



UNIVERSITY OF SIERRA LEONE

FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE STUDIES

FOUNDATION STUDIES - ENGLISH LANGUAGE

FOST 110 / 120

**FOURAH BAY COLLEGE
JUNE 2024**



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COURSE BULB

The introduction of Foundation Studies into the curriculum of tertiary institutions in Sierra Leone is viewed as a reaction to the poor performance of students in the written and spoken use of English Language. The main aim of this course is to enable students use English Language for academic, social and professional purposes.

Credit Units: 3 Units

Course Status: Compulsory

Semester: First & Second

Course Duration: 15 Weeks

INTRODUCTION

You are heartily welcome to Foundation Studies Course and you are assured of easy comprehension of this course. The course is designed to help students to learn and develop the knowledge and skills of effective communication that will effect efficient communication; promote amicable human relationship in learning and working environments and help to avoid misinformation and waste of resources. This is a general overview of the course that will provide you with useful information about the structure and contents of the course.

It is a six-credit hour course comprising two modules with the codes FOST 110 & FOST 120. It is a general and compulsory course for all students registered to study any programme at FBC. It is an important course because it also enhances the English language proficiency of students; noting that it is an international and business language; and above all, it is the language of communication.

WHAT TO LEARN IN THIS COURSE

You are expected to learn the skills that will help you to develop effective communication talents that will enhance better understanding in learning and working environments. This block of knowledge comprises meaning, forms, types, medium and principles of communication. Besides these, you will also learn the rules of language, since language serves as the major means of communication. These rules include categorizing of words according to their functions and arrangement within sentences to convey clear and understandable messages so communication will take place. The specific details of units in the rules are naming words, replacing words, action words and elements of sentences.

COURSE AIM

This course is designed to help students develop the knowledge and skills of effective communication that will help to promote good human relationships in learning and working environments, thus enhancing better understanding and avoiding misunderstanding that will lead to waste of time and resources.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To enable students to develop the skills of proficiency in communication
- To equip students with skills to apply knowledge gained.

GENERAL COURSE FOCUS

To enable students to answer questions attached to each unit correctly as a way of self-evaluation. In addition to the course objectives stated above, the specific unit objectives are set to enhance easy comprehension. It is advised you read them before you start working through each unit; and continue to refer to them during your studying of the unit in order to monitor your progress. By meeting each specific unit objectives, you can assure yourself of success as you progress till the completion of the course.

ABOUT THIS COURSE

The first and second semester periods of the course is sixteen weeks each. As you read these units, you are advised to answer all questions attached to each unit. Please be honest with yourself as these questions are considered to be self-tests. You are also advised to search for and read other relevant materials to this course. You will also need to undertake practical exercises for which you need a pen, a pencil, a notebook, and other materials that will be listed later in this course guide. These materials will help you to jot down relevant and main ideas you will need to remember always. Remember to submit written assignments to your tutor for assessment at the end of each unit. There will be a final exams at the end of the course.

COURSE MATERIALS

The major materials you will need for this course are listed below:

1. Course guide
2. Study Units
3. A digital audio / visual recorder and player of your own
4. Audio CDs that will be packaged in your study pack
5. Video CDs that will be made available at your study centre
6. Assignment file
7. Relevant textbooks
8. Presentation Schedule

TEXTBOOKS AND REFERENCES

There are lists of reference materials that were consulted while putting these resource materials together. You are advised to contact these books and any other relevant materials that will aid your studies. Reading more materials will enable you have a firm grasp of the knowledge the course is intended to impact in you.

THE PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

The relevant dates such as time for assignment submission, time for examination and time for the completion of the course will be communicated with you.

THE ASSESSMENT FILE

For every student, an assessment file will be made available where all details of student works will be kept. The grades scored for assignments, attendance, tests and exams will be added together towards the end of the course to produce end-of-course grades which will determine the category of certificate the student will obtain.

ASSESSMENTS

There are two kinds of assessments: Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs) and Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMAs). The SAEs questions that may be attached to the units should be answered after reading the unit. You are not expected to submit the answers to tutors for marking. The TMAs are assignments, tests and exams that are to be submitted to the tutors for marking and grading. This TMA accounts for 30% of your total score for the course. Every unit has a Tutor-Marked Assignment, which is a compulsory question that must be answered and submitted at the end of the course. Chances of success will be minimized if students fail the Tutor-Marked Assignments.

FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

The final examination for this course will take 70%; it will consist of questions that will reflect the self-assessment exercises, as well as the tutor-marked assignments. You are expected to spend quality time to read the entire course units and all the SAEs and TMAs for the final examination.

COURSE MARKING SCHEME

The assignment and test will be marked over thirty percent (30%) while the examination will be marked over seventy percent (70%); equal to one hundred percent (100%).

FACILITATORS/TUTORS AND TUTORIALS

Part of this course is the tutorial hours; this is the period set aside for learners and tutor to have face-to-face contact. It is the period the TMAs normally take place; but note that the tutorial hours is not only meant for TMAs; it is the time learners have the opportunity put across those troublesome questions or problems they have not been able to overcome. For this period, students will be adequately informed about the venue and the activities ahead. During this period, tutors will grade and comment on your assignments, monitor students' progress and provide answers to their questions. Students are expected to submit their assignment in good

time which will enable their tutor to read them well and to make appropriate comments on them. Students should not be hesitant during this period to consult their tutors when the need arises. Note that besides the tutorials time, students can contact their tutors on the below stated matters when deemed appropriate.

- You do not understand any part of the study units
- You have difficulty understanding self-assessment exercises or tutor-marked assignment
- When you have problems with the tutor's comments on your assignments or their grading.

To gain maximally from the tutorials, you ought to prepare list of questions before attending them and you must endeavour to participate actively, in discussions during tutorials.

SUMMARY

This guide exposes you to an overview of what to expect in the Foundation Studies so a lot of wishes of success to you as you go through the course. Please note that the References are listed at the end of the course.

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MODULE ONE

INTRODUCTION TO MODULE ONE

This module mainly contains the basic and necessary ideas relating to the general ideas of communication. In this module you are expected to learn about the meaning, purpose, forms, principles and challenges of communication. You are advised to read the reference materials stated and any other relevant material to this module.

UNIT 1 MEANING AND CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

1.0 Introduction:

You are welcome to this unit entitled, 'Meaning and channels of communication.' In this unit, we shall discuss the meaning of communication and the various channels we use to communicate.

1.1 Objectives:

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Explain the meaning of communication,
2. Identify the various channels of communication.

