

JOURNALISM

AND CREATIVE WRITING

*A Course Text for Students Offering Journalism
in Theological Schools and Seminaries*

© **EGBEYON F. ILENBODIAYE**

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FOREWORD

While it is obvious that the Rev. Egbeyon F. Ilenbodiaye is not a journalist by calling, he is however journalistic in his writing. He is known for simplicity of style, correct use of syntax, accuracy of diction and appropriate use of illustrations. The author has a flair for details and correct ordering of ideas which goes to show his clear-headedness in articulating issues that flow through his pen.

Having gone through the manuscript of this book, I was intimidated by the fluidity of his thoughts and the uninhibited mastery of the subject-matter. If one of the over all purposes of this masterpiece entitled *Journalism and Creative Writing* is to create in the readers the hunger to write for posterity, I say the book has really achieved this and more.

Again, if the book aims to teach the rudiments of journalistic writing, editing, reporting and/or to equip the Christian Worker writer with the ethical and legal imperatives and mechanical accuracy in writing, the author has succeeded to achieve this brilliantly.

Therefore, it is with great expectation that this book would surely pay every effort put in reading it that I recommend it to all and sundry. Give this *Magnum Opus* a place in the shelf of your library.

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Edo State.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There has always been an avid desire in me to blaze the trail in this ministry particularly in literary works. This desire was revitalized about twelve years ago during my first year in school as an undergraduate. It is never a gainsaying that I have since then inevitably accumulated many intellectual and spiritual debts, some of which are perhaps unrecognized by my creditors. In particular, however, I cannot deny myself the pleasure of publicly thanking my fathers in the Lord, Rev. Ehis L. Onaburekhan, Edo East District Superintendent, Rev. Ehigie Isaiah, and Rev. Dr. M. A. Otobo (Pioneer District Superintendent, Esan District) for the mentorship roles they have played in modeling me for the ministry.

I also want to acknowledge with great delight people like Rev. R. B. Akhaituamen, Esan District Superintendent and Rev. Prof. R. I. Ebuade, NAST President, for the inspiration they have provided, and for helping me to realize that I have great potentials inside of me. Dr. M. A. Izibili, (Lecturer, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma) sir, your perspicacious suggestions and encouragement were germane to the desire to forge ahead in this art, a thing I had dreaded so much.

As a matter of fact, I may not be able to appreciate all of you well enough but I wish to say that through your positive influence upon my life and ministry couple with God's immeasurable grace upon me, I have begun to put my name on papyrus and parchment believing that in the end, I will leave a legacy that will remain monumentally conspicuous in the sands of time.

I am particularly grateful to my bosom friend, a brother and colleague, Rev. Monn Ogbidi, Senior Lecturer- NAST, for proofreading the manuscript and writing the foreword. My former students in Journalism class particularly Pastors like: Charles Ehis Akue, Amos Ehis Ovienlonba, Daniel Okorie Njoku, Collins Aimiebelomon, Emmanuel A. Diamond and Godspower Samuel, also deserve my unalloyed appreciation for their sedulous encouragement which created in me the desire to turn my lecture notes into a book.

For the development and production of the BOOK itself, I feel a deep sense of gratitude to the numerous authors whose works I have rummaged through in order to benefit from their pearls of wisdom. It is noteworthy to say that I am particularly indebted to people like: Joy Chinwe Eyisi, Audu Nock Tonga, Elizabeth Pryse and Nathan Eze. The information contained mainly in chapter eight is an excerpt from your works because I found that I could never have treated the various topics the way you did. Notwithstanding, I am solely responsible for any surviving errors in this work.

Finally, I wish to pay a tribute to my amiable and ex-gratia wife, Pastor (Mrs.) F. O. Ilenbodiaye for her endless patience and indulgence that gave me the impetus to continue in the drive to produce this third book. I owe you a reservoir of infinite gratitude.

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated first and foremost to the Almighty God who poured his immensurable grace upon my life and inspired me to put down in writing form what He has impressed upon my heart; and to all my former and present Journalism Students.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword
Acknowledgements
Dedication
Table of Contents
Prefatory Note

Chapter One

JOURNALISM: THE SCOPE

- I. What Journalism Is
- II. The Challenge to Write
- III. The First Rules for Clear Writing
- IV. Freelancing in Journalism

Chapter Two

JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

- I. Communication Defined
- II. The Simple Communication Model
- III. The Various Levels of Communication
- IV. The Media of Communication
- V. Noise in Communication
- VI. Speech Making in Journalism

Chapter Three

NEWS GATHERING, WRITING AND EDITING

- I. News Defined
- II. Interviewing
- III. Types of Newspaper
- IV. The Characteristics of New Writing
- V. Editing and Editorial

Chapter Four

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINE PRODUCTION

- I. Producing the Newspaper
- II. Producing the Magazine
- III. Producing Church Bulletin
- IV. Producing Church or District Newspaper
- V. Pictures in Journalism

Chapter Five

JOURNALISM AND ITS PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

- I. The Journalist and the Law
- II. The Journalist and His/Her Professional Ethics
- III. The Journalist as a Reporter
- IV. The Journalist as a Public Relation Officer

Chapter Six

THE FEATURE WRITING

- I. Definition of Feature
- II. Characteristics of the Feature
- III. Functions of the Feature
- IV. Types of Features
- V. The Structure of the Feature

Chapter Seven

THE REPORT WRITING

- I. Definition of Report
- II. Principles of Report Writing
- III. Functions of Report
- IV. Types of Report
- V. Forms of Report
- VI. The Structure of Report
- VII. The Classifications of Report
- VIII. The Qualities of a Good Report

Chapter Eight

THE MECHANICS OF WRITING

- I. Punctuation Marks
- II. Abbreviations
- III. Capitalization
- IV. Spelling

Glossary

Bibliography

PREFATORY NOTE

I feel a deep sense of responsibility to bring to the fore the knowledge and skills that have been in abeyance. Statistics shows that each individual in every generation is born into this world with a mission to fulfill in the scheme of things. God endows people with great potentials based on the particular assignment in His divine programme that they are created to carry out individually. Myles Munroe remarked, "One of the greatest tragedies in life is to watch potential die untapped."¹

It is a truism that many potentially great men and women have lived in this world and died without ever realizing the full measure of the potentials God locked away within them due to their inability to understand the nature and concept of the potential principle. This assertion is without regard to religion or profession, age or gender, race or nationality.

Many ministers in our contemporary society whose impact would ordinarily have been felt by the larger public are confined to their immediate constituencies due to their inability to appreciate the stuff they are made of as well as their inability to exploit the rich resources inside them to explore other areas of ministries opened to them. Consequent upon this shell ignorance, they are 'striving' in the 'Ministerial Field' 'to win other competitors' rather than 'shinning' as 'peculiar and conspicuous stars' in the 'midst of their contemporaries.' What a fiasco!

Every member of the Body of Christ (Clergy and Laity alike) has been given 'The Great Commission' to tell the life-changing story of Jesus' vicarious and atoning death to all the nations of this world. Over the centuries, it has been emphasized that preaching is the way to fulfill that commission. There is no denying the fact that preaching is one of the most important ways of fulfilling the mandate. But the fact remains that after over two millenniums of preaching, there are millions of people who do not know Christ experientially. People who are yet to keep abreast of the fact that Christ died to redeem them from the bondage of Satan and sin, and to reconcile them with God.

The relevance of this course '*Journalism and Creative Writing*' to pastoral ministries is predicated on the fact that these sin-entangled and potentially lost multitudes everywhere challenge us daily to new and greater efforts. Consequently, the Christian Ministry program curriculum is under constant evaluation. Revisions and additions are being made in keeping with the goal of providing student ministers with the best possible study, learning experiences.

Therefore, this course is designed to provide the requisite skills needed for practical Christian ministry and to challenge those who are already preachers to be communicators of the Word of God through the print media also, a new and exciting ministry opened to all Christian workers. It is also designed to aid them in understanding what is going on in the world of mass media. It is hoped that it will help them to communicate better and be able to use some of the skills they will acquire to further enhance their ministries and advance the course of the gospel not only through writing as an extension of Christian ministry, but through broadcasting as well. "Throughout history the people who have had the greatest impact on other people's lives have been those skilled in speaking."²

This course is intended to teach Christian workers how to write primarily to appeal to the interests that people have in religious and spiritual matters rather than to appeal to current popular taste. However, it is only designed to introduce students to this all-important subject "Journalism." Notwithstanding, it is my earnest prayer and desire that for every student who will painstakingly study and imbibe this lesson, his latent abilities will be reactivated and he will be empowered and repositioned to make fortunes smile on people through the wealth of his endowments.

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January 2011.

JOURNALISM: THE SCOPE

Considering the assertion that writing of all kinds can be associated with journalism, Christians and Christian ministers are encouraged as well as challenged to develop the skills of writing and record keeping. The significance of writing as a means of communication and preservation of knowledge is predicated on the fact that God did ask many of His followers to put things down in writing and keep them as records. In addition to that, writing provides a convenient, easily accessible and most profitable means of disseminating the “Good News” about the Person, message and work of Jesus Christ.

Writing being an art is a skill that is developed through practice in time. There is an unchanging rule guiding writing of all types. The rule says, “Practice makes perfect.” Lending his supports to this assertion, Winston Churchill writes, “The art of writing comes from art not chance as those move easiest who have learnt to dance.”³

In view of this, when a person is writing as a beginner notwithstanding his particular area of interest and type of writing, he does not need to get bored perhaps with his inaccurate homiletical placement of ideas, proficiency and impeccability of expression as well as dexterous presentation. Expertise in all of these areas and even more will gradually set in as he continues to forge ahead in the very art. Contemporary prolific writers will attest to this fact, hence the issue of first edition, second, third and so on, of a particular work/write up. I unreservedly encourage and challenge you to get started so that you can create a monumentally conspicuous record in the annals of history.

It is rather unfortunate that most present day pastors do not even preserve their sermon outlines. Worst still, there are those who do not have message notes. This gross ministerial failure is indoctrinated in the popular but mischievous notion that anytime a preacher opens his/her mouth to preach, the Holy Spirit takes charge and begins to speak through him/her. Apart from the fact that such belief, if it were feasible, reduces a preacher to a mere electronic idiot, it should be remarked that there is no such person as the God of a loafer. Whenever these unwary preachers are confronted, only a few who are sincere with themselves will acknowledge it as a shortcoming.

I. WHAT JOURNALISM IS

The question of what journalism precisely is has attracted debate amongst contemporary scholars especially practitioners in this field. This is owing to the fact that the term ‘Journalism’ itself, being a polymorphic word, has been used by different people and on different occasions, to mean different things depending entirely on the individual’s exposure, his particular area of interest, the context within which the user is speaking or writing among other things. Journalism is also defined from both the professional and the nonprofessional’s point of views. We shall x-ray the various definitions with a view to enabling the would-be journalist understand from the on-set what journalism is all about. To achieve this, we shall define the term in three different senses.

A. JOURNALISM DEFINED: Journalism is the investigation and reporting of events, issues, and trends to a broad audience. Although there is much variation within journalism, the idea is to inform the citizenry. Besides covering organizations and institutions such as government and business enterprises, journalism also covers cultural aspects of society such as arts and entertainment.⁴ The field of journalism includes jobs such as editing, photojournalism and documentary.

In the literal sense, journalism can be defined as “the work of gathering, writing, editing, and publishing or disseminating news, as through newspapers and magazines or by radio and television.”⁵ It also refers to “The collection and editing of news for presentation through the mass media.”⁶

From the nonprofessional’s (layman’s) perspective, journalism simply refers to the newspapers, the radio stations and television channels available to men among other things. In this sense, journalism refers to the medium used in passing newsworthy information to a target audience with a view to keeping them abreast of facts affecting all their lives. The cave man drawing a buffalo on the wall of his house did so to give other hunters the news that buffalos were nearby. The town crier reciting the news in the market place provided a convenient way in which a number of people could simultaneously learn facts affecting the generality of people in that community.⁷

From the professional point of view, D. Wainwright defines it thus: *“Journalism... is the events of the day distilled into few words, sounds or pictures, processed by the mechanics of communication to satisfy the human curiosity of a world that is always eager to know what’s new.”*⁸

Journalism is also defined as “Writing designed for publication in a newspaper or popular magazine; writing designed to appeal to current popular taste or public interest”⁹ as quoted by Rex Jackson in his book entitled *Principles of Journalism*.

From the foregoing definitions, it can be deduced with ease and precision that journalism deals with people, society and events, and of course, the media of communication such as words, sounds and pictures through which the people in a given society are brought abreast with happenings around them. Journalism is news, not just any piece of information. It has to be newsworthy, strange and recent. If it does not alter the status quo, it will be regarded and treated as ordinary piece of information. As the popular saying goes, *“If dog bites a man, there is no news but if a man bites a dog, there is news.”*¹⁰

B. THE MAJOR PURPOSES OF JOURNALISM: Given that journalism is communicating relevant ideas to the target audience, it follows that it serves a particular purpose at every given time. But the questions that come to mind are: what kind of ideas? What various purposes do they serve? Or in the least, how does the Journalist determine the particular audience that needs them most? Attempts are hereby made to spot out and mention some of the different kinds of ideas, which Journalism seeks to send to specific target audience with a view to answering the preceding questions. Put in a nutshell, the various purposes are to: inform, entertain, enlighten and persuade.

1. To Inform: In serving this purpose, the message or piece of information is simply relayed as it is seen. Nobody expects the messenger to speak in parables too difficult to solve. He is not expected to speak as a propagandist either. "In order to inform, the communicator says what happened, when, how, where and why it happened."¹¹ The things or people who are involved may also be mentioned. The newspaper features prominently in this area and because its main business is to inform, notify or get people acquainted with facts and occurrences, timeliness and proximity are its main qualities. The newspaper does not only inform, it also entertains as well as persuade and the information it gives is not restricted to the past. It sometimes deals with present and future events.

2. To Educate or Enlighten: Journalism, through the various media, especially through the electronic media, helps to instruct the public to act in a desired way or to believe and accept something as desirable. This explains why with a view to sensitizing the public on certain developments especially those that are injurious to health, various institutions through the print and electronic media carry out public enlightenment campaign periodically.

Take for instance certain issues like HIV/AIDS, Avian Influenza Bird Flue, Polio among other endemic diseases. If the appropriate authorities fail to educate the public on these issues, they will spread like wild harmattan fire. Apart from health related matters, the government can also through publicity educate the masses on the political terrain of their own society with a view to enabling them take active part in governance.

3. To Persuade or Convince: Journalism serves the purpose of persuasion when a given medium of communication influences listeners to act in a particular direction. Remarkably, all of the communication media persuade at one time or the other as much as they inform, educate or entertain. Occasionally, there is a persuasive means such as an advertisement or press release usually aimed at influencing the public in one way or another. The newspaper is the least persuasive of all the media though some of the feature articles in the newspaper may be persuasive.

4. To Entertain: As the culture of entertainment media becomes increasingly popular, Christians in this generation are facing the question of how to relate with the wild sea of media entertainment they find themselves floating in. This course, however, is not primarily aimed at providing principles guiding such relationship but to simply observe that Journalism serves entertainment purpose.

The hustling and bustling of life mark the contemporary society. In the bid of trying to become enterprising, everybody is engaged in a series of activities, which tend to wear one out with the passing of time. Entertainment aims at relaxing people's nerves by inducing sleep. It makes them to forget the difficulty of the work.¹² As the reader, listener, or viewer reclines on his/her couch at home or even while at work, he/she can be entertained as he/she listens to a piece of music over the radio, watches a comedy on television screen or reads a play or a novel.

Many magazines aim more at entertaining than informing though there

are some that are specifically news-oriented. It has been observed that radio entertains more than other media because except for periods of news broadcast, all other times are geared towards one form of entertainment or the other.

C. JOURNALISM AND OTHER RELATED DISCIPLINES: Journalism, as a discipline of its own, is not standing in isolation to other disciplines. There are some senses in which they relate meaningfully. Journalism, for instance, deals essentially with the public. In this sense, it relates to disciplines like: Mass Communication, the Political and Social Sciences, Law, Business and the like. Journalism serves as the medium through which men of all walks of life are brought together. In the general sense, communication, which is the fundamental feature of journalism, serves as the medium through which relationships are established, maintained and extended. It also serves as the means by which set goals in life can be pursued, attained and sustained.

How well government institutions, non-governmental organizations or business enterprises are able to function properly depends on the level or degree of communication going on within the system. This communicative aspect of journalism whether through the electronic or print media serves as the hub that all other professions in the human society revolve around. Journalism, therefore, embraces other disciplines.

D. HOW JOURNALISM HAS CHANGED: It is an established fact that change is the only thing that is constant in nature; that the ability to adapt to changes in one's environment distinguishes a living thing from a dead one. The dynamism of the human society suggests that enormous changes have taken place over the centuries. Consequently, journalism has drastically changed from its primitive stage to its modern form where a journalist can possibly spread an important news item around the world that is now a global village, in just a matter of few seconds. Some years back, important stories and/or news items that inadvertently took weeks or months to be read or heard can now be transmitted even to the remotest parts of the world in a very short space of time.

Take for instance when Admiral Lord Nelson of Britain died aboard his warship in the battle of Trafalgar in 1805, it took two weeks for the news to reach the Admiralty in London (a young Lieutenant of the Royal Navy brought the dispatches personally). But when President John F. Kennedy of America was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, in November 1963, the news of his death was known around the whole world in just a matter of seconds because of the information technology now in place as a result of scientific research and discoveries.¹³

In the print media also, enormous changes have been experienced. It is a historical fact that the first printed matter is known to have appeared in China when a Chinese called Wang Chieh printed a book in memory of his parents and dated it with the equivalent of May 868. The Chinese are also believed to have invented the first movable type by using small blocks each carved independently with one character to make them interchangeable. Pi Sheng is said to have done

this between 1041 and 1049. But the complex character of the Chinese alphabet with its multiplicity of picture symbols made this a slow and tedious process.

It was not until the fourteenth century that movable type was introduced in Europe. Johan Gutenberg set up his press in Mainz Germany in 1454/5, and began to print papal indulgences (the documents authorized by the Pope and was believed to grant forgiveness to sinners) for which there was an understandable demand. In 1456, Gutenberg and his assistants printed 300 copies of the Bible. It was in black Gothic lettering, and initial letters were left blank and later ornamented to give the impression that scribes had handwritten the work.¹⁴

II. THE CHALLENGE TO WRITE

The dire need for Christians, the clergy and the laity alike, to launch in full swing into the art of writing can never be overemphasized. Books and articles on virtually all fields of human endeavor fill everywhere. Unfortunately, those of Pentecostal Christianity are very scanty.¹⁵ Apart from prestige, other benefits accrue to writers. In a nutshell, writing is like excavating a gold mine. The deeper you dig, the more you get out, and the more you are enriched. The more the book you publish, the richer you become, especially if the book is worth the amount people will spend to purchase it.

Writing is a treasure that may not be compared with any other treasure even wealth. Wealth lasts a lifetime and can be enjoyed by only the owner and his family. Writing is a legacy that generations and generations of people enjoy, especially if what is written is of worth.¹⁶

People in the Western World have labeled Africans as traditionalists who use oral tradition as the sole means of passing the wealth of their knowledge and information from one generation to another. There is no denying the fact that this oral method of passing information has resulted in the lost of many invaluable legacies that would have been resourceful to the new breed of both the present and future generations.¹⁷

Axiomatically, most of our trado-medical practitioners have known various herbs and many other medical items, which could have today benefited the world immensely in its therapeutic endeavors. But sad and regrettable is the realization that most of them, if not all, died without passing or transferring the wealth of their knowledge to their children, relations or acquaintances through oral tradition or apprenticeship since many of them were not literate enough to record such treasure for succeeding generations.

The most pathetic issue is that the trend is repeating itself even in the present. Little wonder that historians who propounded the cyclical philosophy of history opined that history tends to repeat itself when men fail to learn meaningfully from it. In the intelligentsia community, scholars have resolved to pursue wealth through methods other than writing. They live in the present with little or no thought about what becomes of them (their fantasies) after their demise. Surprisingly enough, most lecturers at all levels of our institutions of learning across the nation rely solely on books written by foreign authors.¹⁸ We claim to have gained independence, yet we

rely on the Westerners for virtually everything.

In technology, for instance, we maintain the status quo. We are mere assemblers of parts not manufacturers. In training, we rely on foreign skills and aids. That is, manpower and materials. In teaching also, we depend more on foreign authors, yet brag about having many academic juggernauts. One wonders how long we will continue in this trend of depending on foreign aids in everything.

A. REASONS WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD WRITE: A renowned academic has expressed his opinion thus, "What is expressed is impressed."¹⁹ Writing enables one to achieve specific results especially where the objectives for the particular writing are defined from the on set. Various professional bodies need to be well guided in their specific areas of endeavors. They need to have a good library and stock of other materials (electronic and otherwise) containing facts and figures of the activities of the past and present in respect to the achievements and failures or lapses so far recorded, if they are to know precisely the immediate or pressing areas where researches are needed to be carried out.

The assertion that the present is the product of the past and the seed of the future is as true in writing as in every other facet of human activity. Besides, it has been earlier remarked that there are inestimable values accruable with all types of writing. However, the following reasons have been advanced for the necessity of writing.

1. God Commanded Men to Write: Writing is a divine imperative calling for strict compliance. There are clear indications from the Scriptures that God did command many of His servants and prophets to put things down in writing. God Himself knows the inestimable value of all kinds of writing. One of the reasons why He has interest in record keeping is because He knows that human mind is forgetful and very frail. Eze remarked,

Not only that man quickly forgets but he can never retell the event exactly as he heard it. He must alter one point or two. Sometimes this is done purposely for vested interest or just because he is too handicapped to remember all that happened.²⁰

In Isaiah 8: 1-2 we read, "Moreover the LORD said to me, *"Take a large scroll and write on it with a man's pen concerning... And I will take for Myself faithful witness to record..."*²¹ God also commanded Jeremiah saying: *"Take a scroll of a book and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you..."*²² (Jer. 36: 2). Other passages where God gave explicit command to write include Hab. 2: 2-3; Isa. 30: 8; Jer. 30: 2; Rev. 1: 11, and Rev. 20: 5 just to mention but a few.

In the light of the foregoing, we can draw a conclusion as follows: That writing is a command binding on all classes of workers in God's vineyard especially the clergy and all those who are actively involved in the business of soul winning. It is a means to an end. That is, it serves as a means of fulfilling the divine mandate of reaching all nations of the earth with the gospel of salvation. It is a long lasting treasure opened to all literate persons notwithstanding the difference in age, gender, colour, religion, profession, socio-economic status or nationality.

2. Everyone Has a Potential to Write: Writing is a medium of communication and everyone that is mentally sound enough to communicate reasonably has a potential to write. Psychologists say that a child usually prattles before he or she begins to talk. In the same vein, anyone who is writing as a beginner is liable to making some mistakes. But he or she will invariably overcome those mistakes as time progresses because it is very uncommon for a sensible man to keep making the same mistakes. As Eze puts it, "The easiest way of learning the streets in the city is to be lost along some roads. Before long one will know all the nocks and crannies in the town."²³

It has been observed that the thought of producing a masterpiece at first attempt is one of the reasons why most people dread writing. You do not have to allow the possibility of failure to subjugate you. Just give it a trial and you will discover that there is really no harm in it. In addition to this, it will not be long; you will blaze the trail for posterity.

3. Everyone Has an Opportunity to Write: One of the recurrent mistakes people make is to believe and confess that they have no ideas to put down in writing. This may be predicated on the fact that they have little or no formal education, as it were. If I may ask, have you ever conversed with people? If your answer is in the affirmative, it follows that you have so many things to say as well as a lot of ideas to develop through writing.

What you have to do is to give your thoughts a sense of direction. Just have a reflection on anything or experience that has affected you positively or negatively. Then as you begin to evaluate the causes and effects of that experience, thoughts will begin to flow. On the spur of that moment as the ideas start flowing, just sit down and begin to write them without paying special attention to coherent presentation of ideas or impeccability of expression.²⁴ This will be given considerable attention during the structural organization of the material.

B. FACTORS THAT SHOULD ENCOURAGE WRITING: Nathan Eze quoting Sherwood E. Wirt in his book 'Journalism and Christian Writing' writes,

If I were a young Christian, eager to make an impact on today's world for Jesus Christ, I would not enroll in a seminary to learn how to preach. I would not take courses in Mass Communication or speech or linguistics. I would not try to start another denomination or Para-church super organization. I would not try to get on television. I would become a writer.²⁵

It should be remarked that Sherwood, in the above passage, was not trying to play down on the necessity of pastoral training or the relevance of media evangelism among others, but was trying to stress the significance of writing as well as the value it has more than others. The following factors will further buttress the point we are making here.

1. Writing Makes a More Lasting Impact: A television preacher can reach hundreds of thousands of souls at a time notwithstanding the distance. But the

inevitable question is, how long does the impact of his soul-stirring and thought-provoking message last? If he uses the print media, his message will not only make a more lasting impact on his audience, but it will be such that they can make a constant recourse to because of its mobility and accessibility. It is said that "... a writer does all that any other worker for God does even with more lasting impression."²⁶

- 2. Writing Gives the World a Socio-Economic Lift:** It has been observed that writers have contributed in no small measure to the progress the world is making today in all fields of human endeavor.²⁷ Through writing, most philosophers, psychologists and scientists of the past have formulated theories that the present day scholars have developed which have given rise to the modern discoveries in science and technology. The developed nations of the world today own authors the credit of the progress (in all ramifications) they have so far made in every facet of life. There is no gainsaying the fact that writing is the greatest legacy that anyone can bequeath to his posterity.

There is a clarion call to all and sundry to develop the skill of writing because you really can't tell who will write an article or book that will interest people as well as gain a worldwide influence and acceptance. Procrastination remains a thief of the time. Nobody knows what would have become of the human society today if the various authors whose works have caused remarkable changes had failed to put their ideas down in black and white.

- 3. Writing Brings Spiritual and Eternal Blessings:** Jesus Christ came over two millenniums ago to introduce His 'Gospel of Total Emancipation.' During that time of His earthly ministry, only a handful of disciples saw and heard Him taught and preached in the streets of Jerusalem and its environs. Today, there are millions of Christians all over the world who came to know Him through the written word-Logos. Imagine how this world would have looked like if everyone were an infidel. Life on earth would have lost its essential meaning, value and purpose in the face of the unimaginable, disgusting and calamitous things that are happening.

Besides, those who are instrumental in the hands of God in reaching out to these souls have great rewards in heaven apart from the inestimable spiritual blessings they are enjoying today. In addition to this, those who through books and articles have made many converts, have the satisfaction that their literary works are influencing souls for God.

- 4. Writing Brings Physical and Material Blessings:** Prolific writers will attest to the fact that writing is a lucrative business. Learners from the kindergarten to tertiary level of education including those outside the four walls of the school system all use books. Consequently, authors are in high demand. Books, articles, journals, magazines etc, as essential commodities (economic goods) hardly depreciate in value in the economic world due to the fact that literary works are not seasonal or localize products. People patronize books and newspapers vendors daily.

As a result of this, writers of books and articles make their living through this means. The more literate the Nigerian society becomes, the more marketable writers will be. In the words of Barnet and Stubbs, "... writing is not simply a way to express ideas, but a way to acquire them."²⁸ This implies that the more you write, the richer you become both mentally and materially.

- 5. There Is Need to Write in Cultural Context:** The assertion has been made that writing out of context is a pretext. Foreign books are good but they can never be good enough for Africans because they lack contextual approach. There is a popular saying that it takes the man who wears the shoes to know where it itches. Powerful and highly demanding books and articles are usually borne out of close observations, not hearsay necessarily.

