UNIT 3:

WHAT READING SKILLS ARE NEEDED?

OBJECTIVES:

3.1 Students are able to discern facts from opinions.

3.2 Students are able to make use of the clues to help identify or formulate the writer's thesis.

3.3 Students analyse text organisation and identify the writer's refutation.

3.4 Students understand construction of arguments, deductive and inductive reasoning.

3.5 Students are able to draw generalisation and inferences.

3.6 Students recognise tools for identifying tone of voice: connotative meanings, figurative language, and point of view.

3.7 Students are able to evaluate arguments and evidence.

UNIT 3

WHAT READING SKILLS ARE NEEDED?

3.1 DISTINGUISHING FACTS FROM OPINIONS

In this unit we will investigate facts and opinions in details. Facts refers to verifiable statements. Facts are employed extensively in any kind of text. But not all statements are facts. The Earth revolves around the sun, this table is square are instances of facts. However, even statements that look like facts may not be verifiable, hence not facts, but merely opinions. The latter when widely accepted tends to be taken as facts. For example, the quote *'Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months'* by Oscar Wilde certainly is well received and rings true for many, yet it is not a fact.

In this unit, we pay attention to facts and opinions, how and where they are used, how one eludes as the other and if the writer does so on purpose. Aware of these, the reader is able to become an independent yet informed thinker as they encounter a decision-making situation by putting facts and opinions into good use.

We have covered in *Some clues that the readers can make use of as a guide to distinguishing facts from opinions are*:

3.1.1 VERBS THAT SUGGEST SUBJECTIVITY OR UNCERTAINTY:
I THINK, PERSONALLY, IT SEEMS, ETC.

3.1.2 ADJECTIVES:
WISE, INTERESTING, DISTORTED, GOOD, ETC.

EXAMPLE 1

(a) *A picture with 452 likes. Smiling, leaning against a podium, with my chin tilted up*, (b) I looked accomplished and content in the photo from my medical school white coat ceremony. (c)

Later, I felt accomplished and content with the amount of attention it garnered. (d) The likes seemed to indicate that people supported my choice of profession, I looked good, or both.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arianna-yanes/a-month-without-social-media_b_10119504.html

The paragraph exhibits a good blend of facts and opinions. Close examination reveals that the italic faced type in (a) 'A picture with 452 likes. Smiling, leaning against a podium, with my chin tilted up,' describes a picture capturing her on her graduation ceremony, hence a fact—the 452 likes, too a fact. (b) 'I looked accomplished and content in the photo from my medical school white coat ceremony' describes her facial expression in the picture—it is the writer's assessment of her looks, hence an opinion. Moving on to (c) 'Later, I felt accomplished and content with the amount of attention it garnered' where the writer describes her feelings toward the welcoming responses from her audience, this can be viewed as a fact, as it outright says how she feels. Finally, (d) 'The likes seemed to indicate that people supported my choice of profession, I looked good, or both' really captures her reading of 'likes', which can be safely assumed to be 'an opinion'.

Linguistically, we take note of the verbs 'looked' in (b) and 'seemed' in (d). These are verbs that suggest subjectivity.

EXAMPLE II

(a) Those who've been raising alarms about Facebook are right: Almost every minute that we spend on our smartphones and tablets and laptops, thumbing through favorite websites and scrolling through personalized feeds, we're pointed toward foregone conclusions. (b) We're pressured to conform.
https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/22/opinion/sunday/how-facebook-warps-our-worlds.html?_r=0

This paragraph begs the readers to question:

a Are those people really right on account of raising alarms about Facebook? Could there be anyone who brushes off such alarms about Facebook as nonsense? This really is a matter of opinion.

b Are we pointed toward the pressure to conform? Again, is this really true for everyone. Again, this is subjective.

Taking a close examination of the paragraph, we don't see the verbs that show reservation like 'look' or 'seem' as we witnessed earlier. Rather, we see the writer phrases the idea with the verbs that suggest 'reality'. Here, the writer uses 'are' and 'are pointed toward' in (a) and 'are pressured' in (b). The obvious linguistic characteristics that flags opinion is 'right'. Adjectives possess subjectivity. 'Right' for one may not be 'right' for others. What comes next is 'almost', ridding the sentence of complete certainty—the writer hedges the time we use logging on to social network. Yet to claim that social network users are headed toward the 'foregone' conclusions, being pressure to conform, can be entirely a hasty conclusion as well to some who disagree. Then, 'are pressured to conform' definitely sounds like a fact in its looks, but we established that the statement draws splitting opinion.

We've seen so far that facts and opinions mingle nicely in a text. But taking note of the adjectives and some verbs or phrases helps us distinguish facts from opinions. Let's explore further and see if the writer might insinuate his view in his piece, be it on purpose or not.

3.1.3 INDIRECT SPEECH

In the process of developing an article, the writer go through some data that he cannot possibly gain first-hand. Direct quotes are common in an article, but they are not used all through the piece. Indirect speech are also abundant, and finally the writer summarises the data in his own words. When the writer does so, he risks projecting his own opinions into the piece. To illustrate, let's look at the following statements.

EXAMPLE III

a People were less willing to discuss the Snowden-NSA story in social media than they were in person.

b Social media did not provide an alternative discussion platform for those who were not willing to discuss the Snowden-NSA story.

c In both personal settings and online settings, people were more willing to share their views if they thought their audience agreed with them.

d Previous 'spiral of silence' findings as to people's willingness to speak up in various settings also apply to social media users.

e Facebook and Twitter users were also less likely to share their opinions in many face-to-face settings. This was especially true if they did not feel that their Facebook friends or Twitter followers agreed with their point of view.

Overall, the findings indicate that in the Snowden case, social media did not provide new forums for those who might otherwise remain silent to express their opinions and debate issues.

http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/08/26/social-media-and-the-spiral-of-silence/#fn-11806-1

This data is taken from pew research, an active credible English poll house. What tone of voice can we detect from the statement? Does the writer exhibit her grudge at all? As the readers, what do we feel about social media role being an alternative venue for expressing opinions? The findings from A to C have been written in the most objective way possible, and the conclusion derived from the data is neutral.

Now, let's look at how the poll result is reported in an article.

Social media is not living up to its promise of being an online outlet for discussion that mirrors our communications and conversations that take place in the offline world. In fact, people are less willing to discuss important issues on social media, than they are in real life, a new report from Pew Research Center has found.

https://techcrunch.com/2014/08/26/social-media-is-silencing-personal-opinion-even-in-the-offline-world/

The idea that has been translated into the piece seems more dramatic than the report itself. This is an example of how the writer interprets the information and projects her own opinion into the piece.

3.1.4 UNDERLYING MESSAGES

EXAMPLE IV

A recent survey says people are happier and laugh 50% more when talking to a friend face-to-face. So, it's safe to conclude that virtual friendships don't count any more. (I)

It's the same scenario with most of us. We have hundreds of — some even have 1,000-plus — friends on social networking sites, but only a handful of 'real' ones. Real friends whom we hang out with, share personal details and spend quality time with. And yet, we keep chatting with our virtual friends on social networking sites almost on a daily basis, instead of nurturing real friendships. (2)

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/relationships/love-sex/Virtual-vs-real-friends/articleshow/19740338.cms

The first underlined statement—So, it's safe to conclude that virtual friendships don't count any more—is evidently an opinion. Again, we see evaluative adjective 'safe' is used. Also, two persons may not reach the same conclusion. In fact, it would be a wonder if many people would come to the same conclusion that 'virtual friendships don't count any more'. Again, the paragraph proves a good example of a neat mixture of facts and opinion. We should also keep in mind that in picking one piece of data over another to support one's view, the writer, arguably, has expressed his opinion. (Cromwell, 2009). In this particular instance, in order to claim that it's safe to conclude that virtual friendships don't count any more, the writer has chosen this particular study so that it ascertains his claim.

