The Use of ENGLISH and COMMUNICATION SKILLS
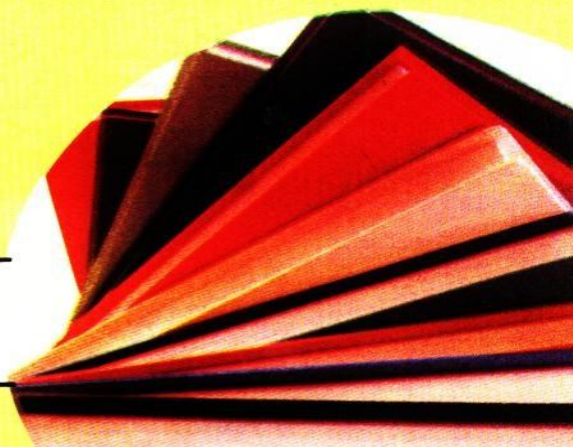
For Tertiary Education

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Three

STUDY SKILLS
Uche Nnamani and Mark Ononiwu

3.1   Time Management

3.1.1 Introduction to Time management
"Nothing really belongs to us but time, which even he has who has nothing else" — **Baltasar Cyracian**

We are all very familiar with the story of Alexander the Great's three wishes while on his death-bed. He had summoned his generals and instructed them that the best doctors should carry his coffin to demonstrate that in the face of death; even the best doctors in the world have no power to heal. Second, he said the road should be covered with his treasures so that everybody sees that material wealth acquired on earth will stay on earth. Finally, he wants his hands to swing in the wind so that people understand that we came to this world empty-handed and leave the world empty-handed after the most precious treasure of all is exhausted and that is TIME. His generals were puzzled and he went ahead to explain to them that we do not take to our grave any material wealth and that time is our most precious

treasure because it is LIMITED. He said that we can produce more wealth but we cannot produce more time.

This story and the above quotation by Baltasar Gracian both underscore the critical role of time in human existence and affairs. They demonstrate that time is the most valuable finite resource we have (Jay 2002:100), and it determines how meaningful such existence would be. Yet, it is strange that most people live through life without paying the least attention to or caring a bit about how this crucial but limited driver of existence called time is used. Students at all levels of educational pursuit constitute the highest percentage of time abusers and neglect. Yet, they represent the most critical population that require effective time management if the future of the society is to be productive. It has been observed that most students in tertiary institutions fritter away a good chunk of their time within their first one year in school either because of the unlimited freedom they enjoy or due to ignorance of the enormous challenges of their new academic environment. This has led to high cases of unfulfilled dreams and ambitions or more still, very little achievement under very stressful condition, hence, the need for a course on time management as a tool for nipping this ugly trend in the bud.

3.1.2   What is Time Management?

Time management is an organized method for planning the use of your time to achieve goals. It is the act or process of planning and exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase effectiveness, efficiency and productivity (Wikipedia). Broadly speaking, time management encompasses not just the management of time within the business, academic or workplace but also the individual's personal activities. As a matter of fact, if the individual is unable to discipline himself in the management of his personal activities, hardly can he adapt his idiosyncrasies to the more serious techniques required to manage and exert a measure of control over it in the workplace or study for that matter. Levin (2007:2) captures the peculiar challenges faced by students or learners in a school environment in time management as follows:

> Planning ahead to do a piece of work that involves learning is not easy, because everything you do when you're learning involves an element of novelty of newness, and accordingly some uncertainty. You hardly ever have an exactly similar past experience to refer to, and you never know what tomorrow will bring: Some new insight or piece of

information may come your way that sets
you off on a different track or sends you
back to revise what you have spent the
past three weeks writing.

From the above excerpts, one can see, that the task of time management for the students is much more daunting either because they operate under an environment of uncertainty, never knowing what to expect, or largely because tasks are imposed upon them. Students frequently complain about not finding enough time to cover their readings, meet assignment deadlines, lectures, and so many other tasks and activities.

Class Activity: Do Exercise 2 in Chapter Three of the workbook.

3.1.3 Measures to combat time management problems

Once you are able to identify your most recurrent problem in managing your time, it is time to do what is called 'planning', which means planning ahead. This will require a number of proactive strategies or techniques such as strategic thinking and time use strategy.

3.1.3.1 Strategic Thinking

This involves thinking ahead of the task before you. You

take a panoramic view of the size of the task involved in your set goal and the challenges to be encountered in achieving them. The strategic thinker generates critical questions around the task before him and takes proactive steps in providing answers to these questions. Being aware of the exact shape of the task before him, the strategic thinker skillfully manages his time and avoids unnecessary crises that usually come with deadline clashes. Failure to think strategically puts you under stress with its attendant consequences. But those who think strategically enjoy more freedom, greater control over their study activities, and produce better works in a seemingly effortless way.

