

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE COLLEGE

AUSTRALIAN COMMAND & STAFF COLLEGE



RAN STAFF ACQUAINT COURSE

**EFFECTIVE WRITTEN
COMMUNICATION
READER**

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION

1. All Defence officers must be able to communicate effectively. All officers must be able to translate their thoughts into clear and concise English leaving no room for misunderstanding. However, correct grammar alone will not necessarily give accurate meaning to what you say and write. Extra skills are required - skills that cannot be acquired overnight but only as a result of constant application of certain techniques.

2. The Effective Written Communication Reader is designed to introduce students to these techniques. It contains aids and guidelines which, if consistently used and practised, will help to improve communicative ability. It concentrates more on written than on oral expression; the Effective Speaking Reader will redress the balance.

AIM

3. The aim of this reader is to help students improve the effectiveness of their written expression.

CONDUCT

4. The reader is a self-help text that includes exercises and associated suggested solutions. Experience with past courses indicates students require, on average, about 3.5 hours to achieve the aim satisfactorily.

EFFECTIVE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	I
CHAPTER 1 - THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS	1-1
General	1-1
Communication as a professional asset.....	1-1
Communication and mental growth	1-1
The communication process.....	1-2
Improving your Communication	1-3
Sharpen your powers of perception.....	1-3
Know your purpose and audience	1-3
Examine and improve thought processes	1-3
Know your language	1-4
The four skills	1-4
Transmission skills: speaking and writing	1-4
Reception skills: reading and listening.....	1-5
CHAPTER 2 - WORDS.....	2-1
Vocabulary	2-1
Improving a vocabulary.....	2-1
The dictionary.....	2-1
The Thesaurus	2-3
Choice of words.....	2-5
ANNEX A TO CHAPTER 2.....	1
EXERCISE PRECISE	1
ANNEX B TO CHAPTER 2	1
EXERCISE CONFUSION	1
ANNEX C TO CHAPTER 2.....	1
EXERCISE PRECISE – SOLUTION	1
ANNEX D TO CHAPTER 2.....	1
EXERCISE CONFUSION – SOLUTIONS	1
ANNEX E TO CHAPTER 2	1
WORDS COMMONLY MISUSED	1
ANNEX F TO CHAPTER 2	1
SPELLING	1
CHAPTER 3 – PUTTING WORDS TOGETHER TO MAKE SENSE	3-1
Introduction	3-1
Style and expression.....	3-1
Punctuation.....	3-1
Sentences	3-2
Officialese	3-3
Meaningful sentences	3-3
Paragraphs	3-4
Paragraphs – principles	3-5
Paragraphs – structure	3-6

III

Paragraphs – contents	3-7
Paragraphs – coherency	3-8
TABLE 1	3-9
Paragraphs – length	3-10
ANNEX A TO CHAPTER 3	1
EXERCISE PUNCTUATION	1
ANNEX B TO CHAPTER 3	1
EXERCISE PUNCTUATION – SOLUTIONS	1
ANNEX C TO CHAPTER 3	1
EXERCISE OFFICIALESE	1
ANNEX D TO CHAPTER 3	1
EXERCISE OFFICIALESE - SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS	1
ANNEX E TO CHAPTER 3	1
EXERCISE SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION	1
ANNEX F TO CHAPTER 3	1
EXERCISE SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION - SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS	1
ANNEX G TO CHAPTER 3.....	1
TYPES OF PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT	1
ANNEX H TO CHAPTER 3.....	1
EXERCISE ARRANGE	1
ANNEX I TO CHAPTER 3	1
EXERCISE ARRANGE - SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS	1
CHAPTER 4 – EXPRESSING IDEAS CLEARLY AND PERSUASIVELY ...	4-1
Style.....	4-1
Characteristics of style	4-1
Cloudy expression	4-1
Level and tone	4-2
CONCLUSION	4-3
ANNEX A TO CHAPTER 4.....	1
TWENTY-ONE RULES FOR WRITING GOOD ENGLISH	1

CHAPTER 1 - THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS¹

General

1.1 Consciously or unconsciously you've been studying communication all your life. In the cradle, you first became aware that cries and gurgles could control the responses of your parents. Then came school with its alphabet, parts of speech, grammar, punctuation, and so on. Now here you are, starting yet another book on the subject. If you mutter to yourself, 'Ye gods! Why more English?' it's quite understandable. Such a good question warrants a good answer.

1.2 Part of the answer is that this study will not be simply 'just more English'. Communication involves much more than the structure and mechanics of a particular language - much more. First, though, let's consider some ways in which communication inevitably contributes to one's success or failure.

Communication as a professional asset

1.3 This is an age of specialisation. If your television blinks off you call a TV repairman, if you get into legal difficulties you consult a lawyer, if you become sick you call a doctor. Unfortunately, if you get into communication difficulties, calling a communication specialist is not likely to solve the problem. A person must do some things for himself, and doing his own thinking and transmitting the results to others are such tasks. Some degree of communicative skill is vital in any trade or profession.

1.4 In fact, the more a profession makes use of ideas in addition to manual skills, the more skill in communication it generally requires. The lawyer unquestionably needs more verbal skill than the TV repairman does, and a teacher who can't communicate ideas effectively isn't a teacher at all. The Staff Officer spends much time every day trying to convince other people to follow a certain course of action. Whether communicating in writing, or by speaking, good staff officers need to be able to persuade others to the rightness of their causes. Effective communication is paramount for all staff officers.

1.5 Can you write a competent brief or paper in Defence format, talk to an audience comfortably and effectively, or read and listen to fairly difficult material with some intellectual awareness? Your professional career from now on will demand these skills.

Communication and mental growth

1.6 We tend to think of the development of ideas, indeed, of thinking itself, as something quite separate from the expression of ideas in communication; but are these skills really separate and distinct? Right now let's experiment: try thinking about something - from your profession to what you'd like to do tonight - without thinking in words.

1.7 You didn't get very far, did you? There are many undiscovered things about the operation of the human mind but thinking beyond the simplest level seems to be impossible without the use of symbols. Sometimes the mathematician thinks primarily with equations, the chemist with formulae, the artist with colour and line; but most of us depend on words to carry on our symbolic thought processes. Communication is the audible or graphic

Acknowledgment

1. Dean H. and Bryson K. Effective Communication. Prentice Hall. New Jersey, 1962

representation of the symbols of thought and feeling so that others may see or hear. Growth in the one implies growth in the other.

The communication process

1.8 If communication means transmitting thoughts and feelings to others, and receiving them from others, a Beethoven symphony is communication, as is a popular ballad. A smile and a frown are communicative acts. In this study however, we shall concern ourselves primarily with communication by verbal language and with nonverbal methods only as far as they are used to accompany and reinforce verbal communication.

1.9 What actually does happen when people communicate with each other? What do you need to understand in order to communicate more effectively? Well, the first tentative step towards a greater understanding of the communication process is an analysis of the principal components, and the factors that influence them.

1.10 All communication requires a sender, a receiver and a medium through which the message must pass. Any communication is incomplete unless there is a return message or 'feedback' from the receiver to indicate receipt of the original message.

1.11 The sender is the originator of the message. Senders need not only to dream up ideas but also to convert them into an intelligible and understandable form for transmission - whether the spoken word or in writing. The conversion of ideas into messages or 'message processing' is the sole responsibility of the sender: nobody else can ever accurately express another person's ideas! Already you should be feeling a little apprehensive since when was the last time you exactly and concisely expressed an idea? Cheer up! Perhaps the next time will be the first time.

1.12 The receiver is responsible for receiving and decoding the message to comprehend the sender's meaning. His job is the more challenging and demanding. Not only must his vocabulary and knowledge of language at least equal the sender's, but he must also allow for any shortcomings in the message processing ability of the sender - otherwise he would become one of the foolish many who accept things at 'face value'. By making effective use of feedback however, the receiver has the most valuable tool in ensuring effective communication occurs. 'MESSAGE RECEIVED AND UNDERSTOOD' is, providing it means what it says, the essential final link.

1.13 So far we have not discussed the chosen medium and the crucial part it plays in the communication process. Because we are limiting our study to communications by verbal means, we will analyse only the factors influencing the written or spoken word. We will also presuppose that the sender and receiver have the required 'idea < -- > message' translational skills discussed earlier.

1.14 Although stating the obvious, 'a written word must be able to be read to be understood'. Consequently a writer who cannot spell has a poor command of the English language, and, above all, one who writes illegibly is an enemy of effective communication.

1.15 Similarly a speaker who mumbles, drones on in a monotonous undertone or makes no allowance for distracting extraneous noises is in grave danger of never being heard let alone understood by his audience.

1.16 Common sense dictates that, as a participant in a verbal communication process, you will be either a sender or a receiver. Albeit you will be continually changing from one role to the other: only the extremely clever - and conversely the not so clever - attempt both roles

simultaneously. You will therefore be involved with either writing or speaking on the one hand, or reading or listening on the other. To acquaint you with the required skills some basic principles are in order.

IMPROVING YOUR COMMUNICATION

Sharpen your powers of perception

1.17 The ideas used in a speech or a paper are based ultimately upon what the author has perceived of the world around him, either through direct observation or through communication received from others. Certainly, then, the ability to observe things clearly and to report accurately what is observed is basic to effective thinking and communication.

1.18 Often we are so blinded by familiarity that we look at what is going on around us without much perception. One group of university students, who complained about not seeing anything on which they could write, were asked to put powers of perception to the test by describing what could be seen on one face of a coin. They found, when they really started looking, that it took 300-500 words!