The second paragraph is all about opinions. The writer operates on many assumptions. Firstly, the writer assumes that the reader is in the same situation as described in the study she picks to present. Then, she assumes that 'we'—the writer herself and the reader—have hundreds of virtual friends but only a few real friends. She carries on assuming 'we' spend time talking every day with these virtual friends. She finally suggests that 'we' should foster 'real' friendships, which clearly she means offline not online.

3.2 IDENTIFYING THE WRITER'S THESIS

The writer's thesis is the writer's position on the issue. By this definition, to be able to identify the writer thesis, firstly we must identify the issue and then figure out what the writer thinks of the issue. Identifying the writer's thesis in argumentative texts, however challenging, is not an impossible task. The writer usually provides us with many hints. Once we have learned to read all the hints and make use of them, the writer's thesis is more easily spotted on.

Before we are to be walked through the steps that help us identify the writer's thesis, it is important to note the following characteristics of the writer's thesis.

- ✔ The writer's thesis must be written in a statement.
- ✔ The thesis statement cannot be a question.
- ✔ The thesis statement must reflect the writer's view on the issue.

As stated, the writer's thesis is tightly knitted to the issue, it is very important that we figure out the issue before we recognise and formulate the writer's thesis. The following steps are some guidelines in helping us achieving this task.

3.2.1 THE TITLE

We can look at the title of the articles. More often than not, the title of the articles clearly suggests what the writer thinks about the issue. Examine the following titles.

EXAMPLE V

1. Hear them Roar

2. Secure your Energy before it's too late

Note that the first title does not tell much about the article, but the second one does says a lot. We know right upfront the writer persuades the reader to save energy.

3.2.2 THE LEAD-IN

A lead-in is actually a part of the introduction; it is written in a way that aims to grab the reader's attention and equally important captures the main idea of the text. Generally, the reader scans the lead-in and decides if he is interested in the article. Reading the lead-in, therefore, helps us get some idea what the article is about. Let's examine the following examples.

EXAMPLE VI

1. Hear them Roar

Female dissidents are rewriting the rules in countries where they can't even show their faces.

2. Secure your Energy before it's too late

Thailand has alternative fuel options; the government must support their development and implementation.

The leads-in clearly add the needed information for the reader's quick scan before he reads the piece. In the first example, while we are clueless reading the title, we know that in muslim countries, women are fighting for something. In the second example, we know that the writer calls for government support of alternative fuel development and implementation.

3.2.3 THE INTRODUCTION OF THE TEXT

If reading the title has not revealed the clue as to what the writer's thesis is, nor does the text come with the lead-in, we could start by reading the introduction. When stated, the thesis is commonly placed at the end of the introductory or at the beginning of the body paragraphs.

3.2.4 THE FIRST SENTENCE

When the thesis is not explicitly stated, read the first sentence of each paragraph in order to try to get the gist of the whole text.

3.2.5 THE WRITER'S ARGUMENTS

Alternatively, we may list all the points—the main idea—of each paragraph. These are likely the writer's arguments. When it becomes more challenging identifying the writer's thesis, we could try and see what idea the arguments the writer has listed support.

3.3 ANALYSING THE TEXT ORGANISATION AND RECOGNISING REFUTATION

As previously discussed in **Unit 2 Text Components**, in the body section of an argumentative text, the writer offers arguments and to further strengthen his case, he offers refutation or rebuttal.

Here, we examine refutation or rebuttal in details. Refutation refers to the action of proving a statement or theory to be wrong or false (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

3.3.1 THE STRUCTURE OF REFUTATION

Refutation consists of two components:

3.3.1.1 Acknowledgment of the opposing view

To begin with the writer needs to address the opposing arguments—so-called counter-arguments.

3.3.1.2 The writer's rebuttal

Rebuttal is an act of proving the opposing argument is erroneous. In other words, it's the writer's way of pointing out the flaws in the opponent's reasoning.

3.3.2 SIGNALS OF REFUTATION

Linguistically, we could take note of the following signals:

3.3.2.1 The report verbs:

(Opponents/the opposition of … [may] '*assert, claim, argue, attest, maintain, believe* etc'. **However,** …

In some texts, neutral reporting verbs like 'reveal, indicate etc.' are used.

3.3.2.2 Passive structures:

Sometimes refutation comes in passive structures as shown here.

It could be claimed, it has been asserted that, or it might/may be argued that… **However,** (the writer's rebuttal).

EXAMPLE VII

During the past 10 to 20 years, there has been a growing intrusion of pharmaceutical companies and medical device makers into the day-to-day practice of medicine. Industry gifts—pads, pens, logo bags, and the like—have grown commonplace. In many doctors' offices, hospitals, and medical centers, the free lunch, courtesy of industry sponsors, has turned into an accepted way of life. And these gifts can also include dinners at expensive restaurants (to hear a lecture by a physician also being compensated by industry) or free travel to

meetings at fancy resorts (to participate in a medical education event sponsored by industry). (1)

It has been claimed that these are ways of strengthening relations with the pharmaceutical industry. Of course, I am not saying I don't value your relationships with the industry. Indeed, we depend on your industry partners to carry the fruits of your research to market. At the same time, data increasingly show that even small gifts influence the drugs physicians prescribe. On a larger scale, physicians who serve as paid consultants to industry are more likely to recommend the approval of a drug or device to the FDA than those not receiving consulting fees. (2)

Adapted from www.businessweek.com

The text deals with doctors and medical professionals receiving gifts from pharmaceutical companies. The writer finds it unethical and in more than one way influencing doctors in their prescribing medication.

In the second paragraph where the writer starts his argument against gift taking practices of doctors and heath care professionals, the writer acknowledges the opposing view--gift-giving practice may be considered as ways of expressing gratitude and valuing relationship with the pharmaceutical companies. Then, he goes on by pointing out the worrying data which show that such practices lead to favourable treatments when these doctors prescribe the medication. The writer successfully raises questions in the reader's mind —Are gift-giving and taking practices harmless relationship building? And finally, the reader is likely to draw the conclusion based on the data given that the practices have influenced doctors in a certain way.

3.3.3 THE GENERAL REFUTATION PATTERNS

So far, we've established that refutation is a part in the body of the text, and it renders strength to the writer's argument. Refutation consists of a) acknowledgement of the opposition view and b) the writer's extensive rebuttal. In this section, we're going to look at the general patterns of refutation.

3.3.3.1 Pattern A

a The writer's thesis

b The counter-argument(s) + REFUTATION

c The writer's arguments A, B, C

In this pattern, the thesis statement is immediately followed by the opposing view and the writer's refutation. The technique is useful when the opponent's position is shared by the general audience. The writer starts out with 'common' yet possibly 'misguided' beliefs or a myth. Then, he presents the flaws, the inconsistencies or the disadvantages of such ideas. Finally, the writer puts forward all his arguments to convince the reader.

3.3.3.2 Pattern B

a The writer's thesis

b The writer's arguments A, B, C

c The counter-argument(s) + REFUTATION

Here, the thesis statement is immediately followed by each of the writer's arguments. With this pattern, the writer presents his case with evidence first and then, to make his case even stronger, he addresses the opposing view and finishes up with his rebuttal. This model is powerful when the writer is certain of his strong arguments yet wishes to seal his reasoning. He does so by addressing the flaws in the opponent's reasoning, which sometimes may be an 'anticipated' counter-argument.

3.3.3.3 Pattern C

a The writer's thesis

b The counter-argument A + REFUTATION A

c The counter-argument B + REFUTATION B

d The counter-argument C + REFUTATION C

e The writer's arguments A, B, C

This model is fashioned when the writer feels the need to address the opposing view point by point. Each counter-argument is brought up alternately with the writer's rebuttal. Once done, the writer strings up all his arguments. This format works well in giving the reader comparison of the flaws in the counter-arguments.

The following excerpt illustrates the last pattern.