With due respect to foreign authors and their fans, I submit that testimonies borne by eyewitnesses are never comparable to those carried by rumormongers. How many of these foreigners have lived in Africa, shared their feelings, seen through their cultural lenses as to be favourably disposed to speaking and writing exactly the way they would have spoken or written. The earlier we begin to write and deal with our problems by ourselves and in our own style the better it will be for us all.

- 6. There is Need to Check Inflation:** As one who is not an economist to the core, I stand to be corrected if my submission is proved untrue. The scarcity of textbooks by African authors, which has given rise to the excessive demand for those written by foreign authors, has resulted in inflation in the country. Apart from the delay associated with importation of books and other educational materials abroad, high import duties, bans placed on imports, and high excise duties are factors to reckon with.

A situation where demand for goods and services are higher than their supply, demand-pull inflation becomes inevitable. This is the case in nearly all Africa countries. We are all eyewitnesses. According to late Prof. John Kenneth Galbraith of Harvard University as quoted by Dele Sobowale, "*...a man who announces his entrance by breaking down the door should not carry the blame for violence exclusively. Something should be said about the condition of the door.*"²⁹

There is no denying the fact that inflation has adverse effects on the economy, but something has to be done about the negligence on our part. Over the years, teachers rationalize in an effort to dissuade inquisitive students from demanding for textbooks. Their argument is usually that the thing that is important to them is what they are taught in the class.³⁰

If I may ask, what type of meaningful education can students get in the long run where there are no textbooks to refer to after normal class discussion? Given the hullabaloo that is often generated by scarcity, I challenge Nigerians in particular and Africans in general to travail and give birth to the literary works that the media is waiting to showcase to the world.

- 7. There is Need to Make Learning and Skill Easily Accessible:** One advantage that advanced countries have over the developing countries is that learning and

skills are brought to people's doorposts. The versatility of every average American who seems to know how to do almost everything is not brought about necessarily by much formal education but by enabling environment. Many of them rather than enrolling in technical schools to acquire psychomotor skills, they buy books written by experts in the particular area of interest, sit back in their private workshops, and having spread their tentacles, they start to invent powerful things. That is why up till date, Americans have remained the wonders of this world. My earnest prayer is that there should be a paradigm shift.

My humble submission is that if African academic juggernauts that have won several professional accolades in the educational firmament of Africa and beyond will make concerted efforts to make literary impressions that will remain monumentally conspicuous in the sand of time, African nations will metamorphous into highly developed countries with such a velocity one could never have imagined.

C. FACTORS THAT TEND TO DISCOURAGE WRITING: When what a man has readily on hand is sufficient for him to prosecute a given project and bring it to a logical conclusion, then he has done what every other person could do. In all fields of endeavor, great achievements are not rooted in what is but are born out of what can be. Hence, achievers say, purpose plus pursuit equals to achievement. It is what a man has achieved in life that stands him out from the crowd.

Those who have taken giant strides in the past to achieve great things in life have their propelling force (vision and passion) driving them on. On the other hand, those who have never dared to venture into anything-worthy have their subjugating, deluding web (cowardice and purposelessness). In the art of writing in particular, those who have the technical know how but have never considered it worthwhile to put their names on papyrus and parchments have their myriad of excuses. This explains why it is said that nothing goes or happens for nothing.

1. Inferiority Complex: It is undoubtedly a psychological disorder for a person to accept defeat before ever he sets his hands on the plough. In the words of Nathan Eze,

Self-disregard deters success in any field of life. Such people never see any good thing in themselves. They always condemn themselves at seeing what achievements others make. Instead of taking steps to venture into the future and stumbling on success, he concludes: I cannot do it. There's not need trying.³¹

It is often said that there is no harm in trial. That failure is not a defeat until a man stops trying, and that trial and error is indispensable precedent in every act of discovery. In the light of the foregoing, rather than asking ourselves, can any good thing come out of Nazareth, we should first become a Nazarene and see what becomes of us.

2. Waiting for the Green Light: People say that procrastination is a thief of the time. I want to add that it is equally a thief of opportunities. Achievers say that

the best time to begin is to begin. Nature says that a journey of hundred miles begins with a step forward. A man can never really estimate the value of his mental capability until he engages his mental faculty in a problem-solving venture. If you do not make any bold attempt to organize your thought, you will not know that it is possible for you to become a prolific writer. Therefore, rather than waiting indefinitely for the green light, we should start to do something knowing that a stitch in time saves nine.

- 3. The Cost of Production:** Any man that is really hoping to get so much, nature says that he should put in so much also. In the law of nature, it is the degree of what the earth gives out as vapor that determines the amount of what heaven will pour out as rain at the end of the day. It is true that producing a book is capital intensive. But we must not allow that to bastardize our God-given vision. We should be willing to invest in article or book production because it is never a white elephant project.
- 4. Writing to Impress:** One of the major factors that kill impetus to write is the thought of writing to impress people. This thought comes to bear on writing when one begins to have a certain class of people in mind that may be reading the article or book. Even if one has the class of highly educated people in mind, that is never a reason enough for one to litter his article or book with high-sounding terms that one cannot conglomerate. It is more profitable to use familiar terms than to use those that are not of the same collocation. The aged long rule is that "Just write to express yourself and eventually you will be writing to impress."³²
- 5. Writing Involves a Risk:** When a man fails to take a risk, he will be living at risk. Basically, risk comes in various ways. It may be the fear of not being sure if the article or book is of worth to gain acceptance into the world market. It may be the fear of being prosecuted for literary offenses such as piracy and plagiarism judging from their enormity. Yet it may be the risk of facing those destructive critics who are hanging out and watching with gale cynicism and with a view to catching something that can be a subject for discussion.
- 6. Writing is Demanding:** Apart from the financial commitment involved in writing an article or book, there are other demands it makes on writers most fundamental of which is time. Vision can possibly come in just a flash of time. But it will invariably take a considerable length of time for it to actualize. If a would-be author (journalist) catches the vision to write on a given topic, he will have to brood over that concept or subject matter, sometimes for years, before it will be fully hatched.

Throughout the period of incubation, he will have to continue to brainstorm scanting for more ideas to build up and embellish the disgusting skeletal structure that he has. It is actually an experience to reckon with. All the same, knowing that great rewards await us, we should willingly face up to the challenges it poses however enormous and multifarious they are.

III. THE FIRST RULES FOR CLEAR WRITING

Accuracy of speech and writing makes effective understanding a reality. Communication is practically impossible when the message is not clear as a result of ambiguity and vagueness of expression.

When God commanded Habakkuk to write down the revelation He gave to him, He made it clear to him that it was necessary to make the writing plain. God knew that communication is impossible when the message is not clear hence clarity is considered very important. It is probably true that the command to make it plain meant primarily that the writing itself should be plain. It is also possible that God meant that its meaning should be plain.³³ Which ever the case, God meant that His message to mankind must be transmitted through symbols that convey exactly what He has in mind. In other words, the message should be clear, easily understood. Below are some guidelines or rules for clear writing that have been developed to help us communicate better.

A. WRITE TO EXPRESS, NOT TO IMPRESS: It has been established that the best communication is the clearest communication. If the message is not clear enough, the reader will not know what exactly you want him to learn or do. It is therefore advisable that you express yourself in such a plain language that leaves no room for doubt as to what you mean by what you have expressed.³⁴

One of the major factors that kill impetus to write is the thought of writing to impress people. This thought comes to bear on writing when one begins to have a certain class of people in mind that may be reading the articles or book. Even if one has the class of highly educated people in mind, that is never a reason enough for one to litter the article or book with such high-sounding terms that people find difficult to assign meaning to. It is more profitable to use familiar words than to use those that may not even be of the same collocation.

B. USE SHORT AND SIMPLE WORDS: In writing, you want to relate your thoughts in words that someone else can understand. What your readers understand will be according to their own experience and exposure. It will be a big mistake for writers to assume that just because they understand what they are writing and because they are familiar with the words used, everyone else will also understand them. It does not follow. The present day writers emphasize clarity above all things. Therefore, make efforts to use short and simple terms. If a reader does not understand the words you use, chances are that he may not get the message you are trying to communicate. "Scientific tests have proved that the more syllables a word has the more difficult it is to understand."³⁵

C. USE FAMILIAR WORDS: Every profession in the world today has its language register. If you work with electrical and electronic equipment, you know that *ohm* is a word that refers to a measure of electric resistance, but it doesn't mean anything to most people. If you are a student of psychology, you know that *id* refers to the natural man or the lowest nature of man.³⁶ If a lawyer writes a book and employs such words as jurisprudence, prosecution, felony, adjudicate, kleptomania, "Nemo Judex in Causa Sua," "Actus non facit reum nisi mensit rea,"³⁷

any reader who is of the legal profession will not find it difficult making meaning out from what has been expressed.

More so, if a theologian writes a book and employs some theological terms: Harmatology, Soteriology, Pneumatology, hermeneutics, Homologoumena, antilegomena, Pseudepigrapha, apocrypha, polyglot, inerrancy, canonicity etc., pastors who have similar experience will not have difficulty assigning meaning to the words used. The same applies to medical practitioners, engineers and other professionals.

What seems to give me concern is when the book is meant to be used by all and sundry. The writer will have to minimize the use of his own professional jargons. This, however, does not imply that his experience will not come to play on his work but that his work should not be littered with unfamiliar terms.

D. USE SPECIFIC WORDS AND TERMS: One fault that is common with people who are writing as beginners is that they use general words or terms. We must bear in mind that the more specific we are in our writing the better. If a writer expresses himself thus: *A man entered the store*. Readers will immediately ask the questions: "What kind of man?" What is his name? How did he enter? What stores is it? But if he gives clearer picture by being more specific, chances are that his readers will not ask many questions. Consider this: *A tall man, dressed in ragged clothes, rushed into Kingsway store.*³⁸

E. CUT OUT UNNECESSARY WORDS: It is always better for a writer to express his thoughts with the fewest number of words possible. Flowery language can prevent communication. When a writer tries to embellish his communication with too many words that may not be appropriate, he usually falls into the temptation of introducing ambiguity and vagueness of expression. It may not be altogether out of place to use elegant style but when it turns out to be such that there are unnecessary repetitions, improper collocation or confusion, then, it should be discouraged.

F. USE STRONG, ACTION VERBS: Experts say that the most important word in a sentence is the verb because it carries the action. In writing generally, a transitive verb, which is stronger than an intransitive one should be used. A verb is said to be transitive when it carries action from the subject to an object. *The boy kicked the football*. This does not imply that an intransitive verb does not carry action. What it does mean is that it makes the doer of the action to be passive or weak.

Remember that forceful and lively writing depends on the use of forceful and lively verbs. Besides, active voice carries a better sense of movement than passive voice. In active voice the subject does the action expressed by the verb whereas in passive voice, the subject receives the action by someone or something. In the light of this, writers should use transitive verbs in preference to intransitive verbs.

G. USE CORRECT MECHANICS OF WRITING: When a public speaker is speaking, he makes a pause to show a break in thought. He may speak a little louder to emphasize a point. In writing also, you must use certain mechanics of writing to

do what your voice does in speaking.³⁹ These mechanics of writing are called punctuation marks. Writers should learn what marks are necessary and how to use them correctly to improve on their writing. Finally, you may also use idioms, figures of speech and familiar proverbs as embellishment.

IV. FREELANCING IN JOURNALISM

Freelance journalism offers one of the few remaining opportunities for individual freedom, self-expression and financial gain. It also has a lot of fun and can lead to varying degrees of fame and fortune. However, it is one of the more hectic forms of freelance writing. If you want to become a successful freelance journalist, you will need to be comfortable with spending much time hunting down stories, traveling from place to place, and writing under short deadlines. This explains why it is said that the career of a journalist is not for everyone.

Notwithstanding, if you enjoy all of that, and if you are interested in some of the best opportunities for personal creativity, then freelance journalism may be for you. A successful writer does not have to be gifted. Every freelance journalist was once a complete beginner. Success in freelance journalism is very much a matter of knowing how to go about it.⁴⁰

When we talk about freelance journalism, we need to distinguish between two types: newspaper journalism and magazine journalism. As a rule, newspaper journalism involves a much narrower range of subject matter than magazine journalism, significantly shorter articles, and a greater focus on form. Typical newspaper articles follow a hierarchical format: the most pertinent information first, the least pertinent last. For example, an article about a local parade would start with "The X Parade will travel down Main Street at 10:00 Saturday in support of Y," while it might end with "Onlookers are advised to bring umbrellas."

In addition to this, writing as a newspaper journalist means that you need the ability to find out about the news. Often, a journalist's day looks like this: the editor assigns the journalist an article topic at 6 AM. By 8 AM, the journalist is making phone calls to various parties related to the topic. For a story on rising gas prices, this may include CEOs of oil companies, local gas station owners, car owners (interviewed on the street or at gas stations), car manufacturers, and local policymakers.⁴¹ Journalists usually interview anyone with a meaningful connection to the topic, and who can provide some good, succinct quotes and information.

Information-gathering goes on for most of the day, usually ending around evening. The journalist then works on the article, fact-checking where appropriate before submitting it for publication sometime that night depending on the particular paper. Then he is able to go to sleep, and the next article topic comes in.

A. THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD FREELANCE JOURNALIST: Apart from the professional skills required, there are some qualities needed to be a good freelance journalist. These include: a command of the English language, an interest in writing, enthusiasm, willingness to learn, among others.⁴²

It is impossible to be a good writer on every subject. Find one or two areas that really appeal to you and in which you feel confident that you can become an expert and concentrate on them. It doesn't matter whether it is chicken farming or tribal politics in Mongolia, there will probably be a market for your

work.⁴³ An individual may choose to write about business and another person on technology or politics. This may depend on the area that appeals to him and the stuff he is made of. You will do better as a good freelance journalist if you specialize.

B. THE ELEMENTS OF JOURNALISM: In order for a journalist to fulfill their duty of providing the people with the information they need to be free and self-governing. They must follow these guidelines: Journalism's first obligation is to the truth.

1. Its first loyalty is to the citizens.
2. Its essence is discipline of verification.
3. Its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover.
4. It must serve as an independent monitor of power.
5. It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise.
6. It must strive to make the profession significant, interesting, and relevant.
7. It must keep the news comprehensive and proportional.
8. Its practitioners must be allowed to exercise their personal conscience.
9. It is the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

END NOTES ON

INTRODUCTION/CHAPTER ONE

¹Myles Munroe, *Understanding Your Potential*, (Shippensburg: Destiny Image Publishers, 1993), ii.

²Regis J. O'Connor, *Speech Exploring Communication*, (Eaglewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1981), 24.

³Egbeyon F. Ilenbodiaye, "Achieving Great Things During the Most Inconvenient Times," (Benin City: Assemblies of God Church, 28 October 2007), 3.

⁴*Principles of Journalism*, [http://www.mousetrapmedia Ltd-info \(at\) journalism.co.uk/2010](http://www.mousetrapmedia Ltd-info (at) journalism.co.uk/2010), 1 (accessed May 22, 2010).

⁵David B. Guralnik, *Webster's New World Dictionary of American Language, 2nd ed.* (Cleveland, Ohio: William Collins Publishers Inc., 1980), 762.

⁶*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, (Markham, Ontario: Thomas Allen and Son Limited, 1991), 652.

⁷Bernard U. Oguzie, "Principles of Journalism," (Ewu: Nigerian Advanced School of Theology, 2001- Unpublished Book), 3.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Rex Jackson, *Principles of Journalism*, (Irving, Texas: International Correspondence Institute, 1992),

¹⁰Oguzie, "Principles of Journalism," 5.

¹¹Nathan Eze, *Journalism and Christian Writing*, (Aba: Assemblies of God Press. n.d.), 13.

¹²Eze, *Journalism and Christian Writing*, 13.

¹³Oguzie, "Principles of Journalism," 4.

¹⁴Ibid., 3.

¹⁵Eze, *Journalism and Christian Writing*, 18.

¹⁶Ibid.; ¹⁷Ibid., 9.; ¹⁸Ibid.; ¹⁹Ibid., 22.; ²⁰Ibid., 23.

²¹*The Holy Bible, New King James Version*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982), 670.

²²Ibid., 774.

²³Eze, *Journalism and Christian Writing*, 18.

²⁴Ibid., 19.; ²⁵Ibid.; ²⁶Ibid., 21.; ²⁷Ibid.; ²⁸Ibid., 22.

²⁹Dele Sobowale, "New Naira Policy: Will Soludo Survive This?," (Sunday Vanguard (Lagos) 19 August 2007), 7.

³⁰Eze, *Journalism and Christian Writing*, 25.

³¹Ibid., 19, 20.; ³²Ibid., 20.

³³Jackson, *Principles of Journalism*, 34.

³⁴Ibid., 36.; ³⁵Ibid., 38.; ³⁶Ibid., 41.

³⁷Jerry John Abba, *Law for the Layman*. (Abuja: Olu Prints Nig. Co., 2001), 46.

³⁸Jackson, *Principles of Journalism*, 44.

³⁹Ibid., 68.

⁴⁰*Principles of Journalism*, <http://www.mousetrapmedia> 1. (accessed May 22, 2010).

⁴¹Ibid.; ⁴²Ibid.; ⁴³ Ibid.

JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

IT should be borne in mind that the ultimate purpose of journalism is communication. This owns to the fact that communication is a central activity to any human existence. Without communication, it will not be possible for an individual to get his or her ideas across to other people or take in ideas that other people wished to express to him or her. Though people spend little or no time trying to understand its workings, communication is so constant and widespread that nobody including the journalist can escape its influence. Communication is an easily observable behaviour among human beings. It is a complex process, but such that is full of rewards.

Communication is said to be the medium through which relationships are established, maintained, sustained as well as extended. This essential nature of communication further explains why it is regarded as the fundamental responsibility of a journalist because his or her duty is to keep the general public abreast of happenings within and outside the country. This is done essentially by means of communication through the print or electronic media. Journalism, therefore, is basically communication.

I. COMMUNICATION DEFINED

One of the pioneering theorists in communication has argued that though communication act is an easily observable behaviour, it is a very difficult concept to define.¹ However, in this chapter, attempt shall be made to explain the meaning of communication by taking an in-depth look at some of the definitions given by some experts in this field. The reason for this is to enable the would-be journalists to have a true picture of what their role is as communicators so they would be able to function properly.

- a. Audu N. Tonga remarks that “The word communication itself is derived from a Latin word *communicare* which means “to share.”²
- b. Burgoon and Ruffner define it as “... a symbolic behaviour that occurs between two or more participating individuals. It is a process which is transactional and affective in nature.”³
- c. Thompson defines communication “as a process of interaction that goes on for the purpose of giving and receiving information.”⁴
- d. Peter Little defines it as “the process by which information is passed between individuals and/or organization by means of previously agreed symbols.”⁵
- e. Ravel Jane, in her opinion views communication as “an exchange between people of knowledge, of information, of ideas, of opinions, of feelings.”⁶
- f. Okwo quoting Ughamadu defines communication as “*An interactive process involving the design of ideas, messages, information or data, and their dissemination in an attempt to effect change in a person’s behaviour or to persuade him to act in a particular or predetermined manner.*”⁷
- g. Johansson, in his personal opinion, made the assertion that “*Communication is not simply a question of giving or receiving instructions and information*

but rather a kind of linking process aimed specifically at encouraging understanding and cooperation.”⁸

In the light of the foregoing, it can be deduced with ease and precision that communication is the process of interaction that is aimed at establishing commonness between the encoder and decoder. Tonga noted, *“When we act in a socially meaningful way we are transmitting meaning to a participant or observer and usually we are engaged in a very complex exchange of meaning even where this is not our conscious intention.”⁹*

II. THE SIMPLE COMMUNICATION MODEL

Communication is a sequence of action that continuous throughout one’s lifetime. In a simple communication model, there are four main elements to reckon with, namely: sender, message, channel and receiver (*S. M. C. R.*). We are going to briefly consider these elements that are involved in the transmitting process of creating and exchanging of messages, views, ideas, attitudes and feelings within the network of interdependent relationships. See the illustrative diagram below.



A Simple Communication Model

A. THE SOURCE, SPEAKER, WRITER, SENDER, ENCODER OR COMMUNICATOR:

This is the originator of the message, news or piece of information, who may be an individual, a group of persons, an institution or an organization. The communication process is said to begin at this ideation stage.¹⁰

The speaker or transmitter does most of the work in communication. He constructs the message, puts it into symbols before sending it out. Therefore, he should be fluent, have a good accent, a strong and clear voice that must not leave his listener in doubt. If he is a writer, he needs to arrange his points logically and coherently, and use understandable language to express himself.

B. THE MESSAGE, NEWS OR PIECE OF INFORMATION: In the communication process, the message could be an aspect of knowledge or skills, concepts, behaviours, events, situations, physical objects, words, sound, drawings, pictures, essays, or any activity to which meaning can be assigned. Experts have opined that the message should be presented with mutually shared linguistic codes.

C. THE CHANNEL OR MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION: This refers to the means through which a message travels or gets to a person or group of persons who are said to be the receiver(s). In the words of Gbenedio and Anene-Boyle,

Messages are said to travel through a channel, which could be directly through the airwaves as in a situation when classroom teacher presents

his subject matter to the learner, or through devices like radio, television, letters, memoranda etc.¹¹

The channel, which is the third element of the communication process, is very important because it enables the receiver to receive the message.

D. THE DESTINATION: LISTENER, READER, RECEIVER, DECODER, OR COMMUNICATEE: This refers to the target audience who receives the message and responds to it accordingly. This response may be positive or negative based on some conditions. The listeners must as much as possible be attentive and active throughout the communication process. They should have a good command of the language used for communication and also be in their right frame of mind if understanding is to be assured.

What we have discussed so far is a simple communication model that is linear in nature and the position of participants seems to be fixed. But in a situation where the communication process is complex, multivariable and dynamic, and where the positions of participants are not fixed, there will be additional elements such as effects, feedback and noise. In this case, those who are involved in the communication act, function simultaneously as both senders and receivers. This is why experts say that in a sophisticated communication model, human beings are not fixed in their roles.

III. THE VARIOUS LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION

A good number of communication literatures identify three types of communication, namely: intra-personal, interpersonal and mass communication. They are discussed as follows:

A. INTRA-PERSONAL COMMUNICATION: This is taken to mean those processes whereby a person communicates within himself and with himself. This is otherwise known as soliloquizing. Examples of communications taking place within a person are thoughts, ideas, reflections, mental defining of aims, goals and objectives.

B. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION: This consists of many different types and it is aimed at enhancing the quality of relationship between the communicators.¹² They are listed below:

1. Face-To-Face Communication: This is also called one-on-one communication and it is taken to mean those processes whereby a person communicates with another person in a face-to-face setting, telephone conversations, and interviews. It consists of various matters of common interest to both of the people involved in the conversation.¹³

2. Group Discussion: This second phase of interpersonal communication involves three or more people who exchange ideas and information among members of a group. Examples of groups include a family, an organization, a club etc. Group communication includes such things as committee meetings, conferences, and workshop. The purpose may be to solve a common problem, to make decision, or to answer a question that interests all the members of the group.¹⁴

3. Public Communication: This is a type of interpersonal communication in which one or more people communicate with an audience. A typical example of public communication is 'Public Speaking.'¹⁵ Such professionals as teachers, attorneys, preachers, politicians, government and many others have used this form of interpersonal communication to reach large numbers of people through the spoken word.¹⁶

C. MASS COMMUNICATION: In mass communication, one or perhaps several senders communicate with a large number of listeners. These listeners are usually not physically present when the sending takes place. Newspapers and magazines are examples of mass communication. Apart from the print media, mass communication also takes place through the electronic media.

IV. THE MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION

There are essentially three media (Types/Methods) of communication. They are: Oral, Written and Visual communications.

A. ORAL COMMUNICATION: We talk to people individually, or in groups, direct or via telephone more often than we write to them. Examples of this method of communication include: face-to-face discussion, conversation, interview, meeting, oral briefing, public address, telephone calls, conference etc. Oral communication has some advantages and some disadvantages. They are as follows:

Its Advantages

1. It is a direct medium of communication.
2. It has the advantages of physical proximity, which make for instant interchange of opinion, views and attitudes.
3. It is the most reliable method of bringing about a good interpersonal relationship.
4. It costs little or no money, except when it involves a telephone exchange.
5. It is possible to elaborate at any length and giving emphasis to important points, which may not be possible in writing.
6. It makes room for the correction of wrong information or impression.

Its Disadvantages

1. In oral communication, it is more difficult to hold your ground in the face of opposition.
2. It is more difficult to control especially when a large number of people take part in it at a given time.
3. It can bring about some distortions and wrong impressions.

B. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION: This is the graphic presentation of words in a pattern that can be comprehended by readers who are literate enough to understand the language used. Simply stated, it is communication through the print media. Examples of written communication are: letters, memoranda, reports, minutes, articles, press releases, books, newspapers, magazines, circulars, posters, signposts, maps, bank statements, advertisements, telex, telegrams etc.

Its Advantages

1. Written communication is more advantageous than the oral in that it provides a record of what is said, and that helps to avoid misunderstanding.
2. It makes possible easy dissemination of information to dispersed receivers.
3. It also cannot be distorted.
4. It can be preserved for reference purposes.

Its Disadvantages

1. It takes more time to produce.
2. It can be very expensive to produce.
3. It makes communication too formal.
4. It causes problems of interpretation.
5. It is not possible to get instant feedback.
6. It cannot be denied should the need arise.
7. It can incriminate in the event or face of litigation.

C. VISUAL COMMUNICATION: Visual communication is frequently linked with speech and it takes such forms as facial expressions, gestures and pictures. Modern visual or non-verbal communication now includes complex diagrams, charts, graphs and even cartoons. Communication experts have identified a number of advantages and disadvantages in this type of communication. They are listed as follows:

Its Advantages

1. This type of communication has the advantage of simplicity.
2. It also has more immediate impact on the receiver.
3. It helps to reinforce oral communication.
4. It provides ideas in number form and gives illustrations and procedures.

Its Disadvantages

1. It may be difficult to interpret without the reinforcement of the written or spoken word.
2. It requires additional skills of comprehension and interpretation.
3. It can be costly to produce in pieces.
4. It does not always give time for proper evaluation.
5. Its dissemination or distribution can also be very expensive.

V. NOISE IN COMMUNICATION

Noise is a technical term used to describe all forms of barriers or obstacles that affect the quality of a communication event. These obstacles conspire to reduce the fidelity of communication by reducing the amount of information, which is sent between those who are communicating.¹⁷ Noise could be physical, psychological or linguistic depending on the type of message and the medium of communication.

A. PHYSICAL NOISE: Physical noise makes the comprehension of message difficult if not completely impossible, especially when the message is verbal. This type of noise includes bad sounds from radio sets, markets in full session, bad

conversation, sounds from workmen's tools among others which combine to serve as disturbance to the sensory antennal of the communicatee.¹⁸

- B. PSYCHOLOGICAL NOISE:** Noise is psychological if it exists in the form of anything that can negatively affect the mental attitude of the receiver, or his attentiveness or frame of mind.¹⁹ Psychological noise has to do with anything that hinders comprehension or makes the receiver's receptive ability to become very low. It includes poor mental attitude, depression, fatigue, emotional disabilities and the like.
- C. LINGUISTIC NOISE:** Communication experts have opined that interchange of ideas or information can only take place when both parties to the communication process mutually share linguistic codes. Linguistic noise relates to one's inability to use the language of communication effectively and it falls into three major categories, which are listed as follows:
- i. Grammatical:** This manifests itself in the form of faulty sentence construction, misapplication of rules of language, and mechanical inaccuracy.
 - ii. Semantic:** This has to do with ambiguity and wrong use of words.
 - iii. Phonological:** This manifests itself essentially in poor pronunciation, stressing of the wrong syllable in a word etc.

VI. SPEECH MAKING IN JOURNALISM

As earlier remarked, the ultimate purpose of journalism is communication. Although this work pays a special attention to communication through writing, it does at the same time acknowledges the fact that communication exists in various forms and in varying degrees. Human beings use various means of communication. You can show that you are in agreement with someone by just nodding your head. You can also communicate something about yourself to almost everyone you meet by what you wear.