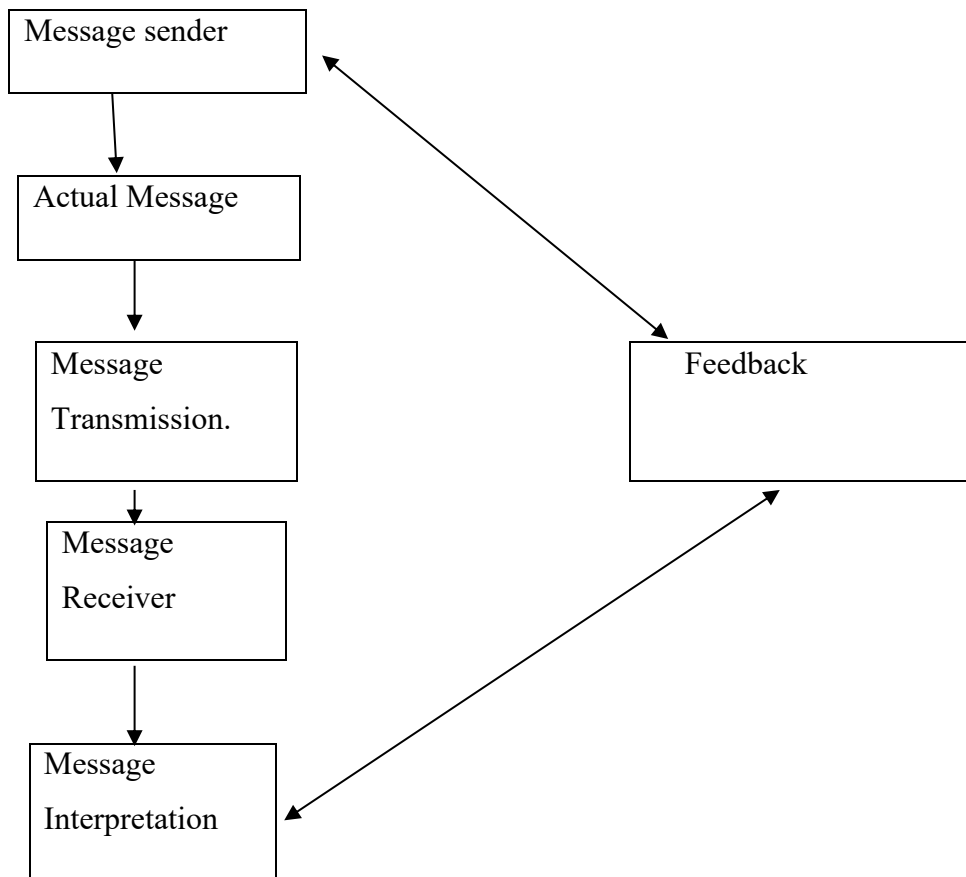
2. MAIN CONTENT

2.1 Meaning of Communication

Communication could be defined as the process by which information, knowledge, attitude, emotion and behaviour are exchanged between and among people by the use of a common system of signs, symbols, attitudes and behaviour. Communication is a vital part of our everyday lives, beginning from birth. As one develops from birth, communication becomes more complex. As a result speaking, listening, reading, writing and even observing become part of the communication process.

3. 2 Channels of Communication

Communication takes place only if you have both the sender and receiver of the message. Every exchange of message whether oral, written or nonverbal, involves six basic components. The *message sender*, *actual message*, *message transmission*, *message receiver*, *message interpretation*, and *feedback*. Each time you have a conversation with someone or exchange written message you should be aware of each of the component of communication.



1. **Sender of the message:** The sender composes the intended message. The sender could be a writer, a speaker, or a person who sends nonverbal message through gesture and body language.
2. **Actual message:** The actual message may be written, oral, or nonverbal, or it may combine two or more types of communication. It may or may not be the message the sender intended.

3. **Message transmission:** The message can be sent or delivered in a variety of ways. Written messages can be sent in the form of letters, memos, and reports. Written message could also be sent electronically. Oral messages can be delivered through face-to-face conversations, meetings, telephone conversations, voice mail etc. Nonverbal messages through gestures, body language and facial expressions.
4. **Receiver of the message:** The receiver takes in, or receives, the message. The receiver's knowledge, interest, and emotional state will affect how the message is received.
5. **Message interpretation:** The receiver interprets the message. The interpretation may be different from the intended message or the actual message.
6. **Feedback:** The sender and receiver respond to each other in writing, orally, non-verbally, or in a combination of these ways. Feedback may include a written response, verbal questions, and nonverbal gestures such as body language and facial expressions.

4. CONCLUSION

Having completed this unit, it is expected that you explain the meaning of communication and also identify the various channels through which communication takes place.

5. SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed the meaning of communication and we have also outlined and explained the various channels of communication.

6. TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Answer the following questions

1. Discuss with examples in your field of study, the relevance of feedback in communication.
2. State and clearly explain the various channels of communication.
3. Explain in your own words what you understand by communication.

UNIT 2 FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

2.0 Introduction

You are welcome to this unit entitled Forms of Communication. In this unit we shall discuss the various forms of communication.

2.1 Objectives

By the end of this unit you should be able to

- i. Identify the various forms of communication.
- ii. Explain the relevance of the various forms of communication.
- iii. Explain the merits and demerits of the various forms of communication.

2.2. MAIN CONTENT

There are basically two forms of communication:

i. **Verbal Communication**

Verbal communication is a type of communication that is either written or spoken.

- a. **Oral Communication:** Oral communication uses spoken words to exchange ideas and information. Examples of oral communication include *one – one conversation, meetings, voice – mail messages, telephone conversation, teleconferencing, symposia*. Spoken messages can be sent instantaneously and usually result in some immediate **feedback**. The oral communication has several advantages and disadvantages.
- b. **Written Communication:** Written communication can include communication through *letters, text messages, written report, tables, diagrams, charts, graphs etc.*

7. Nonverbal Communication

The Nonverbal communication is the communication done without the use of words either written or spoken. Think about yourself communicating well without saying a word. Without saying a single word, you can express your feelings with *body language* –

gestures, facial expressions and body movement or positions.