EXAMPLE VIII

> Opponents of technology in the classroom **believe** it is too costly to students and colleges. There is some validity to this claim; However, a bigger picture has to be viewed. The cost of technology has to be weighed with what it provides for students, a future where they can go out into the world and compete and succeed. Other opponents of technology **maintain** technology in the classroom and around it decrease face-to-face communication. This statement is **untrue.** Professors can still schedule conferences with students to improve communication, and because email is the preferred form of communication for students, there is more communication not less. Still other opponents of communication **see** it as a distraction and a cheating tool. Well, all new forms of communication can be a distraction if not used properly, but through professors' monitoring (when and where to use the technology) valid use of the technology can happen. Also, with harsh penalties for cheating and constant enforcement, cheating can decrease.
>
> Source:learning.hccs.edu/…/the-refutation-and-conclusion-revealed-part-4

The refutations employed by the writer include

a The expensive cost of technology: although it is costly, it helps train the students to work in the real world.

b The decrease of face-to-face contact: not only can professors arrange conference times, the students-teachers contact can be made through emails.

c The potentiality of distraction and cheating: any communication tools can be distracting, but with the professors' supervision the problem can be solved, as with cheating, where harsh measures will deter students from doing.

PRACTICE

Directions: Read the following article and identify the pattern of refutation.

DRUNK DRIVERS Korea Herald

More than 1.52 million people received a special pardon to mark the 64th anniversary of Liberation Day on Aug. 15. The government said that the mass presidential pardon is part of its efforts to help low-income groups and provide realistic assistance in the current economic downturn. (1)

The logic behind this round of presidential pardons is that it would give small, first-time offenders who inadvertently broke the law while trying to earn a living a chance to start afresh. It is ostensibly in line with President Lee Myung-bak's recent pledge to help the poor. (2)

While the goals are worthy, *a close look at who are being pardoned is worrisome*. More than 98.5 percent of those pardoned are traffic law violators. Of these, 82.2 percent are simple offenders who have accrued demerit points for breaking the traffic law. Having demerit points does not affect one's ability to make a living. So why erase these people's violation records? If the rule of law is to be upheld, strict application of the law is necessary. Mass presidential pardons do a disservice by diluting the strict application of the law. (3)

Even more worrisome is the fact that *people convicted of drunk driving have been pardoned*. While the government has excluded people with two drunk driving offences in the past five years, those caught drunk driving without a license and drunk drivers involved in accidents in which people were hurt or killed, the fact that drunk drivers have been pardoned at all is regrettable. (4)

Drunk drivers put not only themselves but innocent people at risk. By wiping the slate clean, the government sends the message that drunk driving is not a serious crime. The government, which should enforce strict rules against drunk driving, has reduced its own power to prevent drunk driving with the presidential pardons. Around the world, governments are stepping up restrictions against drunk driving. It is lamentable that the Korean government is issuing pardons to drunk drivers. (5)

Where in the text does the writer offer his refutation? _____

The writer's refutation appears in paragraphs 2 and 3.

==> Acknowledging the opposing view: The logic behind the presidential pardon is to give small, first-time offenders inadvertently violating the law to start afresh during the economic downturn. (P.2)

==> Rebuttal: Having demerit points does not impede one's ability to make a living.

The refutation pattern that the writer has adopted is Pattern a). After his offer of the background to the issue in paragraph 1, the writer proceeds with the refutation before putting forward his arguments against the issue of indiscriminate presidential pardon to law offenders.

In close examination, we can see that the writer starts his argument from paragraph 2 onwards. First, he acknowledges the logic behind the presidential pardons of low-income prisoners. Then, he attacks the flaw of such practice, arguing that in practice, traffic law violators or drunk drivers have also been pardoned. This, to him, makes the law no longer sacred. Moreover, even with the screening system, drunk driving violators have actually been pardoned despite the fact that drunk driving is a serious crime and deserves severe punishment.

3.4 UNDERSTANDING ARGUMENT CONSTRUCTION AND INDUCTIVE AND DEDUCTIVE REASONING

Reasoning is the DNA of arguments. As the reader, we should understand the reasoning techniques that the writer harnesses so that we can evaluate if the writer's argument is valid and sound. This section is devoted to the basics of the inductive and deductive reasoning. It will help us to have a clearer thinking pattern and be able to assess the writer's reasoning.

Let's dissect the following examples so we understand the structure of arguments.

Example VII

a. This movie is directed by Tim Burton. *It must be fun!*

b. *We should avoid going to Silom area during rush hours*. The traffic is congested.

A. and b. consist of two statements. The second statement in the pair can be labelled a conclusion. How is each conclusion arrived at? In a. The speaker may have seen a lot of Tim Burton's movies and most of them are fun. So, he assumes that this movie, which is also directed by Tim Burton, should also be fun. Likewise, in B the person may be a frequent visitor to Silom area during rush hour, and it usually takes him hours. Naturally, he suggests us avoid the area during rush hour.

Now let's look at another way of arriving at a conclusion. Examine the following examples.

EXAMPLE IX

c. If one is looking for a Gucci handbag, she should go to Siam Paragon. *Almost all of the designer brands are there!*

d. Is Sarah thinking of taking EG 351? *No way, she can't. She hasn't even taken EG 222, has she?*

C. and d. differ from a. and b. In c. the conclusion that one is likely to find Gucci at Siam Paragon is derived from the fact that almost all of the designer brands are available at Siam Paragon, and Gucci is a renown designer product.

Similarly, in d. when Sarah's friend comes to the conclusion that Sarah isn't eligible to enrol in the course mentioned, it is because she is aware that EG 222 is a pre-requisite for EG 351, and she knows for a fact that Sarah hasn't taken the course, so Sarah fails to meet such requirement.

3.4.1 INDUCTIVE REASONING

Inductive reasoning is the gathering of data in an attempt to draw a general conclusion out of those data. In our everyday life we possess and collect a lot of data and if we repeatedly experience the same things for quite sometime, we are likely to draw a conclusion about that thing. Examples a. and b. fall into this type of reasoning. As explained above, the conclusion that Tim Burton's new movie must be good undergoes the inductive reasoning process, where one draw a generalisation out of the experience of having seen his movies for many times. The other conclusion that one should avoid Silom during rush hour, too, is generalised from the fact that the speaker has been to the area a few times.

3.4.2 DEDUCTIVE REASONING

Deductive reasoning usually falls into syllogism which is 'a rigidly organised series of three statements, the last of which is the conclusion drawn from the preceding two, which are called the major and minor premises' (Toulmin 1958). It is used to prove the validity of certain kinds of arguments.

To illustrate, let's suppose that a writer is arguing for gay marriage. He could employ this type of reasoning by offering the following set of statements.

EXAMPLE X

Major premise: All human can get married.

Minor premise: Gays are human.

Conclusion: Gays can get married.

We've previously covered 'premises', which refers to a statement(s) that logically leads to the conclusion. Now let's look at the common structure of deductive reasoning in detail. The set of statements that comprise premises and a conclusion is called 'syllogism'. The example above captures the standard syllogism, where we require one major premise at least one minor premise and one conclusion.

Major premise: a premise that contains the predicate term of the conclusion. (**B**)

Minor premise: a premise that contains the subject term of the conclusion. (**A**)

The gays-can-get-married conclusion consists of Gays (**C**) can get married (**B**). The gays-can-get-married conclusion comes from the two premises, which can be represented in **A**, **B**, and **C** as follows.

Major premise: All human (**A**)	can get married (**B**)	or **A** = **B**
Minor premise: Gays (**C**)	are human (**A**)	or **C** = **A**
Conclusion/Claim: Gays (**C**)	can get married	or **C** = **B**

PRACTICE I

Directions: Fill in the space provided with appropriate keywords.

1. Lisa is a celebrity, so she loves shopping at Siam Paragon.

MAJOR premise: Most celebrities (**A**) go shopping at Siam Paragon. (**B**)

MINOR premise: Lisa (**C**) is a celebrity (**A**).

Conclusion/Claim: Lisa (**C**) may love shopping at Siam Paragon (**B**).