In other words, your appearance, eyes, and movements all represent a kind of communication called the nonverbal communication.²⁰ However, human beings communicate best through speaking and writing. In this section, the author intends to discuss the verbal form of communication called 'speech making.'

People use many different ways to communicate through speech every day. "By using words to stand for, or to symbolize, the ideas they have in their minds, people can transfer the meaning of those ideas to other people."²¹ Communication is all about getting the meaning of those thoughts one person (the communicator) has in his or her mind into the mind of another (the Communicatee) as clearly and accurately as possible. When people do this by transmitting words with their voices, it is called speech communication and it can be done through various means such as one-to-one communication, group discussion, telephone, radio and television among others.

Since we have already discussed some of the media of communication in the previous section, our primary concern now is to look side by side at some of the factors that hinder effective speech making and those that tend to enhance our confidence and also help to improve our diction.

A. FACTORS HINDERING EFFECTIVE SPEECH COMMUNICATION: Every art of communication has a specific purpose that it is intended to serve and a goal that is often aimed at. More often than not, this purpose is never achieved due to some factors playing on the fidelity of the communication. The problems to be discussed include: stage fright, over-confidence and lack of preparation.

1. Understanding Stage Fright: Stage fright is a significant problem for most beginners (speakers). It constitutes an obstacle that can make the difference between success and failure in accomplishing one's speech purpose. It can be described as a strong psychological tension that builds up within a public speaker when he or she stands behind the pulpit to give a public speech. While there are some public speakers who feel as relaxed in front of a large audience as they do chatting with a few friends around the dinner table, there are those who usually become nervous upon the realization that all eyes are focused on them. This realization that they are now the center of attention intensifies the desire for success and the fear of failure and embarrassment.²²

Research figures show that over half of the beginners in speech making surveyed reported stage fright, and only a very few experienced speakers were totally free from nervousness. Sir Winston Churchill who is considered as one of the most famous and influential speakers of the last century once confessed to a regular dose of stage fright when delivering his speeches.²³

Axiomatically, it is normal to be nervous and have a lot of anxiety when speaking in public. Public speaking may not be comfortable, but take our word for it, nerves are good. Being 'centre stage' is not a good place to feel too comfortable. Nerves will keep you awake and ensure you don't get too complacent. If channeled well, nerves can make the difference between giving a humdrum presentation and giving one that keeps people listening.²⁴ The major difference in the effect that stage fright has on a beginner and on the experienced speaker comes from how each handles the nervousness once it occurs.

2. Over-confidence: This is a situation whereby a person relies so much on his or her skills or abilities that he or she begins to ignore the essential elements of effective speech making. Preparation, organization of one's thoughts as well as good listening is often neglected. Self-consciousness or over-confidence can make a public speaker to lose balance or become so frightened before an audience that he cannot think clearly, can't concentrate or even remember what he had intended to say.²⁵ Overconfidence often results in inability to get one's thoughts together in logical order.

3. Lack of Preparation: All public speaking of real merit are born out of conscious preparation. One fatal mistake that most people make is neglecting to prepare their talks. Carnegie Dale quoting Chauncey M. Depew remarked, "There is no other accomplishment, which any man can have that will so quickly make for him a career and secure recognition as the ability to speak acceptably."²⁶ This goal can be achieved only when one is sure of what to say. Unfortunately, some people are hardly able to utter a word before an audience. Some will make a speech that lacks substance and turn their backs on their audience and walk silently out of the

podium, a deeply embarrassed and humiliated speaker. Fear is begotten of ignorance and uncertainty. It is the result of lack of confidence. Therefore, to develop courage when you are facing an audience, be sure you are fully prepared.²⁷

B. HOW TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS OF SPEECH MAKING: It is noteworthy to say that public speaking, judging by its very nature, is such that makes a beginner to experience some fleeting fear, some shock, or some nervous anxiety the first few moments he or she faces an audience to make a speech. But as time progresses, you will be speaking with positive pleasure if you are resolutely determined to learn its workings. This will not only help you to overcome the problems highlighted above, it will also make you self-confident.

1. Developing Self-confidence through Preparation: The assertion has been made that the never-failing way to develop self-confidence in speaking is to get oneself fully prepared before time. Preparation, which is the sine qua non of success in speech making, simply means or refers to the process of thinking, brooding over your thoughts, your ideas and your convictions, recalling them, selecting the ones that appeal to you most, polishing them and assembling them into a pattern of your own.²⁸ What a colossal difference the right kind of preparation makes!

The urgent necessity of preparing a talk before ever one starts to make it and of having something clear and definite to say or something that has impressed and such that won't stay unsaid,²⁹ can never be overemphasized. It should be borne in mind that the gaining of self-confidence and courage, and the ability to think calmly and clearly while talking to a group of listeners is not brought about by anything else than conscious and deliberate preparation. Many great speakers who have learnt the secrets of preparation will tell you that the presence of an audience is a stimulus, an inspiration that drives their brains to function more clearly and more keenly.³⁰

Many great men and women who afterwards became famous public speakers and who forged ahead in their speaking abilities with an unusual rapidity were, at the outset of their careers, beset with self-consciousness and almost paralyzed with audience fright. But through preparation and practice, they were able to overcome nervousness. Preparation was the secret of the success of the celebrated Charles Reynolds Brown of Yale Divinity School in his series of lectures in the 'Art of Preaching.'³¹ It was the secret of Dwight L. Moody in his addresses and sermons which made spiritual history, and it was also the secret of Abraham Lincoln in his famous Gettysburg address and throughout his presidency.

Christian journalists today and all my readers cannot afford attempting to deliver a speech for which no adequate preparation has been made. Therefore, the best way to control stage fright or deal with the problem of nervousness is to begin to build confidence in oneself through preparation and practice.

2. Organizing Your Thoughts: Once you have settled on a topic that is right for you, for your audience, and for the occasion, the next important thing to do is to begin to organize your thoughts so that you can produce a speech that is well researched

and clearly arranged.³² Whether the purpose of your speech is to provide information or to persuade your audience to adopt new views, there is need to conduct a research on it to discover additional facts to support the various statements you will be making in your speech. Thereafter, you will have to organize the material into a pattern that will be easy for both you and your listeners to follow.³³

Carnegie has opined that a modern audience, regardless of whether it is fifteen people at a business conference or a thousand people under a tent, wants the public speaker to talk just as directly as he would in a chat, and in the same general manner that he would employ in speaking to one of them in conversation.³⁴ Speech making can become so spontaneous, charming, powerful and remarkable only after the speaker had taken time to properly organize his or her thoughts.

Organizing your thoughts will make them flow so natural, and make such a deep impression on your listeners that they begin to suspect that you have had a special training on public speaking. A good speaker is like a window which does not call attention to itself but merely lets in the light. He is so natural that his hearers never notice his manner of speaking but are conscious only of his matter.³⁵

3. Using Different Methods of Delivery: There is something besides the mere words in a talk which counts and that is the flavour with which they are delivered. In other words, it is not so much what a public speaker says as how he says it. Over the years, four basic methods for delivering public speeches have developed; we shall discuss them briefly.

a. Manuscript Method: In this method, speakers write down everything they plan to say to their listeners, then bring their manuscripts to the podium and read them to the audience. Experts will internalize the content and begin to speak to the paper in front of the audience.³⁶ The advantage that this method has is that there is no danger of forgetting a part of your speech. It also assures precise timing of a speech. However, its disadvantage is that it prevents the speech from sounding natural.

b. Memorization Method: This method also begins with a written manuscript but differs in that the manuscript is memorized word-for-word and not used during the delivery. The advantage it has is that it helps you to choose the most effective language beforehand and it makes your speech to be timed precisely. Its disadvantage is that it puts a tremendous burden on your memory for any speech longer than five minutes.

c. Extemporaneous Method: In this method, speakers prepare the outlines of the ideas of their speeches beforehand, but do not memorize an exact pattern of words. They choose the words with which to clothe their ideas as they are speaking. The advantage it has is that it sounds natural much like an ordinary conversation. It also gives the speaker the best opportunity to make use of positive and negative feedback from his or her audience in that by constantly monitoring the listeners' reactions and making necessary adjustments, he or she will improve his or her chances of maintaining a high level of audience interest and enthusiasm.³⁷

d. *Impromptu Method:* This method is used on occasions when people must speak “off the cuff,” with no chance for previous preparation. This method demands that the speakers both organize their ideas and choose their words as they proceed through their speeches.³⁸ The only advantage of impromptu delivery is that it sounds natural. However, its major drawback is its tendency to sound unprepared.

4. Using Your Voice Effectively: Let it be understood that a large part of the message of a speech is carried by the voice (vocalization). That is, what the audience hears. How well a public speaker is able to control and use his or her voice can make all the difference between a well received and a poorly received speech. We shall treat this topic briefly under four headlines.

a. *Speak with the Right Volume:* Experts have opined that no matter how well organized, researched, and practiced a speech may be, if the listeners cannot hear what is being said, the speech cannot possibly succeed.³⁹ Variety in volume is highly encouraged. A speaker who is constantly loud, for instance, will not only strain his voice and eventually lose it but his listeners will become bored and eventually give up straining to hear such a speaker. On the other hand, if he is constantly soft, it will be difficult for his listeners to hear him.

b. *Vary Your Pitch:* Pitch refers to the tone of the voice on the musical scale. Words or syllables to be emphasized are usually spoken in a higher key. Public speakers should maintain a variety of pitch when speaking from a public platform. Speaking in ‘monotone,’ with no ups and downs in pitch, can quickly give an audience the impression that the speaker is not enthusiastic or sincere about the topic.⁴⁰ For public speaking therefore, each person needs to discover his or her optimum pitch, that is, the portion of your range in which your voice usually hovers when you speak, that pitch which can be used most comfortably without strain for extended periods of time.

c. *Watch Your Speaking Rate:* Normal speaking rate varies from an average of 120- 150 words per minute range. Usually, some people speak more rapidly or more slowly than others. But for a public speaker to speak too rapidly as if due to nervousness or otherwise; or to speak so slowly as if there is no life in him or her, or due to vocalized pause such as ‘you-know,’ ‘uh,’ ‘en,’ or similar non-meaningful sounds will make the art to be very distracting to the listeners.

d. *Use Correct Pronunciation:* Pronunciation which is the correct sounds and the proper syllable stresses can also play a vital role in determining the degree of respect given a speaker by the audience. The two best sources where a speaker can discover the accepted pronunciation of words are (1) the dictionary and (2) the prominent speakers of the day such as national new commentators and notable government officials especially those who are phoneticians.

END NOTES ON CHAPTER TWO

¹Audu Nock Tonga, ed. *Use of English for Polytechnics: Communication Skills, Vol. II*, (Benin City: Stirling-Horden Publishers [Nig.] Ltd. 1997), 1.

²Ibid.

³Akporherhe, F. *Advanced Communication Skills in English*, (Eku: Justice and Peace Standard Press, 2008), 3.

⁴U. B Gbenedio and F. A. Anene-Boyle, eds., *Language and Communication Skills*. (Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited, 2004), 25.

⁵Tonga, *Use of English for Polytechnics, Vol. II*. 1.

⁶Eziechine Augustine Obiajulu, *Effective Communication In English Language*. (Agbor: Krisbec Publications, 2002), 1.

⁷Ibid.; ⁸Ibid.

⁹Tonga, *Use of English for Polytechnics, Vol. II*. 1.

¹⁰Ibid., 10.

¹¹Gbenedio and Anene-Boyle, eds., *Language and Communication Skills*, 31.

¹²Ibid., 27.

¹³Regis J. O'Connor, *Speech Exploring Communication*, (Eaglewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice- Hall, Inc., 1981), 24. O'Connor, *Speech Exploring Communication*, 79.

¹⁴Ibid., 18.; ¹⁵Ibid., 19.; ¹⁶Ibid., 19, 20.

¹⁷Tonga, *Use of English for Polytechnics, Vol. II*. 11.

¹⁸ Tonga, *Use of English for Polytechnics, Vol. II*, 11.

¹⁹Gbenedio and Anene-Boyle, eds., *Language and Communication Skills*, 31.

²⁰O'Connor, *Speech Exploring Communication*, 17.

²¹Ibid., 16.; ²²Ibid., 130.; ²³Ibid.

²⁴William J. Seiler and Melissa L. Beall, *Communication: Making Connections. 8th ed.* <http://www.amazon.com/Communication-Connections-William-J-Seiler/dp/0205691269> (accessed 27 September, 2010).

²⁵Dale Carnegie, *How to Develop Self-Confidence and Influence People by Public Speaking*, (Benin City: Rhema Publishers Inc., n.d), 11.

²⁶Ibid., 19.; ²⁷Ibid., 23.; ²⁸Ibid., 34.; ²⁹Ibid., 29.

³⁰Ibid., 15.; ³¹Ibid., 35.

³²O'Connor, *Speech Exploring Communication*, 154.

³³Ibid., 154.

³⁴Carnegie, *How to Develop Self-Confidence and Influence People by Public Speaking*, 115.

³⁵Ibid., 116.

³⁶O'Connor, *Speech Exploring Communication*, 201.

³⁷Ibid., 203.; ³⁸Ibid., 201.; ³⁹Ibid., 210.;

⁴⁰Ibid., 211.

NEWS GATHERING, WRITING AND EDITING

AS earlier remarked, journalism is aimed at satisfying the human curiosity of a world that is always expectant and eager to know what is new. Not just any piece of information but the one that is interesting as well as one that alters the status quo. Nobody expects journalists to sit in their oasis waiting for news to come. Instead, they go all out scanting for those pieces of information that are newsworthy, needful, people-oriented, factual, and uncommon. The journalists, as reporters, are expected to know the interest of their readership. This knowledge will guide them in their choice of information while they are out in the field.

Factual news is not easy to come by. Sometimes the journalists may have to go to places where there is crisis and even warfront. He goes into the field to gather the pieces of information from different quarter and different people. Having done this he is left with an all-important task the organizational structure of the work. It should be remembered that there are several rules guiding the writing of newspaper and its presentation. Some of these rules are expressed while others are implied. It behooves the journalist to get himself acquainted with such rules if he does not want his efforts to be sabotaged in the long run.

I. NEWS DEFINED

Different people have defined news in different ways but the fact underlying the various definitions is that news is a factual piece of information that instigates thoughts and emotions in people thus making them to act in a given direction. Nathan Eze quoting Stanley Johnson and Julia Harris defined news as follows:

- News is an account of an event which a newspaper prints and believes that by doing so it will profit.
- News is whatever readers want to know about. Anything that people want to read is news, provided it does not violate the canons of good taste and the laws of libel.
- News is anything people will talk about. The more it will excite comment, the greater the value.
- News is accurate and timely happenings, discoveries, opinions, and matters of any sort, which affect or interest the readers.
- News comprises all current activities, which are of general human interest, and the best news is that which interests the most readers.
- News is an account of the changing relationships between man and man, and between man and his environment.¹

Judging from the assertion of authorities in this field, news is not just anything that will interest people, it is not the event itself or current activities but experts emphasize that it is an account given or the report of those events. It is important to note that anything that happened in remote places which has remained unknown to people is only a potential news. It may eventually become news when somebody who gets to know about it reports it.

A. THE QUALITIES OF NEWS: There are some all-important qualities that news must possess. These qualities help to distinguish news from every other piece of information. They are discussed as follows:

1. Timeliness: One of the qualities of news is its recentness. This makes the difference between news and history, which concerns itself mainly with distant past. It should be remarked that when we speak of a recent event, we also refer to events that may have taken place several years ago but were not discovered and reported. The Christians refer to the gospel of Jesus Christ as “Good News”. But one wonders, what makes the gospel of Jesus good news, something that happened over two millenniums ago? His death is as efficacious today as it has always been.

God, through the preaching of this gospel, is still changing people’s lives for good. Miracles of healing, deliverance and preservation of lives are still taking place in a supernatural way. Nathan remarked, “When a notorious harlot accepts the gospel and begins to denounce harlotry and live a sober life, which is news.”² Since such incident is uncommon, it qualifies to be regarded as news.

2. Prominence: This refers to how urban/populated the places are, the nature of things involved, or the status of the people mentioned in the news. It is a truism that all animals are not equal. Some people are basically more prominent or important than others, at least from a news standpoint.³ This is what is meant by prominence.

Events affecting the President of a nation, or the Governor, a Senator, Chief Judge, Royal Highness, Pope or Bishop, are more newsworthy than those surrounding a common man on the street. Some places also are more prominent than other places, and this is true of organizations, institutions etc. The more prominent the places, things or people that are involved, the more likely it is going to attract a lot of media houses.

3. Proximity: Another quality of news is its nearness to its readership. This nearness we speak about here is not restricted to geographical location. It also has to do with nearness in interest or relationship. People’s interest gets easily aroused when they are told something about their kinsmen, towns, state or nation.

Man is an incurable egotist. He naturally has selfish tendencies. He has interest more in what affects him than what affects other people. In this sense, he prefers a piece of news having direct effects on him, his own people or city, to anyone of distant places. This nearness is a factor the journalists should reckon with in dealing with the newsworthiness of what they intend to pass across to the public.

4. Consequence: The amount of consequence of an event is considered in terms of the number of people that will be affected and what will happen as a result. In other words, how powerful/great the influence of a person, place, or event is will depend on how many lives it touches.⁴ If for instance a small provision store is destroyed by fire, few people other than the owner will care about the loss. But if a hospital burns down, then everyone will be concerned because it is the only center for treating diseases in the town. All the sick people in the hospital at the time of the fire incident as well as those who may become sick before another hospital can be erected will be greatly affected. Many of these sick ones will die

due to lack of health care facilities and adequate treatment. The entire community is affected. It is news.

- 5. Conflict:** What appeals to most people in news is the element of struggle and competition. This is why a good number of people enjoy sports events. Most newspapers have a special section just to report sports news. The greater the competition or the opposition, the more interesting the story. Conflict can be between people or between people and nature itself. Read this story:

A couple of years ago in Nigeria, it was reported that a leopard killed almost 100 people in a particular community. The people were so afraid that they would hardly go to the market, farm, their offices or business centers. Hunters tracked the animal for weeks and months but it escaped. The story was carried in all the newspapers because of the conflict between the savage animal and society, between the leopard and the hunters. When the beast was finally killed, front-page headlines carried the news.⁵

- 6. Human Interest:** An event that is unprecedented, outstandingly unusual or anything that arouses sympathy, fear, or delight has human interest. It makes no difference whether or not they are sad or funny. "We are all interested in births, marriages, and deaths. Sharing news of what has happened to ourselves or to other people makes up much of our conversation."⁶ News about people is more interesting than anything else, although things and events can be interesting if they are outstanding. Sometimes it seems that bad news has more appeal than good news. Read these stories:

When the United States was involved in war with Viet Nam some years ago, many university students demonstrated against the war. Some of these students set fire on military buildings in their towns and threw stones at military officers who came to the university. These events got front-page headlines in the newspaper.

At the same time another group of university students went to a military hospital in the town where their school was located. Each of these students gave a pint of his own blood to be sent to Viet Nam to help soldiers who were wounded in battle. The story was carried inside the newspaper with small headlines.⁷

If we look at the events in a more critical sense, we will find that the good these students did far outweighs the destroying of property in demonstration. But the newspaper made light of it because of the greater news appeal of violence.

- B. THE REQUIREMENTS OF NEWS:** There are two basic requirements of news. These essential elements should serve as watchword to the journalists. They are 'Truthfulness and People-oriented-ness.' We shall discuss them briefly.

- 1. Truthfulness:** It is required in news writing that every news item be factual, be a real life event and be presented exactly as they are (apodictic certainty). News writing is not like fiction. A poet may mix true statements with fiction in order to

achieve his expertise and with a view to presenting something that will interest his readers. But this is not the same in news writing. "What is reported must be factual. It must be what actually happened whether the writer read it, heard it, or witnessed it."⁸

2. People-Oriented-ness: It is human for men to like reading about men before considering reading about other creatures. More so, newspapers industries are business enterprises. They are profit-oriented. As a result, publishers make sure they publish articles or books that interest people so that they can buy and read them. For any piece of news to be worthwhile and be a saleable commodity, it must be interesting and people-oriented.

II. INTERVIEWING

It is very obvious that it is not possible for reporters to always be at the scene of an incident. It takes resourcefulness on their part to gather the relevant pieces of information they need. That is why tactfulness, friendliness, politeness and maturity, among other things, are necessary if they are to be successful in discharging their duties as journalists. Where there are eyewitnesses to an incident, their work will be very easy for them.

But if for instance a journalist who may be reporting the incident happens to arrive late at the scene of an accident, he will necessarily have to rely solely on interviewing people as his source of information. He will have to go to those who are eyewitness to get information from them. In some cases, he will need to glean some pieces of information from those in police quarters who may have arrived at the scene before him.

It is a truism that the reporter who wants to be dedicated to his job will be involved in a lot of risks. Eze noted, "During war times, the ardent reporter endangers his life in the war zone to get first-hand information about events in war front. Many a journalist has lost their lives during that."⁹ Even in times of peace, it is not easy to collect or gather news.

Apart from this, we also have cases where a reporter wants to get information about a particular field of life, a sector of the society, an institution, an organization, or about top government functionaries. It will be necessary for him to go to the people who are favourably disposed or competent in the particular field of life: a diplomat of international status, a political analyst, an academic juggernaut, a social activist, a commissioner or a governor. In doing this, he will be involved in a lot of risk. The tight security brought about by the sophistication of modern technologies is there to grapple with.

In times of political upheavals everybody including the journalist can be seen as a suspect. Individual differences are another factor to reckon with. Ethnicity, religious crises and general hostility of people are also there. Yet in the face of these odds, a reporter must go out to collect or gather information on specific issues or incidences. He has to learn the rules for interviewing.

A. THE RULES FOR INTERVIEWING: Experts in this field have summarized these rules as follows:

1. **Source of Information:** The reporter should find out the best sources of information and go there.
2. **Be Determined:** He should bear in mind that perseverance is a good quality that should be found in an interviewer. He may be ignored or treated as a trash at first but he should not give up. He must press on until he gets what he wants.
3. **Be Prepared:** He should plan his interview in advance with a view to avoiding the possibility of his interviewee taking him for someone who is slothful in business. If his thoughts are not organized and he rambles from one question to the other none of which coheres with the other, chances are that his interviewee will tighten up against him due to boredom.
4. **Be Friendly:** An interviewer, like a salesman, must have a good manner of approach knowing that he will be dealing with different classes of people during his interview.
5. **Be Polite:** An interviewer by the nature of his work is an interrupter. He should therefore be one who has learnt ethics and etiquette so as to be humble enough to apologize for interruption or disturbance or even embarrassment he may cause his interviewees.
6. **Be Sociable:** He should know that being humble does not call for timidity or inferiority complex. He has to learn to interact freely with people including those he is meeting for the first time.
7. **Maintain Confidentiality:** Everybody needs security and an interviewee is not an exception. The reporter should assure his interviewee of his own safety if he gives the information. Many people who feel that they stand the chance of losing their lives or jobs deny reporters access to their houses and offices because some of them are not conservative.
8. **Establish a Point of Contact:** He should not always jump into interviewing people. Establish some kind of relationship where it becomes necessary. Determine in advance questions which their answers will establish familiarity and eliminate tension between you and the interviewee. If for instance he meets a man and says, *There is a chill in the atmosphere, isn't it?* His response will definitely fertilize the ground for discussion.
9. **Introduce Yourself:** Etiquette says that when you meet with people you may be doing any serious business with, do not conceal your identity. When you open up to your interviewee, he will also open up for you. Do not think that telling him that you are a journalist or reporter will make him to be scared of you. No, that will only make him know that you are in for something important.

B. INTERVIEW AIDS: In recent times, so many interview aids have been made available to reporters to assist them in their newsgathering processes. They make his difficult and risky task to be easy, convenient and perfect. They are considered very necessary because the human mind cannot grab, retain and recall everything with utmost precision. As earlier remarked, litigants usually look out for an avenue such as inaccurate information to fall out with journalists. Besides, most people tend to deny the information they have given to journalists if they are not backed up with sufficient proofs.

- a. Using shorthand. Such writing as abbreviations, signs, or symbols.

- b. Audio-visual recording device
- c. Good Mobile Phone. Global System of Mobile Communications (GSM)
- d. Writing materials (Books, biros and pencils).
- e. Photo digital camera machine.
- f. Palm top computer.

III. TYPES OF NEWSPAPERS

As earlier remarked, the newspaper, as the name implies, serves the primary aim of collecting the news and telling it to the public with a view to keeping them informed or abreast of happenings in the society. However, besides giving news to the public, the newspaper educates, entertains and also persuades the public.

It is noteworthy to say that there are some factors that make newspapers worthwhile. The value of a newspaper is determined by the following factors:

- **The Kind of Message It Carries:** It is the content of the message that serves as the glue that holds the readership;
- **The Medium:** This represents the language of presentation and the type of newspaper through which the message is given. According to experts, the meaning of an expression depends on the words used coupled with the experience of the reader as it affects the symbols used. Some newspapers are of local or state standard while others are national. This factor determines the extent to which they are to be disseminated and accepted; and
- **The Style of Presentation:** This is the least important factor. Several styles are opened to the writer but his choice should be based on the message he intends to give and his readership.

Considering the issue of 'Types,' it is pertinent to say that newspapers are classified mainly according to the frequency of their publication and also according to the kind of news they publish. We shall look at this briefly under two sub-headings:

1. **The Frequency of Publication:** The frequency of the issuance of a newspaper varies. If issued everyday, we call it a "Daily Newspaper." If issued every week, the paper is called a "Weekly Newspaper," and if every month, it called a "Monthly Newspaper," and so on.¹⁰
2. **The Kind of News Published:** The kind of news that newspapers publish varies considerably. We have, for instance, "Commercial Newspaper" which concerns itself mainly with news publication about trade and business. We also have "Sports Newspapers." These are devoted essentially to games and sporting activities. We have those dealing with trade union affairs.¹¹ In short, the list is long.

IV. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF NEWS WRITING

The newspaper has some characteristic features that distinguish it from other media. Arguing further on the foregoing, Eze remarked: *"The news may be relayed through the radio or television before it is read in the pages of the newspaper. Why is it that after hearing the news over the radio people will still be anxious to buy the newspaper the following day?"*¹²

Each time news broadcast is made over the radio or television, it is usually the summary of the news that is read. If anyone desires to know the details of the story, he will have to buy the newspaper. Usually, when news broadcast is being made over the radio or television, presenters are mindful of time whereas the problem of the newspaper is space. Besides, people are likely to retain more of what they see and read than what they merely hear. More so, if one keeps his newspapers carefully, he can make a constant recourse to them. But this is not true of what is heard over the radio or television. These and other qualities account for the value people place on the newspaper.

Consequently, the characteristics of news writing are to be taken cognizance of if the newspapers are to retain their value. We shall briefly discuss these features.

- 1. Clarity:** It has been observed that one reason why most writers do not write in short, simple words is the thought to impress readers well enough by using high sounding terms.¹³ What does a writer stand to gain if he has what is perhaps very important to pass across but does so by using symbols too difficult for readers to comprehend due to their lack of clarity, improper collocation, and vagueness of expression. We should bear in mind that readability is a factor to reckon with in all kinds of writing. This, as it were, depends partly on using short, simple words and also on correct grammar.
- 2. Brevity:** News writers should realize that brevity is a quality to reckon with in news writing. Its importance is brought on writing by the fact that everybody is in a hurry. People want news story they can read as quickly as possible and get on to something else.¹⁴ If you play down on the importance of brevity and then go on to write a very long article, most readers will turn away from it without even starting to read it however interesting it might be.