THE ONE-WAY AND TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION PROCESSES

The communication process could be a one-way or two-way process.

- i. **One-way communication:** This process of communication involves the sending of a message from one source without getting any immediate feedback from the receiver(s) of the message. Most heads and bosses of certain institutions and establishments use the one-way communication process to victimize their subordinates by not allowing them to react to decisions. The one-way communication also includes *newspapers, televisions, diagrams, charts, radios, magazines etc.*
- ii. **Two-way communication:** The two-way communication process takes place between and/or among persons. The two-way communication process makes provision for an immediate feedback. The sender sends the message and receiver sends a feedback to the sender of the message. The two-way communication process includes *meetings, interviews, seminars, etc.*

2.3 CONCLUSION

Now that you completed the study of this, it is expected that, you be able to identify the various forms of communication, explain their relevance as well as their merits and demerits.

2.4 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed in detail the various forms of communication, explained their relevance and their merits and demerits.

2.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT - TMAs

1. Discuss with as many examples as you can in your field of study, the advantages and disadvantages of oral communication.
2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the two-way communication is more effective than the one-way communication. Your answer should be related to your field of study.
3. With as many examples as you can in your field of study, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of written communication.
4. With as many examples as you can in your field of study, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the nonverbal communication.

UNIT 3 THE PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

3.0 Introduction

In the previous unit, we discussed the various forms of communication. In this unit, we shall discuss the various principles of effective communication.

3.1 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Explain the various principles of effective communication
2. Apply these principles to enhance effective communication

3.2 Content

Communication generally creates interactions between persons and groups of people. It is vital to personal, academic and professional life, including management, business and administration.

The following principles should be considered in making communication effective:

a. Purpose of the communication

One needs to decide on the purpose of communication and think about the person he or she is communicating with.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- i. What do I want the reader or listener to know?
(This determines the information and the general content of your communication).
- ii. How do I want my audience to feel? (This guides you to choose an appropriate tone, and what point to emphasize).
- iii. What do I want my reader or listener to do? (This helps you to make sure both you and your audience achieve something as a result of the communication)

The following are the common purposes of communication:

- Informing an audience
- Obtaining information from an audience
- Making an enquiring

- Making an invitation
- Persuading an audience

b. Understanding your audience (reader/listener)

Always try to think that you are addressing an individual or a group of people.

Write to that individual or group of persons as in the way that is very similar to how you would talk to them. Think of them in terms of the following:

1. Level of seniority
2. Level of knowledge (of subject)
3. Level of interest
4. Cultural background
5. Social background
6. Attitude to your views

c. Speaking or writing in plain language

The use of plain language is vital in communication. Effective communication depends on this, and not on verbosity. Use language that your audience can hear and easily understand. Write as if you are talking.

For communication to be effective, the sender and receiver of the message should understand each other. Use the degree of formality you would use if you were speaking to your reader. Please make every deliberate effort to learn to use plain English when you speak or write.

d. Use of correct grammar

This is the prerequisite for effective communication.

Grammar is the rule that guides the use of a language. You need to master grammar rules to enable you communicate effectively. Clarity in your communication depends entirely on this. Grammar also implicates mechanical accuracy, particularly in written communication. Your use of punctuations and capital or small letters should be appropriate in consistence with the grammatical rules that guide their use. Shape letters clearly and correctly when you write.

Grammar of any language is unlimited. We cannot learn all the grammar of a language consciously. We adopt them as we make attempts to communicate in the language. We discover the rules as we listen to good speakers of the language, and read well written texts. We will deal with a few essential elements of the English grammar in the course to enable you communicate more effectively. You should make deliberate effort to improve on your grammar on your own. No one else can do it for you. You have to pay attention to grammar rules and practise using them correctly.

e. Be brief and concise

You need to be brief and to the point so that your audience will immediately get the main point of your communication. Do not **beat about the bush; hit the nail on the head!** Avoid veering, particularly when you write. Always read over what you write to avoid repetitions, veering and omission.

f. Be clear in speaking and writing

You need to be clear in whatever you say. Avoid ambiguous statements, unnecessary jargons and technicalities, use of excessive words, and dull, flat language.

g. Know your subject well

To communicate effectively you need to have adequate knowledge of the subject. Read and research well to know your subject better.

h) Organize your ideas well

You need to organize your ideas well so that the audience easily follows what you write or say.