1.19 Granted that few people would want to read such lengthy descriptions of the face of a coin. Nevertheless, the average person can increase immeasurably his stock of ideas that are worth writing about by stopping now and then to observe closely all that is happening around him. Every great writer has had the faculty of keen observation and acute perception.

Know your purpose and audience

1.20 The communicative process begins with the controlling purpose of a speaker or writer and ends in the response of his audience. These are, in a sense, the controlling factors in any communication. They determine what kind of ideas and what kind of language will be necessary. Thus two basic principles for effective communication are:

- a. Always know exactly what you are trying to accomplish whenever you write, speak, read or listen.
- b. Always remember your audience and what you must communicate to them in order to accomplish your purpose.

1.21 Because these are the controlling principles in any communication activity, you will want to know as soon as possible how to think through the purpose of a communication in relation to audience response.

Examine and improve thought processes

1.22 We noted the inseparable nature of effective thinking and effective communication in paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7. A controlled selection and development of ideas must precede actual speaking and writing. Accordingly, some study of the most important kinds of thinking in communication will be necessary.

1.23 One step beyond simple observation and perception is inductive thinking - the use of observed evidence to support and develop statements or generalisations. Consider the case of the small-town newspaper editor who saw some high school and university students on a drinking spree one night and concluded in an editorial the next day that the younger generation is a drunken lot. He had been doing some inductive thinking, and his editorial was

a communication of that thinking; but it wasn't accurate thinking, and so it wasn't good information.

1.24 Then there is the mental process you go through when you say something like this: 'There's a good show on tonight. Lot of stars in it'. You see how you are reasoning? All shows with stars are good. This is deductive thinking. You haven't seen this show. You can't base your opinion of it on actual observation, but you can deduce something about it from other things that you believe, such as the quality of stars' acting.

1.25 Have you learned to identify and examine these mental processes that we all use everyday, in order that you may improve upon them? It won't be easy, because genuine thinking is seldom easy, but we can hope that it will be interesting. And it is important for effective communication.

Know your language

1.26 Communication requires the translation of ideas and emotions into language symbols. We have already noted that, because we think largely in language symbols, this translation process is somewhat inseparable from language difficulties. You can confuse and annoy your readers (and sometimes your audience) by poor grammar or by mumbling your words, or by speaking in a monotone, or by misplacing punctuation, or by using words that have different meaning for you and your audience.

THE FOUR SKILLS

1.27 Your role of sender or receiver is an interchangeable one. For every idea you express you receive perhaps 15 or 20 others. Just think of the volumes that you read compared to the amount that you write. Obviously, reading and listening skills are as important to you as writing and speaking. Throughout the Course you will be practising all four, and a few general principles are necessary now.

Transmission skills: speaking and writing

1.28 Speaking and writing are alike in many important ways. Each requires the same ability to always keep in mind the nature and needs of the audience, and the same thoughtful development of ideas which you need to accomplish your purpose. Both require an adequate command of language, although oral and written languages are not identical. Because of these basic resemblances, much of the material in this Reader will be applicable to both skills - particularly that having to do with purpose, thought processes, organisation, and language and meaning.

1.29 However, there are important differences that result from the different situations in which the communication occurs. The speaker is face-to-face with his audience; the writer is not. The physical presence can be a great advantage to the speaker. His mannerisms and facial expressions can express his personality to the audience and can help him to remain in contact with them. The qualities of his voice animate the words he uses and, hence, the ideas they express. In contrast, the writer depends solely on a masterful command of the written language. Careful construction of sentences, precise choice of words, and such typographical devices as punctuation and paragraphing are all he has to take the place of the marvellously communicative qualities of the human voice.

1.30 The speaker's physical presence before the audience also involves some difficulties. A writer who isn't sure just what he wants to say can stop, think, scratch out and revise. A speaker, once he faces his audience, had better be sure of his material. Of course, he can

watch the reaction of the audience and, in a sense, revise what he intended to say if he sees he is not making himself clear; but this requires quick thinking. Words once spoken cannot be scratched out and revised.

1.31 Directly facing the audience places the speaker in a different psychological situation. The direct contact may stimulate him to produce more direct, spontaneous and lively expression of his ideas. At the same time, he is acutely aware of his own presence before the audience. He may feel that they are hypercritical of his little mistakes. In short, he may suffer badly from stage fright. The writer doesn't face this form of torture, but if he isn't careful he may pay for his peace of mind in less effective communication. It is easy for him to forget his audience, since it isn't there, and to slip into a lifeless, stilted and pseudo-formal manner of expression.

1.32 In a sense, each difference in the situation of the speaker and writer carries with it both advantages and disadvantages. It is important to be aware of them and to compensate for them. It is important to remember, too, that you as a writer can learn from you as a speaker. You can attempt to carry over into your writing some of the liveliness, spontaneity, and simplicity of expression which are likely to be characteristic of your speaking; and you can attempt to carry over into speech some of the more careful thought and preparation often characteristic of writing.

Reception skills: reading and listening

1.33 Because they are both receptive skills reading and listening have much in common, and because they are both communication skills the basic principles discussed in this book apply to each. For example, clarity of purpose is as important as it is in writing and speaking. One of the major weaknesses of many people is failure to recognise that there are as many ways of reading and listening as there are purposes, and that there is an efficient way for each purpose. If you read and listen to everything in the same way you not only waste much valuable time; you also fail to extract what you should from your effort.

1.34 You may listen to a chemistry lecture or read a chapter of history primarily to absorb information. This kind of reading and listening we shall call assimilative. You have to realise as soon as possible what the central theme of the material is, and as you proceed you must distinguish between the main ideas and the supporting details. You can absorb and remember the material in a useful form only if you see these relationships. Miscellaneous facts about the Civil War, Russian education, missiles, satellites - or anything else - are not much use unless they fit into an intelligible and meaningful pattern.

1.35 Mere assimilation of ideas is often not enough for effective reading and listening, because the value, truth, and validity of the ideas may be open to question. Passive acceptance of everything you read or hear is as undesirable as the opposite extreme - cynical refusal to believe anything. The intelligent course is to learn when to be critical in your reading and listening and how to use the tools of critical thinking to place the proper evaluation on what you read or hear. To be effective, you have to be able to recognise and evaluate a line of reasoning.

1.36 In short, both reader and listener are involved in the complicated processes of assimilating and critically evaluating ideas, and they make use of the same basic knowledge and ways of thinking. However, the important differences between speaking and writing imply similar differences between reading and listening.

1.37 One difference is the amount of unbroken and concentrated attention required. Listening, especially in any situation in which you are not the only listener, is an instantaneous experience that generally cannot be repeated. If your mind wanders off for a few minutes in a reverie about last night, you lose what the speaker has offered during that time and the omission may make it difficult to pick up the thread of ideas again. Even a train of thought stimulated by something the speaker says can be a distraction in this sense. If you spend too much time taking notes, by failing to distinguish between main ideas and details, the speaker will leave you behind. Concentrated attention is also important in reading, of course, but the situation is different. If your attention is distracted, you can always return.

1.38 Usually the reader has more control over distractions, too. He can shut the radio off, or move to a quieter spot if other people distract him. He can shut the window if he gets too cold. The listener, however, must develop enough concentration to overcome distractions beyond his control: the cold draught in the lecture hall, the two girls whispering in the next row, the window that invites reverie.

1.39 We noted, too, the physical presence of the speaker - the impact of personality might serve either to reinforce or distract from his ideas. It is hard to recognise the value of the speaker's ideas if his manner annoys you, or to be adequately critical of one whose personality pleases you. In short, pleasing voice quality, lively manner, and attractive appearance do not always accompany worthwhile thinking, nor does a sparkling and lively style in writing. Both reader and listener have to be aware of, appreciative, and intelligently critical of all aspects of the communication directed at them - of the total, complicated process that is taking place.

CHAPTER 2 - WORDS

Vocabulary

2.1 Chapter 1 emphasised the importance of the ability to communicate effectively. The key to this ability is knowledge of words, because words are the basic tools in all communication. Therefore, a good starting point for the study of communication is a sound vocabulary.

2.2 To communicate fluently a writer or speaker must have an extensive and precise vocabulary and knowledge of current usage. He must also develop the capacity to put the best word in the right place.

2.3 Each of us has an active and passive vocabulary. The words that we recognise in our reading and listening form our passive vocabulary; those that enable us to communicate our thoughts in speech and in writing constitute our active vocabulary. The active vocabulary is far less extensive than the passive. If we are prepared to make a systematic and sustained effort, however, we can widen our active vocabulary and therefore our ability to communicate our thoughts. Make your study of words a **passionate pursuit**, not a **painful prow**.

Improving a vocabulary

2.4 English has a wealth of vocabulary, mainly because it has assimilated many forms from other languages, particularly from Latin but also from modern languages. This makes it a difficult but also a precise means of communication. The chief problems are to master current usage, to choose the right word from many with similar meanings and to spell it correctly. To overcome these problems, you must be able to use the standard references.

2.5 The following reference books are provided for the Course:

- a. *The Macquarie Concise Dictionary*,
- b. *Roget's Thesaurus*,
- c. *Macquarie Concise Thesaurus*,
- d. *Modern English Usage*,
- e. *Usage and Abusage*, and
- f. *The Complete Plain Words*.

2.6 Whereas reference to some of these texts will be relatively infrequent (and probably only in attempts to refute 'judgements' by Syndicate Directors), almost continual use of the dictionary and thesaurus is considered mandatory.

The dictionary

2.7 A dictionary is an indispensable tool of every literate person. Whenever you are not absolutely sure that you know fully and exactly what a word means, you should look it up in the dictionary. The Macquarie Dictionary is the accepted authority within the Australian Defence Force on matters of word meanings and spellings. Where two forms of spelling a word are given, either may be used.

