obah, T.Y. (1981) "Techniques for Faster Reading" in *The Use of English For Higher Education*, ed. Oluikpe, B.O.A., Onitsha: Africana - Fep. Publishers Ltd.
3. University of Ife, Department of English (1975). *The Use of English: A Text*. Ibadan: The Caston Press (WA) Ltd.
4. Uzoma, C.O., et al (1986) *The Use of English For Higher Education*. Onitsha: Barcye Industrial Press Ltd.