(i) Understand any possible barrier to effective communication.

In order to communicate effectively, one has to identify any possible barrier to the communication process. Understanding the barriers to effective communication helps communicators to communicate effectively.

8. 4 Conclusion

Having completed this unit, it is now expected that you would be able to explain the principles of effective communication and some purposes of communication.

3.5 Summary

In this unit, we have discussed in detail the principles of effective as well as some common purposes of communication.

3.6 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Attempt the following questions:

1. Discuss with examples some common purposes of communication

UNIT 4 BARRIERS TO EFFECTVE COMMUNICATION

4.0 Introduction

Barriers are factors that interfere with communication and might negatively affect the intended message. In this unit, we shall discuss some of the barriers to effective communication.

4.1 Objectives

By the end of this unit, you should be able to

- 1 Explain some of the various barriers to effective communication.
- 2 Apply strategies to overcome these barriers

4.2 MAIN CONTENT

Barriers are the factors that impede or interfere with communication and might negatively affect the intended message. Barriers may include physical distractions, emotional distractions, and cultural and language differences.

1. Noise
2. Mood
3. Language difference
4. Distraction
5. Lack of concentration
6. Cultural diversity
7. The length and volume of the message.
8. The use of jargons and specialized registers.

4.3 CONCLUSION

Having completed this unit, it is now expected that you would be able to explain some of the barriers to effective communication.

4.4 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed in detail the barriers to effective communication.

4.4 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Now attempt the following question below:

- 1.** Identify and discuss any possible barrier of communication you might encounter in your field of study and further explain how you might overcome it.

UNIT FIVE DEVELOPING GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS: Listening, speaking, Reading, and Writing.

5.0 Introduction

Communication is a two-way process that requires a sender and a receiver. You cannot communicate in a vacuum. You cannot communicate by speaking if there is no one to listen. An essential ingredient of successful family, social, and business relationships is effective communication. In this unit we shall discuss the various language skills.

5.1 Objectives

By the end of this unit, you should be able to

1 Develop good communication skills.

5.2 MAIN CONTENT

Communication is a two-way process that requires a sender and a receiver. You cannot communicate in a vacuum. You cannot communicate by speaking if there is no one to listen. You cannot communicate by writing if is no one will read your words. Each side-sender and receiver – must do its part.

It should be noted that, communicators are paired: speaker- listener and writer-reader. Oral communication requires a speaker and a listener. Oral communication is most effective when the speaker has good speaking skills and the receiver has good listening skills. Similarly, written communication requires a writer and a reader. Written communication is most effective when the sender has a good writing skill and the receiver has a good reading skill.

Listening Skills

Listening is one of the means to receive information. The problem with listening is that if you miss something or forget part of what you heard, you cannot replay the message (unless if you had recorded it). Good listening skills helps you understand instructions, absorb academic lessons etc.

Common barriers or distractions to good listening fall into three categories:

- i. *Educational distraction*: Lack of knowledge on the subject matter and vocabulary.
- ii. *Environmental distraction*: Has to do with external factors such the noise level, the temperature in the room and so on.
- iii. *Emotional-physical distraction*: Includes internal factors such as ones state of mind, or health. For example, having a headache or being extremely worried about something can adversely affect your ability to listen well.

Speaking Skills

The communication skill you will probably need most is speaking. Speaking can be an excellent way of transmitting information. Speaking comes to play as part of being a good listener. By giving good feedback, you let your listener know that you are a good communicator. You use your speaking skill to share information, your thoughts, accomplishment and feelings with others. It is an important skill in the work world.

Reading Skills

Reading is one of the principal ways of obtaining information. It is an efficient way to learn since it allows you to control the flow of information in books, magazines, lecture notes, instructions and so on.

Writing Skills

Writing skills are important for creating and communicating information. Writing has many advantages but its major advantage is that, it provides a physical record of communication that can be used as proof where necessary.

5.3 Conclusion

Now that you completed this unit, it is expected you will put into practice what you have learnt in order to communicate effectively.

5.4 Summary

In this unit, we have discussed in detail how we could develop good communication through listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills will aid you throughout your life.