2.8 To gain full value from a dictionary, you need to familiarise yourself with the symbols and abbreviations listed in the introduction. These symbols are a useful guide to word derivations, inflections, grammatical forms and pronunciation.

2.9 Closer inspection of a good dictionary reveals that it supplies more than the correct spelling and meaning of a word. It is a veritable mine of information and provides the following details:

- a. **Definition.** Most important of all, a dictionary endeavours to define words. A good dictionary should define most meanings of all but rare and highly specialised words; in that case, a special dictionary such as the technical dictionary is required.
- b. **Spelling.** Dictionaries record preferred current spellings for words. When a word has two or more spellings, eg 'connection, connexion', the preferred spelling is given first, but, when modern usage of a word is at variance with the dictionary, eg 'tyre' is the normal spelling rather than 'tire', the former should be used. The use of syllables to divide words and the treatment of compounds as single words or with hyphens are other aids given to the reader.
- c. **Pronunciation.** Dictionaries reprint each word with special marks to indicate the location of accents and the sounds of individual letters. The marks, called diacritical marks, are explained in the introduction.
- d. **Grammatical information.** For almost every entry the 'part of speech' (noun, verb, etc) is given. For example, 'research' is shown as 'n.' and 'v.i.': the former entry indicates that as a noun the word has various meanings; the latter deals with the word as an intransitive verb.
- e. **Word origins.** Every dictionary adequate for student use describes, using the abbreviations explained in its introduction on Etymology, the origins of words. Square brackets at the end of the entry show the word's etymology. Knowledge of affixes and derivations can be extremely useful in learning and remembering words.
- f. **Usage.** The mere fact that a word is listed in the dictionary does not mean that it is in good use or that some of its special meanings are acceptable in current English. The Macquarie Dictionary gives 'dinkum' but points out that it is 'colloq.' (colloquial) for 'genuine'. As well as indicating acceptability, where applicable, a good dictionary will indicate usage in the following three categories:
 - (1) **Geographical.** The geographical label indicates a country or area of a country where a word or a particular meaning is common. Since English is the native language of so many people in various parts of the world it is not surprising that geographical labels are necessary. For example:
 'wowsler (-z-) n. Colloq. a prudish teetotaller. Slogan invented by John Norton, Australian journalist and politician 1862-1916.'
 - (2) **Time.** The time label tells whether a word or one of its meanings is no longer used, is disappearing from use, or is still used but has a quaint form of meaning. For example:
 'whither Archaic; now replaced by where. [ME and OE ...]'

- (3) **Subject.** The subject label indicates whether a word or one of its meanings belongs to a specialised department of knowledge. For example:

‘syzygy. n. Astron. the conjunction or opposition of two heavenly bodies.’

2.10 Full utilisation of the information readily available in your dictionary will help you increase your vocabulary and knowledge significantly.

2.11 To assess your own vocabulary and practise use of your dictionary (ie The Macquarie Concise Dictionary) you should now attempt Exercises PRECISE and CONFUSION in annexes A and B. The solutions are in annexes C and D.

2.12 Exercise CONFUSION highlights that no two words in the English language have precisely the same effect on the reader. Some words look and sound similar but are entirely different in meaning. Other words are commonly confused because they are often mispronounced leading to misuse and incorrect spelling. Annex E has a list of some of the more commonly misused words.

2.13 For those of you who have problems with spelling and wish someone would simplify the system - beware. The letter in annex F suggests such an innovative approach. After the required ‘rereads’ of the letter to try and understand what the author is actually saying, you might realise, albeit reluctantly, that only increased use of the dictionary will solve your problem.

The Thesaurus

2.14 Often our principal problem is not to find the exact meaning of a word but to find the exact word for a meaning that is floating around in our heads. A dictionary is not much help, any more than a telephone directory would be if we had a number on a piece of paper and wanted to find out whose it was. Let us imagine that we are in the middle of writing something and are suddenly stuck for the ‘right’ word. We know it has to do with ‘growing smaller’, but this is as far as we can get, although we have the irritating feeling that the word is on ‘the tip of the tongue’. What we want now is not an alphabetically arranged dictionary but a book that categorises words by topics. Such a book is Roget’s Thesaurus, originally compiled by Peter Mark Roget, FRS (1779-1869) and first published in 1852. The thesaurus is therefore similar to the ‘Yellow Pages’ trade telephone directory that lists the telephone numbers of the various trades and professionals under appropriate group headings.

2.15 Roget’s Thesaurus has undergone many revisions and appears in various editions. It has earned its rightful prominent place on the desks of people seeking to improve their communication skills because ‘Famous as it is, Roget’s Thesaurus lives not by the praises of past generations but by its enduring reputation for usefulness’.²

2.16 How to use Roget’s Thesaurus is explained in detail in the initial pages of the book itself. To assist your understanding further, consider the following example of usage. Assume you are writing about government of the USSR. You have the word ‘tyrannical’ in your mind but you think it is too strong and perhaps old fashioned. To find a more appropriate word you proceed as follows:

- a. Look up the word ‘tyrannical’ in the index at the back of the thesaurus.

Acknowledgment

1. Roget’s Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases. Aylesbury, 1980. p VII.

- b. You see it refers to:
- violent 176 adj,
cruel 898 adj,
lawless 954 adj, and
(see tyranny)
- c. You decide violent, cruel and lawless are inappropriate so you look up tyranny in the index.
- d. You see it refers to:
- influence 178 n,
badness 645 n,
despotism 733 n,
brute force 735 n,
insolence 878 n, and
arrogation 916 n
- e. You decide 'brute force' is definitely more like the meaning you have in mind and therefore you turn to entry 735 in the body of the Thesaurus.
- f. At 735 you find 'Severity - n'. You then look for 'brute force and inspect the words of similar meaning.
- g. To your relief you discover and decide upon 'coercion' as the word that fits the thoughts in your mind.

2.17 Due to limited availability of *Roget's Thesaurus* the College also uses the *Macquarie Concise Thesaurus*. The book resembles a dictionary in layout with the words listed in alphabetical order. It doesn't have a cross-referencing numeral system like Roget's'. Instructions on its use are printed in its front pages.

2.18 Repeating the exercise in paragraph 2.16:

- a. Look up the word 'tyrannical'.
- b. You see it refers to:
1. forceful,
2. powerful,
3. repressive, and
4. unlawful
- c. You decide powerful, repressive and unlawful are inappropriate so you look up forceful.
- d. You see it refers to 'coercion' amongst others and you decide upon it.

2.19 A thesaurus does not give definitions of the individual words and if we come upon one in the list that is unfamiliar; we must turn to a good dictionary to inquire into its precise use. But since our 'passive' knowledge of words is always so much greater than our 'active' use of words, it is often enough merely to see a word in a list to know that it is just right for our needs.

Choice of words

2.20 Improving and increasing one's active vocabulary can be a major step towards increasing effectiveness in communication. However, too often the eagerness to 'show off' the newly acquired knowledge results in a deterioration in communication, with readers and audiences left bewildered and confused. The benefits of a larger active vocabulary will be obtained only by choosing one's words wisely. The following guidelines should always be borne in mind when communicating:

- a. Prefer the simple word, provided that it conveys your meaning.
- b. Prefer the concrete word to the abstract.
- c. Do not use several words where one will do.
- d. Prefer the short word, or words, to the long.
- e. Use words that mean what you mean.
- f. Use words that the reader will understand.
- g. Beware of over-worked words.
- h. Avoid cliches.

2.21 Detailed advice on the choice of words to be used in Defence writing is given in ADFP 102, *Defence Writing Standards*, Part 1, Chapter 3.

Annexes:

- A. Exercise PRECISE
- B. Exercise CONFUSION
- C. Exercise PRECISE - solutions
- D. Exercise CONFUSION - solutions
- E. Words commonly misused
- F. Spelling

EXERCISE PRECISE

1. The following sentences contain words that are used imprecisely. Check the highlighted words in the dictionary and decide on suitable alternatives:
 - a. All matches were well attended and provided a welcome **divergence** from normal Defence activities.
 - b. Requiring a ship to train a large number of apprentices will adversely **effect** its operational capability.
 - c. The **principle** difficulty in the Normandy landings was maintaining the element of surprise.
 - d. Certain facets of an officer's career are **tantamount**; the need to be a soldier first, then an officer and the continuing and irrefutable demand for a thorough understanding of the military profession.
 - e. The examiner **allows** that the successful candidate will have a sound general knowledge of his own branch.
2. Suggested solutions are in annex C.

EXERCISE CONFUSION

1. Select the correct word given in brackets to suit the context of the following sentences:
(Solutions are in annex D.)

- a. The explorer was (adverse, averse) to the suggestion that he should go immediately.
- b. His (official, officious) attitude made him unpopular with his colleagues.
- c. There, to his great delight, he met the (demure, demur) young lady whom he had seen previously.
- d. From the look of the sky, a storm was (eminent, imminent).
- e. From her study of (astrology, astronomy) she believed she knew what the future held for her.
- f. Brandy is regarded by many as a (stimulus, stimulant) to be used only in cases of emergency.
- g. Much (elicit, illicit) trading is carried out in the colony of Macao.
- h. An (incredible, incredulous) number of people failed to vote at the election.
- i. Many of the (immigrants, emigrants) realised that their departure could not be delayed.
- j. The wine was carefully chosen to (complement, compliment) the special dinner.

EXERCISE PRECISE – SOLUTION

1. The suggested solutions to questions of Exercise PRECISE are:
 - a. diversion;
 - b. affect ('effect' means 'to make happen');
 - c. principal;
 - d. paramount ('tantamount' means 'equivalent'); and
 - e. assumes (takes for granted that).