There are times when an important event will necessarily require full coverage, which will invariably turn the story to a lengthy one. Even at that you can as well learn to condense the story and make it brief knowing that lengthy story discourages readers. It is this quality of brevity that makes radio news presentation very popular among other media.

- 3. Accuracy:** That people are interested in news report is never an excuse for reporters to give to the public any piece of information that is not factual and accurate. Accuracy deals with both the news itself and correct spelling of people's names.¹⁵ It should be borne in mind that the consequences of telling untrue story about people or places are enormous and far-reaching. No reporter has immunity against libel, calumny, assault, slander or battery notwithstanding his or her social standing or influence.

Consequently, knowing that more than one person may have a certain name, the reporter will have to include additional information (profession, state of origin, age, sex, complexion etc.) to identify a particular person. Otherwise, he or she might cause embarrassment to someone. Worse still, he or she might fall out with litigants.

Several years ago a leading newspaper reported that a well-known cinema star got married. Problems arose when it was discovered that the one who got married was a university professor with the same name as the cinema star.¹⁶

4. Objectivity: Although experts have opined that 100 percent objectivity in reporting news is actually impossible, it should be a goal that reporters are striving towards.¹⁷ Reporters are required to state facts without including their own opinion and personal prejudice or bias. This objectivity is especially important in an institutional, organizational, a group business enterprise or denominational publication reporting a situation where the members are sharply divided.¹⁸

A reporter should not get his or her own bias across by emphasizing one part of the story and ignoring another part or by putting extra emphasis on one thing to make it seem worse than it really is. His or her report may be factual but for the fact that there is emphasis on one part and de-emphasis on other makes his or her not to be objective.

A. WRITING THE NEWSPAPER HEADLINES: The headline of a newspaper, due to its importance, is described as reader appeal or reader-arrest part of the entire story. This explains why it is said to be very difficult to write. It is like the gateway into the showroom where the showcase, the lead is. It is usually written in about 5- 8 words, though it could sometimes be less or in extreme cases, more.¹⁹ Since the headline serves mainly the purpose of enabling the reader to see the entire story at a glance, great care is always exercised when writing it so that its purpose will not be defeated in the long run. The best procedure for writing it is to first and foremost summarize the story to produce the news lead and then either summarize the lead to get the headline or to pick the main words or features in the lead to serve the same purpose.

1. The Headline Writer: The headline is called the whole story in few words. Whereas it is the responsibility of the reporter to get the article written in accordance with the rules of typing an article, it is the duty of the copyreader or editor to create the headline that will suit the story. Lending support to this assertion, Eze writes: *“The editor after checking the article for accuracy, clarity, and style creates a headline that will capture the main thoughts in the story, summarize them in few words and write that down as the headline.”*²⁰

2. Reasons for the Headline: There are a number of reasons why the headline is considered very important in news writing. Some of them are stated as follows:

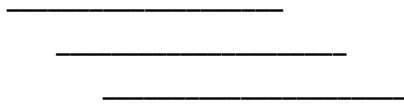
- To ensure the easy selection of article of interest.
- To arrest the reader’s attention as he glances through the newspaper.
- To assist the reader in getting a quick summary of the news highlights of the newspaper.
- To make the newspaper itself attractive to readers.
- To depict the importance of an article

3. The Styles of Headline: Many styles of news headlines have been in use since the history of journalism but some of them are now outdated. The editor knows the current or modern ones.

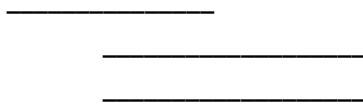
a. Cross Line: This is where the headline is put across in one line but centered

according to the number of columns covered by the story as illustrated below.

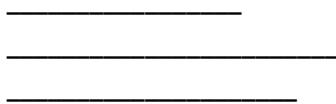
b. Drop or Stepped Lines: This is when indentation goes to the right in two, three or four lines approximately of the same length.



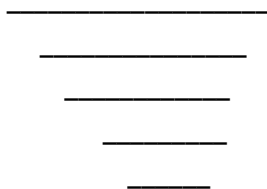
c. Hanging Indentation: This kind of headline is indented to hang to the left. It often occupies two, three or four lines according to the length of the headline and flushes at the right as illustrated below.



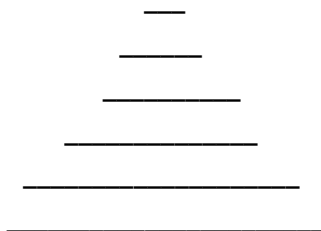
d. Flush or Flush Left: In this type of headline, each line starts exactly where the previous one starts or will flush at the left but may vary at the right hand as illustrated below.



e. Inverted Pyramid: This is such that each line gets shorter than the one above it but the arrangement is centered.



f. Pyramid: The pyramid style is such that each line becomes longer than the previous one until it gets to the bottom.



4. The Language of the Headline:

a. Tenses: It is required that the headline be written in the present tense though the event may be in the past, present or future. This is done with a view to giving the impression that the event is recent.

Examples:

1. Chief Ekeoba Dies At 98
2. Edo State Governor to Visit Abuja Tomorrow.

b. Punctuation: It is also required that headlines should not include period or full

stop and if it is a direct quotation, the single quotation marks should be used.

Example: 'What a Fiasco!'

- c. Abbreviations:** All forms of abbreviations should, as much as possible, be completely expunged from the newspaper headline.
- d. Grammar:** The editor, in an effort to condense the headline, should be careful of ambiguity resulting from grammatical error.

5. The Qualities of Headline: A well written headline should have these qualities:

- a. It should always have active verb (be written in the active sense).
- b. It should portray the content of the article.
- c. It should contain as many facts as possible.
- d. It must summarize the story.
- e. It should be written in few but powerful words.
- f. Its words must not be split between lines (syllabication).
- g. Its words are to be properly arranged.

Examples:

- 'Sylvester loses bail bid'; 'Fleeing robbers kill ex-police officer'
- Corruption monitors coming; Anyim wants PDP restructured.
- When we heard; 'One cop killed, naval men injured'
- Militants attack vessel; 'Miscreants butcher 28-yr-old'

It is apparent from the foregoing that writing a good headline, like other aspects of the newspaper production, is an art that is developed through practice in time. A beginner in this area should remember the saying that "Practice makes perfect."

B. WRITING THE NEWS LEAD: The news lead is the fundamental part of the newspaper. It consists of the most essential facts of the story in a newspaper built into the first paragraph. As its name implies, it is intended to catch the attention of the reader and lead him on to the rest of the story. The lead of any news story carries much responsibility because, more often than not, that is the only part of the story a reader reads.²¹ If a news lead is interesting and informative, however, it can draw the reader's attention to the rest of the story.

Writing the news lead is the first skill a journalist needs to develop that is why it is considered as the most important aspect of the study of journalism. As a matter of fact, one cannot boastfully claim to be a journalist if he has not mastered the techniques of writing a good news lead. It takes a good knowledge of English Language particularly summary writing to be able to select all the key thoughts in the article and condense them into the first paragraph meeting the demands of the '5Ws and H' which are the facilitators of lead writing.

1. Special Features of the Lead: There are special features that make the lead to be treated as the most fundamental aspect of the story and an easily identifiable in the newspaper. They are listed as follows:

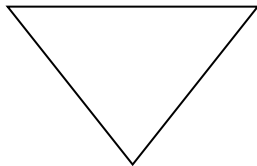
- In most newspapers, the lead is always printed in bolder types than the rest of

the story to make it conspicuous for easy reading.

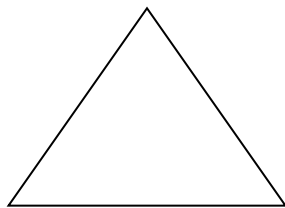
- Well-written leads often do not contain full stop. Everything is composed into one sentence containing some or all of the '5Ws and H.'
- It is an all-inclusive sentence or paragraph summarizing all the salient points in the article.

2. Styles of the Lead: There are three major styles of writing the news lead. They include:

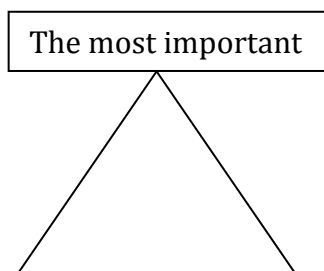
a. The Inverted Pyramid Form: It is so called because it gives the most important facts of the story, which immediately lead the reader on to the rest part. This lead form begins with the climax and then goes back to fill in the details. These details are written in descending order of importance. It is the most popular and the preferred type of lead today due to the fact that readers hardly spare enough time for reading newspapers.



b. The Pyramid Form: This style of newslead writing is the literary type of writing like composition or essay, novel, poetry, or drama, which maintains the rule of coherent presentation of the less important points first leaving the most important parts to the climax of the story. This pyramid form is the opposite of the inverted pyramid.



c. The Modified Pyramid Form: In this form, the most important facts, as Nathan Eze observed, are presented in the lead after which other facts in the story are reverted and presented in an ascending order of importance reserving the second most important fact to the end as a semi climax.²²



3. Examples of News Lead:

- Rear Admiral Oseikhe Aziembemhin Esanigbedo Chief of Fleet Support, Nigeria Navy, on account of his recent promotion, will be accorded a civic reception today by the traditional rulers, Ibhiyon Union and the entire people of Idumu-Okhae community in Agbazilo Local Government Area of Afesan State.²³

◆ Who? Rear Admiral Oseikhe

Aziembemhin Esanigbedo.

- ◆ What? Will be accorded a civic reception.
 - ◆ When? Today.
 - ◆ Where? At Idumu-Okhae community in Agbazilo Local Government Area of Afesan State.
 - ◆ Why? He has recently been promoted to Real Admiral in the Nigerian Navy.
- ii. Two Hometown High School teachers, Mr. Amos Osezua Okonofua, 1640 East Glasgow Avenue, and Mr. James Osemudiamen Obaze, 2115 North Third Street, were killed at 9: 30 last night on the road to Northeast City when a tyre on their car blew out causing the driver, Mr. Okonofua, to loose control of the car and crashed into a cement bridge railing.²⁴
- Who? *Mr. Amos Osezua Okonofua and Mr. James Osemudiamen Obaze.*
 - What? *Were killed in a car accident.*
 - When? *At 9: 30 last night.*
 - Where? *On the road to Northeast City.*
 - Why? *A tyre blew out and the driver lost control of the car.*
 - How? *The car crashed into a cement bridge railing.*
- iii. At exactly 12 noon on Sunday, a blind man's eyes were opened at Assemblies of God Church, 158 Nosa Avenue, Paris as Evangelist Prosper Mavis Osaigbovo prayed for the sick, having expressed his avid desire in his sermon for God to perform miracles in the church.
- iv. Five army officers have been arrested following a shoot-out last week between police and the army in the Northern Toga, Alaska.
- v. The Second ABC- Concord Tennis Championship in Port Harcourt recorded its first major upset on Friday when the ladies singles number one seed, Rose Ekpen Aigbuza, was sent packing in the first round of the sixteen draws event by Tony Abanimu Aluola.²⁵

4. Identification: The necessity for the inclusion of identification in writing news lead is predicated on the fact that most people's names in some parts of Nigeria today are generational and very similar to each other. That is, from the first to sixth generation and beyond, a particular name is associated with all members of a given family, however large. This sense of shared identity makes it difficult to distinguish one person from others in that lineage.

Identification helps to remove every atom of doubt that may arise as to whom the particular person (or place) might be. Nevertheless, it is brought to bear on writing news lead when there is a story that revolves around someone of low socio-economic standing or political status. For instance, people like Olusegun Obasanjo, Pius Ayim Pius, and Prof. Oserhemen Osunbor, do not need any identification because of their political influence.

We use the following in identifying people and places:

- Achievement
- Age

- Gender
- Address
- Description
- Nationality
- Occasion
- Occupation/profession
- Past news
- Relationship
- Sportsmanship

Examples:

- i. *In Uzebu Local Government Area of Afesan State, a well-known educationalist and community leader, Mr. Ferdinand Ehizojie Ikpotokin on Wednesday, died of heart attack in his hometown Obodogun.*
- ii. *Falling headlong from a running trailer, a police officer, brother to Lisbon State police commissioner, died yesterday near the Saint Peterson square in an effort to arrest a suspected armed robber.*

5. The Body of the News: The body of the newspaper, much like that of an essay or a novel, is built into well-conglomerated paragraphs each taking on a vital point of the news story arranged in an ascending or descending order of importance depending on the form of presentation the writer chooses to adopt. However, a novelist would prefer to use pyramid style because of his intension to build suspense. To the news writer, the best style is inverted pyramid because he is aware that his readers have little or no time to spare reading lengthy stories.

Preachers are not completely left out of this choice making. The inverted pyramid style of sermon delivery is strongly recommended for them knowing that the world is a busy one, schedules are tight and nobody wants to be delayed longer than necessary. If they use about 35- 45 minutes for preaching, for instance, and use about 45- 60 minutes for teaching, their deliveries would be snappy, powerful and far-reaching. But if the time for any sermon delivery is stressed out of proportion, it will turn out to be boring and discouraging. Besides, such attitude depicts lack of training and basic skills. In fact, it is disappointingly annoying, to say the least.

V. EDITING AND EDITORIAL

It is generally believed that in journalism the knowledge of the art of writing is not complete unless it is coupled with the knowledge of the art of editing. Consequently, the journalists should not only seek to acquire, develop and master the skill of writing, they should as well complement it with that of editing. The indisputable fact remains that there is no news without an editor. He is the one who decides what goes into the newspaper taking into account the mission and philosophy of the publication.

More often than not, the information a reporter brings gets to the editor as raw as he gathers it. He may hurriedly make as many corrections as he can but will not

give as much time as possible since like a hunter, he hurries back into the bush for more animals to kill, more news to gather.²⁶

The article a reporter sends for publication is therefore left at the mercy of the editor. What matters now is whether or not the article will successfully pass through the sieve of the editor or whether or not it will appeal to his own senses. The editor as one who is acquainted with his readership knows the article that is newsworthy. He uses his good sense of judgment in line with his gate-keeping function to decide whether to discard the material in its entirety or only a part of it. In the production of newspapers, therefore, the editor plays the all-important role that is said to be very complex.

A. WHO IS AN EDITOR?: From our discussion in the above paragraph, it can be deduced with ease and precision that an editor is one who studies the quality of the materials (news items) sent to him and decides what piece of news is a good quality that deserves to be included among the pieces that are to be published.

Nathan Eze, quoting Floyd K. Baskette and Jack Z. Sissors in their book entitled *“The Art of Editing,”* describes an editor as “One who decides what shall and what shall not go into his publication on the basis of what he conceives to be the publication’s mission and philosophy.”²⁷ He has right to kill a story if he knows that it does not agree with the mission of the publication. The inference that can be drawn from the above description is that the job of an editor is enormous and multi-dimensional in nature. He is saddled with the responsibility of analyzing, rearranging and restructuring the whole piece with a view to enhancing the readability as well as its quality. Lending support to this assertion, Basket and Sissors opined that the work of an editor includes:

To improve an essentially well-written piece or to turn a clumsily written one into, at the very least, a readable and literate article, and at the very most, a beautifully shaped and effective essay which remains true to the author’s intention, which realizes that intention more fully than he himself was able to do. He cares about the English language; he cares about clarity of thought and grace of expression; he cares about the traditions of discourse and of argument.²⁸

The work of an editor is three-fold as can be seen from what is written above. We shall discuss them briefly so as to further give his true picture and the various jobs he does.

1. As a Gate-Keeper: As the name implies, the work of a gate-keeper is to determine who or what passes through the gate.²⁹ In doing this, he has to exercise great care knowing that if he allows himself to be caught in a deluding web resulting in some bad elements passing into his compound, they will inadvertently do some havoc. In view of this, the gate-keeper is always meticulous and makes sure of who or what he allows. The reputation of the publication rests entirely on the shoulders of the editor. He is therefore under obligation to be very keen in his decision on what not to include in the publication.

In addition to this, the editor, as a gate-keeper, takes so many things into consideration in his choice of what to and what not to publish. As pointed out earlier, every publication has a mission and philosophy which may be political,

religious or commercial. The editor being an achiever, a goal-getter, and a purpose driven worker in the industry will have to weigh every given material or article to ascertain its agreeability with the existing policy of the publication.³⁰ He will have to dissect the article to find out if it is such that has anything to add to the goal of the paper or one that satisfies its demands. The onus is his to discard the article if it is perceived to be such that could in any way betray the philosophy of the publication.

- 2. As a Representative:** The editor, in this connection, plays a dual role. He represents the entire publishing house by controlling what will and what will not be accepted and published on one hand, and on the other hand represents the article writer by helping to ensure proper conglomeration of ideas and impeccability of expression.

A writer may have good ideas but he does not have the language to present the thoughts. If he jumbles them down the way he feels, it is the responsibility of the editor to rewrite it in a better language that can be read by the audience.³¹

He does this meticulously with a view to ensuring that the intentions of the writer whom he represents are, as much as possible, not adulterated.

- 3. As a Corrector:** As it is often the case, the articles sent to the press are very lengthy and clumsy. Apart from the fact that one can get bored with such lengthy articles, men being what they are, hardly spend quality time to go through their numerous pages to get the gist. Consequent upon this, the editor intelligently works on them to bring each piece to a literate and readable type. He corrects the grammar, introduces brevity and brings clarity to the thoughts.³² Chances are that as he does this, he may have to restructure the entire article, merge some paragraphs and/or rephrase some sentences in order to make the article look more beautiful and attractive.

B. HOW TO EDIT: As earlier discussed, the work of an editor is really very complex and demanding. Although it is an art that requires formal training and proper orientation, yet there is hardly any school that provides a course of study for the training of editors. Nevertheless, like every other work of arts, editing is a skill that is developed with practice in time. It should be borne in mind that in every given art, one does not become proficient and dexterous by chance or propensity. Rather, experience is the best teacher.

There is actually no hard and fast rule regarding the 'HOW' of editing. It is rather a process that comes to bear on editing itself as the editor carries out the work of or functions as a corrector, a selector, an arranger, a composer, a reducer, a framer, a translator and a graphic artist. An editor "...becomes all these through years of practice and he may not even know he has all these qualities."³³ By and large, the editor's ultimate aim is to enhance the readability of the article as well as to ensure that its message is passed across with as few words as possible.

C. KINDS OF EDITORS: It is necessary to reaffirm that editing is a job that is

enormous and multi-dimensional. If a clean and perfect work is to be done in the long run, different kinds of editors are needed in the process. This work pays attention to three kinds of editors. They are discussed as follows:

1. The Copy Editor: The primary responsibility of a copy editor is to work mainly on the written materials for the publication. In short, all we have discussed up to this point concerns the copy editor. Without further ado, we shall take on the next point.

2. The Photo Editor: The value of pictures in newspapers and magazine publication as well as in general arts can never be over-estimated. This is owing to the fact that in most cases, words are grossly inadequate in making some vivid explanations and descriptions. But when a good picture or a diagram goes with the piece of writing, it will facilitate the understanding of the readers.

In the words of Baskette and Sissors as quoted by Eze, "A picture editor is almost as essential to a newspaper as a copy editor ... if it is a good picture, it should get a good play just as a good story a big headline."³⁴ The importance of pictures is further buttressed by the fact that some events are essentially graphic and need little or no text to get the message across to the target.

3. The Make-Up Editor: In our contemporary society, aesthetic value has come to the fore. People, especially ladies, dress in good and expensive clothing in order to appear cute and fascinating. Many are given to the use of cosmetics and the use of jewelries to compliment their natural endowments. In literary works also, any publication that fails to take into consideration the taste of beauty of the populace may never have patronage. As the popular saying goes, what is good to the eyes is good to the taste and also good to the body.

In consideration of this, the make-up editor being one that is exposed to designing and its rules, oversees the dummy (that is, the final arrangement of the various news items including the photographs, advertisements and fillers on the pages of the newspapers before they are sent to print) to ensure that the newspapers is second to none in the competitive society. On the whole, an editor should be a man or woman of many parts. He or she should possess skills and wealth of knowledge accruable with practice in time.

D. THE VARIOUS LEVELS OF THE EDITORIAL LADDER: As it is often the case, editors of different levels exist in most newspapers houses. As a result, every article for publication will necessarily pass from one level of editorship to the other. In the process of this, some articles will be shortened and others completely rejected by the topmost person in the editorial ladder. "If the article is rich in content and needs to be published, then it will be rewritten in a style acceptable to the press."³⁵

1. The Reporter: Customarily, when a reporter returns with his article, he reads and rereads what he has put together. He does so with a view to correcting his grammar and reconstructing his sentences using more appropriate words where necessary to improve on the material. In spite of his efforts to eliminate errors on first rereading or even the second, chances are that errors may still exist. What he needs to do is to give the article to a second person whose

judgment and sense of evaluation places him in a position to find out more mistakes. Sometimes, it takes more than two readers to find out all the mistakes in a given article.

2. **The Rewriter:** There are three kinds of rewriters. Eze listed them as follows:
 - a) **Clippings From the Competitive Newspapers:** The editor cuts off some news items from the newspapers that are highly competitive and gives them to a reporter who scouts for a few more facts and add them to the clippings which the editor has written in his own words.
 - b) **Combined Work of “Desk Men” And “Leg Men”:** Those referred to as ‘leg men’ are those out in the field to collect news items whereas those who sit back in the office to receive news from the ‘leg men’ through the wire service as in telephone or telegram are called desk men.
 - c) **News Containing Flaws:** This third group is made up of rewriters who work mainly on news containing flaws and consequently needs to be rewritten.³⁶
3. **The Copyreader:** Experts in this field call the copyreader ‘*The midwife of the story*’ or ‘*The reporter’s best critique.*’ The duty of the copyreaders is to ensure that all mistakes are eliminated, that all wrong statements corrected, and the language improved as they prepare the final copy that goes to print.
4. **The Proofreader:** The proofreaders are said not to be directly involved in editing process in that they do not improve the quality of the story in any way. Nevertheless, they are integral part of the editorial ladder.
5. **The Headlining:** As we earlier discussed, this group of editors are responsible for providing a suitable headline for the news story to ensure the easy selection of article of interest among other things.
6. **The Make-Up:** The make-up editors do the final layout or arrangement of the various items to make the newspaper look very attractive. They take into consideration the taste of beauty of the populace.

E. EDITORIALS: The editorial by description is the news behind the news. It is “a newspaper or magazine article that gives the opinions of the editors or publishers.”³⁷ The difference between the straight news and the editorial is that when a news writer writes his news, he tries to explain what exactly happened, when, where, why and how it happened. But in editorial writing, the writer concerns himself with interpreting the news. Besides, in news writing, one is instructed to be as objective as possible whereas in the editorial, one has the liberty to be subjective. That is, he can give his opinions about the current events and has the audacity to interpret government decisions. However, he should not be prejudiced and biased.

An editorial writer is said to be one who stands in the place of the common man and speaks for him to the government. Consequent upon the sensitive position he occupies, he has to be a cosmopolitan man whose mind has been well developed, and one who can “... be considerably critical and should have the ability to both analyze and synthesize the news.”³⁸

It is important to note that though the editorial informs and entertains by making some gentle funs, its main purpose or aim is to influence and convince.

The editorial tries to inspire good causes and to shun bad ones.

When worthy but unpopular causes need to be defended, the editorial does that. It also condemns unworthy but popular causes by showing the evils of those causes and why people should shun them. The editorial stimulates thinking and inspires challenges. It may aim at influencing the government, the political parties, the institution and often the readers to a positive action and sometimes negative ones.³⁹

1. **Editorial Style:** The editorial style is determined among other things by the following:
 - a) **The Objective of the Paper:** The question here is what aim does the given paper want to achieve which has inspired its publication? Is that aim religious in orientation or political?
 - b) **The Readership of the Paper:** The tone of the editorial is determined by the geographical, urban or rural, socio-ethnic setting of the readers.
 - c) **The Editorial Policy:** The editorial policy is the overall attitude and rules governing the publication.

In view of this, "The editorial always defends the rights of the public to know. It tries to uphold the principles of journalism to the utmost. It does not fail to represent the governing body to the people."⁴⁰

2. **The Editorial Page:** Customarily, editorial pages are often designed to appear different from other pages. The compelling logic behind this is to make the pages conspicuous and very attractive to readers and to arrest their attention as they skim through the pages of the newspaper. In order for the editorial to achieve this noble purpose, the editorial pages are written as follows:
 - a. They are printed in larger types and wider column widths.
 - b. They are never written to follow strictly the rules for columns.
 - c. They are printed left hand pages instead of the right.
 - d. They are often found at the third page more than other pages.
 - e. They are not leaded like every other article on the newspaper.
 - f. Their headlines may be just a phrase unlike other articles.

F. MANAGING: In order to ensure the continuous existence, steady progress, and smooth running of a business establishment, or an estate, an institution and the like, machineries are usually set in motion to carry out its management function. This art of managing serves as the sure means to a clearly defined end. That is, it serves as the means through which the set goals are pursued, attained and sustained. Where this is not firmly in place, bankruptcy becomes inevitable.

In publishing houses also, machinery is compulsorily set in motion to do the all-important work of overseeing the production, financing and the distribution of the newspapers. Managing is an important aspect of journalism. The person performing this duty may not necessarily be a journalist. All the same, it will pay the publishing house better if such a person is knowledgeable in journalism. According to Eze, "where the managers of a newspaper house are journalists themselves, better achievement is made."⁴¹

END NOTES ON CHAPTER THREE

¹Nathan Eze, *Journalism and Christian Writing*, (Aba: Assemblies of God Press. n.d.), 13.

²Ibid., 36.

³Rex Jackson, *Principles of Journalism*, (Irving, Texas: International Correspondence Institute, 1992), 82.

⁴Ibid.; ⁵Ibid., 85.; ⁶Ibid., 86.; ⁷Ibid., 87.

⁸Eze, *Journalism and Christian Writing*, 35.

⁹Ibid., 58.

¹⁰B. A. Ballard, ed., *English Language Registers*, (Ibadan: Onibonoje Press Publishers, 2000), 87.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Eze, *Journalism and Christian Writing*, 12.

¹³Jackson, *Principles of Journalism*, 105.

¹⁴Ibid., 108.; ¹⁵Ibid., 111.; ¹⁶Ibid.; ¹⁷Ibid., 113.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Eze, *Journalism and Christian Writing*, 38.

²⁰Ibid.; ²¹Ibid.; ²²Ibid., 120; ²³Ibid., 49.; ²⁴Ibid., 50.; ²⁵Ibid.; ²⁶Ibid., 14.; ²⁷Ibid., 61.;

²⁸Ibid.; ²⁹Ibid.; ³⁰Ibid.; ³¹Ibid., 62.; ³²Ibid.; ³³Ibid.;

³⁴Ibid., 63.; ³⁵Ibid., 15.; ³⁶Ibid.; ³⁷Ibid., 17.;

³⁸Ibid.; ³⁹Ibid.,64.; ⁴⁰Ibid.; ⁴¹Ibid.