3.1.3.2   Time Use strategy

Time use strategy is a process which ensures that you not only exact control over your future time, as we saw above, but that your time is used productively. According to Levin (2007:13), adapting a time-use strategy requires the following things:

1. Finding the time that you need in order to accomplish your task
2. Committing yourself to making the effort necessary to accomplish your task
3. Making sure that you comprehend exactly what it is that your task requires you to do.
4. Getting hold of the physical resources such as

books, equipment, material, that your task requires.

5. Finding an environment to work in that is conducive to accomplishing your task.

The above conditions will require what Linda Wong (2006:68) calls "managing your Time Profile", an assessment of your individual attitude towards time management and the task before you. According to her, students should respond to the questions below before getting into time use strategy proper.

		YES	NO
1	I use a weekly schedule to organize my studying, work, and social lives		
2	Friends and family often take priority over my study time		
3	I try to make each day's schedule to be different so I do not get bored		
4	I often study for three hours or more in a row so I can stay current		

	with my reading and homework assignments		
5	I usually study two hours during the week for every one hour in class		
6	I schedule specific times to study during the weekend		
7	I know the time during the day when I am the most mentally alert		
8	I study my least favourite subject at night		
9	I avoid time management because I prefer to be spontaneous		
10	I am confident that I have the skills necessary to manage my time well		

(Culled from Essential Study Skills by Linda Wong, p.68)

Class Activity: Do Exercise 3 of Chapter Three of the workbook.

3.1.4 Managing Your Time

Balancing your life		Term Schedules
Applying Time Management	Managing your Time	· Weekly Schedules
Task Schedules		Daily Schedules
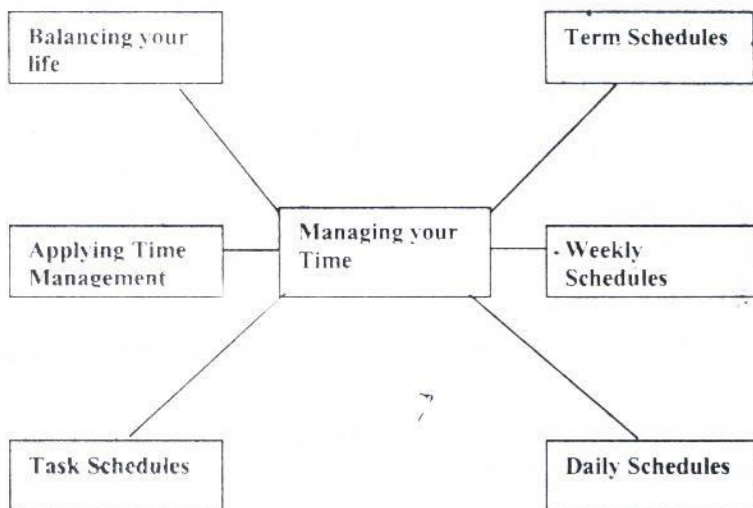
(Culled from Essential Study Skills by Linda Wong, p.67)

3.1.4.1   Balancing your life

As stated in the introductory section of this discussion, if an individual is unable to discipline himself in the management of his personal activities, it will be difficult for him to effectively organize and exert any meaningful control over his study time. The first step in this process of self-discipline is using what Linda Wong calls "the pie of life method"

3.1.4.2   The Pie of Life
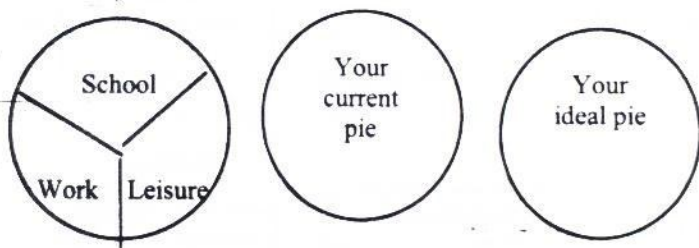
(Culled from Essential study skills by Linda Wong, p. 69)

As can be seen above, the pie of life represents the quantity of time you allow to the three contending areas of your life: school, work and leisure. A student should be able to get his priorities right by indicating how much time he gives or dedicates to each of these areas. For example, the first pie has three equal parts but that does not mean that everybody should have exactly that plan. A lot depends on your circumstance in life and the condition under which you study. Some are working while attending school at the same time while others operate from their homes where there is likely to be domestic interference.

Class Activity: Using The Pie of Life diagram above, do Exercise 4 of Chapter Three of the workbook.