EXERCISE CONFUSION – SOLUTIONS

1. The solutions to the questions of Exercise CONFUSION are:
 - a. The explorer was **averse** to the suggestion that he should go immediately.
 - b. His **officious** attitude made him unpopular with his colleagues.
 - c. There, to his great delight, he met the **demure** young lady whom he had seen previously.
 - d. From the look of the sky, a storm was **imminent**.
 - e. From her study of **astrology** she believed she knew what the future held for her.
 - f. Brandy is regarded by many as a **stimulant** to be used only in cases emergency.
 - g. Much **illicit** trading is carried out in the colony of Macau.
 - h. An **incredible** number of people failed to vote at the election.
 - i. Many of the **emigrants** realised that their departure could not be delayed.
 - j. The wine was carefully chosen to **complement** the special dinner.

WORDS COMMONLY MISUSED

1. Some words are often misused or mis-spelt because they are mispronounced Three examples are:

- a. **'government'** for 'government';
- b. **'disasterous'** for 'disastrous'; and
- c. **'Febuary'** for 'February'.

2. Some mistakes are made because students confuse words that look alike, eg:

- a. accept, except;
- b. allusion, illusion;
- c. breath, breathe;
- d. counsel, council;
- e. capital, capitol;
- f. dessert, desert.

3. This is a list of words that are commonly confused together with their meanings:

allusion, an indirect reference (to something)

illusion, an appearance that is misleading because unreal

delusion, a false impression or opinion

alternate, coming each after one of the other kind

alternative, giving a choice between two things

appreciable, capable of being estimated; enough to be felt

appreciative, showing appreciation or gratitude

beneficial, productive of good; advantageous

beneficent, doing good

complaisant, obliging, polite and deferential

complacent, self-satisfied

compose, make up (especially composed of)

comprise, consist of

conduce, to lead or contribute to (a result)

induce, to prevail on or persuade (someone to do something)

continual, very frequent
continuous, going on without a break

contagious, communicating disease by contact
contiguous, touching or adjoining

council, a group of people appointed to govern or to advise
counsel, consultation or advice

defer, to put off; also to give way to (especially a superior's views)
differ, to be unlike

deprecate, to plead against; to deplore
depreciate, to diminish in value

device, a contrivance or thing adapted for a purpose
devise, to plan or contrive

dominate, to hold a commanding position over
domineer, to be overbearing towards

eligible, fit to be chosen
illegible, unable to be read
illegal, against the law

elicit, to draw forth
illicit, unlawful or forbidden

expedient, decided from motives of advantage rather than principle
expeditious, doing or done speedily

explicit, stated in detail, leaving nothing merely implied
implicit, to be understood though not plainly stated

facilitate, to make easy
felicitate, to congratulate

gourmand, a glutton
gourmet, a connoisseur of food and drink

hypercritical, too critical, especially of small fault
hypocritical, guilty of assuming or pretending a virtue

imbibe, to drink, absorb
imbue, to saturate (with)

ingenious, clever at contriving
ingenuous, open and artless

intense, very great or strong
intensive, concentrated or deep and thorough
intent, resolved or bent (on doing)

judicial, to do with a judge or law court
judicious, showing good judgement; wise

negligent, lacking proper care or attention
negligible, able to be neglected because of little importance

oppression, rule of a cruel and unjust kind
repression, restraint or checking especially of desires
suppression, the act of putting down by force

principal, first in rank or importance
principle, general law as guide to action

recourse, a resorting to a possible source of help
resource, a means of supplying a want

stimulus, anything that rouses to activity;
stimulant, an exciting drug or drink

stratagem, a trick for deceiving the enemy
strategy, the planning of military action

SPELLING³

Sir,

I note with interest the two references to spelling which occur in your issue of December 26th, in particular the letter of Mr D.L. Cattley. Proposals for revision of the orthography are regularly produced, and just as regularly dismissed, but in this case it might be interesting to examine orthographical revision in some detail.

Unlike metrication, any reform in spelling should preferably take place over a long period of time in order to prevent confusion (freight=frate; eight=ate?). It should also be completely coherent, and the invention of new letters (vide the pseudo-Icelandic known as ITA) or the assumption of many diacritical marks, such as bespatter the pages of modern Slavonic texts, should, so far as possible, be avoided.

It was suggested - by, among others, G.B. Shaw - that a convenient method of revision would involve the alteration or deletion of one letter, or associated group of letters, per year, thus giving the populace time to absorb the change.

Thus, for example, in Year 1 that extremely useless letter 'c' would be dropped to be replaced by either 'k' or 's', and likewise 'x' would no longer form part of the alphabet. The only remaining case in which 'c' would be retained will be the 'ch' formation, which! will be dealt with later. Year 2 might well reform 'w' spelling so that 'which' and 'one' would take the same konsonant, while Year 3 might well abolish 'y' replacing it with 'i', and Year 4 might fix the 'g' - 'j' anomaly once and for all.

Generally, then, the improvement would continue year by year, with Year 5 doing away with useless double konsonants, and Years 6-12 or so modifying vowels and the remaining voiced and unvoiced konsonants. By Year 15 or so, it would finally be possible to make use of the redundant letters 'c', 'y', and 'x' - by now just a memory in the minds of those who would remember 'ch', 'sh' and 'th' respectively.

Finally, when, after some 20 years of orthographic reform, we would have a logical, coherent spelling in use throughout the 'English-speaking world. However, since we have, for example, 'Airy' and 'Skates', not to mention 'Seven' and 'Way', due to the spike in 'Ingle', we would have a spelling suited to our long term. Xei kud, however, or how we learn 'Ingly' as a second language at school! - Iorzh feixfuli, M.J. Xilz (M.J. Shields)

Acknowledgment

2. The Economist. 16 January 1971.

CHAPTER 3 – PUTTING WORDS TOGETHER TO MAKE SENSE

Introduction

3.1 Nothing new can be written about writing; there are books and articles galore on every phase of the subject. However, all who seek to improve their writing skills should grasp the opportunity to revise the fundamentals. Also, for those of you who are meeting the requirements of Defence writing for the first time or are largely unpractised in the skills required, such a revision is mandatory.

3.2 Effective Defence writing is composed of two stages which can be simply stated as:

- a. preparing what you mean to say, and
- b. saying what you mean.

3.3 The requirements of the first stage will be covered in detail later in the Course. The remainder of this Reader will concentrate on ‘saying what you mean’.

Style and expression

3.4 The ability to say what you mean is also known as ‘expression’ or ‘style’. It is the ability to put your active vocabulary to its most effective use. Knowledge of words by itself is insufficient unless you can ‘put those words together’ in a way that communicates your meaning to your readers.

3.5 Good expression can be developed and the first step is to acquire a thorough understanding of correct English grammar and usage. The intention from now onwards is to develop and capitalise upon that grammar.

3.6 Just as all matter can be divided into molecules and further sub-divided into atoms and smaller particles, so all writing can be divided into paragraphs and further sub-divided into sentences, clauses, phrases and words. The analogy is not perfect but conveys the idea that the end product — writing — comprises basic ingredients that are combined in accordance with certain rules.

3.7 Having already discussed words at Chapter 2, the basic ingredients still to be considered are punctuation, sentences and paragraphs.

Punctuation

I myself have learned by experience, that, if ideas that are difficult to understand are properly separated, they become clearer; and that, on the other hand, through defective punctuation, many passages are confused and distorted to such a degree, that sometimes they can with difficulty be understood, or even cannot be understood at all.

Aldose Manatees. 1466.

3.8 The basic purpose of punctuation is to show the relationships among words, phrases, clauses and sentences so that the writer’s meaning is conveyed to the reader with the least possible delay and without ambiguity. At higher levels of development, punctuation is used to indicate pauses and to emphasise certain phrases that convey finer shades of the writer’s thought.

3.9 For the mature writer, punctuation is partly a matter of taste and the rules are not applied rigidly in every case. For every writer, however, the main emphasis should be to communicate clearly: inadequate punctuation obscures, and unnecessary punctuation distracts. The good craftsman learns, with practice, how to achieve a desired effect.

3.10 The various punctuation marks and their effective use in Defence writing are illustrated in ADFP 102, *Defence Writing Standards*, Part 1, Chapter 4. After reading that chapter, attempt Exercise PUNCTUATION in Annex A to Chapter 3 and compare your answers with those given in the following annex B.

SENTENCES

3.11 As words have little or no meaning except in the context of a sentence, the sentence may well be regarded as the real unit of the language.

3.12 Hopefully you will be aware of the elements of sentence construction and the different types of sentences. The task now is to write the most effective sentences to meet the requirements of Defence writing.

3.13 Defence writing covers all writing originated by or on behalf of the Australian Defence Organisation. It includes orders, briefs, memoranda etc. Each of these different formats exerts discrete influence on the style of writing and the structure of sentences to be used. Notwithstanding these differences — which will be covered by tutorials and exercises throughout the Course — all Defence writing demands certain fundamental characteristics.

3.14 The fundamental characteristics of Defence writing are accuracy, brevity, clarity, relevance and logic. There is also a requirement to maintain your reader's interest and this is best achieved by avoiding the monotonous use of one type of sentence construction. Variety is not only 'the spice of life'; it is essential to provide the emphasis and animation to written work that the skilful orator gives the spoken word.

3.15 The following list of simple actions will assist you to improve the standard of your Defence writing:

- a. Clarify your thinking before you start to write.
- b. Be continuously aware of your reader.
- c. Use short, simply constructed sentences.
- d. Use the active rather than the passive voice.
- e. Use concrete, specific expressions rather than vague general ones.
- f. Keep abstract nouns to a minimum.
- g. Punctuate carefully and correctly.
- h. Use correct grammar and syntax to avoid ambiguity.