5.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Now attempt the following questions below:

1. With as many examples as you can, discuss the relevance of listening skills in relation to the following:
 - i. Your social life.
 - ii. Your educational life.
 - i. Your professional life
2. With as many examples as you can, discuss the relevance of speaking skills in relation to the following:
 - i. Your social life.
 - ii. Your educational life.
 - iii. Your professional life
3. With as many examples as you can, discuss the relevance of reading skills in relation to the following:
 - i. Your social life.
 - ii. Your educational life.
 - iii. Your professional life
4. With as many examples as you can, discuss the relevance of writing skills in relation to the following:
 - i. Your social life.
 - ii. Your educational life.
 - iii. Your professional life

References

1. Camp, S. C. & Satterwhite, M. L. (1998) College Communication (Glencoe McGraw-Hill)
2. Olaofe, I. A. (1993). Communicate English Skills. Zaria: Tamaza Publishing Co.

MODULE 2: English Grammar and Usage

Introduction

Bravo! You are welcome to module two entitled ‘English Grammar and Usage’. This unit comprises five units: Nouns and their usage, Pronouns and their usage, Verbs one, Verbs two and subject verb agreement. The contents of these modules provide an introductory and an in-depth discussion on every topic using a systematic, simple and clear approach. The module is intended to meet your required needs on English grammar and usage; that will enable you improve on your spoken and written English Language. The module further provides relevant tutor- marked assignments that you would use to assess your learning progress. The contents of this module could not be an end in itself; it therefore provides related references that could be of help to you to further broaden your knowledge and use of the English Language.

UNIT 1 Nouns and their Usage

1.0 Introduction:

You are welcome to this unit entitled Nouns and their usage. In this unit, we shall discuss the meaning of nouns, different classes of nouns and their usage.

1.1 Objectives:

At the end of this, you should be able to:

2. Identify and explain the meaning of nouns in different contexts;
2. Classify nouns into different classes; and
3. Properly use nouns in sentences of your own

1.2 MAIN CONTENT

In English Grammar, a noun is a part of speech (or word class) that names or identifies a person, place, thing, quality, idea, or activity. Most nouns have both a singular and plural form, can be preceded by an article and/or more adjectives and can serve as head of a noun phrase.

Nouns can be divided into PROPER NOUNS, COMMON NOUNS, COLLECTIVE NOUNS, COUNT NOUNS, MASS NOUNS, CONCRETE NOUNS, ABSTRACT NOUNS, DENOMINAL NOUNS AND VERBAL NOUNS

Proper Nouns

Proper nouns name things that are not common. It is a name of a particular person, an animal, a place or an idea. For instance, the name boy is not a name of a particular person. Therefore, a boy in a class could mean any boy. But if Steven is a name of a boy in a class, it refers to a particular person. The name Steven is a proper noun.

Examples of proper nouns are:

- i. Names of people: John, Amara and Bintu etc.
- ii. Names of towns: Koidu, Makeni and Zimmi etc.
- iii. Names of ideas: American Democracy, Socialism, Tribalism etc.
- iv. Months of the year: January, February and March, etc.
- v. Days of the week: Monday, Tuesday and Friday etc.

Common Nouns

Common nouns are nouns that are common. They are general names given to all people, things, places or animals of the same kind. They are general names. For instance, boy, father, girl and city are all examples of common nouns.

Note: In writing, proper nouns are also different from common nouns. While the first letter of every proper noun must be capitalized wherever it occurs in sentences; that of a common noun is written in small letters.

Collective Nouns

Collective nouns are names given to a collection of people or things. They name many people, things or animals coming together to form a whole. To put it differently, a collective noun names a group of individuals as if they were one individual. Examples of these nouns are: flock, committee, family, class, mob, club, etc.

Countable Nouns

Countable Nouns are nouns that can be counted. In other words, these are nouns that could be taken apart and counted numerically. They are pen, bag, pencil, house etc.

Mass nouns

Uncountable Nouns are nouns that cannot be counted but can only be measured, e.g. water, salt, rice, sand, information, equipment etc.

Concrete Nouns

Concrete nouns are nouns that we can see and touch, e.g. bottle, boy, house, dog, chair, book etc.