3.1.4.3   Increase-Decrease Method   .

This method involves shedding off or accommodating what intrudes into your time or creating more time for neglected areas. It is a kind of give and take strategy that enables you to discover areas where you have been wasting time unnecessarily so that you don't fall into the category of students who are "busy doing nothing" or who are "jack of all trades and master of non". The table below will certainly help you to determine where to add flesh to your time and where to shed off depending on, as we noted earlier, your circumstance and the opportunities available to you. The increase-decrease method has a column for problem identification on the left and possible solutions to them on the right. The problem of dealing with contending activities in the three major areas of students' lives presented and possible solutions are offered.

As a student you can draw a one-week time log to show the amount of time you give to the three major areas of life:

1. School – Include class or lecture time, reading and studying, school activities and meetings, study groups, and lab times
2. Work – Include employment (if any), household chores, preparing meals, and errands.
3. Leisure – Include 'time for friends, family

members, talking on the phone, watching television, listening to music, using the internet, recreation, exercise, hobbies etc.

Note: You may also include time spent on sleeping or napping or any other thing not listed above.

3.1.4.4   Term Schedule

This is otherwise called semester schedule and represents what you want to accomplish within a given semester or term. It is a month by month plan or calendar intended to guide you through important events and deadlines within a particular semester. Term schedule should reflect the following items in its planning

1.   Create important deadlines for special projects, reports and lab assignments that appear on course outline.

2.   Insert dates for tests, mid-terms and final exams

3.   Special events, meetings, workshops or conferences

4.   Personal appointments on or off campus

5.   Holidays

6.   Time for tutorials, study groups, or other support services.

3.1.4.5   Weekly Schedules

Unlike the term schedule, the weekly is much more

detailed and focused on plan that serves as a guide for creating a comfortable, manageable routine in which you can be productive and bring greater balance to your life. This plan helps you organize, monitor and regulate your use of time for various activities and obligations starting from Sunday to Saturday. This plan is very common with students, and Wong (2006:75) suggests the following steps for creating a weekly Time-Management Schedule

1. Write in all your fixed activities
2. Write in your fixed study time for each class
3. Add several flexible study blocks
4. Add time for personal goals and other responsibilities
5. Schedule leisure, family, and social time.

Class Activity: Using the sample weekly schedule below, do Exercise 5 of Chapter Three of the workbook.create your own weekly activities taking cognizance of the recommended five steps above

WEEKLY TIME-MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE
For the week of _____ Name _____

Time	Mon.	Tues.	Wed	Thurs	Fri.	Sat.	Sun
12 – 6am							
6 – 7.00							
7 – 8.00							
8 – 9.00							
9 – 10am							
10 – 11am							
11–12noon							
12 – 1.pm							
1 – 2.00							
2 – 3.00							
3 – 4.00							
4 – 5.00							
5 – 6.00							
6 – 7.00							
7 – 8.00							
8 – 9.00							
9 – 10.00							
10 – 11.00							
11 – 12.am							

3.1.4.6   Task Schedule

As the name implies, this represents specific list of task you wish to accomplish in a day, say on a Monday or any other day of the week.   These include specific homework, review activities, chores or errands; family, social, recreational or leisure activities needed to be

discharged in the course of a day. Example:

Monday

Time	Morning	Afternoon	Evening/Night

Or

Monday

8 – 11.00am	
11 – 12.noon	
1 – 3.00pm	
3 – 5.00pm	

3.1.4.6 Task Schedule

This is a step-by-step plan for accomplishing a specific activity within a specific time span say from 10.00am–12. noon. The activity may be an in-class test or examination essay. Every examination paper has a specific time and whenever you are in an examination hall, you are involved in a specific task of managing your time to achieve success in the course or subject. Sensitizing yourself to this challenge helps you to avoid waste of time trying to decide what to do or where to start. It also gives you a purpose and motivates you to achieve your goals.

3.1.5 Applying Time Management

This section is simply an advice on how to effectively make use of all the techniques of time management we have been discussing above. These include:

1. Flexibility – be willing to let go of your old habits and cleavages which tend to stand in the way of your current challenges and tasks.

2. Be willing to inform others of your commitment to time management so they can understand your change of habit and even assist you in adjusting to your new challenges.

3. Be honest and humble enough to seek help when hitches occur. You could discuss with your lecturers or fellow students for possible solutions.