Officialese

3.16 No comment on effective Defence writing would be complete without condemning the all too frequent use of ‘officialese’. Officialese comprehends verbosity and circumlocution; it is also characterised by the insertion of meaningless phrases whose only purpose is to try — unsuccessfully — to add dignity or emphasis.

3.17 The following example is regrettably typical of much that has been written by unskilled writers in official publications:

Weather is always present and, to a varying degree, is a continuing factor in the conduct of any military action. Its effects are so numerous and widely varied that they can be properly evaluated only when treated within their relationship to all other factors contributing to the manner of conducting specific operations. This becomes particularly manifest in the application of weather forecasts to planned or contemplated operations. Any operation, therefore, the conduct of which might be affected by weather conditions, demands a proper consideration of a reliable forecast to cover the action, and appropriate adjustments in plans necessitated by the weather forecast, if effective conduct is to be assured.

Had the writer been less imbued with a desire to dress up his thoughts in pretentious clothing he might have written the clearer and simpler statement:

When you contemplate a military operation, consult a reliable weather forecast.

3.18 Further examples of officialese and suggested better alternatives are:

- a. ‘It is clear that ...’ is better stated as ‘Clearly ...’ — but then check that it really is ‘clear’
- b. ‘The question as to whether ...’ is better stated as ‘The question ...’
- c. ‘First of all I should mention ...’ is better stated as ‘Firstly ...’
- d. ‘Having regard to the fact that ...’ is better stated as ‘As ...’
- e. ‘It is our intention to ...’ is better stated as ‘We intend ...’

3.19 The competent staff officer is always vigilant to ensure his written work does not suffer from officialese. Your competence — or lack of it — is directly proportional to the ability to recognise and eradicate the various forms officialese can take. Assess your level of competence by attempting Exercise OFFICIALESE in annex C and comparing your answers with those given in annex D.

Meaningful sentences

3.20 In every sentence you write always remember to ‘say what you mean’. Do not cheat your reader. He is looking for ideas — for meaning — when he reads your letter, regulation, or directive. If he reads a lot of words which have little to do with the real meaning of the sentence; if he reads a number of sentences to get just a little meaning, you are cheating him. Much of his time and effort is wasted because he is not getting full benefit from it. He expected something that you did not deliver.

3.21 Each word in the sentence should advance the thought of that sentence. To leave it out would destroy the meaning you are trying to convey. ‘Naturally’, you say. ‘Of course’. But re-

read the last letter you wrote. Are not some of your sentences rather wordy? Could you not say the same thing in fewer words? And, finally, have you used a whole phrase to say what could be said in one word, or a whole clause for what could be expressed in a short phrase?

Every word in the sentence should be essential to the thought the sentence conveys. To omit any word would destroy the meaning. 'Naturally', you say. 'Of course'. But re-read the last letter you wrote. Could you have expressed some of the sentences in fewer words? And, finally, have you used a phrase for what could be said in one word, or a clause for what could be expressed in a short phrase?

3.22 Of course you can be too concise. Terse writing can sound rude and abrupt; you might lose more than you gain. We need, then to be politely concise. What you are writing, what you are writing about, and whom you are writing for will help you decide just where to draw the line. However, our general rule, 'Make every word count', still stands. Say what you have to say in as few words as clarity and tact will allow.

3.23 A second way to save effort for your reader is to pack as much meaning as possible into each sentence without having too complicated a sentence structure. Each sentence is a unit of complete thought. Each time the reader reads one of these units he should get as much meaning as possible.

3.24 There are several things we can do to pack meaning into a sentence. In general, they all have to do with summarising and combining. Some people write weak, insignificant sentences, in both structure and thought. Ordinarily, several such sentences can be summarised and the thought put into one good, mature sentence:

- a. **Example.** 'We left Newcastle the next morning. I remember watching three aircraft. They were Mirages. They were flying very low. I felt sure they were going to crash over half a dozen times. The Mirage is new to me. I hadn't seen one before.'
- b. **Rewritten.** 'When we left Newcastle the next morning I remember watching three Mirages, a type of aircraft I had never seen before. They were flying so low that on several occasions I felt sure they were going to crash.'

3.25 In this section you have reviewed the sentence - the real unit of the English language - and the vital part it plays in effective Defence writing. Writing good sentences takes concentration, patience and practice. Whereas concentration and patience are 'up to you', practice is provided in Exercise SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION in annex E. The suggested solutions to Exercise SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION are in annex F.

PARAGRAPHS

The purpose of paragraphing is to give the reader a rest. The writer is saying to him: "Have you got that? If so, I'll go on to the next point".

H.W. Fowler

3.26 Just as words need to be organised into effective sentences, so sentences require to be linked into effective paragraphs. Sentences were organised according to certain rules of grammar and syntax, but there are no set rules for constructing a paragraph. So long as a paragraph treats only one idea, it may be organised and written in a number of ways.

3.27 A whole composition, if not broken up into sections, would be difficult to follow. There would be nowhere to pause and to guide the development of the topic. The reader would have

to work out the stage-by-stage development unaided by the author. To enable the reader to advance by easy stages and quickly appreciate the development of the whole, the writer divides his composition into paragraphs.

3.28 **The paragraph problem.** Without set rules how can one write good paragraphs? What makes one paragraph better than another? Good paragraphs possess common characteristics or qualities. Identification and discussion of these qualities will then allow the derivation of guidelines to aid and improve future paragraphing.

Paragraphs – principles

3.29 A paragraph may appear to be just a collection of sentences but, in substance, it is more than this: it is a unified collection of thoughts that sums up one phase of a whole composition. Just as a sentence has unity in dealing with a whole subject, so should a paragraph have unity in dealing with a set of closely associated thoughts.

3.30 **Paragraph unity.** A paragraph may consist of one or more sentences dealing with the topic. To make sure that the reader understands what the topic is about, focus the material into a topic sentence. This sentence may introduce an idea or state in general terms the subject of the paragraph. It serves to maintain the unity of the paragraph and will act as a signpost for the reader. The sentences that follow it support it with facts and details.

3.31 If you have clearly thought out what you want to write, the result will be apparent in your paragraphs, for a paragraph represents a stage in your thinking process. It is the full development of one of the ideas you considered as you organised your thoughts. Your paragraphs should lead your reader clearly and smoothly along your line of thought.

3.32 Each idea is presented and supported in a paragraph. In a short letter, there may only be as many paragraphs as there are main ideas. In a longer paper, the writer may present each idea in a paragraph and then use another paragraph for each supporting point. Paragraphs should show how ideas were broken down into their various aspects. To highlight these ideas for the reader, paragraph headings are used. Therefore, the first and most important principle to be observed in paragraph writing is that of **unity**. The paragraph and every part of it must be the expression of one idea or topic.

3.33 **Paragraph order.** The second principle of paragraph construction is **order**: that is, logical sequence of thought or development of the subject. The scheme of development and the order in which sentences are arranged are intimately related. The first sentence should generally be the topic sentence to arouse the interest of your reader; and the last should satisfy it.

3.34 The kinds of order most commonly used in paragraph writing are:

- a. from familiar to the unfamiliar;
- b. from the general to the particular;
- c. from the particular to the general;
- d. chronological order; and
- e. from less to greater value: order of climax - increasing importance of interest.

3.35 Whatever the order chosen, the thought must progress steadily from somewhere to somewhere else. It must follow a definite direction, not ramble aimlessly. In the entire paragraph, each sentence should ideally have a place of its own, and a place so plainly its own that it could not be shifted to another place without the paragraph losing coherence.

3.36 **Paragraph variety.** A third principle of paragraph construction is **variety**. To avoid monotony, the paragraphs should be of different lengths, and not always of the same construction.

3.37 **Summary.** The essentials of good paragraph construction are:

- a. unity,
- b. a good topic sentence,
- c. logical sequence of thought,
- d. variety in paragraph and sentence structure, and
- e. a rounded final sentence in conclusion.

3.38 Examples of paragraphs which exhibit these qualities are in annex G. Now attempt Exercise ARRANGE in annex H. The suggested solutions are in annex I.

Paragraphs – structure

3.39 The dominant sentences of a paragraph may be located at the beginning, the end or somewhere in the middle of a paragraph. The dominant, or ‘topic’, sentence should be placed where it has strongest effect; for example, a journalistic style would usually place the topic sentence at the beginning of the paragraph, but routine journalism also tends to rely on short paragraphs to create an arresting effect. In any event, each paragraph should have one clearly identifiable theme.

3.40 In writing Defence papers, you are usually expected to build up to your conclusions, rather than boldly assert what you want to say and then supply the supporting argument or detail. Whatever the sequence of your presentation, remember to state your main idea, support it, and emphasise it.

3.41 Many authorities argue that the topic sentence of your paragraph should be the first sentence throughout, as this allows your reader to scan more quickly everything you want to state. This practice is certainly a sound one in writing manuals and regulations, but it is not recommended for all purposes and forms of writing.

3.42 The following three paragraphs illustrate various positions of a topic sentence;

Australia is one of those fortunate countries that have never been fought over in national or international war, and whose people have never known the brutalities of a conquering army, or the shame, poverty and misery of defeat. Soldiers, sailors, and airmen have gone overseas to fight in wars in which the bearing on the defence of Australia was not always clear. The nearest that an enemy army has come has been New Guinea. Two world wars brought bereavement and sorrow but, with the exception of minor damage at Darwin, the wars themselves have left no scars on the land.