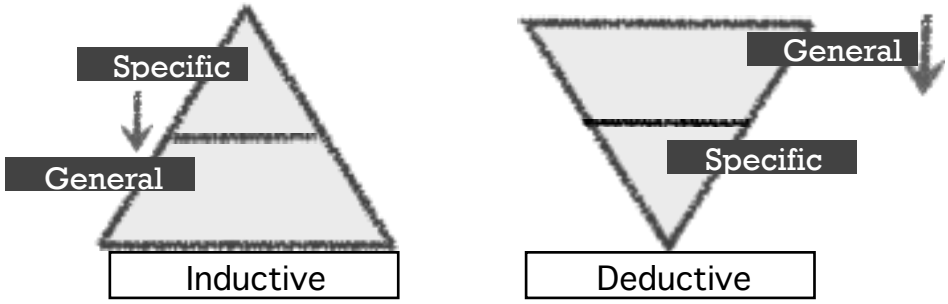
2. Karen workers(**C**) might not be treated fairly (**A**) by government officials. They are non-Thai (**B**).

MAJOR premise: No fair treatment (NO **A**) is offered to non-Thai. (**B**)

MINOR premise: Karen workers (**C**) are non-Thai (**B**).

Conclusion/Claim: No fair treatment (NO **A**) is offered to Karen workers (**C**).

To recap, the two types of reasoning that the writer employs to present his arguments are the inductive reasoning and the deductive reasoning. An inductive inference begins with particular facts and proceeds to a larger, general statement. Conversely, deductive inference begins with a general statement and proceeds to particular facts. The following diagrams illustrate the concepts.



It is worth-noting that not all arguments are good arguments. Critical readers always examine if the writer has presented a sound argument.

As for inductive reasoning, the reader should look at the evidence the writer uses and see if it is relevant, recent, representative and lends strong support to the writer' claim. A scholar in accounting field who writes a review on cosmetics product is not a relevant authority to be cited as evidence to promote selling of the product. Nor is the rigorously-conducted research in the 70s when one wants to sell dietary supplements in the 21st century. One may want to pause at a claim that a new Chinese restaurant down the block serves superb wanton soup based on a word of mouth of a few customers, now that he can go online and check customers' reviews on the place instead.

The same goes with deductive reasoning. To evaluate whether the syllogism is valid or not, we have to consider not only the conclusion but also the major and minor premises. To ascertain a valid conclusion, the major and minor

premises must be true. For example, is it true that 'all celebrities love going to Siam Paragon?'. If it is not, then the premise is false. This essentially leads to the false conclusion and, evidently, an illogical argument.

We will examine logical fallacy at length in **3.8 JUDGING EVIDENCE AND EVALUATING ARGUMENTS.**

3.5 MAKING GENERALISATION AND DRAWING INFERENCES

3.5.1 MAKING GENERALISATION

A generalisation is a broad statement drawn from a set of information that is used to apply to a larger group of examples.

Television news readers are seen as highly dependable, respectable and impartial'. Overweight people are often seen as jolly. Examples of racial stereotypes include Jews seen as shrewd and mercenary, Japanese as shrewd and sly, Black people as lazy and happy-go-lucky and White Americans as industrious and intelligent. (Braly and Katz, 1933)

Stereotyping is a good case of making a generalisation, or 'over-generalisation' to be precise. Obviously, we may disagree with most of the said qualities. But it clearly illustrates the point that generalisation is only a 'broad' conclusion derived from a set of data and is not always right. Racial stereotyping starts from the fact that when some members of a particular race behave in a certain way, people draw a general conclusion that the rest of the members would behave in such a predictable way. In reality, it is possible that an encounter with a few members of a group may reveal the stereotype, yet it doesn't mean that one should simply generalise such character to all members of the particular group.

We have made the case of a simple yet bad use of generalisation. For our purpose here, we are talking about the use of making generalisation in reasoning. Making a generalisation is the basic process of reasoning.

EXAMPLE XI

Marijuana can be used to treat and prevent the eye disease glaucoma, which increases pressure in the eyeball, damaging the optic nerve and causing loss of vision.

Marijuana decreases the pressure inside the eye, according to the National Eye Institute: "Studies in the early 1970s showed that marijuana, when smoked, lowered intraocular pressure (IOP) in people with normal pressure and those with glaucoma."

These effects of the drug may slow the progression of the disease, preventing blindness.

http://www.businessinsider.com/health-benefits-of-medical-marijuana-2014-4

This article is entitled *24 Benefits of Cannabis*. Scrutinising the text, we can see that generalisation is at play in the excerpt. To claim that *Marijuana can be used to treat*

and prevent the eye disease glaucoma, the writer first comes up with the conclusion that marijuana use may slow the progression of glaucoma, based on the studies which found that *marijuana, when smoke lowered intraocular pressure in people with normal pressure and those with glaucoma*.

Let's examine the reasoning process, which is based on making a generalisation. First, the data from the studies reveal positive results from the use of marijuana. The first broad statement is made about the benefit of marijuana —It may slow the progression of glaucoma and prevent blindness. Then, from this findings, the writer makes the claim about the benefit of marijuana use.

As discussed in **3.4 INDUCTIVE AND DEDUCTIVE REASONING**, a claim based on specific instances is inductive reasoning. Our example is the case of inductive reasoning.

An argumentative writer drives home his arguments by drawing on a generalisation. He could provide evidence to reel the reader into making a generalisation in the way that he wants. When not very careful, the reader is inclined to buy into the writer's argument only because he feels that it 'makes sense', given the set of data the writer has provided. It is very important that the reader should be able to deconstruct the writer's argument. They must also evaluate the suggested generalisation whether it is valid and sound.

So far, we have established the writer's *main* purpose in writing the text, which essentially impacts the writer's *overall* tone of voice and reflects his *general* attitude. Note also that along the course of his writing, when the writer advances his argument, offering evidence in support of his argument, the writer always has a certain purpose in mind. For instance, in a piece where a writer vigorously advocates for legalisation of organ purchase he could cite the case of such law in Iran to make the point that it is a practical solution to organ shortage. A proponent of cosmetic surgery industry illustrates cases after cases of superstars rising to fame who have gone under the knife to drive home the point that plastic surgery does make a difference in the entertaining industry, reinforcing the underlying dream of teenagers who aspire to improve their looks. Keeping this in mind, the engaged reader keeps questioning the writer's purpose in offering facts, stats, stories etc. Doing so, the reader is able to critically analyse and evaluate the writer's position and his message.

3.5.2 DRAWING INFERENCES

If you are on the road and hear the screeching sound followed by a big bang, without seeing what is actually happening, you might intuitively think that there is a car crash on the road. Or if you are using a computer and it shuts down automatically without warning, you may conclude that your CPU might have died or your computer might have got virus infected. In the above cases, you draw conclusions, based on the information you have. Making inference in real life as illustrated in the situation above is the mental process that we exercise all the time. In reading, the task certainly becomes more challenging. Ideas and meanings are not always obvious or are explicitly stated by the author; instead, it may be implied —suggested rather than spelled out in a straightforward manner. Therefore, the reader has to infer—draw conclusion or make judgment—the meaning or intended message based on the information given in the text. Drawing inferences often requires us to draw on background knowledge, experience or values. Let's look at some examples now.

EXAMPLE XII

Cellphones and Driving: No

Congress should pass the ALERT Drivers Act that bans texting behind the wheel, but getting drivers to put down their cellphones will be more difficult.

From the above, there are at least three inferences that we can draw. Firstly, the ALERT Drivers Act is still being in consideration of the Congress. By 'should', the modal auxiliary verb which suggests obligation, we know we could only use this verb with the event that has yet to realise. Secondly, Many people in this state tend to use mobile phone while driving. To reach this inference, we must draw on our knowledge background that a bill is proposed in to solve a civic problem. Last, the writer believes that people may still drive and talk, despite the ALERT Drivers Act. This last inference comes from 'but getting drivers to put down their cellphones will be more difficult'. Here, the writer evaluates the situation by drawing on his experience and background knowledge before coming to the conclusion by the use of 'more difficult'. This suggests what he predicts if the Act is approved.