4. Modify strategies for independent study. Self-discipline and dedication and above all, sincerity is required here to be able to follow all your schedules from weekly to specific tasks.
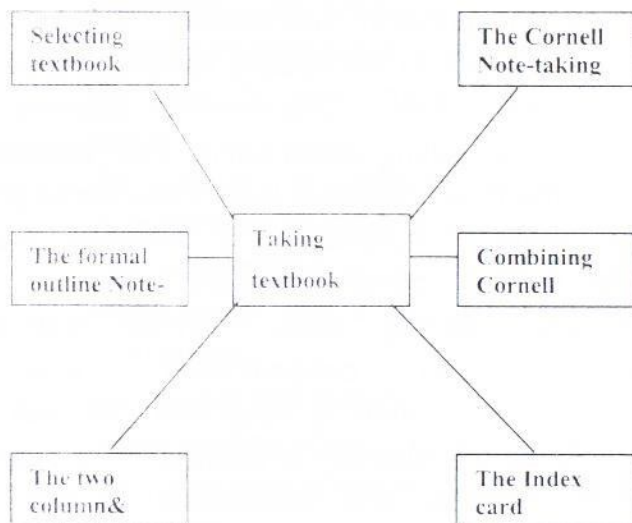
3.2 NOTE-TAKING

3.2.1 Introduction to Note-Taking

One of the most essential skills a student must possess

in order to achieve comprehension of any subject or topic is note-taking. Broadly, we have various situations which require us to take notes: we take note when we are listening to a lecture, public speech, legal proceedings, a discussion, and reading. This forms the basis for the distinction .we usually have between note-taking and note-making. One involves listening while the other involves jotting down points from reading. In either case, the main objective is to make some jottings of salient points. Note-taking is therefore crucially connected to two other important language skills: Listening and reading skills. While Note-taking enhances listening concentration, note-mating enhances comprehension of what one has read in a textbook. Since the quantity of information a student is required to process and understand in any given situation, whether while listening or reading from a textbook, is enormous, it becomes important that he or she devises a number of strategies to maximize his learning and comprehension within the scheduled period for a particular task. Below is a diagram which can provide students with reliable options for capturing main ideas and important supporting details in textbooks and lectures.

3.2.2 Note-taking Systems

NOTE-MAKING DIAGRAM

Selecting textbook		The Cornell Note-taking
The formal outline Note-	Taking textbook	Combining Cornell
The two column&		The Index card

(Culled from Essential Study Skill by Linda Wong, P.227)

As will be explained shortly, the above strategies provide students with viable options for taking notes either in a classroom lecture or while reading from textbooks. It should be noted that what one is listening to or reading determines what method to adopt.

3.2.2.1   Selecting a Textbook Note-taking system.

As stated earlier, efficient reading skill will help students to comprehend textbook information. Taking notes from textbooks makes you an active learner and helps you

select vital information that is important to learn and remember. In selecting textbook note-taking system, it is important to note the following:

a. Notes should be based on understanding. To be able to select the most salient points from what one is reading there must be understanding of what one is reading. It is very difficult to make accurate and effective notes on any topic you do not understand.

b. Only important concepts, main ideas, and supporting details should be put down concisely and clearly in the form of sub-headings. A skill in summary writing is very essential here.

c. Make use of organized and consistent structure. Notes on each topic or subject should be kept together preferably in loose – leaf, folder and dated for easy identification and use.

d. Supply bibliographical data when making notes from textbooks and other written materials.

e. Decide what kind of note is most suitable – extraction of facts, summary, paraphrase, quotation or combination of the above. This strategy ensures that the information is complete and accurate.

f. Always use your own words in your notes, unless you specifically put in quotes, any definitions or points lifted from other sources.

g. When taking notes, use as many abbreviations that are meaningful to you as possible.

h. If the note is from a book, write the page number on which you found the information you are noting. after the identification of the sources

i. At the top left write a short heading to indicate the kind of information the note contains.

j. In the end, check the note for accuracy.

3.2.2.2   The Cornell Note-taking system.

The Cornell method is organized steps intended to ensure that you do not go back to the book at any other time.   According to Linda Wong, the method was "designed by Dr. Walter Pauk at Cornell University more than forty-five years ago" as a response to students' need for a more effective note-taking.   It has five steps known as the five Rs: Record, Reduce, Recite, Reflect and Review.   The jotting paper for the Cornell method has the design below.

	Book Chapter
	Introduction
	1. Important point
	2. important point
	3. Important point
	4. Important point
	First Heading
	1.
	2.
	- Mino supporting details
	- Minor supporting details
	Second Heading
	1.
	2.
	3.
	4.