The second has the topic sentence at the end:

In not making such a request, the government of South Vietnam was doubtless acting under advice. **The paradox has developed that action in the same name of SEAT (or of SEAT “obligation”) is more forthcoming if requested directly of the individual members than if requested of the organisation.**

The third has the topic sentence in the middle:

On 16th March 1949, the Prime Minister, J.A.B. Chifley, issued a directive for the establishment and maintenance of a permanent civilian security intelligence organisation to protect the Commonwealth and its territories against espionage, sabotage and subversion. **Thus was formed the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO).** A legislative basis for the organisation was given by Act No 113 of 1956. In this Act, the functions of ASIO were defined.

Paragraphs – contents

3.43 **Supporting material.** Support material proves, describes, explains or illustrates what was said in the topic sentence. Here you need to add interest in your writing as well, to sell your point. However, in Defence writing this is where most people court trouble by being too wordy. The material you use must be carefully chosen: it should be pertinent, adequate and informative. Consider these points:

- a. A paragraph is a unified body of material dealing with one idea. The details, reasons and illustrations you use must actually support this central idea.
- b. Supporting material must clear up all doubts your reader has about the idea. It must clearly explain, describe or prove the idea to the reader’s satisfaction. Here are a few points to remember about choosing material that will be acceptable to your reader.
 - (1) **Be honest with yourself and your reader.** Do not be misleading. Do not use something as a fact unless you are sure it really is so. An intelligent reader will see through this kind of support and reject the idea just because you have not been honest.
 - (2) **Give your reader credit for being intelligent.** However, do not over-estimate his ability to understand your more obscure statements.
 - (3) **Use valid support.** How up-to-date are your statistics? Do they actually apply to this point? What was your source? Are you quoting accurately and in context? Is the person quoted really an authority on this subject? If so, identify him as an expert for your reader.
 - (4) **Use meaningful support.** A particular illustration may be valid yet not very meaningful to the reader. Things are most meaningful to the reader when they hit close to home. He wants to know ‘What does this mean to me?’

3.44 Be complete, but do not labour detail. Stop too soon and you will raise questions in your reader’s mind; stop too late and you will ‘flog a dead horse’. Use just enough detail - no more.

3.45 **Padding.** Padding should be avoided. Padding is the use of words, phrases, and even sentences that contribute nothing to the reader's perception of the writer's meaning. Some phrases seem to be especially tempting to writers, eg 'at this point in time'.

3.46 All forms of verbosity might be described as padding. However, padding is here used as a label for that type of verbosity Prime Minister Churchill referred to in a memorandum entitled 'Brevity' that he issued in 1940. He wrote:

Let us have an end to such phrases as "it is important to bear in mind the following considerations ..." or "consideration should be given to the possibility of carrying into effect ...". Most of these woolly phrases are mere padding, which can be left out altogether, or replaced by a single word. Let us not shrink from using the short expressive phrase even if it is conversational.

3.47 Padding, in the sense in which Churchill used the word, consists of clumsy and obtrusive stitches on what ought to be a smooth fabric of thought. No doubt, padding comes partly from a feeling that wordiness is an ingredient of politeness, and that a bald statement is crude, if not rude. There is an element of truth in this: a *staccato* style can be as irritating as one that is *sostenuto*. Style is a matter of degree, and official prose calls for plainness rather than elegance. No doubt, also, the habit of padding springs partly from less meritorious notions — that the dignity of an official's calling demands a certain verbosity, and that the naked truth is indecent and should be clothed in wrappings of woolly words. Frequently, padding is a cloak for sloppy thinking. Elimination of padding, of which officialese is one variety, forces the writer to clarify his thinking. One should aim for clarity and conciseness; anything that does not relate directly to the theme of the paragraph should be discarded.

3.48 **Development of support material.** There are several devices that can provide suitable support material for your topic sentences. You may use:

- examples and instances
- causes and effects
- proofs or reasons
- comparisons or contrasts
- analogies
- definitions

Various schemes of paragraph development are illustrated in annex G. The time taken in reading through this annex will be time well spent.

Paragraphs – coherency

3.49 Practice will enable you to write coherent paragraphs. You need to lead your reader smoothly and easily through your ideas. You should use transitional devices to tie the thoughts of a sentence together and then to tie the paragraphs together.

3.50 There are several ways to move from one idea to another. You may repeat something you have said earlier, you may use a connecting word or phrase, or you may have a whole sentence whose sole purpose is to move the reader to the next point. In longer papers, you may even find transitional paragraphs.

3.51 When using a connecting word, be sure to choose a word that accurately shows the relationship between the ideas you are connecting. Each of the following words establishes a

definite kind of relationship: **‘finally’, ‘so’, ‘next’, ‘therefore’, ‘however’, ‘now’**. These words may tie together whole paragraphs as well as clauses and sentences. For example, in the following sentences ‘however’ acts as a transition.

In previous tests, only one person in five was able to complete Part I in less than two hours. However, three out of every five completed it within one and a half hours during the last test

Notice that the two ideas stand apart: a gap of meaning separates them. The word ‘however’ introduces a contrast and relates the two separate sentences. Do not use ‘however’ as a conjunction. It is not a replacement for ‘but’. If ‘however’ is used to join two main clauses it must be preceded by a punctuation break greater than a comma.

3.52 You are probably more aware of phrases that are used as traditional devices. Here are some familiar ones: **‘on the other hand’, ‘since this is true’, ‘because of this’, ‘in the second place’, ‘another point to consider’**. These will often be found at the beginning of topic sentences.

3.53 Transitional sentences and paragraphs are not as common as transitional words and phrases, but they are needed sometimes. The transitional sentence may be found at the end of a paragraph leading up to the following paragraph. You have probably seen one like this: **‘This brings us to the next point - the transitional paragraph’**. Transitional paragraphs may sum up a major point and at the same time lead into the next point. Occasionally, they merely introduce the next major point.

3.54 Normally, one thinks of transitional devices being used between paragraphs, and this is where they are most obvious. The devices may provide either a link to the preceding paragraph or to the whole subject of the paper. Generally, paragraphs are tied together within a major topic. Further, when a writer moves to the next major topic, he may use a transitional device to link it to the previous topic or to the subject of the paper as a whole.

3.55 Transition is also accomplished between the sentences in a paragraph by repeating a name or idea previously mentioned, using a pronoun to refer to it or by using some of the transitional words mentioned previously. The reader must be able to follow the logical progression of points in the support material.

3.56 The most important point to make about these transitional devices is to use them. You have thought out your ideas; now lead your reader by the hand over this same ground.

Some commonly accepted transitional phrases and the purpose they fulfil are at Table 1:

TABLE 1

Serial No (a)	Purpose (b)	Transitional Phrase (c)
1	To add some ideas	in addition, moreover, a second method, another way, besides, also.

2	To contrast ideas	but, yet, nevertheless, however, still, in contrast, otherwise, on the other hand.
3	To compare ideas	like, similar, just as.
4	To show results	therefore, as a result, consequently, thus.
5	To show time	then, a little later, immediately, meantime, afterwards, earlier, next.

Paragraphs – length

3.57 Generally, if there is such a thing as an average in the length of paragraphs in Defence writing, three sentences comprise this average in many formal orders and instructions, extending sometimes to five or even more sentences in less formal Defence writing. A succession of very short paragraphs can be irritating, but very long ones can be wearisome.

3.58 Paragraphing is partly a matter of the eye: a reader will address himself more readily to the task if he sees from the start that he will have breathing spaces from time to time than if what is before him looks like a marathon course. However, a paragraph is essentially a unit of thought, not of length: it must be homogeneous in subject matter and sequential in treatment.

3.59 As a general rule keep your paragraphs relatively short, but vary the length to suit the format of your composition. If you have several very short paragraphs in a row, do not be afraid to use a long one after them, or break up a series of rather long ones with a short paragraph. Even a single sentence can be used as a paragraph occasionally if the sentence is important enough to deserve the emphasis it will receive as a paragraph.

3.60 A paragraph is a composition complete in itself. One must develop the main thought of the composition clearly and completely. If attention is focussed on the main idea of the paragraph, and that main idea is supported with interesting and acceptable material, the argument should be convincing. The same principles apply to the body of the material as a whole: paragraphs should integrate naturally into a whole as sentences integrate into a well-written paragraph.

3.61 When you revise your next piece of writing, see if you can answer ‘yes’ to each of the following questions:

- a. Is every paragraph clearly related to the subject?
- b. Does each paragraph proceed logically to the next?
- c. Is there a smooth transition of expression from one paragraph to the next?
- d. Does each paragraph have unity, order and variety?
- e. Is there a clearly dominant thought in each paragraph?

- f. Are the supporting thoughts within each paragraph so clearly subordinated that the reader can easily determine the difference between an important idea and a lesser one?
- g. Is each paragraph consistent with the mood and tone of the whole composition?

Annexes:

- A. Exercise PUNCTUATION
- B. Exercise PUNCTUATION - solutions
- C. Exercise OFFICIALESE
- D. Exercise OFFICIALESE - suggested solutions
- E. Exercise SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION
- F. Exercise SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION - suggested solutions
- G. Types of paragraph development
- H. Exercise ARRANGE
- I. Exercise ARRANGE - suggested solutions

EXERCISE PUNCTUATION

1. Examine each of the following sentences for errors in punctuation and correct where necessary:
 - a. Are you sure the initials are her's.
 - b. The children's request was granted, their parents was not.
 - c. On cold days my hands are too cold to write on warm days too hot.
 - d. He scored highly on the academic scale however his poor grooming counted against him.
2. ADFP102, Defence Writing Standards, Part 1, Chapter 2 details the required conventions of punctuation for use in Defence writing. Examine the following for errors and correct where necessary:
 - a. Lieutenant F O Smith RAN scored 5.5 on his PR5.
 - b. The ratio 1/5 is incorrect eg. there is evidence indicating at least two in every five have some form of sight defect.
 - c. The CO said "Jones your car was travelling at 70 m.p.h."
3. Compare your answers with those given in annex B.