Chapter Four

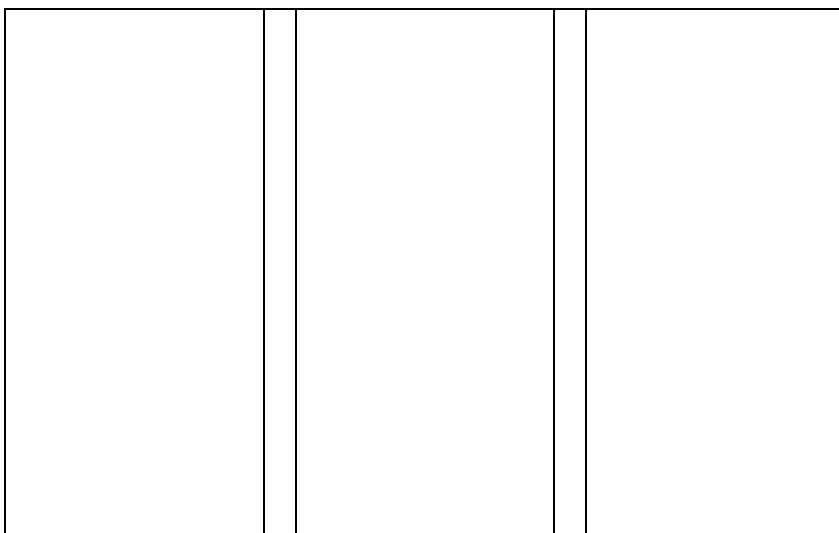
NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINE PRODUCTION

THE publishing aspect of journalism is very important and demanding, and it involves various steps and many factors. That is, it involves finance, manpower and technicalities. As a matter of fact, this aspect used to be an uphill task. Thank God for the technological advancement of our world that has ushered in the advent of digital computer machines and a host of other sophisticated electronic gadgets that today combine to build a powerful network of media and technical activities that facilitate the process of newspaper production. We do not want to commit ourselves to going into a detail about all that is involved in publishing a paper. Our intention is to try to give you a few guidelines that will prove to be profitable, all the same.

I. PRODUCING THE NEWSPAPER

The preliminary work that should be done in the process of newspaper production is to ensure that the various news items for the newspaper have been gathered. Plan the content and length of each page. For you to get an idea of how your copy will be arranged, you will first prepare a layout page for each of the pages of your paper. These layout pages will show you the number and size of columns at a glance. Thereafter, you will in a rough way write in what you expect to be in each column on each page. Having gone through the first stage, the next step should be to type the stories on a regular foolscap size plain paper divided into two or three columns (having two foolscap sheets to a page), which has small spaces left between the columns to act as a gap between them. It should look like this.

A foolscap sheet divided into three columns.



The typist should type the story column by column and ensure that the first column is filled from the top to the bottom before typing on the other columns. At the completion of the typing, he will progress to the next step, preparing the dummy.

A. THE DUMMY: The dummy, as can be seen below, is the temporary paste-up sheet or sheets containing all the news as arranged, ready for the final typing according to that design before printing.¹ Articles are arranged in the order of their importance. This is especially true of the front page. As a rule, important stories should be prepared to cover two or three columns while the less important ones are put on single columns. One point to note is that care should be taken to diversify the arrangement to make room for beauty.²

The make-up editor will usually mark off enough space at the top center of the dummy for the title of the newspaper and should make it wide enough to contain the producers or owners of the newspaper, the volume, number, and the day, month and year of publication. At this point, he should now cut the stories according to the size of space allotted to them and begin to paste them.

The arrangement of a dummy should look something like this:

NAST THE LAMP LIGHTER		25th Edition Vol. 6
NIGERIAN ADVANCED SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, EWU, EDO STATE, 2010		
MAJOR CONTROVERSY BREWING ON THE FUTURE OF NIGERIA'S UNITY		When We Heard
		Is Fancying Women A Sin?
If... You Don't Succeed, Secede		PICTURE
53 Pilgrims Killed in India Bus Crash	NAST WEARS A GOOD LOOK	

B. THE MATERIALS FOR PREPARING THE DUMMY: These are the possible materials needed for preparing the dummy.

1. There should be articles or news stories typed in columns and other plain sheets ruled in columns.
2. There should be a pair of scissors for cutting the typed sheets column by column.
3. There should be gum for the pasting of cut sheets.
4. There should also be pencil for writing temporary headlines.

Nevertheless, in this present age when we have digital computers and experts in graphic designs, the work can better be done in the Corel Draw package with the help of a graphic artist.

C. PRODUCING THE FINAL COPY: The dummy pasted up or prepared will serve as the format, which will be used as a guide in the production of the final copy. When the artist and the typist are producing the final copy, they will use such materials as sheets of stencil, letter guides, stylus, typewriter, duplicating sheets, and duplicating or mimeographing machine.³

Nevertheless, as we remarked earlier, event has overtaken this laborious method of newspaper production. Computer experts in various software packages use modern sophisticated machines to do nearly every phase of the work. What the producer needs to do is to harness their talents for efficiency and prompt delivery.

II. PRODUCING THE MAGAZINE

The magazine is not exactly the same as the newspaper that we have earlier discussed. This is owing to the fact that the objectives of both papers differ and there are many other aspects that differ in both papers. As a result of this, there exist a few differences between the production of the newspapers and that of the magazine. There exists a similarity, however, especially in the area of techniques. We shall therefore proceed to the areas where they differ and point out what extra things that the magazine needs.

A. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MAGAZINE AND NEWSPAPER: A number of things make the magazine peculiar among literary works. A few of them are highlighted as follows:

1. The newspaper as everybody knows is produced on daily basis as opposed to the magazine, which takes a longer time, often days and even weeks in most cases. What accounts for this difference is that magazine is produced in color and more quality papers are used hence it is not easy to produce them daily. In newspaper production, durability of the work is not taken into consideration because people usually discard them after use. But because of the durability of the magazines, most readers, if not all, file them for future reference.⁴
2. The newspapers are mainly for news that is why they pay only subsidiary attention to advertisements and entertaining articles and pictures.⁵ Conversely, the magazine is meant to be more persuasive and entertaining than informative. That does not imply that magazine does not give news. In fact, there are newsmagazines, which are mainly for news summaries and interpretations, and editorials.
3. The magazines are usually more carefully and beautifully designed than the straight newspapers.
4. The headlines of the magazines are more diversified than the newspapers, artistically and otherwise.
5. As it has been observed, adverts in the newspapers are often placed on the left hand side of the page unlike that of magazines that are placed on both sides of the cover page, inside part of the front cover page and sometime two cover pages are created for additional adverts.⁶

These areas of differences that we have spotted are the reasons why the magazines need more finances, time, materials, manpower, and technical knowledge to produce.

B. SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE MAGAZINES: There are some other special features that further distinguish the magazine from the ordinary newspapers. They include the following:

- 1. The Front Cover:** This should portray the image and aim of the publication, and the contents of the magazine. Its paper quality is higher and far better than those of the other pages.
- 2. The News:** The news in the magazine is presented in many styles. It can be presented in a descending order of importance or in a narrative style, or yet in the lead style as we see in the newspaper.
- 3. Magazine Page:** A page in the magazine usually has at least one dominant picture and other minor or smaller pictures. It should also contain at least one title and a subtitle. This depends on the length of the article. Besides, articles in a magazine range from say 1000 to 2500 words per article, having the most important article as the cover story.⁷
- 4. Cover Story:** The cover story in a magazine should relate to people such that it provides answers to the questions they have in their minds. It should place priority on the common human interest of the people over every other item in the article. It should also be designed to look fascinating and meaningful to people so much so that they are compelled beyond resistance to buy the magazine as well as read its pages.⁸
- 5. People-Oriented:** Eze opined that if the magazine must catch and hold the attention of people/readers, everything in it has to be people-oriented.
- 6. Appearance:** The magazine usually appears in three columns per page and visible lines are made in the tabulation in preference to the ordinary empty space demarcations between as in the newspapers. For the purpose of diversification, two columns are made and sometimes some pages could even go as far as four columns.
- 7. Intermediary:** The magazine exists between the book and the newspaper. One cannot as a matter of certainty classify or equate it with any; neither can one dismiss it altogether from any. It should therefore be left to play its role adequately as a mid-fielder. As something in the midway between the two, it tries to satisfactorily meet the demands of the newspaper and at the same time satisfy its requirement as a book. In addition to that, the magazine is produced with durable and qualitative materials to merit preservation like a book and as a newspaper it should meet the immediate needs of the reader.

III. CHURCH BULLETIN

The Church Bulletin is a kind of newspaper which carries announcement of upcoming meetings and brief reports of recent happenings. Church bulletins are usually distributed at the weekly Sunday morning service and the content is generally limited to the activities of the day or week.⁹ The production of Church Bulletins may be quite simple when compared to that of the regular newspaper or magazines in that they are usually run off on a mimeographic or duplicator.

More often than not, church bulletin is printed on regular size typing paper that is folded to make a four-page paper. Often times the front page has a drawing of the church and on the back the regular services are listed. The two inside pages will usually have the announcements of weekly events. As a routine, these pages usually remain unchanged from week to week.¹⁰

However, a more developed church bulletin might be printed on legal or foolscap-size paper, which is folded three times and printed on both sides to make an eight-page bulletin with narrow pages.

IV. CHURCH OR DISTRICT NEWSPAPER

Sometimes a local church may publish a newspaper in place of or in addition to the weekly church bulletin. This newspaper may be distributed monthly through the mail rather than handing it out at a service as in the case of the bulletin. The church newspaper, which is an expanded version of the weekly bulletin, may include such news items as reports of weddings, baptisms, miracles, special meetings, missions' news, and all other outstanding developments.¹¹

Church newspapers are often published not only on the local level, but also on the district, regional or national level. In this case, the paper published may be a 12-paged paper that is like a small magazine of about the size of an ordinary typing sheet. The page cover often varies from month to month but usually emphasizes whatever district-level programme is taking place at the time.¹² This up-coming programme may be the annual church council, a prayer conference, the summer camp meeting, the annual retreat, and the like.

A church or district newspaper may be organized according to departments as occasion warrants. The first page carries a message from the pastor or leading officer which may be partly devotional and partly informative. He may also use it to report any special development within the church or district, such as an outstanding revival or newly organized programme. He may also seize the opportunity to appeal to his readers for cooperation in the series of programme taking place each month. Other subsequent pages may report news from secretary such as financial matters that the people should be aware of, special activities, and other statistical information.¹³ Then as many pages as necessary may follow with news concerning the various departments and special ministries of the organization.

V. PICTURES IN JOURNALISM

In the art of communication generally, pictures play a very vital role especially in the non-verbal aspect of communication. In ancient times, peoples inscribed pictures on tablets and wall as a means of passing all-important pieces of information but as a means of preserving history and culture. Since that time, artists have been known for creating pictures to convey some ideas and to create some impression. The Chinese people knowing/appreciating the value said, "a good picture is worth ten thousand words."¹⁴

The cultures of Rome and Greece are rich with many of such paintings and sculptures made in public building and other architectural designs found in their cities. Eze remarked,

In Saint Peter's cathedral in Rome, pictures are seen all over the

place to represent the salvation story and the story of the development of the church. The design is that those pictures will continue influencing the lives of the viewers since they see them constantly while in the church.¹⁵

Even in our modern societies, pictures are used by public speakers or orators to aid words and to also paint a more vivid imagery of, say, a story, an event, a scene and the like. The undeniable fact remains that in the modern concept, pictures and words complement themselves in that in order for the communicatee to get the truest account of an event, pictures are used by communicators to supplement words and words are used to explain pictures.

A. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PICTURES IN JOURNALISM: Pictures are inseparable part of journalism. The plain truth is that pictures play all the parts that journalism as a whole plays. They serve the purpose of entertaining as well as informing people, and can also influence as well as advertise. If journalism is going to be what it should be, pictures should be allowed to continue to play their tangible parts in the entire process of information gathering and dissemination. Artists believe that there are some aspects of the story that can never be satisfactorily explained with mere words hence some people, things, scenes and even imaginations are often picturized.

1. ADVANTAGES OF PICTURES

- a. Pictures can be used to portray much of the story at a glance. These days people are in a hurry all the time, so they may find it difficult to create time out of their busy schedules to read the entire article. But as they see the pictures, they get the summary of the whole event.
- b. Pictures are used to emphasize certain points in an event. The photographer only needs to amplify those parts of the pictures to explain any aspect of the story.
- c. Pictures make for variety in the make-up of a given page.
- d. Pictures bear impressions that are more accurate and convey them whereas words can only approximate impressions.
- e. Pictures can expose a scene or certain aspect of an event that may not be easily described with words.
- f. Pictures can create life in a page such that it attracts the attention of readers and keeps it.
- g. Wide pages without pictures create boredom but pictures put it away by arousing interest.¹⁶

2. DISADVANTAGES OF PICTURES

- a. Pictures do sometimes tell a lie. If a photographer takes and amplifies a certain part of a scene, it may result in giving the opposite impression about the entire happening.
- b. If a cinematographer makes a silly mistake in the positioning of his camera, he will thereby make a tall man short, a handsome man ugly.

- c. In the darkroom, a photographer can join a woman's head to the body of a child or man. He can as well make a man appear to be carrying a tree or any other object.
- d. By superimposition, a photographer can make a preacher to appear as if he was preaching to an audience.¹⁷
- e. Some journalists may be tempted to use make-up pictures out of a collection of pictures where there is no original. In short, there can really be no end to what photographers can do with pictures in the darkroom.

B. HOW TO PRODUCE PICTURES: It is important to point out clearly here that the production of pictures is better studied in photography. That is never our intention here hence only a feeble attempt will be made to give some directives as to the use of a camera. There are different makes, sizes and grades of camera each having its peculiar composition, manner of operation and level of complexity. Some of these cameras especially digital camera machines are so sophisticated that only professional photographers can use them perfectly and conveniently. There are also different sizes of films depending on what is to be produced.

It is advisable and more profitable for journalists to use the 'Single Lens' - 35 mm Camera' because of its portability, running and maintenance cost. This camera uses a variety of lenses, which are detachable and they range from the wide lens, the telephoto lens, to the zoom lens. The wide-angle lens is used to cover wider view; the telephoto lens is used to bring a distant image or object closer to the grapher, while the zoom lens has a variety of functions. It focuses away all unnecessary details and it has a telephoto device that can catch animals, birds, and inserts in their hideouts. The same applies to people.¹⁸

In talking about the actual production of pictures, it should be remarked that the journalist does not necessarily have to be a producer himself. If he is competent in doing the snapping, he will just have to take the negative to the studio where experts in this area will give him what he wants. Trying to become a jack-of-all-trades, makes one a master of none. It should be borne in mind that most newspapers and magazine producers do retain the services of experts in photography. In fact, all media houses should do so to make for proper division of labour resulting in the efficiency and productivity of workers.

C. HOW TO PRESERVE PICTURES: Good quality films usually result in good quality pictures that can be preserved especially if the films are well developed. In order to preserve films for future use, they should be kept as free as possible from dust and dirt. "The best way to do this is to hang it with a clip to stay perpendicularly hanging."¹⁹

Pictures are more fragile than films and require extra care to preserve them for future use. Ideally, one should have a good photo album where each picture is kept separately from the other to avoid the possibility of them gumming together. Another thing that can aid the preservation is proper care in the process of washing them. If the chemical used is not washed away completely and thoroughly from the paper, it can hamper the durability of the pictures. This is because if any taint of the chemical is retained on the picture, it will invariably

affect it by causing it to either fade away or peel off in short amount of time, sometimes around one year.

In the light of the foregoing therefore, pictures should, as much as possible, be kept dry or completely free from moist, pest such as animals and insects, and must be preserved from being caught by fire or any other thing that could do harm to it by causing it to be Side faced.

As earlier remarked, further information on this topic can only be supplied by experts in this field. It will be of greater value, therefore, to the journalist if he should consult with experts in this area either through face to face contact or by buying and reading books written on photography and related fields.

END NOTES ON CHAPTER FOUR

¹Nathan Eze, *Journalism and Christian Writing*, (Aba: Assemblies of God Press. n.d.), 67.

²Ibid.; ³Ibid., 69.; ⁴Ibid., 77.; ⁵Ibid.; ⁶Ibid., 78.

⁷Ibid., 79.; ⁸Ibid.

⁹Rex Jackson, *Principles of Journalism*, (Irving, Texas: International Correspondence Institute, 1992), 282.

¹⁰Ibid.; ¹¹Ibid., 286.; ¹²Ibid.; ¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Eze, *Journalism and Christian Writing*, 81.

¹⁵Ibid.; ¹⁶Ibid., 82.; ¹⁷Ibid.; ¹⁸Ibid., 85.; ¹¹Ibid., 91.

JOURNALISM AND ITS PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

EVERY profession in the world, Pastoral Ministries, Teaching, Business, Law, Medicine, Military, Sports, Engineering, Theatre Arts etc, is guided by a code of ethics whether written or not. Journalism cannot be an exception. Ethical codes of conduct deal with the moral values and ethical disposition or behaviour of the profession with a view to eliminating all profound upheavals in human relations, which tend to bar good life in the society. Ethics, which concerns itself principally with the nature of good or bad, right or wrong, justice or injustice, takes a look at the duties each practitioner in any given profession ought to perform in order that he or she may fulfill his or her role as a member of that body in particular and the society in general.

I. THE JOURNALIST AND THE LAW

In every country where corruption has not eaten deep into its fabric or in a truly democratic setting “Freedom of the Press” and “Right to Free Expression” are seen as inalienable part of Fundamental Human Rights, which the citizenry enjoy. Freedom of the press is in essence the right to publish and distribute one’s thoughts and views without government restriction.¹

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria puts it thus: “Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinion and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference.”² Such freedom is usually protected by clearly stated constitutional provisions. Consequently, law, to a certain extent, for what they write and publish, protects most newspapers and broadcasting organizations and their journalists.

Nevertheless, unrestricted access to information and the freedom of the press are defined by and subject to the limitations of national security, laws of libel, sedition and treason. In other words, everyone is free to say what he likes or write what he wants so long as it is not defamatory, seditious, obscene or blasphemous.³

However, most newspaper and broadcasting companies retain the services of a lawyer. But the fact that he is there, in the office or on call, does not lessen the responsibility of the reporter for what he writes or for the editor for what is published. Legal actions can be very expensive, and involve the journalist, editor and publisher. The journalist who wants to make a name for himself by exposing evils and putting the world to rights, must be certain that he has his facts absolutely correct in every detail, and if the case is likely to lead to litigation, must have his reports backed up with legally witnessed affidavits from those concerned.

In consideration of the aspects of law (press laws) relating to publication, it is therefore advisable to refer matter in typescript to the lawyer, if there is any doubt at all about the possibility of legal action following the publication of a story.⁴

A. THE PRESS: The press provides a medium through which the governed can express their views about the way in which they are being governed by the leadership of their own country. This is done through the newspaper in addition to its main function of giving news to the public. In a country where there is

Freedom of the Press, there is a possibility for an articulate public to develop especially if the majority of the populace is literate and enlightened. It is the inalienable right of the governed to tell the government how they should be ruled.⁵ Through a free press the government can know the feelings of the people as expressed in the newspapers.

On the other hand, it is the duty of the government to convince the people in its press releases and by holding press conferences that its policies are all made in the interest of the people. In a truly democratic system of government where it is impossible for all the citizens to sit in parliament at the same time, the press provides an avenue for the citizenry to take active part in governance. "If the government of the people is to be by the people, the people must use the Press to direct their rulers as much as practicable."⁶ This, however, can only be done in accordance with the provisions of the constitution (PRESS LAWS).

There are Press Laws that impose some restrictions on the press for what it publishes. (That is, having the effect of gagging the Press). In the event that the press persists unduly in publishing obnoxious and destructive information about the government or if it deliberately prints obscene information and pictures,⁷ it may be muzzled for failure to act within its limits.

The government imposing a restriction on the press in such a circumstance may be justified on the ground that deliberate obnoxiousness and obscenity are against the ethics of journalism.⁸

Where the difficulty lies is how to differentiate between press restriction that is as a result of unethical publications and that, which is imposed as a result of the intolerance of the government. '*Press Censorship*' is a hateful thing to any free thinker who can hardly help viewing with gay cynicism the authenticity of the news carried by a restricted press. This is owing to the fact that an evil government in which people have lost confidence and which has become intolerant of fair public criticisms can resolve to perpetuate itself in power knowing that the press which could have played a major role in serving as a means through which the public can build resistance has been censored.

B. DEFAMATION: Defamatory statement in Abba's own words "... is one which tends to lower a person's reputation in the estimation of right thinking members of the society, or which causes him to be shunned and avoided or which is calculated to injure him in his office, profession or trade."⁹ it can also be defined as "... matter likely to injure the reputation of any person by exposing him to hatred, contempt, or ridicule...."¹⁰ Defamation could be either libel or slander. It is libel when it is published in a permanent form such as writing, print, photograph or carving. But if it is a statement published in transit form such as words or gestures, then it is slander.¹¹

The Law of Torts, being specie of the civil wrong, is distinguishable from criminal wrong,¹² coded offenses. Notwithstanding, legal procedures and criminal prosecutions cannot be evaded by anyone who commits any of the offenses classified as torts. This is owing to the fact that a conduct may sometimes give rise

to both tort and crime. In the Criminal Code Act, it is said,

Any person who publishes or reproduces any statement, rumor or report, which is likely to cause fear or alarm to the public or to disturb the public peace, knowing or having reason to believe that such statement, rumor or report is false shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and liable, on conviction, to imprisonment for three years.¹³

Libel is addressed to the eye whereas slander is addressed to the ear. Libel and slander, though treated as two aspects of the single tort of defamation and are generally governed by the same principles, yet they differ in that whereas libel is always actionable per se, slander is not actionable per se except for certain cases.¹⁴ This means that whenever a libel is published, law will presume that damage has been caused to the plaintiff's reputation and will award him general damages by way of compensation. If in the event that the plaintiff in a libel action does prove that he has suffered actual damage, he will be entitled to recover a further sum in addition to the general damages.

Conversely, in case of slander that is not actionable per se, the plaintiff cannot recover damages merely on account of his loss of reputation. He will be able to recover damages only if he meets the condition. That is, the onus is on the plaintiff to satisfy the court by proving that he has suffered some special damages.¹⁵

It is an established fact that words spoken as mere vulgar abuse or insult are not actionable in slander. "Whether particular words constitute slander or mere vulgar abuse depends upon the circumstances in which they are spoken."¹⁶ Consequently, if for instance Mr. A calls Mr. B a "dirty whore" at the height of a violent quarrel, this may be established as mere vulgar abuse and not actionable; but the same words spoken in 'cold blood' would be slander.

- 1. Remoteness of Damage in Libel and Slander:** In accordance with the general tort principles, the damage complained of as a result of a defamatory statement must not be too remote. The reason for this is because the plaintiff may recover compensation only for those consequences of the defendant's defamatory statements, which were foreseeable.¹⁷

If for instance, Mr. A slanders Mr. B to Mr. C, and Mr. C repeats the slander to Mr. D who then dismisses Mr. B, Mr. A is not liable for Mr. B's dismissal since the damage is too remote. But Mr. A will be liable if in the event that he authorized the repetition; or Mr. C had a legal or moral duty to repeat it; or that Mr. A should have foreseen that Mr. C would repeat his slander.

These aforementioned rules of remoteness equally apply to cases of libel as Gilbert and Oluwole noted. However, they argued that in each case, the plaintiff in a defamatory action must establish three things: that the words were defamatory; that the words referred to him, the plaintiff and that the words were published to at least one person other than the plaintiff himself.

- 2. Unintentional Defamation:** It is well established that at common law, it is no defense to an action for libel or slander that the defendant did not intend to defame the plaintiff. Gilbert and Oluwole noted the intentions of the defendant

may be relevant to the assessment of damages but are irrelevant to the question of liability. According to them, defamatory statement exists in two forms (1) It may be with regard to knowledge of facts, which make a statement innocent on its face, defamatory of the plaintiff.

If for instance, Mr. "A" the defendant publishes a fictional story in a newspaper concerning the adulterous exploits of Mr. "B", the plaintiff whose name was used fictionally unknown to the defendant that it was a real person's name, the defendant will be sued for libel by the plaintiff. On the other hand, unintentional defamation with regard to knowledge of facts which make a statement innocent on its face, defamatory of the plaintiff, is such that if the

...Defendants publish in newspaper a photograph on one Corrigan in the company of Miss X with the caption, Mr. Corrigan the racehorse owner and Miss (X) whose engagement has been announced. Mrs. Corrigan brought an action for libel, pleading the innuendo that readers of the newspaper who knew her would think that she was not the lawful wife of Corrigan and that she had been living with him in immoral cohabitation.¹⁸ Her action succeeded.

3. Innocent Dissemination: Commenting on the foregoing, Gilbert and Oluwole remarked,

... the laws takes more lenient attitude towards those who are not the authors, printers or first/main publisher of a libel, but who take only a subordinate part in its dissemination, such as booksellers who sell books containing libelous material, libraries or museums which exhibit libelous books, or news vendors who sell libelous newspapers.¹⁹

According to them, disseminators of such libelous materials have a defense to an action for libel if they can show that at the time they disseminated the newspapers or books they did not know that they contained libelous matter and that it was not due to any negligence in conducting their regular business that they did not discover the libel.

II. THE JOURNALIST AND HIS/HER PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

It should be remarked that there are inestimable moral values and ethical codes of conduct, which every practitioner in every profession is expected to learn, imbibe and exhibit in view of the necessity to reduce, if not to eradicate entirely, the unnecessary arguments and heated atmosphere in which the given professionals thrive.²⁰

The term 'Ethics' was coined by Aristotle in about 400 BC in a historical period when the Greek Society was experiencing a rapid social change, which resulted in profound upheavals in human relationships. He therefore used ethics to designate a definite class of human virtues especially praiseworthy, character traits such as courage and moderation.²¹ While ethics may be defined as the science of moral behaviour, morality is understood as the set of judgment people make regarding what is right or wrong, good or bad.²²

It should be remarked that while ethics may be regarded as a purely academic study, it originated from and also has intimate connections with the daily lives of men.²³ The necessity for the inclusion of this topic to this work is predicated on the fact that many individuals, social groups and institutions have often failed to achieve their desired goals due to a confusion in thought and practice as well as a total lack of knowledge of the appropriate order of priorities.²⁴

Therefore, in order to enable journalists to develop broad-mindedness, which will help them to avoid bias and prejudice, do things in a logical order of importance as well as make them profoundly conscious of their duties, rights, privileges and benefits, let us pay special attention to the duties journalists ought to perform in order that they may fulfill their roles as the 'fourth estate of the realm.'

A. ETHICAL CODES OF CONDUCT: It is noteworthy to say that the essence of the exercise of freedom of opinion, expression and information, recognized as part of human rights is to foster a sense of oneness and belongingness among professionals as well as strengthen peace and international understanding between nations.²⁵ The codes of ethics guiding journalism as a profession are couched in form of ten principles. They are excerpts from 'Professional Ethics' by M. A. Izibili. They are summarized as follows:

- 1. People's Right to True Information:** Accurate and comprehensive pieces of information are a rightful property of people and individuals, hence journalists owe the public this duty as part of their ethical responsibility to always give objective, unambiguous and comprehensive information.
- 2. Dedication to Objective Reality:** Some level of commitment should be seen in the activities of the journalist. To this end, reports should be consciously given in the context such that there would not be distortion of any kind. This will enable the public, for whom the reports or information are meant, to get a comprehensive picture of the world in which the origin, nature and essence of events as well as states of affairs are properly understood as objectively as possible.
- 3. Social Responsibility Not Neglected:** The journalists should demonstrate that they are accountable both to the media they represent and the public. Information ought to be seen as a social good and not as a commodity. To that extent, the information transmitted should be done with a sense of responsibility.
- 4. Professional Integrity:** Unflinching devotion to one's calling, impeccable integrity coupled with transparent honesty are not optional for journalists. In a world that is filled with lying, fraudulent practices of all kinds and a high level of dishonesty, a journalist must refrain from working against his/her convictions. Journalists ought to know that it is basically unethical to accept bribes or promotion of private interest contrary to the general welfare.
- 5. Public Access and Participation:** The public should be given the right to correct any wrongly reported information. They should also be allowed to participate in the media activities as much as possible provided such participation is not injurious to the profession.
- 6. Respect for Privacy and Human Dignity:** In view of the enormity and legal implications of offenses such as libel, calumny, and slander, all of which tend to

defame the character or reputation of a person, journalists are by this principle cautioned.