Under record, you put down all information you consider important on the right side of the paper as shown above. In step two, you now reduce by writing on the left column (known as recall column) for the first time. The third step involves reciting aloud from the recall column, an exercise that helps in strengthening

the memory. Cornell step four requires your critically thinking through what you have recorded in the recall column and an overall assessment of the structure of the chapter under study. The final step is an opportunity to review what you have done and see what information is active in your memory. This stage provides the repetition you need to retrieve information quickly and accurately from your long-term memory.

Note: *Students are expected to Google Cornell method from the web for intensive practice with the method.*

3.2.2.3   Combining Cornell Method with SQ4R.

This is a combination of Cornell system with another method called SQ4R with SQ4R providing preliminary steps for getting into the Cornell five steps proper. The merging pattern is as represented in the table below:

SQ4R	Combining SQ4R and Cornell
CORNEL	Begin the SQ4R steps
S	1. Survey: Do an overview for the chapter
Q	2. Question: Write questions for each heading
Read	3. Read: Read one paragraph
Record	4. Record: Take Cornell note on separate paper
Recite	
Reduce	

Recite Reflect Review	5.	Recite: Recite the important information in the paragraph
	6.	Continue to read-recite-record till the end of the chapter
	Continue the Cornell Steps	
	7.	Reduce: Make your recall column
	8.	Recite: Cover your note and recite from your recall column
	9.	Reflect: Do one or more reflect activities
	10.	Review: Review your note and complete the chapter and, the questions you made in the 2nd step of SQ4R

(Culled from *Essential Study Skills* by Linda Wong P. 24).

3.2.2.4   The Index Card Note-taking System.

Here the questions you generated in the SQ4R and in the reduce column of the Cornell system are reduced to an index card measuring 3" X 5" or 5" X 7" in size. The Index card contains the question cards, definition cards, and the category cards. The chapter of the book under study is noted at the top right of the card's from. Then immediately below the chapter, you generate questions around the content of that chapter. The answers are provided at the back of the card.

Front: The Question

| Ch. 5 |
| Question |

Back: The Answer

| Answer |

Using the above format, students are expected to generate similar cards for definition and subject categories. They have the same pattern as question card, the difference being that in definition cards you write one key concept or term on the front and the definition or explanation at the back.

The category card simply makes a list of the information required from a textbook with the topic appearing in front while list of items needed to be defined appear at the back.

3.2.2.5   The Two–Column and Three Column Note-taking System.

This method is similar to Cornell system but differs in the sense that in the left column, you place terms to know, key questions to answer or categories of information. Then in the right column, you provide answers or definitions. As for the three columns, you create three spaces for information you gathered from two different sources.

Two columns

Concept	Answer

Three Columns

Topic	Textbook	Lecture

3.2.2.6   The Formal Outline Note-taking System.

This takes the format of an outline used in normal essay writing. An outline represents the skeletal structure of any piece of writing.   In note-making, it represents organized and detailed notes that show levels of relationships and information among concepts and ideas presented in a book. Here Roman numerals, Capital letters, Arabic numerals, Lowercase letters are used to break down a topic into major, minor and sub-heading to show logical relationships of the concept or ideas in such textbook or topic.

Title:
1. Main heading with Roman numerals
    A. Subtopics appear capital letter
    B. Subtopic
    1. Arabic numeral to import supporting point
    2. Minor detail
    (1) Sub ideas or minor details
    (2) Sub ideas of minor details
    C. Subtopic

Title:
2. Main heading with Roman numerals
    A. Subtopics appear capital letter
    B. Subtopic
    3. Arabic numeral to import supporting point
    4. Minor detail
    (3) Sub ideas or minor details
    (4) Sub ideas of minor details
    C. Subtopic

It should however be noted that how ideas are arranged under this method depends on individual learner's preferences. There could be such outlines as:

i.	Topic
ii.	Main heading
A.	Subtopic
	1
	2
B.	Subtopic
C.	Subtopic as linkages of A & C above

Class Activity: Do Exercises 6 and 7 in Chapter Three of the workbook.

3.3   The Uses of the Dictionary

3.3.1 Introduction to the Use of the Dictionary

Human beings are in constant disagreement because they persist in using words in different senses while interpreting the various issues of life. However, the truth is that as we argue over issues and concepts, symbols remain unchanged but we find that images and reverends vary endlessly, thus giving us grounds to insert and insist on our subjective thought habits. Whenever we get ourselves into this intolerable burden of getting our meanings across or insisting on our own meaning, the dictionary comes handy as the ultimate

authority or arbiter. This is why the dictionary is a must companion for anybody who wishes to cope with lexical complexity of the English language, a language that has become unarguably the most dominant of living languages of the world. The dictionary is a book that provides access to the definition, meaning, class, and usage of words arranged in alphabetical order A -Z. There is possibly no aspect of human life and knowledge that the dictionary does not cover, including specialized areas of human knowledge. That is why students and other learners of the English language must endeavour to avail themselves of the wealth of information which various dictionaries offer. Regrettably, most students at various levels of education system, especially at the tertiary level, are either ignorant of the crucial role of dictionaries in their studies or too lazy to maximize the gains. As a result, they pay skimpy attention to very useful usages and lexical entries in the dictionary. This section on the use of dictionary is therefore intended to nip this problem in the bud for fresh students in our tertiary institutions.