EXERCISE PUNCTUATION – SOLUTIONS

1. The suggested corrected versions of the examples given in Exercise PUNCTUATION are, in order:

- a. Are you sure the initials are hers?
- b. The children's request was granted; their parents' was not.
- c. On cold days, my hands are too cold to write; on warm days, too hot.
- d. He scored highly on the academic scale; however, his poor grooming counted against him.
- e. Lieutenant F.O. Smith, RAN scored 5.5 on his PR5.
- f. The ratio 1:5 is incorrect; eg there is evidence indicating at least two in every five have some form of sight defect.
- g. The CO said 'Jones, your car was travelling at 70 mph'.

EXERCISE OFFICIALESE

1. Expressions such as these are found all too frequently in correspondence. Suggest better alternatives:

- a. At the present juncture
- b. It will be our endeavour
- c. In short supply
- d. Bearing upon the matter in hand
- e. Regular course of procedure
- f. Reduce the severity of
- g. This is accounted for by the fact that
- h. The necessary enquiries have been instituted with a view to ascertaining the causes
- i. In the eventuality of the squadron's being unable to deploy in accordance with the plan

2. Suggested solutions are in annex D.

EXERCISE OFFICIALESE - SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

1. Suggested better alternatives to the examples in annex C are:

a.	At the present juncture.....	now
b.	It will be our endeavour....	We will try
c.	In short supply....	Scarce
d.	Bearing upon the matter in hand....	Concerning, relevant pertinent
e.	Regular course of procedure....	Routine
f.	Reduce the severity of....	Mitigate, moderate, alleviate
g.	This is accounted for by the fact that	This is because
h.	The necessary enquiries have been instituted with a view to ascertaining the causes	The causes are being investigated; we are trying to find out why; we are asking why
i.	In the eventuality of the squadron's being unable to deploy in accordance with the plan ...	If the squadron cannot deploy as planned

EXERCISE SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

1. Construct single sentences from each of the following group of facts:
 - a. The Force can achieve its aim. The force is small and ill equipped. Its state of training is poor.
 - b. She lay in the path of other shipping. The ship rode at anchor. There was a danger of being sunk by other shipping. She omitted to show lights.

2. Construct a single sentence from each of these groups:
 - a. Requirements should be obtained to the greatest extent possible from Australian production. This conforms to the long-standing policy. This desirability has been observed.
 - b. There is an exception to the general practice of non-modification of commercial items. This exception is when the commercial items adopted do not satisfy military requirements. Military requirements often demand more rugged performance, durability and reliability.

3. Suggested solutions are in annex F.

EXERCISE SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION - SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

1. Suggested single sentences for Exercise SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION are, in order:
 - a.
 - (1) The Force, though small, ill-equipped and in a poor state of training, can achieve its aim.
 - (2) The Force is small, ill equipped and badly trained; yet it can achieve its aim.
 - b.
 - (1) The ship, riding at anchor without lights in the path of other shipping, was in danger of being sunk.
 - (2) The ship was in danger of being sunk, for she rode at anchor in the path of other shipping but showed no lights.
 - c. In conformity with the long-standing policy for procurement of equipment, the desirability for obtaining requirements from Australian production to the greatest extent possible has been observed.
 - d. Commercial items are adopted without modification, except where they do not satisfy military requirements that often demand more rugged performance, durability and reliability.

TYPES OF PARAGRAPH DEVELOPMENT

1. **Examples and instances.** The following paragraph illustrates how an argument can be developed by use of examples and instances:

- a. It is pitifully easy to prove our rules of grammar arbitrary, unintelligent, and inconsistent. One mistake or change gets by; another gets stopped. The adjective 'like' may become a preposition freely, the adjective 'near' is admitted with some reluctance to the same class, but the adjective 'worth' must remain an adjective, though its use is plainly prepositional. The phrase 'already' may be written as one word, but not the phrase 'alright'. Scores of verbs, such as 'write', 'incline', 'begin', and 'end' - the list is endless - may be either transitive or intransitive, but not 'lay' or 'set'. We may 'lay' a floor but not 'lay down', 'set the table' but not just 'set'. We may use what was originally a past tense as a past participle when we say 'I have fought' but we must not say 'I have fell'. Why not?

2. **Causes and effects.** The following two paragraphs are examples of how an argument can be developed in terms of cause and effect:

- a. The college freshman who is learning to speak before a group is sometimes ineffective at first and is unable to convey to the group exactly the message or point that he is trying to make. And he is frequently surprised to find out that his listener did not grasp the point, for it seemed perfectly clear to him. This ineffectiveness is usually caused by these difficulties, each of which can be overcome with practice and care. The first is that the speaker does not give extra emphasis to the important parts of his talk. Instead, everything that he is putting forth rolls along flatly and without variation; there are no hills and plains. The consequence of this unrelieved sameness is that listeners have trouble in separating the important from the unimportant, the significant from the trivial; and at the end they are unsure of the point. The second difficulty is that the speaker does not set up signposts along the way. He forgets, for instance, to number his points. He forgets to pause between points. He forgets to use relational expressions to show thought relationships - such expressions as 'in the first place', 'as a beginning', 'on the other hand', 'on the contrary', 'nevertheless', 'in addition', 'to continue', 'next', 'hence', 'thus', 'consequently', 'for example', 'for instance', 'to illustrate', 'to conclude', and 'in conclusion'. Without such signposts listeners sometimes get lost, and then they lose interest and begin to think about other things. The final difficulty is that the beginner's rate of speech is far too rapid. In his nervousness and in his desire to get along with his subject, he speeds ahead at a pace that makes listening difficult. And when listening becomes difficult, listeners tend to give up. These difficulties are the cause of much of the ineffectiveness of talks given by beginners before college groups.
- b. A sure method of calculating the age of rocks seemed too much to hope for, but has actually been found in the radioactive elements. These shoot off at regular intervals, like a Roman candle, an atom of helium and degenerate successively into elements of lower atomic weight. The heaviest of the elements, uranium, is breaking down slowly into radium and this less slowly into lead. The average life

of a uranium atom is 7 000 000 000 years. The average life of a radium atom is 2 440 years. Most of the uranium in the world has come into existence within the Christian era. All the rocks containing uranium also contain lead, the particular kind of lead that descends from uranium. The helium, being gaseous, has mostly escaped. By analysing a specimen of such rock it is possible to tell how much lead has accumulated from the decomposition of its uranium, and therefore to calculate the age of the rock.

3. **Giving proofs or reasons.** The following paragraph shows a good arrangement of supporting reasons and proof:

- a. If you think the movies make California, you are wrong. The production value of all movies is only a 150 million a year. The chief sources of income to Californians are manufacturing, agriculture, mining, and tourists - in that order. Manufacturing, with the refining of petroleum and the processing of fruits and vegetables heading the list, contributes approximately 850 million added value a year. Mineral products, in which the largest item is oil, contribute about 310 million. Tourist expenditure, variable of course, is about 300 million. Thus the four main sources of income - manufacturing, agriculture, mining, and tourists - account for 14 times the amount that movies bring to the state.

4. **Comparison or contrast.** The following paragraph develops its argument by good use of comparison and contrast:

- a. The epochal inventions, which we shall describe more fully in the next chapter, produced power-driven machinery and factories, self-propelled vehicles, accurate tools and measuring instruments and modern science. Farming changed from a simple occupation undertaken with crude tools, like a horse-drawn wooden plough, to a highly intricate enterprise, requiring complicated machinery, swift means of transportation, and a knowledge of chemistry, biology, and related sciences. Manufacturing, once conducted in the home and small shops, moved to gigantic factories with highly complex machinery, requiring the supervision of experts versed in chemistry, physics and engineering. Dwellings changed from simple, one or two-storeyed frame buildings, into many-storeyed apartment houses of steel and brick. Railroads, ocean liners, automobiles, trucks and airplanes replaced wagons and sailing ships. The radio, telephone, telegraph, movies, public mails and modern newspaper press provided swifter and more far-reaching communication than word-of-mouth or hand-printed papers, and a slow, inefficient, semi-private postal system. The Industrial Revolution even penetrated into homes, as the vacuum cleaner displaced the broom, electricity the kerosene lamp, and the washing machine the tub and the scrubbing board. Commerce and trade developed on a tremendous scale, even between distant corners of the earth, while individuals - once confined entirely to their parishes - became used to travelling thousands of miles each year.

5. **Analogy.** The following paragraph demonstrates good use of parallel or analogous descriptions:

- a. Heat is always being transferred in one way or another, whenever there is any difference in temperature. Just as water will run down hill, always flowing to the lowest possible level, so heat, if left to itself, flows down the temperature hill, always warming the cold objects at the expense of the warmer ones. The rate at

which heat flows depends on the steepness of the temperature hill as well as on the properties of the materials through which it has to flow. The difference of temperature per unit distance is called the temperature gradient, an analogy to the idea of steepness of grade, which determines the rate of flow of water.