EXAMPLE XIII

Vladimir Putin Comes Half Clean on Olympic Doping

Russia's abominable record of doping its athletes in international competitions finally forced President Vladimir Putin to concede some shortcomings this week — but not his government's basic culpability in the cheating. (1)

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/03/opinion/vladimir-putin-comes-half-clean-on-olympic-doping.html?ref=topics

In this example, we may reach quite a few inferences. First, even before reading the news itself, we may infer that Russian athletes have been accused of doping in the Olympic. This is derived from the fact that Vladimir Putin is the president of the Republic of Russia. Then, we can probably conclude that the accusations have been going on for a certain period of time before Putin publicly addresses the problem. This inference is drawn from the fact that the writer says 'Russia's abominable record of doping'. Also, the writer still holds a negative view towards Putin's public address on the issue. This is implied by the writer's use of 'finally forced'. Based on our value, we would expect the head of a state to man up and take responsibility for the undesirable act of his people, which is not the case here, as Putin has been forced to come (half) 'clean' after criticism and pressures on the issue have become more intense.

These examples illustrate how the reader could 'read between the lines' and get more from what the writer actually says in the text. Understanding inference gives the reader more insights into the writer's message and definitely promotes the reader's critical thinking skill.

Before we progress to the next discussion on inference, let's make a clear distinction between inference and paraphrase. Students have often mistaken one for the other. Always remember that inferences are <u>not</u> stated in the text. As readers, you have to think beyond what is literally stated. On the contrary, paraphrases are <u>restatements</u> of the same ideas.

The following statement taken from the text Less Airbrushing, More Reality illustrates the point. In this instance, the writer cites Crawford as evidence to support her argument against manipulation of women portrayal on magazines.

Cindy Crawford once famously said: "Even I don't wake up looking like Cindy Crawford." (4)

Possible inference: '*Even a supermodel like Cindy Crawford needs a retouch of her snapshot*'.

Paraphrasing: '*Cindy Crawford does not look very much gorgeous when she wakes up*'.

3.5.2.1 Inferences in Reasoning

Now, let's take a further step in examining inference. Examine the following example.

EXAMPLE XIV

The Future is Green, The Future is Nuclear

> The very first inference is that the article may be about an environmental issue. This can be tricky if you don't know that green is the colour that is symbolically used to refer to the environment. Another inference could be that in the future the use of nuclear power may be necessary. This is signified by the use of 'is'. And finally, we could interpret that nuclear is friendly to the environment. This last inference comes from making connection between the future, green and nuclear which are all equated by the use of 'be'.

We discussed generalisation and its play in inductive reasoning. Inference has its part in reasoning too. In argument, it is not unusual to see the writer making use of inferences. Looking up in the cloudy sky, you say it looks like it is going to rain. Your claim about the high probability of the rain is based on the **unstated** premise that the cloudy sky usually comes before it rains. It's cloudy now. The rain is likely to come. You can see that the prediction of this natural phenomenon requires your ability to connect the dots between the cloudy sky (which you literally see) and the rain (in your experience).

In the case of 'The Future is Green, The Future is Nuclear', the syllogism goes like this:

Premise: The future is green.

(Unstated) premise: Nuclear is green.

Claim: The future is nuclear.

Whether anyone wants to challenge this syllogism is irrelevant. Indeed, we are going to look at the validity of claim in **3.8.2 LOGICAL FALLACY**. But for the sake of our discussion, we've successfully established that the 'missing' jigsaw the reader supplies into the string of statements, to make plausible and complete argument, relies on the process of making inference. Let's look at further examples.

EXAMPLE XV

> Organic Food Miles Take Toll On Environment
>
> Organic fruit and vegetables may be healthier for the dinner table, but not necessarily for the environment, a University of Alberta study shows.
>
> Food miles are defined as the distance that food travels from the field to the grocery store. The study found that the environmental cost of greenhouse gas

(CO2) emitted to transport 20 tonnes of organically grown produce was comparable to that of bringing the same amount of conventional fruit and vegetables to market.

For the study, the team collected retail price data from six grocery stores and interviewed suppliers about their shipping methods. They found that most travels by truck. Since 1970 truck shipping has increased, replacing more energy-efficient rail and water transport. What's more, many of the organic products are travelling further than the conventional food. Two items in particular, mangoes and green peppers, were shipped much further than their conventional counterparts (4,217 and 1,476 kilometres, respectively).

https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/06/070606113311.htm

From the excerpt, we've derived the claim that organic food that travel a long way is not environmentally friendly. This is based on the findings from the study — organic food travels longer distances than conventional fruit and vegetables. The unstated premise that the reader intuitively supplies to understand the writer's claim is the distance food travels causes damage to the environment. Hence, they are said to 'take tolls' on the environment.

Putting forward his argument, the writer relies on the reader's ability to draw inferences for the unstated conclusion as well.

Example XVI

Generally speaking, where milk prices are equal across fat alternatives, people are much more likely to choose whole milk over lower-calorie alternatives. This is particularly noteworthy in low-income areas, where the market share of whole milk is 52%, much greater than the 25% in higher-income areas.

And when whole milk is priced at a premium — even if it's just 5% per gallon of milk (14 cents, on average) — we observed a significant shift in market share away from whole milk and toward lower-fat options. This shift to the lower-calorie options is particularly pronounced in lower-income neighborhoods, which is important because obesity has a disproportionate impact on lower-income groups.

https://hbr.org/2016/09/even-a-14-cent-food-tax-could-lead-to-healthier-choices

In this article, the author claims that food tax could contribute to healthier choice. The cited study gears the reader to these logical, yet implicit or unstated conclusions. The same pricing of whole milk and low-fat milk allows low-income people to go for their preferred choice, whole milk. And most importantly, the low-income neighbourhoods are likely to switch to low-fat milk should the price of their preferred whole milk hike. To come to this conclusion, the reader has been through the thinking process:

Premise: Whole milk and low-fat milk are currently priced the same.

Premise: Low-income families buy whole milk.

(Unstated) Conclusion: Low-income families prefer whole milk to low-fat milk.

Premise: Whole milk is priced at premium.

Premise: Shift to low-calorie milk is significant.

(Unstated) Conclusion: Price contributes to purchasing decision.

To wrap up, when we've analysed an argument, we exercise inferential skills in drawing generalisation. At the same time, while reading, we often rely on the skill in understanding the text more that what the writer explicitly says.

3.6 RECOGNISING CONNOTATION AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

In the previous section, we looked at arguments constructed by inductive and deductive reasoning, the persuasive technique called 'logos'. Let's turn our attention to the use of rhetoric devices that the writer uses to convince the reader. When using this technique, the writer draws on 'emotion' rather than 'reasoning'. Doing this, the writer makes use of connotation and figurative language.

3.6.1 CONNOTATION

Connotation is an idea suggested by a word in addition to its main meaning (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). It implies additional meaning of the word. The connotation of words can show the positive or negative attitudes of the writer towards the issue.

Selection of words to be used in the text is arguably important as it is one of the tools that suggests the writer's attitude. As the writer takes good care in selecting words to convey his message, we must be aware of his choice of words in order to fully understand what message he has intended to put across and his feelings towards a particular issue, person or idea.

Let's examine example XIV and decide which carries the positive attitude towards the fact that there were a number of tourists visiting this particular town during the holiday.

In the examples, *bustling* has the shade of excitement and energy. On the contrary, *mobbed* suggests the sense of overcrowding, restricted movement and chaos.

EXAMPLE XVII

a The city was mobbed with tourists during the holiday.

b The city was bustling with tourists during the holiday.

http://www.eecs.berkeley.edu/~ambuj/research/reports/cs182report.pdf

Sentence _____ conveys the positive tone.

mob *past tense and past participle* **mobbed**, *present participle* **mobbing** [transitive]
if people mob a famous person, they rush to get close to them and form a crowd around them.
mob [countable]
a large noisy crowd, especially one that is angry and violent
bus·tle [intransitive always + adverb/preposition]

to move around quickly, looking very busy
bustle
[singular] busy and usually noisy activity

www.ldoceonline.com

Let's try some other examples.