In this chapter students are going to be exposed to some basic dictionary information and skills required to enhance learning as well as increase their competence and proficiency in the language. Apart from knowing the various classification and types of dictionaries, students are expected to achieve such

objectives as finding ways around the dictionary's special abbreviations, lexical, grammatical, pronunciation, and stylistic guide and information.

3.3.2 Types of Dictionary

There is no water-tight criteria for classifying the various types of dictionaries there are because we have a large amount of overlapping in their properties, characteristics and uses, taking into cognizance the nature of lexical item and the perspective of the learner/user. Nevertheless, an attempt will be made to classify them according to the dominating perspective of each, that is, its definite focus on some major aspect of the language. In terms of their characteristic properties, some scholars have identified the following types:

1. Osemasiological and anomasiologicaldictionaries

2. Monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual dictionaries

3. Concordances

4. Terminology dictionaries

5. Lexica

6. Thesauri

7. Encyclopaedia

8. Lexical databases

However, for the purposes of our discussion here we shall adopt the more inclusive criteria which classify them into the following types:

3.3.2.1 Encyclopaedic and Linguistic Dictionaries

Though both the encyclopaedic and linguistic dictionaries share a number of common properties, a basic distinction can be made depending on the degree of inclusion of lexical and non-lexical items by the lexicographer. While such lexical information as pronunciation, definition, etymology, grammar etc., are linguistic in nature, encyclopaedic items encompasses the following: (a) the inclusion of names of persons, places, and literary works (b) coverage of all branches of human knowledge (c) extensive treatment of facts. What this means is that encyclopaedia deal more with concepts and objects of extra-linguistic world presented not only in a denotative manner but in a detailed way, touching upon the history and description of such items. It should be noted, however, that most dictionaries combine both features. Such big dictionaries as Chambers 20th Century Dictionary, Webster''s Comprehensive Dictionary, The Oxford English Dictionary, Malayalam Lexicon, Tamil Lexicon, Hindi SabdaSagar etc., are encyclopaedic but all of them are linguistic dictionaries.

3.3.2.2 Historical and Etymological Dictionaries

Dictionaries can also be classified in terms of the time or period they cover. If a dictionary deals with words across time it is diachronic but if it describes words at a particular point in time it becomes synchronic. Again, we have another overlapping here because it is difficult to distinguish between the two. This is because when a dictionary gives the derivative source of a word in terms of its origin it becomes diachronic in nature, that is, historical information intruding into descriptive or synchronic one. Conversely, the diachronic or historical dictionary has a special class in it which can be called etymological. Both historical and etymological dictionaries are concerned with tracing the history of lexical items but differ in approach. The historical dictionary records the development of a lexical item in terms of both the form and the meaning of the particular lexical unit, whereas the etymological dictionary presents the origin of words by tracing the present day words to their oldest forms. Most bilingual or foreign language dictionaries are both historical and etymological in nature. These dictionaries are useful in deciding the cases of homonymy and polysemy and in ordering the sequence of the meanings of the polysemous words by giving the original or basic meaning. They also help in solving the problem of ambiguous meaning of some lexical units.

3.3.2.3 Special Dictionaries

Under special dictionaries, we have the following categories:

(a) Dialects

(b) Technical terms - glossaries

(c) Special professions, arts and craft etc.

(d) Slangs, jargons and argots etc.

The above classification is based on the nature of their word lists such as

i) Their covering special geographical regions, social dialects or special spheres of human activity,

ii) Their semantic aspect and relational value in the lexical stock of the language,

iii) Their formal shape,

iv) Their collocation value,

v) Special language units and others.

(a)   Dialect dictionaries

Dialect dictionaries share the characteristics with general dictionaries in terms of their lexical entries but they deal with a particular geographical regions or social group. Their lexical items are usually variants of the standard dialects. For instance, we have Standard English dictionary but there could be other regional

variant of the language which lexical items are restricted to that region. Also, some lexical items may be peculiar to a particular social group.