7. **Respect for Public Interests:** The national community, its democratic institutions and public morals must be respected. Therefore, no journalist can evade the consequences of the law should he/she, out of exuberance or otherwise, project an image of his/her country that will be detrimental to the generality of the citizenry.
8. **Respect for Universal Values and Diversity of Cultures:** The following are universally accepted values that the journalists should strive to uphold: Humanism, peace, democracy, human rights, social progress and national liberation. Cultural relativism should also enjoy some atmosphere of no one culture, is the culture. He should beware of negative ethnocentric tendencies. This is the hallmark of postmodernism.
9. **Elimination of Wars and Other Great Evils in the World:** No journalist who is committed to the universal value of humanism should encourage or partake in incitement to wars of aggression and the arm race. Violence of any kind, treasonable felony, savage custom and discrimination especially on the ground of race or sex should be resisted.
10. **Promotion of a New World Information and Communication Order:** Journalists are to work towards decolonizing and democratizing the field of information and communication. This is to be done at national and international spheres so that it will promote peaceful coexistence among people while striving to respect their cultural identity. Journalists should promote the process of getting democracy enthroned and also make concerted efforts to dethrone colonization and militarism.²⁶

B. CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE TO ABIDE BY THESE ETHICAL CODES: Unethical behaviour of a journalist or a group of journalists can lead to the following:

1. It can dent the collective professional image and integrity of journalists.
2. It can hamper peaceful coexistence among people both at the national and international spheres of life resulting from willful denial of the public their right to information.
3. It can result in the individual being charged with treasonable offenses, which will invariably lead to sanctions involving payment of fines, temporal seizure of certificates, imprisonment or excommunication.
4. It can put the nation into a state of political unrest, which may result in violence or war.
5. It can also result in lose of confidence reposed in journalists by the general public.
6. It can give rise to the willful denial of the public their right to participation in governance.

III. THE JOURNALIST AS A REPORTER

Simply put, a reporter/correspondent is a journalist who gives an accurate account of or formally expresses an opinion after a thorough investigation or due consideration. In unit two, we discussed how a journalist, as a reporter, gets the

information he gives out to the public. He goes into the field to gather the relevant pieces of information from different quarters and different people. Having done this, he is left with an all-important task, the organizational structure of the work. It should be remembered that there are several rules guiding the writing of newspaper and its presentation. Some of these rules are expressed while others are implied. It behooves the journalist to get himself acquainted with such rules if he does not want to fall out with litigants who are looking out for opportunities to make case with people.

A. HIS QUALITIES AS A REPORTER: The qualities that should be found in him include the following:

1. He must be a man of good focus or be purposeful.
2. He must be a man of integrity, not corrupt.
3. He must be very conservative and maintains confidentiality.
4. He must be brave and very objective.
5. He must be very versatile and tactful.
6. He must be disciplined and matured.
7. He must not be emotional, unrealistic or biased.
8. He must not give in to arrogance or cowardice.

B. EFFECTS OF NEWS REPORT: As earlier remarked, the people who have had the greatest impact on the lives of other people have been those skilled in the art of speaking. Others are prolific writers. When an effective speaker or writer presents information about a topic, the receivers will almost know more about the topic after listening or reading than they did before. If a skilled speaker tries to convince an audience to accept his or her solution to a problem, the listeners will generally be partially or fully convinced.

The efficacy and effects of publicity or news report are too numerous to count. Some of these effects are positive while others are negative depending entirely on the individual's point of view. In the light of the foregoing, the Christian journalist, knowing that what a man takes in by mental assimilation, through inhalation, orally or intravenously has the inherent ability to make or mar him, build or destroy him, inform or deform him, care has to be exercised in the selection of what goes out to the general public as news, information or body of knowledge. Otherwise, God will hold him responsible for creating in people an emotional disturbance that can lead to psychosomatic problems.

1. Positive Effects: The value of good speech communication is very clear. There are several benefits accruable with news report some of which are listed below:

a. It is educative: Public enlightenment is the only excellent antidote that combats the gross ignorance that has eaten deep into the fabric of the society. If considerable time and large sum of money are being spent to launch several awareness campaigns against human trafficking, child labour/abuse, drugs abuse, indiscriminate and pre or extra-marital sex in view of the underlying consequences of such practices, yet most people are ignoring it. What do you think would have become of the society if there were no campaigns at all?

- b. ***It is Informative:*** Publicity is a tool that can be used by various institutions, organizations, business enterprises or individuals to get the public aware of happenings within and outside its constituency.
 - c. ***It is Therapeutic:*** Publicity in form of entertainments especially by comedians serves as curative means or agents to people who are psychologically uneasy. It helps them to release their tension and become fresh and bubbling with life.
 - d. ***It is Entertaining:*** In the present day society, hustling and bustling are the marks of life. The entertainment media helps to make people's leisure more pleasurable and profitable as they recline on their couch to listen to some good tunes on their radio or watch programme on their television sets. Some people may make do with pornographic literatures.
 - e. ***It is Persuasive:*** Public enlightenment has helped various groups of individuals to succeed in their careers. People who would have lived and died as a bunch of nobodies have made landmarks today because they have been encouraged and persuaded through media awareness to believe in themselves, their environment, inborn and acquired skills, among others.
2. **Negative Effects:** The public could be forgiven for thinking that the mass media are value free or are not bias in anyway. But there are lots of evidence to prove that this is not so.
- a. ***It Gives Poisonous Information to the Public:*** Publicity serves as a medium for tobacco companies to advertise their products periodically, if not daily. Companies that produce condom are singing over the radio and television, chanting, *If you cannot hold your body, use condom to protect yourself*. Some religious fanatics, half-baked theologians and untrained preachers are spending a huge sum of money to air their teachings, which, more often than not, are controversial, deluding, totally devoid of truth, and subversive to the Christian faith.
 - b. ***It Can Be Used to Create a False Sense of Loyalty and Support:*** The media could be used to whip up support for emotional and prejudicial policies as did by both President Roosevelt of USA and Adolph Hitler of Germany before the onset of the Second World War.²⁰
 - c. ***It Tends to Give Wrong Impression:*** What is published in a newspaper about a political party may well be a reflection of the editor's own partisan loyalty and ideology. In Nigeria today, most political juggernauts as propagandists, use "Argument by Prestige" to further the course of their own political parties to the detriment of other rivalry political parties.
 - d. ***It Serves as Grounds for Exhibition:*** Producers of goods and services that are sub-standard take to publicity to make their presence and products known in the economic world. The uninformed, unwary and gullible individuals who easily get caught in their deluding web are carried away as preys.
 - e. ***It Tends to Raise False Alarm:*** If in the event that in early morning news broadcast, it was said that one 'Mr. Cephas George' was on board in an airplane that crashed last night at Dubai. The families of those who are called by that same name will be thrown into a great confusion and apprehension until perhaps later when another broadcast with detailed information about the people on board will

be made. In this case, a false alarm has been raised in the families of those who are just mere name- sake.

If it can be deduced with ease and precision from section two above that not all that Christians may read from printed materials, see or hear over the radio and television can serve for the purpose of edification, it follows necessarily that they have to be selective in what they take as information. It is wrong to swallow everything, hook, line and sinker, what they hear.

IV. THE JOURNALIST AS A PUBLIC RELATION OFFICER

Public relations may be defined as:

The management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or an organization with the public interest, and plans and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance.²⁷

Public relations begin with a good and reputable organization and it deals with selling one's (organization) goods and services to the public. For an organization to flourish and market its goods and services as well as sell its vision to the public, it has to learn to advertise.

Publicity through the electronic and print media is designed to bring the person/s, a film, an institution, organization or a business enterprise making the publication into direct and immediate contact with other people and places all over the world. One of the important characteristics of publicity is its ability to communicate over long distance in very short amounts of time. Although it is capital intensive, it is worth any amount of money that may be spent on it.

The journalist through public relations tries to develop harmony between an organization and the public. As a public relation officer, he should know his target audience so well as to be able to ascertain what could be of interest as well as a great deal of benefit to them. The journalist knowing that public relations serve as a catalyst to the growth of one's organization and a boost to its reputation, he uses every opportunity to keep the general public abreast of what the organization he represents is doing as well as what they stand to benefit from being a part of their program of activities. He does this with a view to getting their patronage.

As one who represents the interests of a public department or the policies of an organization to the outside world, the down side of his job is that he could be seen as a propagandist or a 'spin-doctor,' as often the case. That is why objectivism is required of him. Besides, he should learn not to be unfair to others or criticize them.

There are various media of information through which the public can be reached. These include: Website, Facebook, Shoutlife, E-mail address, phones, magazines, bulletin, radio and television, tracts, newspapers, posters etc. It is pertinent to remark that Pastors and churches that are viable should air their programmes. They should stop operating behind closed doors. The public is in dire need of, and hungers and desires for the solutions to its multifarious needs and problems that only the church can offer. Given the hullabaloo that is often associated with excruciating experiences and hard times in the human society, the church should take to mass media to reach out to the public with the gospel.

END NOTES ON CHAPTER FIVE

¹B. N Ewelukwa and R. N. Ewelukwa, *The Christian and the Law. 2d ed.* (Onitsha: Maranatha Press Limited, 2006), 135.

²*The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* (Promulgated) Decree 1999.

³*Ibid.*, 136.

⁴Bernard U. Ogunzie, *"Principles of Journalism,"* (Ewu: Nigerian Advanced School of Theology, 2001- Unpublished Book), 12.

⁵B. A. Ballard, ed., *English Language Registers*, (Ibadan: Onibonoje Press Publishers, 2000), 90.

⁶*Ibid.*; ⁷*Ibid.*; ⁸*Ibid.*

⁹Jerry John Abba, *Law for the Layman*, (Abuja: Olu Prints Nig. Co., 2001), 44.

¹⁰Olakanmi Olajide, *Criminal Code: Synoptic Guide*, (Abuja: LawLords Publications, 2004), 45

¹¹Abba, *Law for the Layman*, 119.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³Olajide, *Criminal Code: Synoptic Guide*, 45.

¹⁴Abba, *Law for the Layman*, 44.

¹⁵Gilbert Kodilinye and Oluwole Aluko, *Nigerian Law of Torts, 2nd ed.* (Benin City: Spectrum Books Limited, 1999), 81.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 78.; ¹⁷*Ibid.*, 79.; ¹⁸*Ibid.*, 81.; ¹⁹*Ibid.*, 85.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹J. T. Oderinde, *Social Ethics and Contemporary Issues*, (Ilorin: Delma and Sons Printing Press, 2010), 1

²²*Ibid.*, 2.; ²³*Ibid.*, 6.; ²⁴*Ibid.*, 10.

²⁵Matthew A. Izibili, *Professional Ethics: A Reader.* (Benin City; Lucosem Publishing House, 2006), vii.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 67.; ²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸Ogunzie, *"Principles of Journalism,"* 7.

²⁹Rex Jackson, *Principles of Journalism*, (Irving, Texas: International Correspondence Institute, 1992), 200, 201.

FEATURE WRITING AND PUBLISHING

During our discussion on the straight news story, we noted that a reporter's primary aim is to disseminate information to the public. That being aware of the undeniable fact that his target audiences are busy people in the streets, offices, workshops, business centers, classrooms, and what have you, and therefore have little or no time for detailed reading, he does not give his time for information embellishment. His major concern is to let his readers know, in a nutshell, the exact thing that has happened, the exact situation of things, without mincing words.

The feature writing is never like that. While appreciating the fact that feature has many of the qualities of news stories, it should be emphasized that the writer tries to discover the emotive aspect of the story and narrates it with a kind of punch that will entertain his readers. As a creative and subjective writer, he uses colorful and imaginative words to add interest and spice it up. He enjoys the liberty of using narration, suspense, description, dialogue and other devices of writing to make his article more appealing and inspiring.

I. THE DEFINITION OF FEATURE

A feature story, as experts have opined, is a creative article designed to entertain, to form or change opinion and to inform readers of an event, an aspect of life or a given situation. Tonga quoting Wwaura remarks, "Features provide the journalist with a unique opportunity to educate and entertain, to inspire, to mobilize and uplift."¹ A professor in one of the graduate schools of journalism says, "... feature writing is just finding the story behind the story."² As Eze puts it, "The feature is fondly called the news behind the news. It deals with some of the hidden points of interest which could be deduced from the incidence."³

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FEATURE

As earlier remarked, features are usually more creative than the straight news reports. As a matter of fact, feature writing does go in so many directions and has the potency to deal with various subjects so much so that it is difficult to treat its characteristics exhaustively. This owns to the fact that each type of feature emphasizes a different aspect of 'the news story' and has its peculiar approach to it. Nevertheless, a mastery of this area will help the journalist to be a good writer of feature stories bearing in mind that whatever liberty he enjoys, he has to write within the limits of bare facts.

Its major characteristics include the following:

- A. IT IS PEOPLE ORIENTED:** One of the major characteristics of the feature, much like the straight news story, is that it includes or rather concerns people. Customarily, people like to read articles that concern fellow human beings in preference to those having to do with animals and other creatures.
- B. IT HAS HUMAN INTEREST:** Man by nature is an egotist. He will not be willing to give a dime to anything that is not likely to benefit him in one way or another. In

consequence, the feature writer should use fanciful language to share his ideas so that his readers being totally enraptured by the narrations will stay glued to it until he gets to the bottom of the story.

- C. IT FORMS AND CHANGES OPINIONS:** Usually, the feature writer logically and intelligently presents his points with a view to achieving the objective of helping his esteemed readers to form an opinion from the reading and possibly change the opinion they had formed about the incident.
- D. IT CAN PREDICT THE FUTURE:** When a feature writer takes a critical look at the toll of events in the past as well as those of the present, he can, following the trend of affairs, look ahead into the future to predict what will happen.
- E. IT USUALLY APPEALS TO EMOTION:** An article writer aims at playing on the emotions of his readers. As a creative writer, his goal is to arouse feelings of different kinds in his readers thus placing them in a situation where they find themselves piteous, horrified, angered, excited, joyous and euphoric or grieved without knowing when they begin to exhibit those feelings.⁴
- F. IT USUALLY IS DETAILED:** The feature writer, in an attempt to dig into the background of the story, gives a perfect description of some aspects, embellish the points that require such as well as to appeal to the feelings of his readers, finds that his article becomes detailed.
- G. IT IS TIMELESS:** Features may or may not be timely. Usually, a feature is based on news event and offers more details or fuller explanations than might be evident in a brief news report. A good feature article could be developed from an event that took place in the near or even a distant past.⁵

III. FUNCTIONS OF THE FEATURE

Let me again stress that writers of articles are curious observers who use their power of imagination to develop their articles although the articles are not in themselves children of an idle brain begot of nothing but vain fantasies. Articles, therefore, are written to serve the under listed purposes.

- A. TO INFORM:** This is not the primary aim of feature. However, a feature that informs must in the end tell the reader something he does not already know, or to say the least put a new light on the subject. It must satisfy the reader's curiosity and should suggest how an event may affect him.
- B. TO ENTERTAIN:** One of the main functions of the feature is to entertain people. In writing the straight news story, one does not necessarily aim at this but since the feature is said to be indirect news, the tone of communication is emotionally amplified to entertain readers.⁶
- C. TO ANALYZE AND INTERPRET:** It takes an expert to produce an effective feature story that will take on an aspect of news story and criticize, analyze and interpret it in order to unravel its mysteries. Otherwise, the relevant pieces of information in a given news story will be lost in obscurity.

IV. TYPES OF FEATURES

There are different types of features and different occasions that can warrant the writing of a feature. We shall discuss few types of features.

- A. NEWS FEATURES:** We have already stated that features can go many different

directions. One of the most natural directions is the 'news feature,' a story that is based on a timely news event written to interest people.⁷ News event can often be made more informative and more interesting by adding details that an ordinary short news report does not have.

If for instance we read in a newspaper, "Young people in a high school are caught using drugs." This would be referred to as news. But the questions may come, what is behind it? What drugs possibly do to their bodies? Where did they get them from? What should parents know about drugs and how can they tell if their own children are using them? All these questions will be answered in a news feature.

- B. INFORMATION FEATURE:** The aim of the writer is purely to inform. He has little or no time to entertain his readers. There are some things that become part of our daily lives and might affect us more than we realize. Information features require research through personal observation, reading books as well as interviews to dig into these factors and show readers how they affect them. Information features may also give details about organizations, customs, occupations, and countless other things in our society.⁸
- C. HISTORICAL FEATURES:** History is made as years roll by and changes take place. In each year, new events occur which have a historical background. If a story is told about how the Protestant Church started, its experiences through the centuries, its difficulties and victories, it would make a good feature.
- D. PERSONALITY SKETCH FEATURES:** A story about a person is certainly going to have high reader interest especially if it emphasizes what he does rather than a description of him. Story concerning people in the news who have climbed the ladder of success to the peak but about whom the public knows little or nothing of their private lives, will certainly appeal to readers. If a writer can show to the public that such personalities are just ordinary people like you and me who made the most of opportunities offered to them, readers will be encouraged to hope for a better life for themselves.
- E. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE FEATURES:** This kind of feature has particular reference to a situation when a person has battled against a handicap to become successful in life. History records a thousand and one triumphs over handicaps. Blind people have become famous poets and musicians. Lame men have risen to high positions in government. President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the United States as powerful and influential as he was could not walk at all without mechanical aids as record shows.⁹ "A stutterer became a renowned orator. A girl who had polio as a child became a gold medalist in the International Olympic Races."¹⁰ Stories of personal experience and accomplishment like these ones can build hope in readers who also hope for something better for themselves.
- F. TRAVEL STORIES FEATURES:** It is nearly generally believed that stories about faraway places fascinate most people. Axiomatically, if you ask anyone if he

would like to go to a foreign place, almost without exception the answer would be YES. This is owing to the fact that very many people have never had the opportunity, either because of home responsibilities or because of lack of money. In their response to this, they partly satisfy their desire by reading articles about interesting places of the world where other people have gone on a visit or tourism. If a feature writer can build an interesting story about different geographical areas of the world whether locally or internationally that have attracted thousands of travelers from both far and near, his story will hold a fascination on his readers.

G. COMMUNITY PROJECTS: There are some basic social amenities: pipe borne water, medial facilities, good roads, education etc. which some communities having become tired of waiting for the government to take care of, the citizens decided to do something themselves. In addition to community projects, community centers may offer an opportunity for a good feature.¹¹ More so, the average citizen has little knowledge about court systems, hospitals, police headquarters, factories, oil refinery, a dam near the community where electricity is generated, a television station and the like. In short, anything in your community or in the neighborhood that is a part of the lives of the people, but that the people know little about, would make interesting reading.

H. HOLIDAY OCCASIONS: There are some official holidays in your country that most people want to know a little more about. They ask, what is behind these holidays? Why are these days remembered? Why is it that schools, government offices, and business places are closed because of the holidays? Taking Christmas, for instance, you might wish to approach the story from a little different angle. You might perhaps

... tell the story as if you were the innkeeper who had a place for the mother of Jesus the night He was born. Maybe you could be one of the shepherds. Or one of the wise men who followed the star.¹²

One the whole, feature stories offer unlimited possibilities which writers can take advantage of and use their power of imagination and creativity to explore areas of human interest with a view to entertaining and creating a sense of humor in readers. Let me again remark that it is only through practice that a new practicing journalist and freelancer can develop the skill for writing any of these kinds of features.

A SAMPLE OF THE FEATURE

If the snake had beaten her to death, it would have been a tragedy. Oseigbokan Gift Ogbeide, a schoolchild who visited her cousin marched on a green mamba when she was transferring water from one container to the other after a heavy rain.

The snake wriggled over across her leg and she felt she had marched on a frog. On looking down, she saw it was a snake. She then jumped and yelled, "It is a snake." Nevertheless, for the fact that the electricity was on and the bulb was shining, she would not have seen it was a snake. She would have lifted her leg and would have

marched on the part of the snake that would have made it bite.

What would have happened if the snake had struck? Oseigbokan is a maternal cousin to Mr. Oseibhue Ehiabhi. Her cousin did not know any first aid to give after snakebite. Oseigbokan would have died a few hours later. One wonders what would have happened if she had been taken back to her parents as a corpse.

Oseigbokan had just taken her school certificate exam. She came on her own to stay with her cousin in order to be away from home and to be of help to her cousin. It would have caused a great heartache to her cousin Mr. Ehiabhi. The impact would not have left him years after. Mr. Ehiabhi kept shrugging when he pondered what a deliverance that had taken place. God was in control of the world and He closed the mouth of the snake.¹³

V. THE STRUCTURE OF THE FEATURE

In writing the straight news, the reporter uses the inverted pyramid method. But a feature writer ideally uses the chronological order of presentation. The lead of a feature, like that of news articles, is naturally the first paragraph of the discourse and should be so intriguing that it immediately captures the attention of the reader, arouses his interest and holds it on until he reads the whole story.

A. THE INTRODUCTION: This introducing paragraph can also be called the lead. The only difference is that unlike in the lead you do not say things that are too obvious.¹⁴ Instead, you adopt the use of anecdotes, ironies or paradoxes to enhance its effectiveness. This opening paragraph should state the theme of the article and give an idea of what it is all about in a way that promises entertainment or information, or both. As your show window in which you show off the merchandise, you must ensure that what is written there is carefully selected.

Otherwise, your potential customers will simply walk away, that is, drop the article because it is not interesting. In consideration of this, the introductory paragraph should be skillfully crafted, succinctly and intelligently presented to create suspense in readers.¹⁵

B. THE BODY: Once a striking and thought-provoking paragraph has been crafted, the body of the article flows naturally and logically as an elaboration and expansion of the ideas in the introduction. The body of the article, which is the largest portion of the discourse, is where the writer displays his skills as one who conglomerates. This portion consists of several inter-related paragraphs that provide substantive information on each variable to support the subject matter of the entire article.¹⁶ These variables should be skillfully knitted together with transitional words and phrases to ensure unity and coherency that will provide readers a smooth ride through the pages of the article.

C. THE CLIMAX: In most cases, the climax of the story is presented at the end of the entire story. In the words of Tonga, "... a conclusion paragraph could be an entirely new twist in the theme of the story, a teaser, a new challenge, mastery, a puzzle, a question mark, a promise, a hope etc."¹⁷ However, most writers

commonly use the summary ending perhaps because it is the type that would normally tie up the loose ends of the story. What is important is that at the end of the day, the reader should feel satisfied that reading through the article was worth his while.

END NOTES ON CHAPTER SIX

¹Audu Nock Tonga, ed. *Use of English for Polytechnics: Communication Skills, Vol. II.* (Benin City: Stirling-Horden Publishers [Nig.] Ltd. 1997), 40.

²Rex Jackson, *Principles of Journalism*, (Irving, Texas: International Correspondence Institute, 1992), 96.

³Nathan Eze, *Journalism and Christian Writing*, (Aba: Assemblies of God Press. n.d.), 70.

⁴Ibid., 72.; ⁵Ibid.; ⁶Ibid., 73.

⁷Jackson, *Principles of Journalism*, 203.

⁸Ibid.; ⁹Ibid., 205.; ¹⁰Ibid.; ¹¹Ibid., 206.

¹²Ibid., 207.

¹³Eze, *Journalism and Christian Writing*, 75.

¹⁴Ibid., 73.

¹⁵Tonga, *Use of English for Polytechnics, Vol. II.* 38

¹⁶Ibid., 39, 40.; ¹⁷Ibid., 40.

REPORT WRITING

Communication takes place through various media. These are mainly by: Oral or spoken language act; by writing, and by signs and symbols or non-verbal communication. All these areas are broad based and can sustain meaningful discussions or enquiry. Of these forms of communication, "Report Writing" belongs to the written or communication by writing.

Experts in this field have opined that report writing is a form of technical and scientific writing that communicates information on a specific topic. Describing a report in a general sense, Akporherhe remarked that it is an inquiring into certain happenings in the society such as: fire outbreak, students' riot, communal clashes, scientific findings as well as scholarly research among others.¹ It could also be described as "... a document providing a true account of an incident or event witnessed or of a work carried out together with conclusions around as a result of an investigation or research."²

I. DEFINITION OF REPORT

In a simple form, report is defined as "an account given or opinion formally expressed after investigation or consideration."³ In a broad sense,

A report is a document which is written by a person or group of persons who had the mandate to investigate an incident or doubtful state of affair with the aim of discovering the problems therein as well as finding possible solutions to the problems identified.⁴

Some scholars describe a report as a document providing a true account of an incident or event witnessed; it is an account of a work or an investigation carried out together with the conclusions drawn. In the words of Eziechine, "A report is a factual account or written document that embodies the results of an enquiry into the facts relevant to a particular problem."⁶

II. PRINCIPLES OF REPORT WRITING

Report, as a scientific inquiry into facts that bother on a specific issue at a given period of time, has its method of approach. Below are the established principles of report writing as stated by Akporherhe:

1. Report must have controlling idea or purpose, which has to be strictly adhered to in the presentation of any given report.
2. As rule, simple and unambiguous expressions should be used to enhance comprehension.
3. Reported form of expression (indirect speech) should be used.
4. Report should not be personalized. There has to be appropriate distance between the writer(s) and the report itself.
5. Report must be clear, concise and factual.
6. Reports, most times, are problems solving; therefore, step towards solving a specific problem must be given.

7. Report must show steps taken to arrive at a given finding, whereby it is investigative.⁷

III. FUNCTIONS OF REPORTS

There is no denying the fact that reports are invaluable assets to individuals, the government and business executives. This owes to the fact that they provide a mass of materials that give the appropriate information guiding them in their daily official responsibilities.⁸ Reports help administrators to maintain a code of conduct in their inter-personal relationships with people in an organization, and also make them to be aware of what their entitlements are as provided by relevant authorities based on their scope of activities.

It is a truism that governments everywhere in the world do make use of reports at various levels and on different occasions. Tonga remarks,

Reports help the government to access the level of development achieved within a space of time. It reveals all aspects of the relationships between the government and individuals and establishes the basis of further relationship enabling the government to take appropriate measures towards some crucial issues in the society.⁹

In the same vein, no business organization can do without reports. Where a business organization fails to regularly take stock of its activities to identify areas of success and failures, it becomes practically impossible for it to continue to make success. Consequently, the management of an organization should always seek to get all the necessary information relating to its past activities or aspects of its past operations so that it can be fully armed with the necessary pieces of advice that would enable it take appropriate decisions.¹⁰

In a nutshell, we can say that the basic functions of report are to provided as well as store information; to reveal hidden situations by the use of proper investigation and enquiry; and most importantly, to give advice that would help in making decisions.

IV. TYPES OF REPORTS

It should be borne in mind that there are several communication systems that can be regarded as reports. If one chooses to list all of them at random, chances are that there might arise a kind of confusion resulting from the unclassified nature of such list. In order to ensure a better understanding and easy approach, we shall try to group them on the basis of the specific areas of activities they cover in report writing.¹¹

In the ordinary sense, there are basically two types of reports namely: "*Routine and Special*" reports. Yet, there are others that attract questions as to what area to classify them. Oral and Memorandum are good examples of such. A further classification of such is done on the basis of the situation that warrants its writing. However, they are discussed in the work under the routine report:

A. ROUTINE REPORT: As the name implies, routine report usually follows a system of regular feeding in of information, which aims at checking progress and

deviations in the operational mode of a system.¹² We can obtain a good demonstration of this report from the industrial system where people work on shift schedule having variations in the input and output of materials for work. In such system, there are usually schedules that give in a simple form what goes on in the various schedules or shifts.¹³

Examples of routine report include: statistical report, staff confidential reports, examination reports, reports of incidents to the police for investigation, performance reports of units of an organization, etc. We shall discuss them as follows:

- 1. Statistical Report:** The government agencies or individual organizations may set up a routine report or information scheme that can give the statistics of some development in certain aspects of their operation. An example of this is an arrangement which gives figures of disease control progress or spread of epidemics within marked periods, population growth and the like.
- 2. Oral Report:** Oral reports are made at meetings of societies, committees, panels and the like especially when it becomes necessary that a report on a matter that relates to a group of persons be rendered verbally to the hearing of members.
- 3. Memorandum:** "This refers to an official document submitted by an individual or a group of persons to enhance an investigation into a certain matter."¹⁴ Memorandum of this nature should not be confused with the internal office type, which is just a system of passing information and orders within the ranks and files of an establishment. This memorandum under consideration is a form of report that is usually called "an unsolicited report". It can come in a letterform and does not follow the formal features of the special report. It should follow the pattern of;

From:

To:

Subject:

Date: followed by

Content:

Like any other report, it should be dully signed.