EXAMPLE XVIII

c. There are over 3,000 vagrants in this city.

d. There are over 3,000 people with no fixed address in this city.

e. There are over 3,000 homeless in this city.

Which sentence conveys the least offensive feeling? _____ c. _____d. _____ e.

Adapted from www.rpdp.net

3.6.2 FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Figurative language is a useful tool the writer employs to give vivid images to the readers, yield impactful description, and drives his point more effectively. The use of figurative language is effective because in only a few words, the writer is able to convey the message to the reader in a deeper sense and more effectively. Recognising figurative language needs a stretch of imagination, as its intended meaning is beyond the literal meanings of the words. There are many types of figurative language e.g. simile, metaphor, irony, alliteration, metonymy, personification, overstatement, understatement, etc. Here, we are focusing on three types of figurative devices, Simile, Metaphor, and Irony.

Simile and Metaphor are ways to compare two things that have common traits. With simile the writer uses such comparison words as 'like and as'. For instance, 'He *is as big as an elephant'*. the guy is compared to an elephant and the quality shared between the two is 'big'. Common similes include:

As for metaphor, the writer omits those words and simply says the two things are similar. For example, 'He is an elephant'. Here, the guy in question is compared to an elephant to show that he is big. Unlike simile, metaphor is a 'direct' comparison between two things without using signal words like 'as' or 'like'. Now, look at another example.

EXAMPLE XIX

The President has his hand firmly on the tiller of government and it is now plain sailing.

Adapted from http://changingminds.org/techniques/language/metaphor/everyday_metaphor.htm

The President is compared to the sailor; his hand holding firmly on the tiller portrays his control over the administration like the sailor adeptly maneuvers his boat. This implies that the government is now running as smoothly as the boat is sailing. To recognise the power of comparison that relies on simile and metaphor is to be able to identify the common characteristics of the two different things that are being compared.

The following idioms are common use of simile.

- ✓ as blind as a bat
- ✓ as cold as ice
- ✓ as gentle as a lamb
- ✓ as light as feather
- ✓ as wise as an owl
- ✓ to drink like a fish
- ✓ to eat like a horse
- ✓ to fight like cats and dogs
- ✓ to sing like an angle

3.6.2.1 IRONY

Now, let's turn our attention to Irony. Irony is *the use of words that says the opposite of what the speaker mens, often as a joke and with a tone of voice that shows this*. (Oxford Learners' Dictionary)

Irony is the indirect presentation of a contradiction between a situation, an action or expression and the context in which it occurs. The three types of irony include:

3.6.2.1.1 Verbal irony

What is said is opposite to the author's real intention. For example, if we see a girl with an extremely thick makeup, wearing a polka dotted yellow shirt, and orange pencil skirt and a pair of wedge shoes. We may say 'What a stylish girl she is!'. Our remark becomes ironic if we, however, think that the way she dresses is absolutely tasteless.

3.6.2.1.2 Situational irony

What actually happens and the reality are the opposites. For example, while the government promises to deal with pollution problem, it passed the law on tax reduction for first car ownership instead of improving and investing in more public transportation.

3.6.2.1.3 Dramatic irony

This is the form of irony applied in a play or movie where the characters, unlike the audience, act in a certain way without knowing it will result in, most of the cases, a tragic way. For example, in *The Truman Show*, the protagonist does not realise that he is living his life on a reality show.

Persuasive writers make a good use of verbal irony. Next, we explore more of the tones commonly detected in argumentative pieces—sarcastic and satirical tones.

3.6.2.2 SARCASM

Sarcasm is rather similar to irony but with more exaggeration. The intent is to make fun of or mock the intended target. Common sarcasm is achieved by the use of verbal irony. Or we can say that sarcasm is an interchangeable term of verbal irony.

For example, if our friend who possesses no cooking skills says she is going to make dinner for her boyfriend, we could mock her intent by saying 'Sure, why not serve him your Cordon Bleu dishes?'. Or, we may tease her by saying 'I didn't know you could boil an egg'.

Upon listening to a friend babble on and on about how great singer Justin Bieber is, despite feeling the opposite, we responded dead-pan that he is our favourite too.

Here, we simply state the fact or say something and mean the opposite. In daily conversations, we could be sarcastic but it is not usually ill-meant. The examples of sarcasm which occur in a friendly setting are often treated as 'mild sarcasm', since they are not really meant to hurt the intended audience or inflict negative feelings. Certainly, non-verbal language contributes to the friendly reading of the sarcasm.

Yet, in writing, when the writer employs the sarcastic tone, his remarks likely serve the purpose of mocking and making fun of the intended target. Let's check out an example of sarcasm in writing.

EXAMPLE XX

Okay so you remember the Playdoh cologne, well now there's is the attractive aroma of blue cheese by Stilton. Eau de Stilton claims to re-create the earthy and fruity aroma of Blue Stilton cheese. Apparently the perfume is part of their new campaign to entice people to eat more cheese. Maybe since they are constantly working with blue cheese they just can't smell it anymore and maybe it's completely encompassed their lives - that has to be the only logical reason why something would create this product and expect people to buy it.

What does the writer think of this blue cheese perfume?

It is clear that the writer is making fun of this blue cheese perfume. Blue cheese is a cheese known for its strong smell and not very popular among cheese eaters who fancy mild taste.

The writer's word choices are 'attractive' and 'aroma', yet he means the opposites. Obviously, the writer doesn't think that the perfume is attractive. These are examples of 'verbal irony'.

Next, when he describes the whys and wherefores of the product, the writer explains it in the way that is meant to be an insult. This demonstrates an instance of 'sarcasm'.

3.6.2.3 SATIRE

Satire aims at showing the reader the foolishness, shortcomings, folly or vice of the intended target, mostly public figures, institutions, conventional behaviours or political situations.

Satirical tone can be set by the use of irony, sarcasm, exaggeration, juxtaposition etc. It can be serious as evidenced in the widely cited Swift's *A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland Being a Burden on Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Publick*.

> "I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious nourishing and wholesome food..." In the protagonist's voice, the writer satirically suggests the Ireland poor escape poverty by selling their children as meat for the rich.

This is considered a satire because the literal interpretation of the message is impossible and defies the established convention: children cannot be raised

and served as food for someone. Also, the purpose of the message is to attack England in the early eighteenth century when poverty ruled the region.

Satire can also be humorous like most political cartoons in newspapers and magazines. Yet, most aims at improvement rather than simple humorous effect as exhibited in the following letter.

EXAMPLE XXI

Dear MOM,

You're the best! LALALand's first female prime minister - wow! Uncle Tom must really be proud of you and I'm sure dad is glad to be dubbed LalaLand's First Gentleman. I couldn't wait to brag about you to my friends at school (I'm gonna be president of the sand pit!).

I admit I am kinda worried that you won't have time for me anymore because you'll be really busy fixing LalaLand. Please don't forget to hand out tablet PCs to students like you promised. Many of them probably have never seen one in real life. Poor them, I'm already bored playing Angry Birds and street Fighter IV on my iPad II.

Please don't worry about me na krab, I have tam jaied with the fact that I have to share you with the public for the greater good (until the army plays toy soldiers again)

Anyway, su tai na, mum,

Love you,

'PEPE'

Adapted from www.nationmultimedia.com

Every single sentence aims to mock everyone and everything involved: The PM herself, her husband, her son, the country, the public, and the army. This instance of satire is in the heart-lighted fashion, though.

3.6.3 WORDS DESCRIBING TONES

To sum up, we shall look at a list of words that can be used to describe tones.