(b) The dictionary of technical terms

Dictionaries under this category deal with terminologies or vocabulary of a particular field of study or discipline. They may be more appropriately referred to as subject dictionaries as they focus on specific disciplines like Dictionary of Legal Terms, Glossaries of Literary Terms, and Dictionary of Mathematics etc.

(c) Special profession, arts and craft etc.

This is not to be confused with the dictionary of technical terms, though both are closely related. Here we have dictionaries that deal with words peculiar to a particular profession, trades, crafts, sports etc., for example, Dictionary of engineering terms, Greison's Behar Peasant Life etc.

(d) Dictionaries of slang, jargon, argot etc.

These dictionaries present closed set of lexical items and coinages peculiar to a particular social group or class of people. Meanings of such lexical items are usually kept secret and restricted to that group.

Other categories of special dictionaries are those dealing with the formal aspect of the lexical units of the language and others as follows:

(e) Dictionaries of spelling and orthography

These dictionaries provide the spelling of words as well as such phonetic information as tones, stress pattern and accent. They are good reference points for spelling. These dictionaries differ from general dictionaries in not giving any other information than spelling.

(f) Pronouncing dictionaries

These give correct and standard contemporary variants of pronunciation as well as pronunciation of grammatical forms. The English pronouncing dictionaries of A. C. Gimson, Daniel Jones, and Christopherson are good examples.

(g) Word formation or derivational dictionaries

These dictionaries provide information on such word-forming elements as prefixes, suffixes etc. an example is Whitney's Dictionary of Sanskrit verb root.

(h) Dictionaries of homonyms

These give illustrative examples of words that are spelt and pronounced the same but have different meaning and origin in the language.

(i) Dictionaries of paronyms

These provide information on words that have the same root as another in the language

(j) Grammatical dictionaries

A very useful guide for teachers of English language, the grammatical dictionary helps in the understanding of the correct grammatical system of the language. Grammatical categories and paradigms are numbered

under gender, type of declension etc.

(k) Reverse dictionaries

In reverse dictionaries entries are arranged in reverse alphabetical order essentially to maintain a rhyming pattern. Again, they are helpful in preparing teaching materials and manuals as they give a sort grammatical specification, putting in place identical word-forming suffixes and identical compound-forming components.

(l) Dictionaries of abbreviations and acronyms

Though conventional dictionaries provide this entry, they are found mostly in their appendices. These deal mainly with information on acronyms of words like UNO, WHO, UNESCO etc.

3.1. A third category of special dictionaries are those classified on the basis of their semantic aspect and their relational value in the lexical stock of the language. They are as follows:

(m) Dictionary of synonyms and antonyms

They give, with illustrative example, list of different items that closely related in meaning in the language as well as the degree of their occurrence. They help in finding the finer distinctions of meaning of a particular lexical unit in terms of its relation to the other members of the group. A similar entry is also done for lexical items of opposite in meaning. These dictionaries are usually the handbook of writers, e.g. – Roget's Thesaurus of English words and phrases. Indian language is said to

have a very rich tradition of dictionaries of synonyms antonyms.

There are other dictionaries classified on the basis of their collocational value and they include the following: (a) dictionaries of collocation which give collocations of lexical units (b) dictionaries of usages which provide guidelines for the correct and standard usage of words.

A fifth category of special dictionary is based on special lexical units and include the following: (a) dictionaries of phrases which give illustrative examples phraseological units of the language (b) dictionaries of proverbs and idioms found in the language (c) dictionaries of neologism which provide information on new words introduced into the language as well as new meanings of existing words (d) dictionaries of borrowed words which records words borrowed into the language from time to time.

3.3.2.4 General dictionaries

The general dictionary represents the whole lexicon of the language and contains words from all spheres of human knowledge. There are two types of general dictionary: Academic or normative and Referential or descriptive. The academic dictionary gives the lexical stock of the language in its standard usage while the referential or descriptive does not play such normative

role. The referential word stock is usually selected from heterogeneous speech group, and also features words of regional, social and stylistic variations. On the whole, general dictionaries, especially the normative type, offer services on the general word usage including spellings, parts of speech, and etymology. Examples of general dictionaries in popular use are, Longman Contemporary English Dictionary, The Chambers 20th Century Dictionary, The Oxford English Dictionary, and The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary etc.

Point to note: All of the above dictionaries we have been discussing can also be classified into monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual dictionaries depending on the language of their lexical entry. In a monolingual dictionary, both the entry words and their meanings are given in the same language. In a bilingual dictionary foreign words and their equivalents in other languages are given. The aim is to make a foreign speaker understand the language., The same goes for a multilingual dictionary where the words of one language are explained or defined in several other languages.