B. SPECIAL REPORT: This report is called special because it is required only under special circumstances, for instance, by superior officer, a body or an organization, the government or government agencies. Special reports are never like other types of researches that can be done at will; they are never written unless they are called for.¹⁵

It treats a matter with a view to revealing all that can be discovered about it and within the scope of the terms of reference for a particular report and proffers solutions to the problems arising from the discoveries made.¹⁶ It may also provide recommendations to users by advising them on the actions to be taken.

Some of the examples of special reports include: Eye-witness report, investigative report, project report, oral and memorandum. Their major qualities are that they are investigative and strictly formal in structure and can be classified as "*Long or Detailed Formal Report*" and "*Short Formal Report*". The difference between the two is their scope, content, and length of writing.

- 1. Eye-Witness Report:** An eye-witness report sometimes takes the form of a narrative essay where the facts are presented in a chronological order and it is

aimed at providing information or an eye-witness account of an event or incident.¹⁷ It could be a case of an accident, a fire incident, a robbery operation, assault and battery, tribal crisis and the like.

2. **Investigative Report:** This is a report prepared by a committee or panel appointed to study a given situation and submit a report of findings at the end of a given time to either a private or public organization. As Obiajulu puts it, most investigation reports require the following format:
 - a. The title of the report.
 - b. The terms of references, that is the guidelines on which the panel is to focus its investigation.
 - c. The scope of the report (the area to be covered).
 - d. Procedure, that is, how the information is obtained.
 - e. The findings of the investigations.
 - f. Conclusion and recommendations.

3. **Project Report:** This type of report is usually prepared by professionals who are often called upon to Assess the progress of a given project.

a. Works Report: Works report deals essentially with works that are done on major contracts. It helps in giving a progressive situation report on a particular project being carried out and it normally follows a well-established and organized pattern.

- Progress Report (Periodic report on a work as it progresses)
- Completion Report (Final progress report)
- Single Work Report (Report on work of limited scope and duration).

b. Research Report: This type of report is strictly scholarship and it involves establishing a researchable topic, which offers the researcher an interesting question for him/her to answer through research.¹⁸ It is interesting to note that if the selection of a topic for this kind of research is based solely on the experience of the researcher, chances are that he/she will not learn anything new. But the purpose of doing a research for a report is to inform the writer whereas the purpose of writing a report is to inform the audience or users of the report.

Therefore, a researcher attempting to write a research report should note the following procedure: selecting and limiting a topic, writing a clearly and an intelligently stated statement of problem, gathering information on the topic, organizing your data, and the actual writing which entails introductory paragraph, the body, concluding paragraph, and finally, revising and finishing your report.¹⁹

V. USES OF REPORT

Reports are used to:

- a. Record work done during a given period of time.
- b. Assess a situation.
- c. Validate information on a given subject or about someone.
- d. Circulate new ideas
- e. Cross-fertilize ideas
- f. Indicate future courses of action
- g. Inform people

VI. FORMS OF REPORT

In the ordinary sense, report like any other form of writing offers a number of options regarding how it is written. Be that as it may, the choice of a form depends on how free the writer is to choose the form of presenting his report as it suits him. An informal report, for instance, normally gives the writer the liberty to decide which form he is going to adopt. But where the report is a special one, the writer has to stick to a particular form that is acceptable officially.²⁰ The writer should bear in mind that the consideration of the choice of forms opened to him is influenced by what forms are generally acceptable to all. This owns to the fact that report, being an official document, must be presented in a form that is officially recognized. The forms of reports opened to writers are the following: Letter or memorandum form; mixed form, and schematic or analytic form.

A. THE LETTER FORMAT: Experts have said that the letter format of a report is usually applied in writing of reports only when such reports are limited in scope or in relating some other informal information.²¹ This form takes to the style of a letter or memo and as it is usually the case, it contains all the elements identifiable in a report only that these elements are not distinctly marked out in separate sections.²²

As the name implies, the letter form of report may take the shape of a formal letter with addresses, date and salutation. Its introductory section may carefully blend the subject matter, terms of reference and the procedure.

The body of the report, which is written in paragraphs, would dwell more on findings while the last paragraph, which is usually the terminal section will embody the conclusion(s) and recommendation(s). It also has a complimentary close with the name(s), signature and sometimes the designation of the writer(s).²³

B. THE MIXED FORM: The mixed form of report is a mixture of the letterform and the schematic form. The structure basically takes the shape of a letter only that some parts of the report will be subtitled especially where the sub-sections deserve to be treated differently. Besides, this mixed form is adopted when the letter is of considerable length and its subdivisions will make for easy reading.

C. THE SCHEMATIC OR ANALYTIC FORM: This schematic form of report, which is usually presented in a systematic form, is used in the special reports, whether the short or long detailed one. As a rule, it must contain all the details that the report requires and each of the sections and subsections is given title and subtitle with appropriate numbering system.²⁴

Elements of a formal Report

It is important to note that reports are formal in nature especially the special reports that have investigative tendency and they are usually classified under the short special and the long special reports in terms of determining elements (major items that sectionalize the report) must constitute the parts of a report for the report to be considered complete. It does not matter whether the report is regarded short or long.

The fundamental elements include:

- Title
- Terms of Reference
- Procedure
- Findings
- Conclusions
- Recommendations.

However, the “Preliminary” and “Supplementary” sections found in the long report differentiate it from the short one and also make the long report to extend in length and volume. Details of this will be presented in the structure of report.

VII. THE STRUCTURE OF A REPORT

“Report as a form of communication has a simple structure. It maintains the conventional format of a simple essay having the introductory part, the body, and the terminal section.”²⁵ Nevertheless, report is different from the conventional essay in that it maintains a varied approach in the treatment of these structural divisions compared to that of an essay. In report, each of the main areas embodies other elements, which constitute an independent section in the report. Below is the presentation of the total structure.

A. PRELIMINARIES: As we said earlier, this section can be found in the long special report.

1. Title page: The writer of a particular article is expected to draft his title page in accordance with the data available to him. The title page helps to indicate what a particular report is all about. It shows all the identities that would facilitate the easy access to and identification of a report giving such information as:

- a. Subject of the report
- b. The writer or the committee that wrote the report
- c. The person or the appropriate authority that will utilize the report.
- d. Date, including the date of completion, month and year.

EXAMPLE

A report on Budgets and Budget Implementation
In Nigeria from 2000-2006

By

Prof. Prosper Osaigbovo Special Committee
On Budget Implementation 2006

Submitted to:

The Office of the president
The Federal Republic of Nigeria
30th November 2006.

2. **Table of Contents:** The table of contents, which shows the structure of the report in a summary or sketchy form, brings its headings and the sub-headings together, indicating the pages on which each heading or sub-heading would be found in the report. Its purpose is to aid the understanding of the contents and to also help readers to locate the particular heading or sub-heading needed at a particular time without necessary reading through the whole report.
3. **The Preface:** The prefatory note, which is also called foreword, briefly gives insight on what the report is all about and what necessitated the writing of the report. It may also state the reasons why the writer investigated the issue in the manner and methods adopted in the procedure.
4. **The Acknowledgements:** Writing a report is highly demanding that is why it is imperative that the writer of a report uses this part of the report to formally express gratitude to all who contributed to the success of the report by their co-operation in the process of investigation, and by helping to facilitate the task of writing through financial support and other technical assistance. It is, however, not compulsory for you to mention the names of the people being acknowledged one after the other. It may be better for you to use group that generalizes them. E.g. management and staff of..., All my colleagues, all members of ... etc.²⁶
5. **The Abstract (Synopsis):** The abstract or synopsis, which is not as detailed as the introduction gives a quick view of what to expect in the report. It summarizes the purpose of the report and states the nature of its conclusions and recommendations.

B. THE INTRODUCTORY SECTION: The introductory part of the report sets the stage and lays the foundation upon which the entire body of the report is based. The introduction, as a matter of emphasis, is very important in longer reports because it takes the reader into the content of the entire report and also keeps his/her mind in good mood, a state of expectancy, as he/she continues to scan and digest the report. A good and well-planned introduction usually gives proportionate coverage of the various sections of the report without emphasizing any aspect that is not necessary.

At the introduction, the writer makes a clear and unambiguous statement on the subject matter and states the overall purpose and the background information necessary for the understanding of the report. It usually ends with a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

1. Terms of Reference: As its name implies, the terms of reference give an explanation on the subject of enquiry and defines the exact areas to be covered by the writer. To explain further, it covers the scope and limitations of the report. If any meaningful attempt to write a report is going to bring success, the writer must first and foremost ensure that he clearly understands the instructions mandating the writing of the report ever before he commences. What's more, he should bear in mind that if he goes outside his scope or the provisions of the terms of reference, his violation of rules may result in the rejection of the report.²⁷

In a very formal report, there is usually what is called "Letter of Authorization" which spells out in clear and unmistakable terms the given report is fairly long and reasonably formal, there will be the need to treat the letter of authorization separately at the beginning of the report.

2. The Procedure: The procedure is that part of the report where the writer shows all the sources of information available to him, the steps he took, and the method he used to gather the data, which contributed in no small measure to making the writing of the report a huge success. One thing that is exciting news about report is that it is a scientific enquiry.²⁸

It is required that in the procedure, the writer does not just list the various sources of his information, but ensures that every material in the report is dully tendered. That is to say that the confessions, statements, interviews, useful information, and the like, are to be reproduced to substantiate the assertions in the report.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The assertions has been made that the authenticity and accuracy of a report depends largely on the sources of information. In consequence, the writer knowing that every report is accepted on the basis of how authentic are the information given in the report, should as a matter of necessity know the possible sources where he has hewed the pieces of information.

There are two main classifications of sources of information. They are the “Primary” and “Secondary” sources.

- a. The primary sources include: interviews, personal witness, material evidences and written submissions or memoranda.
- b. The secondary sources include: Books, previous report, professional journals and research papers, and print and electronic media sources. Notably, the primary sources make a report authentic than the secondary sources in that they provide more accurate and relevant information.

C. THE BODY OF THE REPORT- FINDINGS: In report writing, the body being the middle part of the usual three major divisions of the write-up is where the writer presents his findings, the findings are facts contained in the materials of information consulted. Therefore, the writer, bearing this in mind, should present his findings as objectively as possible knowing that his personal opinions, which may be a representation of his biases and prejudice, are not needed. It should be remarked that the findings are not the conclusions of the report but forms the bricks with which conclusions are made.

D. THE TERMINAL SECTION

1. Conclusion: In a report, conclusions are made up of all substantial inferences arrived at by the writer(s), which were made possible by the thorough, or critical examination of the facts presented in the findings of the report. In writings the conclusion, the writer has the liberty to state his opinions. Be that as it may, his opinions as a matter of necessity must be enhanced by or premised on the findings and cogently stated with a high sense of logicity.

2. Recommendations: In the ordinary fashion, recommendations are made in a report only in response to the stipulations of the terms of reference. In the event that a report does not call for recommendations, the document necessarily stops with the conclusions.

Recommendations include the solutions and pieces of advice given by the writer(s) as probable means of proffering solutions to the problems raised in the discoveries and conclusions. The writer of the report is only meant to make major discoveries that would aid the executive or the user of the report in making decisions on a matter or issue at stake.²⁹

Notwithstanding, when the user of a given report places on the writer(s) the responsibility of providing solutions to the various problems raised in the report, his (their) suggestions and pieces of advice could serve that purpose.

E. SUPPLEMENTS: As pointed out earlier, the supplementary section is usually added to the long special report after the main content to provided extra information. Although the extra information this section of the report provides is not necessarily part of the main report, yet it is considered relevant because of its usefulness. Aspects of the supplementary section include the following:

- 1. References:** References are the same as footnotes. The modern style has a practice of arranging all footnotes at the end of each chapter or at the end of the entire work. Sometimes based on this practice, the footnotes are better referred to as endnotes.
- 2. Bibliography:** Bibliography are said to be very necessary in reports that are very long and those that sometimes appear in volumes in that they stand as research materials and need to provide other sources for further research. In bibliographies, the writer(s) enumerate in alphabetical order, all the books, journals, encyclopedia and other materials consulted in the process of writing the report.³⁰
- 3. Appendixes:** The writer(s) of a report may need to provide charts, statistical figures, maps, photographs and other related information that are relevant to and useful in the interpretation of the report. The pieces of information in the appendix are sometimes attached close to the part of the report they are related to, while for the purpose of convenience, some are provided at the end of the entire report.
- 4. Indices:** In reports, as in every other kind of write-up, the writer(s) may employ some uncommon terms which specifically belong to a special trade or register and could impede the understanding and interpretation of the report by a layman, such terms are usually listed and explain in index column also know as glossary.

VIII. CLASSIFICATION OF REPORTS

There are several situations that can give rise to the writing of a report. In consequence, the form and style of presentation and even the tone of the report vary. In essence, reports are classified according to the prevailing conditions, which necessitate their being written. Reports can be classified on the basis of the following:

- A. Subject Matter:** This has to do with the specific area of human endeavor on which the report is based. For example: work, engineering, population census, disease outbreak, births and deaths etc.
- B. Important:** Some reports are needed for immediate actions and policy making

while others are used for long term planning.

- C. Length:** Although it is the scope of the subject matter that determines the length of a report, however, the volume of a report can be used as the criterion for its classification as either long or short report.
- D. Language:** A report, like other communication arts, can be classified on the basis of the tone of the language used. This tone of a particular report, which is influenced by the relationship between the writer and the user of the report, classifies a report as informal, semi-formal and formal.
- E. Distribution:** Some reports have wide range of distribution while others are not. A report may be written for the exclusive use of a particular office. Others can be either for inter-office use or for private or public, and companies of similar enterprises.
- F. Time:** Time is a factor to reckon with in the classification of a report. Routine report, for instance, are made from the timing of daily, Weekly, Monthly, or quarterly report. Others are based on present incidents while some are progressive.

IX. QUALITIES OF A GOOD REPORT

A good report must possess the following qualities among others.

- A. Clarity of presentation:** The manner of presentation of the items in a report could determine its logicity and coherence hence report must be clearly presented.
- B. Unified Section:** Writers of reports must ensure that all sections of their reports are unified, knowing that an addition of information not needed by the reader or user can create a gap in the sequential flow information.
- C. Coherence:** The subject matter of a report should be treated with logical analysis of the materials used and the thoughts presented in a chronological sequence when and where necessary.
- D. Accuracy of Information:** It should be borne in mind that the accuracy of information contained in a report determines how authentic it is. Therefore, a good report should derive its findings from certified sources of information.
- E. Brevity:** A good report must be concise and written in a simple style.
- F. Intelligence:** A good report, as a rule, must be intelligible to the readers hence language that tends to create ambiguity should be strictly avoided.

END NOTES ON CHAPTER SEVEN

¹Akporherhe, F. *Advanced Communication Skills in English*, (Eku: Justice and Peace Standard Press, 2008), 158.

²Ibid.

³Audu Nock Tonga, ed. *Use of English for Polytechnics: Communication Skills, Vol. II*, (Benin City: Stirling-Horden Publishers [Nig.] Ltd. 1997), 89.

⁴Ibid., 40.

⁵Akporherhe, *Advanced Communication Skills in English*, 158.

⁶Eziechine Augustine Obiajulu, *Effective Communication in English Language*, (Agbor: Krisbec Publications, 2002), 98.

⁷Akporherhe, *Advanced Communication Skills in English*, 158.

⁸Tonga, *Use of English for Polytechnics, vol. II*, 89, 90.

⁹Ibid., 90.; ¹⁰Ibid.; ¹¹Ibid.; ¹²Ibid., 91.

¹³Tonga, *Use of English for Polytechnics, vol. II*. 89, 90.

¹⁴Ibid., 92.; ¹⁵Ibid., 93.; ¹⁶Ibid., 92.

¹⁷Obiajulu, *Effective Communication in English Language*, 98.

¹⁸Akporherhe, *Advanced Communication Skills in English*, 161.

¹⁹Ibid., 161, 162.

²⁰Tonga, *Use of English for Polytechnics, vol. II*, 93.

²¹Ibid.; ²²Ibid.; ²³Ibid.; ²⁴Ibid., 95.; ²⁵Ibid., 97.

²⁶Ibid., 101.; ²⁷Ibid., 100, 101.; ²⁸Ibid., 101.

²⁹Ibid., 103.; ³⁰Ibid., 104.

WRITING MECHANICS

IN journalism, the term mechanics refers to the skill required in writing a report that is acceptable to the journalism profession. These mechanics of writing in journalism are those gotten from mechanics required in the English language, and is a very important aspect of study in journalism because authorities or publishing bodies prefer certain rules of mechanics to others.¹

As a matter of fact, the study of mechanics embraces so many topics which include: Spelling, that is, the differences between the British and American usage of certain words; Abbreviations, Capitalization, and Punctuation Marks, and even prefixes and suffixes. In this chapter, however, attention will be paid to “Punctuation Marks” with the hope that if space permits; a general overview of other aspects will be done.

I. PUNCTUATION MARKS

It has been keenly observed that so much of what might otherwise be good writing has so often been spoiled by either a lack of or bad punctuation resulting in the tone and meaning of what is conveyed being completely altered. Joy Eyisi, commenting on the relevance of an in-depth knowledge in the use of punctuation marks, gave this quotation:

... sound grammar and spelling are not the only requirements of a good composition. The sentences must be punctuated. A badly punctuated piece of writing distorts the meaning that the author intends to convey to the reader. A good command of the use of punctuation marks gives luster, perspicuity and vividness to an essay.²

Punctuation refers to the use of conventional graphic symbols to mark off pauses and create meaningful grammatical divisions in any written discourse.³ By a simple definition, punctuation, in the general sense, refers to “a set of marks which constitute a system whereby breaks are introduced in the normal flow of speech.”⁴ Punctuation marks, as indispensable factors to any written discourse in English and even in speech making, are distinctively used to mark out strings of words into manageable groups and they help to enhance clarity of expression.⁵ They equally help to give definite meaning to expressions, highlight various points of emphasis in a discourse, and to show the grammatical connection that exists between words and relative expressions.⁶

That they are indispensable to all written and spoken English discourse is predicated on the fact that if there are no conventional marks to separate expressions into readable and meaningfully co-coordinated units, the discourse will invariably be without form and void. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these punctuation marks lies in their selective use.

Considered for treatment in this section are rules and examples, which we feel, may prove helpful to clarify some points on punctuation. They are extracts from

books by Eyisi, Tonga, Pryse and Eze, with little modifications where necessary.

END PUNCTUATION MARKS

There are three types of end punctuation marks, namely: the period, the question mark, and the exclamation point.

A. THE FULL STOP OR PERIOD (.): The full stop is an end punctuation mark and it is used in the following ways:

1. To denote or indicate the end of a complete sentence that is not a question or an exclamation:

Example: *Peterson is a brave combatant.*

2. To end an indirect question:

Example: *Jessica asked where her mother went to.*

3. To mark off abbreviations:

Degrees: *B.A., B.Sc., M. Ed., M. Div., Ph.D. etc.*

Months: *Mar., Sept., Nov., etc.*

Names: *Maj. Gen. S. Samson; G. K. James; Oseoboh E. Osajie*

Titles: *Dr. Miss, Mr., Rev., Prof. Esq., etc.*

Others: *U.K., U.S.S.R., B.C. St., Ave.*

4. To denote the end of an address and date in a letter:

Example: *No 15, Olenokhua Street,*

Eguare, Ewohimi.

25th August 2008.

B. THE QUESTION MARK (?): The question mark (also called interrogation sign) is used as a terminal punctuation to denote a direct interrogative statement, doubt or uncertainty. This can be done in various ways as follows:

1. To mark the end of a rhetorical question:

Example: *Oh Lord God, when will you avenge my enemies?*

2. To denote the end of a question requiring a reply:

Example: *Have they finished the tests?*

3. To use in parenthesis to express doubt or uncertainty about a word, fact, or number:

Examples:

a. *He left standard six in 1926 (?) and University in 1950(?).*

b. *The early church (A.D.30? To A.D.90) faced terrible persecutions.*

4. To serve as an end mark to a transitional statement in a discourse.

Example: *Having pointed out few causes of the falling of education in Nigeria, will it not be appropriate to discuss some viable solutions to these problems?*

5. To mark a direct quotation inserted within inverted commas.

Example: *"What are the rules of the game?" Asked the teacher.*

C. THE EXCLAMATION MARK (!): The exclamation point is used at the end of an exclamatory sentence or after a strong interjection or any other type of forceful expression.⁷ "As an end mark, the exclamation mark or sign serves to denote an expression indicating a strong emotion that is sudden and, sometimes, unusual. Such expressions include: anger, fear, joy, doubt, or any other strong feeling."⁸

They are shown below:

1. To denote exclamatory sentences which begin with how, what and that:
Example: *How pretty she looks! What an exciting story! That's really great!*
2. To express anger, fear, doubt, surprise or joy.
Example: *You are very wicked! You don't mean it! I guess the man is dead! I am shocked by your attitude! Yes, I have got it!*
3. To express words of statements, which are exclamatory in tone:
Example: *Hello! Oh! Really! My God! My goodness!*
4. To denote special emphasis at the end of an exclamatory sentence:
Example: *Becky has been withdrawn! That is good news! Osaze has lost the game!*
5. In quotation, it is placed inside when it is part of the quoted material:
Example: *"I am not guilty!" She exclaimed.*
6. It is also placed outside when it is not part of the material:
Example: *We were terrified by his shout "wei"!*
7. An interjection is a word or words expressing sudden feeling. The sentence following an interjection may end with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point:
Examples:
 - a) *That's a fantastic sight!*
 - b) *Great! May I take as many as I want?*
 - c) *Thud! The body fell to the floor.*

OTHER PUNCTUATION MARKS

D. THE COMMA (,): The comma is a medial punctuation mark that is used to mark off the shortest pause in the course of writing. "The use of comma is more difficult to describe than other punctuation marks, and there is much variation in practice."⁹ Its role is essentially to give detail to the structure of sentences, especially longer ones, and it helps to make their meaning clear. The comma also helps to separate and define the clauses and phrases of a sentence, and it serves various purposes which include:

1. To separate the main clause from the dependent clause in a sentence begun by a subordinator:
Example: *If Osaze fails this semester, he will be withdrawn form the course.*
2. To set off a series of parallel phrase or clause in a sentence:
Example: *You should think about your life, your children, your wife, and your parents before you plan a coup.*
3. To separate items in a series:
Examples:
 - a. *Tropical fruits include pawpaw, oranges, pears and mangoes.*
 - b. *She bought apple, orange, banana and potato from the local market.*
 - c. *The woman who bore the child, who fed him, and who weaned him, is his mother.*
 - d. *Numbers 1, 2, 5, and 7 are odd numbers.*
4. To set nouns that are in the vocative case:
Examples:
 - a. *I was told Madam, that you were sick.*
 - b. *Osakwe, your duty is to watch over the house.*

5. To demarcate contrasted elements in a sentence:
Example: *God made the earth, man made the country.*
6. To separate interrupters and appositive phrases from the rest of the sentence:
Example:
a. *Father Abraham, so the story affirms, was a friend of God.*
g. *Parable, our people say, is the salt of a conversation*
c. *Nsini, the renowned politician, has been kidnapped.*
7. To set off elements in a direct quotation:
Example: *The thief asked, "Will you beat me if I confess?"*
8. To set off dependent clauses, which come in the middle of a sentence:
Example: *Snakes, even if they are short, are dangerous animals.*
9. To set off a question at the end of a statement:
Example: *You did your own work, didn't you?*
10. Comma is also use after verbless or non-finite clause occurring at the beginning of a sentence:
Example: *Weak and worried, Osehotue appealed for calm.*
11. For a neater construction, comma is used to separate modifiers that occur in series:
Example: *He is handsome, smart, brave and sympathetic.*
12. It is also essential when denoting a brief pause within a sentence:
Examples:
a. *I will see him tomorrow, God willing.*
b. *Try to arrest the man, possibly today.*
13. It helps to set off coordinating connectives in a sentence such as or, for, and, but, yet, and transitional expressions such as moreover, however, therefore, nevertheless, more so, furthermore, and so on:
Examples:
a. *The rain continued to fall, yet the sky remained cloudy.*
b. *She registered late and, therefore, missed her tests*
c. *Moreover, she may like to withdraw.*
14. In correspondence, it is useful in marking off elements in an address, date and the complimentary close:
Example: *53 Market Road,
Ibadan.*

E. THE COLON (:): The colon used when the first part of a sentence is complete in sense, though followed by another remark which may arise from it and depends on it in sense but not in construction.¹⁰ It helps to denote a pause that is longer than the semicolon but shorter than full stop and it serves in the following capacities:

1. To mark the introduction of a lengthy quotation:
Example: *Here is the report as sent by the secretary: The young lady slapped her father, she broke the ceiling fans, she burnt the wardrobe, and she wounded her youngest sister.*
2. To enumerate a long list of things:
Example: *The following items are available for collection: biros, pencils, books,*

calculators and typing sheets.

3. To introduce a sharp quotation:

Examples:

a. *The politician exclaimed: "I am elected chairman!"*

b. *Jesus said: "It is finished."*

4. To introduce an expression preceded by a main clause in order to emphasize or explain an earlier statement:

Example: *Mr. Bernard has a great responsibility – a responsibility he cannot neglect: burying his mother.*

5. To establish the connection between coordinate clauses, which, are closely, related in a sentence such that any separation will cause a modification of the meaning:

Example: *The principal spoke angrily: he has been insulted.*

6. To provide a link between contradicting statement not joined together by a conjunction:

Examples:

a. *To err is human: to forgive is divine.*

b. *Too soon dejected: too soon elated.*

7. To interpose between chapter and verse in a biblical citation:

Example: *Proverbs 16:3, James 6:10.*

8. To interpose between hour and minutes in clock time:

Example: *7:30 am; 4:35 pm.*

9. The main role of the colon as experts in the field have opined is to separate main clauses when there is a step forward from the first to the second, especially from introduction to main point, from general statement to example, from cause to effect, and from premises to conclusion:¹¹

Examples:

a. *There is something I want to say: I should like you to know how grateful I am to you.*

b. *It was not easy: to begin with I had to find the right house.*

c. *The weather was bad: so we decided to stay at home.*

F. THE SEMICOLON (;): The main role of the semicolon is to unite sentences that are closely associated. It is also used when we wish to mark off two balanced clauses in the same sentence but do not wish to introduce the complete break that a period would give.¹² It is used to mark a pause that is longer than the comma but shorter than the full stop.¹³ let us look at other uses of the semicolon.

1. To separate two independent clauses that are not linked together by a conjunction:

Examples:

a. *More haste; less speed.*

b. *A woman has just died; she was a teacher at the nearby girl's school.*

2. To denote major breaks within a sentence where the comma would be inappropriate:

Example: *Osaze had three sons: the first was an engineer; the second, an accountant; and the third, a lawyer.*

3. To denote major main clauses that are linked together by adverbial connectives

such as however, moreover, therefore, etc.