6. **Definition.** The following paragraph seeks to establish a definition:

- a. What, then, is my concept of Liberalism? In answering this, it is first necessary to brush aside the misleading and erroneous analogy of the spectrum, with Communism on the left, Conservatism on the right, and Liberalism in the middle. Liberalism is freedom from orthodoxy - independence of mind. It is radical on some questions and conservative on others. While it may at times go down the middle of the road, it may at others range far to either side. It has no kinship with doctrinaire positions at any extreme. The essential characteristics of free thinking, and hence of Liberalism, are the recognition of, and tolerance for, natural facts. The perfect Liberal would be tolerant of both reactionaries and radicals, of good and evil, of everything that is in nature. Notice that tolerance does not mean approval. Webster defines tolerance as 'endurance', and I would add as a prefix 'understanding'. Because he understands it, a tolerant person can endure such evil as he must. He will disapprove of it and take advantage of reasonable opportunities to correct it, but he knows that it cannot be abolished through a great flurry of committee meetings. A Liberal is a tolerant person in this sense. He must retain freedom for his own thought, he must be free to reverse his position on any question if dispassionate judgement convinces him of an error. If he is to be free to do this, he will find few, if any, 'action groups' that he can join with equanimity. On the contrary, he will find himself quite alone in a crowd.

EXERCISE ARRANGE

1. Rearrange the following two lists of sentences so that each constitutes a well-ordered paragraph. Underline the topic sentence of each paragraph:

a.

- (1) The free people of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedom.
- (2) The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want.
- (3) They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died.
- (4) They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife.
- (5) We must keep the hope alive.

b.

- (6) Believe me, mankind had been doing nothing else ever since it began to pay some attention to ideas.
- (7) It has been said that a benevolent despotism is the best possible form of government.
- (8) You seek to impose your ideas on others, ostracising those who reject them.
- (9) I do not believe that saying, because I believe another one to the effect that hell is paved with benevolence, which most people, the proverb being too deep for them, misinterpret as unfulfilled intentions.
- (10) Excuse my rambling.
- (11) I meant to say, in short, that though you are benevolent and judicious you are none the less a despot.
- (12) As if a benevolent despot might not by an error of judgement destroy his kingdom and then say, like Romeo when he got his friend killed, 'I thought all for the best!'

2. Suggested solutions are in annex I.

EXERCISE ARRANGE - SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

1. Suggested paragraph constructions for Exercise ARRANGE are:
 - a. **The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want.** They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died. We must keep the hope alive. The free people of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedom.
 - b. **You seek to impose your ideas on others, ostracising those who reject them.** Believe me, mankind has been doing nothing else ever since it began to pay some attention to ideas. It has been said that a benevolent despotism is the best possible form of government. I do not believe that saying, because I believe another one to the effect that hell is paved with benevolence, which most people, the proverb being too deep for them, misinterpret as unfulfilled intentions. As if a benevolent despot might not by an error of judgement destroy his kingdom, and then say, like Romeo when he got his friend killed, 'I thought all for the best!' Excuse my rambling. I meant to say, in short, that though you are benevolent and judicious you are none the less a despot.

CHAPTER 4 – EXPRESSING IDEAS CLEARLY AND PERSUASIVELY

Style

4.1 Language is not only a means by which information is conveyed from one person to another, but is also a mirror of the writer himself - his ideas, his feeling and his spirit. Thus, our concept of 'style' encompasses:

- a. the practical aspects of how language is chosen and arranged to achieve clarity and adequacy in the expression of ideas; and
- b. the artistic aspects of how language may convey a certain feeling, sensitivity or persuasiveness to the reader.

4.2 The quotation gives a useful insight into what 'style' is all about. Style is the name we give to the particular combination of characteristics that differentiates it from other writing. Style is the character of writing. It is largely a matter of individuality, and is acquired only by long persistence and practice. An effective writing style is characterised by the precise choice of words; it flows with unaffected movement and transitions; and it is always appropriate to the occasion in both level and tone.

Characteristics of style

4.3 **How to develop style.** The best practical way to develop style is first to understand grammar, syntax and word usage. Your writing will then be, at least correct, concise and clear. Once you have mastered the mechanics of the language you will develop confidence in your writing. This confidence will lead naturally to writing that will carry the imprint of your personality.

4.4 A writing style develops, of course, in many ways, but especially from reading. Probably the best simple thing you can do to improve your writing is to read. In fact, you can profitably read writers whom you admire and make a conscious attempt to learn from them, analysing their sentences, their diction and their tone.

4.5 Originality is a virtue much admired in writing, but you cannot write originally by imitating what seems clever in some other writer. Originality emerges in writing when you think and learn enough about your topic to make the ideas you present your own. Tricks and devices are likely to be less original than clearly conceived material presented with sincerity, directness and simplicity.

4.6 **Defence style.** The style of your writing is, however, subject to a certain uniformity in the Defence. This is not for a moment to say that either the style of Defence writing or the uniformity is unattractive. In fact, considerable latitude is possible within the prescribed formats and conventions.

4.7 The aims and characteristics of Defence writing are simple and straightforward. If you satisfy these requirements, your writing will have a distinctive style; it will be accurate, clear and concise, relevant and have inherent logic.

Cloudy expression

4.8 Perhaps the most important skill you must develop is to write clearly. Cloudy expression is the result of undisciplined and lazy thinking, and inevitably begets inefficiency

and confusion. Some aspects of cloudy expression, such as ambiguity and verbosity have been examined briefly in earlier chapters, but this chapter would be incomplete without some comment on the evils of writing generally in the style of a particular group. For example, some bureaucrats tend to write ‘officialese’; some engineers write technical jargon; inferior journalists write ‘journalese’; and some public figures tend to disguise what they have (or do not have) to say by means of ‘gobbledygook’⁴.

4.9 One of the difficulties of stamping out writing such as this is that it has a number of variants. Jargon, which can be regarded as legitimate English in its own environment, becomes gobbledygook as soon as it is inflicted on people who cannot understand it.

4.10 Most writers of turgid prose have something worth saying. The sad fact is that readers soon weary of translating the stuff and fail to judge the substance fairly. Cloudy expression is, therefore, more than just an offending nuisance: it is also a threat to efficiency, mutual understanding and fair dealing.

Level and tone

4.11 ADFP 102—*Defence Writing Standards*, Part 1, Chapter 2 introduces the concepts of ‘level’ and ‘tone’ when applied to written expression. As Defence relies on an officer’s ability to write at the appropriate level and tone, and as many past students have evidently not understood what the phrase ‘level and tone’ means, a further comment on this aspect of writing may prove helpful.

4.12 The word ‘level’ may be used in two different senses: it may refer to the relative ranks of the writer and the reader, or it may refer to the intellectual plane on which the writer tries to convey his ideas. In the matter of relative rank, there are conventions of address and attitude which need to be maintained (that is, between superior and subordinate, between subordinate and superior, and between equals). In the matter of writing on a certain intellectual plane (that is, in the more philosophical sense), ‘level’ refers to the degree of conceptualisation or abstraction the writer is trying to achieve. At a ‘high’ level, he is concerned with the formation, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of ideas. Many a piece of correspondence in Defence has failed to achieve its purpose, whether it be one of seeking cooperation, or a request or direction, because the reader has been offended by the level (in either sense) of the correspondence, and so has not given fair evaluation to the substance it contains.

4.13 The word ‘tone’ suggests a prevailing character or mood, but the term is complex and cannot be confined to a particular genre. In painting, ‘tone’ denotes the general effect of colour, light and shade; in music, the quality, strength and vitality of a particular sound. In writing, a ‘good tone’ suggests a balance of the spirit, refinement and tact of what has to be said with the variety, arrangement and expressiveness of the language used. Tone, then, is more than a mere facet of style. It is the essence of the strength and character of what is written and takes account of both the importance of what has to be said and the devices of language (punctuation, grammar and word choice) needed to convey that importance.

4.14 Every officer must continually pay attention to the level and tone of what he writes. Put in more down-to-earth terms, this means that he should have due regard for his readers, for the value of what he has to say, for the grammar of the language and for the careful choice of his words.

Note

1. Gobbledygook is an ugly word that aptly describes an ugly affliction of the English language. Gobbledygook gives an impression of superfluous eloquence by the use of ‘buzz words’ and other highly affected euphemisms.

CONCLUSION

4.15 A good style cannot be developed overnight. Only the apprenticeship of continuous practice, the hard work of putting pen to paper, the discipline of repeated revising and polishing can make you a better writer.

To help you improve your style
and, perhaps, even raise a smile,
I suggest you ponder a while
upon the blatant show of guile
in annex A - 'tis well worthwhile.

J.B. 1983

Annex:

A. Twenty-one rules for writing good English.

TWENTY-ONE RULES FOR WRITING GOOD ENGLISH

1. Don't use no double negatives.
2. Verbs has to agree with their subjects.
3. Make all pronouns agree with the word it refers to.
4. About those sentence fragments.
5. Try to not ever split infinitives.
6. Its important to use apostrophe's correctly.
7. Corect spelling is esentiel.
8. Always read what you have written to see if you any word out.
9. Watch out for irregular verbs that has crope into our language.
10. A writer mustn't shift your point of view.
11. When dangling, don't use participles.
12. Join clauses good, like a conjunction should.
13. Don't write a run-on sentence you got to punctuate it.
14. In letters themes reports articles and stuff like that we use commas to keep a string of items apart.
15. Don't use commas, which aren't necessary.
16. As far as incomplete constructions, they are wrong.
17. Avoid writing too many ideas into one sentence when you are better off to write shorter sentences and your reader can also understand better what you want to say.
18. About repetition, the repetition of a word might be real effective repetition - but rarely is.
19. In my opinion I think that an author when he is writing shouldn't get into the habit of making use of words he doesn't really need in order to put his message across.
20. Avoid flamboyant verbosity or affectation of style whose comprehension transcends the capacity of all but the nimblest audience.
21. Last but not least, lay off cliches and colloquialisms.