3.6.3.1 Negative tones:

accusing, accusatory, dissatisfied, attacking, angry, annoyed, coarse, furious, harsh, condescending, contemptuous, disgusted, indignant, irritated, bitter, desperate, disappointed, bored, grieving, melancholic, depressed, morose, ironic, mocking, sarcastic, satirical, pessimistic, sinister, cynical, judgmental

3.6.3.2 Neutral tones:

didactic, reverent, hesitant, reserved, apologetic, forgiving

3.6.3.3 Neutral tones:

cheerful, content, ecstatic, humorous, comforting, encouraging, soothing, friendly, loving, intriguing, fascinating, pleasant, anxious, excited

3.7 IDENTIFYING THE WRITER'S PURPOSE, POINT OF VIEW, AND ATTITUDE

3.7.1 THE WRITER'S PURPOSE

A text is written with a clear purpose. An advertisement is designed to promote needs and persuade the buyer to buy or in many cases creates non-existing need. A political speech could aim at rally support for a bill. An op-ed article seeks to campaign for gays right, to name a few. The writer's purpose can be categorised broadly in this way:

Text with 'entertainment nature' often seeks to promote positive emotional feelings; some amuse and delight the reader, others appeals to the reader's fantasy and imagination. There are many texts that aim to provoke emotions and sympathies.

Essays on 'public thought and action' seeks to raise questions, concern or awareness on a certain issue, criticise the actions of certain groups or policy makers, weaken the support of opponents or persuade the audience to act, vote, donate, etc.

Articles targeting audience of common beliefs seeks to state one's beliefs, take a stand, repeat the accepted beliefs of a group or encourage and reinforce these beliefs, and many persuade others of the correctness of certain views; gain approval and win active support.

Op-eds criticising the conduct of business and government seeks to promulgate laws, regulations, guidelines, report information needed for making new decisions, laws, policies, argue for or against certain lines of action etc. (Adapted from *Informed Writer*, 109-111)

With different purposes in mind, the writer is likely to adopt different tones in conveying his messages. If the writer wants to praise a good-doer, he can use an appreciating tone. If the writer wishes for a change in the social welfare, he may adopt the critical tone when addressing the government and change to the empathetic tone when addressing the public etc.

Equipped with the knowledge about the writer's purpose in writing the text helps us a great deal in interpreting the text and making an informed decision if we should adopt the writer's view or decide to act as persuaded. The writer's purpose in crafting a text, attitude and tone of voice are interrelated. The tone of voice that the writer employs reflects his attitude, conveying either his 'positive' or 'negative' attitude towards the issue, the people, or the policy and others that

he is writing about. The tone of voice and attitude are a good clue that help the reader analyse the writer's purpose in crafting his piece of writing. Let's now examine the writer's attitude and tone of voice.

3.7.2 THE WRITER'S POINT OF VIEW

3.7.2.1 Types of point of view

Point of view or POI is the angle of vision from which the text is written. Some writers discuss the issue from their own vantage point. Others discuss the issue as if they observe the situation from afar. There are two types of point of view that the writer can pick.

1 The first person

The first person point of view includes 'I and we'. Choosing 'I or we' the writer tells the story from his angle. He could suggest that he has direct experience in the matter. He is 'a participant' in the situation.

2 The third person

The third person point of view includes 'he, she, it or they'. Adopting this point of view, the writer is 'an observer'.

3.7.2.2 Why different points of view?

Is there a reason for adopting different points of view in a text? In argumentative pieces, we could see a lot of first person point of view 'we' and 'I'.

Sometimes 'we' refers to the writer and the entity that the writer belongs to. In other words, the writer writes on behalf of such entity. This may result in understanding tone. Sometimes 'we' refers to the writer and the readers. When 'we' is used in this way, the writer identifies himself with the reader, encourages the sense of belonging and engages the reader in his story.

When the writer chooses 'I', he clearly states his personal stand on the subject matter or his attitude towards a belief or people etc.

EXAMPLE XXII

On Memorial Day, we honor the heroes who have laid down their lives in the cause of freedom, resolve that they will forever be remembered by a grateful Nation, and pray that our country may always prove worthy of the sacrifices they have made. (1)

Throughout our Nation's history, our course has been secured by brave Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen. These courageous and selfless warriors have stepped forward to protect the Nation they love, fight for America's highest ideals, and show millions that a future of liberty is possible. Freedoms come at great costs, yet the world has been transformed in unimaginable ways because of the noble service and devotion to duty of these brave individuals. Our country honors the sacrifice made by those who have

given their lives to spread the blessings of liberty and lay the foundations of peace, and we mourn their loss. (2)

Source: http://stanford.wellsphere.com/men-s-health-article/the-ultimate-sacrifice/14996

The writer wants to convey the message that the loss of heroes was an immense loss because it was not just the loss of an individual but that of the entire nation. The use of the pronoun 'we' draws on mutual sentiments from the audience, effectively heightens this mournful tone and praises the greatness of such a heroic deed.

What's more, in a piece of writing, the writer may not adopt only one point of view. Rather, he could change the point of view from the first person 'I' to 'we'. Sometimes, the writer may begin by being an observer in the situation before changing his point of view and become the 'participant' in the matter.

3.7.3 THE WRITER'S ATTITUDE

Finally, often times argumentative writers could make good use of their word choice. Words can be a powerful tool in eliciting an emotional response from the reader. Carefully chosen, the words manipulate the reader's mind beyond their literal meaning, which mean they can significantly contribute to persuading the reader to subscribe to the writer's position.

EXAMPLE XXIII

Supporters of a saner marijuana policy scored a small victory this week when the Obama administration said it would authorize more institutions to grow marijuana for medical research. But the government passed up an opportunity to make a more significant change…

As the D.E.A. tiptoes toward reconsidering marijuana policies, voters all over the country are expanding access to the drug through initiatives. Alaska, Colorado, Oregon, Washington State and the District of Columbia have legalized recreational use, and 25 states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have legalized medical marijuana. Residents of at least five states — Arizona, California, Maine, Massachusetts and Nevada — will vote on ballot measures to legalize recreational marijuana in November, and residents of Arkansas and Florida will vote on measures to legalize medical marijuana.

https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/13/opinion/a-small-victory-for-more-sensible-marijuana-policies.html

In this particular excerpt from an article 'Stop Treating Marijuana like Heroin', the writer's word choice efficiently delivers more than what the writer explicitly states. 'Saner' suggests his supportive stance on medical cannabis; moreover, the comparative degree hints at the improvement of the policy. Also, when he says that the supporters of medical marijuana scored a 'small' victory, he insinuates that this victory could have been more significant had the government not 'passed up' the opportunity. In the second paragraph, we should take note of the verb 'tiptoes'; the writer insinuates his dissatisfaction with the D.E.A. office in handling the case, while reporting in a straightforward manner the extension of medical marijuana across the states.

3.8 JUDGING EVIDENCE AND EVALUATING ARGUMENTS

As the reader, our first and foremost aim in reading the text is to understand the writer's message. While that objective is perfectly justified, we should not forget that in an argumentative piece, the writer's intent is to argue for his view or belief. We, as the reader, must decide for ourselves whether to adopt his view. This decision-making relies on our ability to remember, understand, apply, analyse and evaluate (Wilson, 2011). Note that the cognitive processes that build up to the summit of a critical thinker, is the quality in evaluating. In reading an argumentative text, this essentially boils down to evaluating the effectiveness of the writer's persuasive techniques. On the writer front, he employs logos, ethos, and pathos. On the reader front, we need to assess if the reasoning is logical and compelling, if the authority can claim authority in the subject matter, and finally if the writer relies heavily on drawing on our emotions rather than uses reasoning.

If we are to distinguish between a persuasive text and an argumentative text, we could say that the first seeks to persuade and the latter to argue. Now, the main tool used to persuade is the emotion while the one to argue is reasoning. We have seen early on that proper use of emotion could render a powerful argumentative piece. Yet, a good argumentative writer supports his view mainly by reasoning, which means he offers arguments. Not all arguments are good, however. Many arguments are fallacious. We now look at GOOD reasoning:

3.8.1 GOOD REASONING

3.8.1.1 Good Deductive reasoning

As discussed, in a deductive reasoning, the premises guarantees the validity of the conclusion. The truth of the premises guarantees the truth of the conclusion. Good deductive reasoning is **valid and sound**. Simply put, the claim rings true. This is possible when all premises are true and they make the conclusion definitely true. When at least one premise is false, the conclusion does not necessarily follow, the argument is not valid, nor is it sound. Compare the following arguments:

a All humans are mortal. Socrates is human. Socrates is mortal.

b All juices made from fruit are sweet. Passion fruit juice is made from fruit. Passion fruit juice is sweet.