Examples:

a. *He was very diligent; therefore, he received the prize.*

b. *She talks too much; moreover, she is disrespectful.*

4. To demarcate the main clauses from the subordinate clauses, which are related in thought but are not joined together by a conjunction:

Example: *He has showed remorse; although he is guilty, he should be pardoned.*

5. To set up parallel structures in a sentence with a series of subordinate clauses:

Example: *If he misbehaves; if there are past records of misconduct; and if he continues to be recalcitrant; report him to the police.*

6. It is often used as a stronger division in a sentence that already includes divisions by means of commas:

Example: *He came out of the house, which lay back from the road, and saw her at the end of the path; but instead of continuing towards her, he hid until she had gone.*

7. It is used in a similar way in lists of names or other items, to indicate a strong division:

Example: *I should like to thank the managing director, Sylvester Oseboh; my secretary, Peterson Osagie; and my assistant, Samuel Jones.*

G. THE DASH (-): The dash is a short parallel line that is a little longer than the hyphen. Its functions, as treated below, are numerous.

1. To show a sudden break in the sentence structure:

Example: *The two suspected passengers have deserted their cars in the park- those driven by Osebhue and Oseigbokan.*

2. To emphasize a word or phrase at the end of a sentence:

Example: *He eats only one kid of meat-chicken.*

3. To give explanation to words, phrases or clauses that precede it:

Example: *The debris of war ammunitions, the smoky atmosphere, and the litters of dead bodies-all marked the terrible effects of the Gulf War.*

4. To insert extra information into a sentence:

Example: *The failure he envisaged-although he was not very sure at that time-finally became realistic.*

5. To mark parenthetical statements which serve as aside or other breaks in a sentence:

Example: *I have heard the news-I mean the news of the theft-and the decision to punish the culprits.*

6. To denote the climax of a situation:

Example: *The wind blew, leaves flew, clouds gathered, lightning flashed and the sky grumbled- there was a heavy rain.*

7. To repeat expressions that support to an earlier one:

Example: *He is a good man-good and generous to all.*

H. THE HYPHEN (-): The hyphen, which is usually half the length of the dash, is an internal punctuation mark that has two main function: to link words or elements of words into longer words and compounds, and to mark the division of a word at the end of a line in print or writing. Let us consider the following instances.

1. To form compound expressions:
Example: *Son-in-law; wife-to-be, well-to-do, on-the-spot etc.*
2. To form compound nouns from two separate words:
Example: *Time-table, copy-typist, director-general, subject-matter, court-martial etc.*
3. To form group modifiers after prefixes
Example: *Audio-visual, eye-witness, extra-curricular, post-mortem, ultra-modern etc.*
4. To form compound adjectives from a prefix and a proper name:
Example: *Post-Gulf war era, anti-America slogan, all-African game, pre-Renaissance Period, Post-Reformation heroes.*
5. To join fractional parts and compound numbers from 21 to 99:
Example: *One-quarter, two-thirds, three-fifths, twenty-one, eighty-six, ninety-four etc.*
6. To show the syllabic division of word at the end of the line on the writing script:
Example: *Resource-ful, control-able, revi-val, hypothe-sis, contri-butions, develop-ment.*

I. THE PARENTHESES OR BRACKETS [()]: The parentheses serve as medial punctuation employed within the sentence to add extra information to the original sense as stated below.

1. To introduce an explanation, an after thought, an aside or any additional information into the main sentence:
Example: *The boards (especially those that are government-owned) decided to implement the council's decision.*
2. To enclose a complete sentence within another sentence:
Example: *The history of the Bakassi Peninsula (this is an area rich in natural oil) should be revisited.*
3. To enclose page references and historical dates:
Example: *The section on syntax (pp 85- 90) can help you. Jude's grandfather (1906-1974) was a good politician.*
4. To translate into figures words denoting amount of money:
Example: *Five hundred naira (#500.00) can buy very little these days.*

J. QUOTATION MARKS OR INVERTED COMMAS (“ ” or ‘ ’): The quotation marks can occur either singly or doubly. The double quotation marks are generally used for normal quotations while the single quotation marks may be used for any quotation within another quotation.¹⁴ Sometimes also, people use either of them to identify maybe a particular word being emphasized in a sentence. Here are some instances showing how to use them.

1. To quote direct speech:
Examples:
 - a. *Mark Anthony remarks: "The evils that men do live after them.*
 - b. *Terry said: "I will not come back home till night.*
2. To mark off words or phrases that attracts special attention:
Examples:
 - a. *He adopted "a Kill-joy" approach to the issue.*

b. I hope to 'massacre' that course this semester.

3. To signify foreign words or technical terms used within a sentence:

Example:

a. The "Agberos" in our motor parks are becoming more and more dangerous.

b. "Argumentum ad Bacculum" is argument based on intimidation.

4. The single quotation marks are used to denote the quotation that occurs within another quotation:

Example: *The teacher remarked: "One English adage, 'once bitten, twice shy' should be the watch-word for every hard-working student".*

5. The closing quotation mark should come after any punctuation which is part of the quoted matter, but before any mark which is not:

Example: *They were described as 'an unruly bunch'.*

K. THE APOSTROPHE ('): The apostrophe is basically used to indicate missing figures in dates, missing letters in words or to denote the possessive case in nouns and pronouns. This can be done in various ways as indicated below.

1. To mark contracted forms of words so as to indicate omission of letters, figures or sounds:

Example: *Won't (will not), who's (who is), O'clock (of the clock) etc.*

2. To show missing figures in dates:

Example: *'90 (1990), '60s (1960s), '08 (2008).*

3. To denote possessive of nouns and pronouns:

Example: *Pupil's workbook, one's household, teacher's salary etc.*

4. To denote plural of letters, word numbers and abbreviations that do not usually have plural forms:

Examples:

a. Cross your t's and dot your i's.

b. Stand in groups of 3's and 4's.

c. There are so many if's and but's attached to his job.

5. To signify possessive of proper nouns ending in "s":

Example: *Moses' Law. Jesus' Ministry, Daily Times' Publication.*

L. THE ELLIPSIS (...): The ellipsis comprises three-spaced dots used to indicate omission of information or expression unnecessary to the sentence or the discussion. However, it is noteworthy to say that the expressions that occur before and after the ellipsis are still meaningfully connected in sense even if the ellipsis is removed.

Examine the following examples:

a. Highlighting Odili's ignorance and complacent attitude in a corrupt society, Chief Nanga remarks: "He that knows not... is a fool."

Note that if the quoted statement ends with the full stop, then there must be four spaced periods, the last denoting the full stop.

b. Signify Odili's ignorance and foolishness in a corrupt society, Chief Nanga described a fool to be: "He that knows not and knows not that he knows not..."

M. THE CARET (^): The caret is symbolically an inverted letter "A" written just

below the normal line to include a piece of information that has been left out in the course of writing or printing. It is usually inserted between words to include the omitted information, which is usually written just above the normal line.

N. THE VIRGULE (/): The virgule is a diagonal mark used to demarcate alternative expression in a single sentence or expression:

Example: *Every student should try his/her best in the test.*

II. ABBREVIATIONS

As a general rule, abbreviations are used essentially in universally accepted cases in formal and informal writings. If one must otherwise use any abbreviation, perhaps, relating to his own private organization, he should ensure that the abbreviated word is spelled out and enclosed in bracket especially if the discourse is expected to be read by the general public.¹⁵

Examples:

1. The teenagers are also expected to attend the Youth Ministry (Y. M.) rally.
2. The members of the M. M. (Men Ministry) were summoned to a meeting.

There is no denying the fact that every organization has its own names abbreviated to suit its purpose. However, such organization having its own peculiar committees or small groups performing certain functions in the interest of the organization, should adhere to the simple rules indicated below if names of such committees or small groups are to be abbreviated in writing.

Here are acceptable rules for abbreviation.

A. In Relation To Names: Some abbreviations are used both before and after names of people and those of organizations. The titles that go before names need to be abbreviated and should go with the last name.

Rev., Dr., Mrs., Sen., Pst., Lt., Col., Gen., Ms., Miss., etc. but when the word “junior” or “senior” follow a name, the words should be abbreviated. Example: *Marcus Oseoboh Sr.*

More so, when company, corporation, incorporated or limited is used after the name of the corporate entity, it should as a rule be abbreviated.

Example: *Picco International Ltd., Holy Temple Int., Inc.*

B. Numerals, Dates and Times: When one is writing room numbers without figure, one should abbreviate but when no figure is involved, it should be written in full.

Examples:

- a. *Joseph lives in room no. 36*
- b. *His room number is different from mine.*
- c. *Sept. 6 is Golden Jubilee Day.*
- d. *It will start at 6 pm.*

C. Bible Books: When the readership is familiar with such abbreviations, the books of the Bible can be abbreviated but where there is no such familiarity or knowledge, it should be written in full. Short Bible names are not expected to be abbreviated, all

the same. For example: Ruth, Job, Joel etc.

D. Addresses: Numbered addresses, avenues and streets are to be abbreviated when they go with the number and name of the street or avenue.

III. CAPITALIZATION

Capitalization refers to the use of capital letters in punctuating sentences. This section depicts various uses of the capital letters in a written work.

1. A capital letter is used for the first letter of the word beginning a sentence in most cases as in:

Example: *The man was arrested for murder.*

2. Capitalize the first letter of a direct quotation if it is not preceded by ellipsis:

Example: *Ferguson exclaimed, "What a coincidence!"*

3. Capitalize the first letter of a question when it falls within a sentence:

Example: *He revealed a secret in an effort to answer the question, which invited the police.*

4. Capitalize adjectives formed from proper nouns.

Example: *How many books make up the Pauline epistle?*

5. A capital letter is used for words derived from a proper name, if the connection with the name is direct, or felt to be continuing (*Christian, Homeric, Marxism*) but not if it is more remote or conventional (*chauvinistic, quixotic, guillotine*).

6. Capitalize nouns and pronouns referring to deity, to the Bible and other sacred books:

Example: *God, Christ, Messiah, The Holy Spirit, The Holy Bible, Koran, He, His, Him.*

7. Capitalize names of offices only when they are used as titles:

Example: *Prime Minister, District or General Superintendent, Attorney General, Deacon/ Deaconess, Brother /Sister, President, Senator, Honorable etc.*

8. Capitalize the four geographic cardinal points and their derivatives only when they refer to geographical areas:

Example: *Oil mills are found in the South where there are palm fruits.*

9. Capitalize the names of language and the anthropological terms for races:

Example: *English, Spanish, Greek, French, Negro, Caucasian, Mongolian etc*

10. Capitalize names of major events in the life of Christ and ordinances concerning Him:

Example: *The Last Super, the Ascension, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection etc.*

11. Capitalize holidays and holy days:

Example: *Christmas, Independent Day, Mother's Day, Men's Day, Worker's Day, Easter Day etc.*

12. Capitalize names of appointed committees and other assigned or delegated groups of people:

Example: *Finance committee, Project Committee, Research Committee, Panel of Enquiry, Development Committee etc.*

IV. SPELLING

The spellings of words in the English language are often very deceptive. In the words of Eyisi, "There is little letter to phonic correspondence and so the

pronunciation of words, in many cases, does not give a clue to their spellings.”¹⁶ To a large extent, this failure to represent pronunciation accurately and consistently is responsible for perennial spelling difficulties among Nigerian learners of English. According to her, in spite of the above, there are other factors which go a long way to complicating learners’ spelling difficulties. The notable ones she mentioned include: insufficient acquisition of the English vocabulary, inability to read extensively and listen attentively as well as ignorance of certain techniques that aid spelling.¹⁷

The assertion has been made that “It is a mistake to underrate the importance of formal correctness in such matters as spelling and punctuation on the ground that the substance is all that matters.”¹⁸ Every wise, dedicated and careful student of English language is expected to devote serious attention to the study of English spellings knowing that anybody who makes the study of words a passionate pursuit is definitely on the path to building a wide vocabulary.¹⁹ The necessity for this study is predicated on the fact that erroneous spellings can mar one’s written work and can even lead to a total failure in examinations.

If therefore the perennial spelling difficulties among Nigerian learners of English whose mother tongues are usually spelt as they are pronounced will be nib on the board and if we are going to satisfy our heartfelt desire for success in written works we have to avoid wrong spellings.²⁰ Learning how to spell unfamiliar words is a thing that takes time and requires continuous effort. The fact remains “Practice makes perfect”. There are suggested rules for learning how to spell words but our concern here is to spot out some areas in particular where the work can be done easily.

- 1. Reading:** Some spellings are learnt unconsciously as one reads through materials. The importance of reading to learning spellings, therefore, cannot be over-emphasized.
- 2. Writing:** Writing is one of the easiest ways of learning spelling because it makes one to get acquainted with word and because the words tend to impress themselves upon his mind and remain there as he writes and looks on them over and over again.²¹
- 3. Learning:** There are certain words that do not render themselves easily for registering in the mind. Such words are better learnt through everyday practice before one becomes familiar with their spellings.²² The learner, therefore, should take out time to learn and master such words no matter how long it takes. He may have to begin by getting to know the syllabus of such words and then try to spell them and group them according to their syllabifications.

HERE ARE SOME COMMON MISSPELLINGS

Incorrect Spelling

1. astornish
2. atlet
3. attrocity
4. auckward
5. auxilliary
6. babar
7. bagage
8. baloon
9. bambuzle
10. beneat
11. beseige
12. bettle
13. bonaza
14. boyant
15. budism
16. bufallo
17. buglar
18. cafitaria
19. camourflag
20. carm
21. catapilar
22. catapolt
23. catichism
24. cattaclism
25. ceilling
26. condusive
27. congruos
28. consequencial
29. conspicuous
30. conterminat
31. contemptuos
32. convalecent
33. convinience
34. copral
35. copse
36. corespondence
37. coridoor
38. corronation
39. costum
40. countanace
41. counterfeit
42. creat
43. curtesy
44. dangrous

Correct Spelling

1. astonish
2. athlete
3. atrocity
4. awkward
5. auxiliary
6. barber
7. baggage
8. balloon
9. bamboozle
10. beneath
11. besiege
12. beetle
13. bonanza
14. buoyant
15. Buddhism
16. buffalo
17. burglar
18. cafeteria
19. camouflage
20. calm
21. caterpillar
22. catapult
23. catechism
24. cataclysm
25. ceiling
26. conducive
27. congruous
28. consequential
29. conspicuous
30. contaminate
31. contemptuous
32. convalescent
33. convenience
34. corporal
35. corpse
36. correspondence
37. corridor
38. coronation
39. custom
40. countenance
41. counterfeit
42. create
43. courtesy
44. dangerous

Incorrect Spelling

45. debator
46. decardence
47. decieve
48. decripit
49. deepfreezer
50. deffiance
51. delibrate
52. demagog
53. derogatry
54. develope
55. diahorea
56. diaphram
57. dicipline
58. dieing
59. dillapidated
60. disguise
61. dizaster
62. dwaf
63. eclips
64. efeminate
65. effecacious
66. effrontry
67. eggregiou
68. elipse
69. ellastic
70. elligible
71. elogize
72. embam
73. embarass
74. embezle
75. enimity
76. enomous
77. enthuziasm
78. equillibrium
79. ernest
80. errorneous
81. etiquet
82. examplify
83. exhausted
84. extempor
85. exume
86. ezema
87. fabullous
88. farwell
89. feasable

Correct Spelling

- debater
- decadence
- deceive
- decrepit
- deep freeze
- defiance
- deliberate
- demagogue
- derogatory
- develop
- diarrhea
- diaphragm
- discipline
- dying
- dilapidated
- disguise
- disaster
- dwarf
- eclipse
- effeminate
- efficacious
- effrontery
- egregious
- ellipse
- elastic
- eligible
- eulogize
- embalm
- embarrass
- embezzle
- enmity
- enormous
- enthusiasm
- equilibrium
- earnest
- erroneous
- etiquette
- exemplify
- exhausted
- extempore
- exhume
- eczema
- fabulous
- farewell
- feasible

Incorrect Spelling

90. february
91. feminin
92. flabergasted
93. forgotten
94. foriegn
95. fortell
96. fourth-coming
97. fourth-night
98. fullscap
99. galivant
100. gastly
101. genoside
102. goriller
103. greatful
104. grievous
105. guarantte
106. halucination
107. hamorrhage
108. handwork
109. hermaphrodite
110. harrass
111. headquater
112. hecitate
113. hellicopter
114. henous
115. hereditry
116. hetrogeneous
117. hilarious
118. hipopotamus
119. hirachy
120. holocust
121. huricane
122. hypocrazy
123. idiology
124. ignoramous
125. ignorminy
126. illussion
127. imbesile
128. imaculate
129. immence
130. immotal
131. impecable
132. impregnible
133. incalcullable
134. incompetent

Correct Spelling

- February
- feminine
- flabbergasted
- forgotten
- foreign
- foretell
- forthcoming
- fortnight
- foolscap
- gallivant
- ghastly
- genocide
- gorilla
- grateful
- grievous
- guarantee
- hallucination
- hemorrhage
- handiwork
- hermaphrodite
- harass
- headquarters
- hesitate
- helicopter
- heinous
- hereditary
- heterogeneous
- hilarious
- hippopotamus
- hierarchy
- holocaust
- hurricane
- hypocrisy
- ideology
- ignoramus
- ignominy
- illusion
- imbecile
- immaculate
- immense
- immortal
- impeccable
- impregnable
- incalculable
- incompetent

Incorrect Spelling

135. incomprehensable
136. incorrigable
137. incredullous
138. indefatigible
139. indispensable
140. inexhaustable
141. ingradient
142. intelligable
143. intelligensia
144. interfer
145. intresting
146. irreconcilable
147. jagone
148. jambori
149. jelous
150. jubile
151. jubillant
152. jurisdinction
153. juvinile
154. karosine
155. keenness
156. kindergaten
157. kliptomania
158. labourious
159. laging
160. lavatry
161. leftenant
162. leizure
163. lenghty
164. lepper
165. lesure
166. litrature
167. londry
168. longerhead
169. lucreative
170. lukeworm
171. lunattic
172. luxirious
173. maginitude
174. maintainance
175. maliscious
176. manover
177. masquirade
178. matrass
179. mediterenian

Correct Spelling

- incomprehensible
- incorrigible
- incredulous
- indefatigable
- indispensable
- inexhaustible
- ingredient
- intelligible
- intelligentsia
- interfere
- interesting
- irreconcilable
- jargon
- jamboree
- jealous
- jubilee
- jubilant
- jurisdiction
- juvenile
- kerosene
- keenness
- kindergarten
- kleptomania
- laborious
- lagging
- lavatory
- lieutenant
- leisure
- lengthy
- leper
- leisure
- literature
- laundry
- loggerheads
- lucrative
- lukewarm
- lunatic
- luxurious
- magnitude
- maintenance
- malicious
- manoeuvre
- masquerade
- mattress
- Mediterranean

Incorrect Spelling

180. mellodious
181. menopus
182. metamophosis
183. millitant
184. morgage
185. naging
186. negligable
187. noticable
188. noughty
189. nutricious
190. obessity
191. obidient
192. obligatary
193. obnocious
194. obsin
195. obsolate
196. obstenate
197. occurence
198. ocult
199. ofense
200. offatory
201. ofspring
202. oitment
203. ominibus
204. oppresion
205. oppulence
206. orbituary
207. orthorpadic
208. pallatable
209. pamanent
210. paradime
211. pari pasu
212. pouper
213. pendullum
214. percevere
215. perfontary
216. permiate
217. perpertual
218. petrolium
219. pharmaceutical
220. phillantropist
221. pigeon-hole
222. plateu
223. pleasureable
224. ponorgraphy

Correct Spelling

melodious
menopause
metamorphosis
militant
mortgage
nagging
negligible
noticeable
naughty
nutritious
obesity
obedient
obligatory
obnoxious
obscene
obsolete
obstinate
occurrence
occult
offence
offertory
offspring
ointment
omnibus
oppression
opulence
obituary
orthopedic
palatable
permanent
paradigm
pari passu
pauper
pendulum
persevere
perfunctory
permeate
perpetual
petroleum
pharmaceutical
philanthropist
pigeonhole
plateau
pleasurable
pornography

Incorrect Spelling

225. postpone
226. postmortem
227. preferred
228. preferential
229. preposterous
230. precarious
231. privilege
232. proceed
233. profiteer
234. programme
235. promissory
236. psychiatry
237. purgatory
238. punctuality
239. quandary
240. quarantine
241. quotient
242. ragamuffin
243. rancor
244. reappraisal
245. receipt
246. receive
247. reconcile
248. recuperate
249. referendum
250. reckon
251. relinquish
252. reminiscent
253. repository
254. repatriate
255. repertoire
256. restaurant
257. rheumatism
258. rupture
259. rusticate
260. sabotage
261. saccharin
262. sacrilege
263. sagacious
264. sanguinary
265. sanctify
266. sculptor
267. secede
268. separate
269. shrewd

Correct Spelling

postpone
post-mortem
preferred
preferential
preposterous
precarious
privilege
proceed
profiteer
programme/program
promissory
psychiatry
purgatory
punctuality
quandary
quarantine
quotient
ragamuffin
rancor
reappraisal
receipt
receive
reconcile
recuperate
referendum
reckon
relinquish
reminiscent
repository
repatriate
repertoire
restaurant
rheumatism
rupture
rusticate
sabotage
saccharin
sacrilege
sagacious
sanguinary
sanctify
sculptor
secede
separate
shrewd

Incorrect Spelling

270.spontaneous
271. stalwhat
272. staminer
273. stampeed
274. stupur
275. surcumb
276. suspence
277. tapoline
278. tea room
279. telisman
280. theoritical
281. tinture
282. tiphoid
283. titilate
284. tranquilizer
285. transfered
286. trouser
287. ucharist
288. unrully
289. unscruplous
290. utoppia
291. vacinate
292. vanquis
293. visable
294. volunter
295. vulnarable
296. vult
297. warranti
298.wooeing
299. yeild
300. youth corp
301. zealous
302. zink

Correct Spelling

spontaneous
stalwart
stamina
stampede
stupor
succumb
suspense
tarpaulin
tearoom
talisman
theoretical
tincture
typhoid
titillate
tranquillizer
transferred
trousers
eucharist
unruly
unscrupulous
utopia
vaccinate
vanquish
visible
volunteer
vulnerable
vault
warrantee
wooing
yield
youth corps
zealous
zinc

END NOTES ON CHAPTER EIGHT

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⁴Ibid.

⁵Eyisi, *Common Errors in the Use of English*, 310.

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⁷Sheridan Blau, et al. *The Writer's Craft: Idea to Expression*, (Evanston, Illinois: McDougal, Littell and Company, 1992), 781.

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⁹Ibid., 312.

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¹¹Eyisi, *Common Errors in the Use of English*, 314.

¹²Pryse, *English Without Tears*, 59.

¹³Tonga, ed. *Use of English for Polytechnics: Grammar. Vol. I*, 44.

¹⁴Ibid., 49.

¹⁵Eze, *Journalism and Christian Writing*, 94.

¹⁶Eyisi, *Common Errors in the Use of English*, 323. ¹⁷Ibid. 323.; ¹⁸Ibid., 322.;

¹⁹Ibid., 324.; ²⁰Ibid., 323.

²¹Eze, *Journalism and Christian Writing*, 113.

²²Ibid.

GLOSSARY

- Abstract:** Expressing a quality apart from an object that is observable by sense organs.
- Accuracy:** Freedom from mistake or error.
- Advance Story:** Story written before or *in advance* of the event being reported.
- Anecdote:** A short account or story of some interesting incident or single event.
- Antagonism:** Actively expressed opposition.
- Beat:** Place or places where a reporter goes regularly to look for news stories.
- Boldface:** A heavy black type.
- Brevity:** Expression in few words; conciseness.
- Censorship:** The control by government on what the press releases to the public.
- Clarity:** The quality or state of being clear and easy to understand.
- Column Inches:** The total number of inches in all the columns of a given space or story.
- Communiqué:** Brief statements or report of a private meeting of importance.
- Communicate:** Transmit information, thought or feeling so that it is satisfactorily received or understood.
- Compositor:** A person in printing shop who arranges and sets types. He is Typesetter.
- Concise:** Brief, marked by brevity of expression.
- Conflict:** Competitive or opposing action between people or between people and nature.
- Consequence:** Something produced by a cause or necessarily following from a set of conditions.
- Continuity:** Smooth, uninterrupted flow of thought expressed in words (as used in journalism).
- Contrast:** A person or thing exhibiting unexpected difference upon comparison with another (as used in journalism).
- Copy:** News material sent by either the reporter or a correspondent to the newspaper house; written manuscript of a news or feature story.
- Correspondent:** A reporter whose work is to collect certain types of news and sends to newspaper houses and national news agencies.
- Covering Story:** Story written about an event; the story 'covers' the event as it takes place.
- Credentials:** A certificate given to a person to show that he/she has a right to confidence or to the exercise of a certain duty.
- Deadline:** Last possible minute a story may be turned into an editor; time limit.
- Dummy:** In publishing, it is a page or volume pasted up to show the printer its general make-up or format.
- Duplicator:** A machine for making copies of written or typewritten matter.
- Editor:** One who prepares news articles or stories for publication.
- Editorial:** Opinion expressed by an editor about a particular public issue.
- Factual:** Restricted to or based on fact; something that has actual existence.
- Flowery:** Marked by the use of many words for a grand effect rather than a simple communication.

Freelance: Writing without being hired or authorized to write, but with the thought of selling such writing wherever possible.

Human Interest: Interesting things that happen to people; quality that appeals to people and arouses an emotional response in them.

Journalist: A person who gathers, writes, edits and publishes news through newspapers, magazines, even for radio and television.

Kill a Story: To cancel the printing of a story already sent to press.

Lead: The first paragraph in a news or feature story.

Letter Guides: These are plastic blades with letters incised on them and they are used to trace different sizes and styles of letters on the stencil.

Libel: A statement published without just cause and tending to expose another to public contempt.

Mass Media: Different organs for communicating to the public like radio, television, newspapers, and magazines.

Mimeograph: A machine for making copies of written or typewritten matter.

Narrative Style: Reporting of a succession of events in chronological order and usually with description of the persons involved.

News Release: A story written and sent to news media by an organization, as opposed to a news story written by a newspaper reporter.

Objectivity: Ability to see reality apart from personal feelings or prejudices.

Plagiarism: Copying something from a publication as if you wrote it yourself.

Press Censorship: Restrictions imposed on the Press by government, which have the effect of gagging or muzzling the press in the event of violations.

Press Release: The plans of governments or organizations which they send out for public consumption.

Prominence: The quality of importance or standing out from the ordinary.

Proximity: The quality of being near.

Publication: Disseminating information through the printed page to the public.

Public Relations: The business of inducing the public to have understanding for and goodwill toward a person, firm or an institution.

Readability: The level or ease or difficulty with which something may be read.

Reporter: One who collects news for the newspaper, radio or television.

Slant: To interpret or write with a special interest to reach a special audience.

Slug: One or two words at the top of a manuscript to identify it by subject.

Stencil: A thin sheet of metal, paper, cardboard, etc., having letters or designs cut through it.

Style: A way of expressing thought in language; the plan followed in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and type arrangement.

Stylus: A hard-pointed, pen-shaped instrument for marking on stencils used in a reproducing machine.

Timeliness: The quality of being recent.

Type Face: The part of printing type that makes the impression on paper.

Wire Service: The sending of news by telegram; agency that sends out news copy by wire to subscribers.

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ABOUT THE BOOK

It is a known fact that throughout history, the people who have had the greatest impact on other people's lives have been those skilled in writing or speaking. Writers have contributed in no small measure to the progress in the world in virtually all fields of human endeavor.

Unfortunately, there has been a serious decline in the art of writing due to misplaced priorities coupled with the demands writing makes on people. Even teachers rationalize in an effort to dissuade inquisitive students from demanding for textbooks. Worse still, many academic juggernauts have passed away without committing anything to writing. This failure to write has resulted in the scarcity of textbooks by African authors, which has given rise to importation of books and other educational materials abroad.

Therefore, the main thrust of this masterpiece entitled Journalism and Creative Writing is to create in the readers the hunger to write for posterity. It is with great expectation that this book would surely pay every effort put in reading it that I recommend it to all and sundry. Give this Magnum Opus a place in the shelf of your library.