3.3.3 Uses of the Dictionary

From our discussion so far on the different types of dictionaries, one can easily deduce the numerous uses a dictionary can be put to. Much depends on the peculiarity of the information the user or learner is

looking for. But for the sake of emphasis and clarity, we shall put the various uses of the dictionary in their proper perspectives.

(a) Provides grammatical information

The dictionary provides information on parts of speech and their minute divisions. It gives information about whether a noun is countable or uncountable and whether a verb is transitive or intransitive etc. Common grammar patterns are also given to demonstrate how the word operates in a sentence. Common preposition and irregular verb are also given. Example: The word Crayfish appears in Longman dictionary as follows: *Cray.fish* plural[C,U]. this information indicates that the word is always used in the plural sense, and that it is also used both as countable and uncountable noun. Such words as 'information, furniture, luggage, money, clothing', etc., are in this category, and students are expected to use their dictionary to identify when they are either (C) or (U).

(b) Order of definitions

Definitions explain the meaning of the word in clear simple language and the dictionary not only does this but also give other definitions of that word. For instance, if a word is a noun, the dictionary tells you when the meaning has changed to verb, adverb, adjective etc., take the word *Quarantine* for example. The Longman

Dictionary has two entries for it as follows: 1. (n) *a period of time when a person or animal is kept apart from others in case they are carrying a disease. 2. (V) to keep a person or animal apart from others for a period of time in case they are carrying a disease.*

(c) Etymological root of words

The English language has borrowed quite eclectically from other languages of the world in the course of its growth and development. Also, in the course of time words have evolved new meanings. The dictionary helps us to trace the original meaning of a word for a clearer understanding and usage. It also helps to trace the development of the forms of the word. For instance the word, *Undertaker*, like the French *entrepreneur, used to mean 'contractor, one who undertakes to do a particular piece of work'*, but has now become associated with *funeral undertaker.* A knowledge of the origin and derivations of words helps in pronunciation and usage.

(d) Word pronunciation

The dictionary contains useful pronunciation guide to help you check the correct punctuation of words. Though the phonetic symbols and tress patterns may differ from dictionary to dictionary but there is always a guide at the initial pages of the dictionary. It also gives

you difference between British and American signs and styles of pronunciation. Usually the British pronunciation is shown first and the American pronunciation follows with a sign of the dollar. It also helps you determine whether words sound alike or not, and what letter is silent in a word. For instance, such words as 'hit and heat', 'course and cause', 'pore and poor', 'it and eat', etc., are indicated whether they sound alike or not. Also, the silence of letter/s in words like 'debris, shepherd, chassis, gnaw, pneumonia, tomb, bump', etc., are indicated.

(e) Cross-reference and easy location of words
The dictionary makes it easier for the user to quickly locate the meaning of a word through other words. The quantum of entries in a dictionary is so mind boggling that the user can easily get frustrated trying to locate the meaning of every individual word. The dictionary is arranged in such a way that one is quickly guided through the headword, and then to other words or group of words following in alphabetical order. Also, through cross-referencing, a word is located through another word, for example, diplomacy through diplomat.

(f) Abbreviations and acronyms
The dictionary helps save the user's time by helping him master some special grammatical, stylistic, and lexical

abbreviations. Some of these abbreviations are usually found inside the front cover page. Abbreviations like n=noun, v=verb, vi=verb transitive, iv= intransitive verb, adv=adverb, adj=adjective, (C)=countable noun, (U)=uncountable noun etc., are grammatical, while SL=slang, Infml= informal, fml=formal, obst=obsolete are stylistic. Abbreviations like US=American, (.)=word division, e.g. 'cen.tury', fig=figuratively, are lexical. Also the dictionary provides a comprehensive list of acronyms and abbreviations of world bodies, institutions, books of the bible, and nation states.

g. Spellings and other varieties of English

The dictionary exposes the learner to other varieties of English and how words are spelt and pronounced in those varieties. Words are marked *BrE* or *AmE* for either British or American English. But, apart from the basic distinction between American and British English, the dictionary gives other varieties like the Canadian, South African Australian and New Zealand English and gives instances when two varieties might be used interchangeably. For example, differences in spellings like *program (AmE)* and *programme (BrE)*, *center (AmE) and centre (BrE)* etc., are indicated.

h. Conventionality of words

The dictionary provides information on the speech habit

of a group or the standard user of the language and what words or usages are tolerable or not depending on the level of formality or informality of the occasion. The occasion may range from high rhetoric to low slang and to that of spoken conversation. It differentiates between old and modern English, colloquial and vulgar to ensure that we vary our usage according to the occasion.

Class Activity: Do Exercises 8 to 10 of Chapter Three of the workbook.