Argument b. strictly follows the set of reasoning we've discussed, yet we know that the major premise—'All voices made from fruit are sweet'—is false as evidently, not all juices are sweet. Although the minor premise—Passion fruit juice is made from fruit—is true. The conclusion is false.

The argument like this is said to be **invalid** and **unsound**. In other words, it is not true and it doesn't make sense.

An argument is valid when it follows the syllogism, and it is sound when all the statement in the syllogism are true.

Whether or not argument is valid or sound can't not be taken lightly. When simply taking the writer's words at its face, without scrutinising the cited data, the source of information, the existence of the eye-witness, etc. , the reader could buy into bad arguments. In other words, the reader falls prey of the writer's manipulation or distortion of the syllogism.

3.8.1.2 Good Inductive Reasoning

We have established that in an inductive reasoning, the premises make the conclusion *probably* true. Good inductive reasoning is **strong and cogent**. Simply put, the claim is very likely true. This is possible if all the premises ensure the high probability of the claim and they are true.

> I have seen a lot of southerners in my lifetime. All that I have seen have been dark-skinned. The next person from the south I see will be dark-skinned.
>
> Michael just moved here from Spain. Michael speaks fluent English; therefore, people from Spain speaks fluent English.

The writer makes a generalisation about the colour of the swan he will next see based on his *lifetime* experience of seeing white swans. His reasoning is strong and cogent. In the second instance, though, to make a generalisation about the hair colour of people from Chicago based on an encounter with one particular person from there is weak, even though all the premises are true. Once again, we can make a mistake jumping to the conclusion, using this very same process of reasoning. Some of us may think of the mistakes of our generalisation.

3.8.2 LOGICAL FALLACIES

Let's now explore some more into common forms of logical fallacies.

3.8.2.1 Hasty Generalisation

When the author commits this fallacy, he makes a broad generalisation on the basis of too little evidence. A beauty product that claims that the high percentage of users are satisfied with the smoother, brighter skin could commit this fallacy. To make a generalisation, the research team must have a large sample size that represents the target group. To generate the percentage and make such claim based on the actual number of 9 out of 10, for instance, is a good case of hasty generalisation.

3.8.2.2 NON-SEQUITUR

When the given premises do not lend support to the claim, the writer could commit non-sequitur fallacy. If someone thinks that second language skill is no longer needed with the advent of Google translate, or if someone is to blame the poor performance of high school students on teachers, saying they don't care about teaching anymore, they are committing non-sequitur fallacies. The claim that we need not study second language is not immediately supported by the translation software if we consider how effective the application is or if we take into account the fact that learning a second language is more than the ability to translate.

3.8.2.3 Post hoc fallacy

This fallacy refers to a sequential relationship is mistaken for a causal relationship. If you left the shoes outside, and it rained. Your shoes were torn. Would it make sense to blame the rain for your ruined shoes? While the public blame violence and deaths on gun and call for gun control, the gun industry could arguably make the case that it is not guns that directly cause violence and deaths—a person could suffer from mental illness and a person could defend himself owing a legal gun etc. Even though we are not interested in deciding who is right, we can see how post hoc fallacy works.

3.8.2.4 Slippery Slope

This flawed argument happens when one assumes that a series of undesirable events will be inevitable if we allow one event to happen. Many are against medical use of marijuana and make the case that people will be addicted. Or if one starts smoking, he will try marijuana, then the next thing we know he's going to die of overdose (OD). Obviously, the so-called series of events have not and may not happen. What's more, to presume that something bad could happen if we were to allow one action to take place is not logical reasoning. The reader should see the red flag if the writer is committing this fallacy.

3.8.2.5 False Dilemma

In this fallacy, the line of reasoning is presented as if there were only two possible choices, hence, the writer's suggested choice should be adopted. Master Card's famous slogan 'There are some things money can't buy, for everything else, there's Master Card'. The proposition is that customers should go for Master Card because Master Card gets you anything that money can buy.

The next persuasive technique that we'll evaluate is Ethos. When persuasion is achieved through credibility or authority of the person who persuades, the reader has to assess if he is the person you should listen to? Why are the US president's addresses aired nationwide? Why do scholars read articles written by Nobel prize awardees? Why do we listen to doctors? Because they are 'authority'. They have built up credibility to the point that we trust them to tell (or convince) us about the matter they've been dealing with. When we read a persuasive text that is not written by the renown scientists or any authority themselves, the author cites them to put his point across. It's our job to ask the right questions about the authority so that we decide if we should adopt the writer's view. You want to know if the person has sufficient expertise in the subject matter in question and if he is speaking of his field of expertise.

3.8.3 FALLACIOUS ARGUMENT RELATING TO ETHOS

Fallacious argument in relation to Ethos comes in the following common forms:

3.8.3.1 Ad Hominem

When argument is launched against the character of an opponent in stead of the value of his reasoning, the writer is committing ad hominem fallacy. If in the course of a bill consideration, an MP who disagrees with the bill, discredits the credibility of another MP

who proposed the bill, the member of the MPs and the public should bear in mind that whatever the personal attack was sassy, evaluation of the bill merits should be impartially made.

3.8.3.2 Guilt by Association

This form of fallacy occurs when we dismiss the claim because it is accepted by the person that you dislike. Clearly, the erroneous reasoning surfaces here. Again, whether we decide to accept the claim should depend on whether the claim is logical and compelling. When we instead evaluate or ignore a claim because we 'associate' it with the person, we are committing this fallacy.

3.8.3.2 False Authority

This is the instance when famous people are used to testify on issues about which these persons have no special competence. Animal rights groups may effectively draw public attention by using a celebrity to endorse their cause. If ever a telecommunication mogul comes out and encourages the public to sign up as organ donors at a request of an organ transplant centre, the public are likely to listen to him. If this persuasion is made for a good cause, you wouldn't have to worry weighing the pros and the cons. When the subject matter in question requires careful decision, however, you should carefully evaluate if the person himself really is the authority to speak on the matter.

The following list of questions sum up the process of evaluating Ethos.

1 Does the person have sufficient expertise in the subject matter in question?

2 Is the claim being made by the person within her area(s) of expertise?

3 Is there an adequate degree of agreement among the other experts in the subject in question?

4 Is the person in question not significantly biased?

5 Is his area of expertise a legitimate area or discipline?

6 Can the authority in question be identified?

Adapted from Cottrell (2006)

3.8.3 FALLACIOUS ARGUMENT RELATING TO PATHOS

3.8.3.1 Bandwagon or Appeal to Popularity

Bandwagon is at play when the writer persuades the reader by suggesting that the majority of people have already accepted the view. After all, popularity has nothing to do with the benefits of the proposition in question. When you feel obliged to behave or think in the same way your friends do, you've experienced 'bandwagon' fallacy. When the writer employs this appeal to popularity rather than presents his line of reasoning, the reader should be mindful.

3.8.3.2 False Analogies

In this fallacy, two things are claimed to have the same property, when actually they do not have the same characteristics in the area being compared. The analogy, therefore, doesn't

hold up. For instance, a PETA advert showing a picture of a turkey and an adorable dog with the caption reading ‘would you eat your dog’? To analyse this message, we have to look at the analogy being drawn. A turkey is being compared to a dog. PETA draws the analogy based on the shared property of the two: They are both animals. Yet, is it a reasonable analogy? Taking a closer look, turkeys have traditionally been food, but dogs aren’t. This is an instance of false analogy.

3.8.3.3 Loaded Language

This kind of fallacy involves the use of words that attempts to influence the reader’s emotion. When not careful, we could easily respond to the language that is carefully designed to evoke emotions and overlook the line of reasoning. Shampoo adverts appeals the audience by words that stir up desirable qualities such as smooth, glow, silky, shiny. A StarBuck advert, which reads ‘The best coffee for the best you’ draws you in by triggering our needs to be in our best shape when starting the day.