Abstract Nouns

Abstract nouns are nouns that we cannot see or touch but we can only feel. They usually name feelings, state of mind or character, e.g. happiness, beauty, hunger, wisdom, holiness, faithfulness, justice, joy etc.

Denominal Nouns

A denominal noun is a noun that is formed from another noun usually by adding a suffix – such as villager (from village), booklet (from book), and librarian (from library)

Verbal Nouns

A verbal noun is a noun that has no verb-like properties despite being derived from a verb.

Example: The sacking of the principal caused serious confusion.

DETERMINERS

A determiner is a word that introduces a noun, such as *a/an, the, every, this, those*, or *many* (as in a cat, the cat, this cat, those cats, every cat, many cats). The determiner **the** is sometimes known as the definite article and the determiner **a** (or **an**) as the indefinite article.

POSSESSIVE DETERMINERS

Words like *my, our, your, his, her, its, and their*, are known as possessive determiners. They come before nouns and indicate ownership of the noun in question as their name suggests:

- My leg hurts.
- James sold his business.
- Bring your children with you.

PLURAL OF NOUNS

There are many plural noun rules, and because we use nouns so frequently when writing, it's important to know all of them! Forming the plural of nouns does not follow a particular pattern; the various forms are as follows:

- Some nouns take [-S] as plural form. Example boy-boys, cup-cups, school-schools, robber-robbers, egg-eggs, bird-birds, tree-trees, etc

- Some nouns take [-es]. Examples church-churches, mosquito-mosquitoes, box-boxes, bus-buses, lunch-lunches, march-marches, etc
- Some nouns that end in [-y] have the [-y] changed to [-ies] to form plural. Examples: lady-ladies, baby-babies, country-countries, fly-flies, beauty-beauties, etc
- Some nouns that end in [-f] or [-fe] have the [-f] or [-fe] changed to [-ves]. Examples: knife-knives, wife-wives, thief-thieves, wolf-wolves, etc

EXCEPTIONS:

Roof-roofs, belief-beliefs, chef-chefs, chief-chiefs, etc.

- Some nouns end in [-y] preceded by a vowel, add [-s] only to form the plural and do not change the [y]. Examples: donkey-donkeys, valley-valleys, key-keys, etc.
- Some nouns have their vowels changed to form plural. Examples: tooth-teeth, louse-lice, crisis-crises, mouse-mice, basis-bases, etc.
- Some nouns take additional letters to form their plural. Examples: child-children, ox-oxen
- Some nouns have their last two vowels removed and replaced with a vowel. Examples: medium-media, stadium-stadia, phenomenon-phenomena, syllabus-syllabuses/syllabi, criterion-criteria, curriculum-curricula, etc.
- Units of measurement are used with non-counted nouns to indicate quantity. Examples: a cup of water-cups of water, a bag of rice-bags of rice, a loaf of bread-loaves of bread, a litre of petrol and litres of petrol

THE POSSESSIVE CASE OF NOUNS

The possessive case of nouns is usually formed by adding ['s] and [s'] to words. Examples:

- A. *The boy's room (singular)***
- B. *The boys' room (plural)***

When a possessive is shared by two or more nouns the fact is indicated by using the possessive case for the last noun in the series. Example: Steven, Ibrahim and Amie's car

Inanimate objects are not capable of possession. The relationship is indicated by the use of the preposition 'of'. Examples:

- A. *The wall of the house (instead of the house's wall)***
- B. *The door of the car (instead of the car's door)***

Objects which are personified such as '*ship*' and '*aeroplane*' do use the possessive case. Example: the ship's cargo, the aeroplane's engine

Idiomatic usage is also allowed with possessive case of time. Examples: a day's work, an hour's work

NOTE: Be careful when placing the apostrophe; observe whether the noun is singular or plural. Examples: *a month's vacation (singular), two months' vacation (plural)*

FUNCTIONS OF NOUNS

The work that a noun performs in a sentence is referred to as its grammatical function. Nouns have different grammatical functions depending on their position in a sentence. Nouns function as:

- A. SUBJECT: subject tells “who” or “what” about the verb. Examples:
 - Jonathan ran to school because he was late.
- B. DIRECT OBJECT: direct object answers “whom” or “what” after an action verb. Examples:
 - Rebecca loved Jacob with all her heart.
- C. INDIRECT OBJECT: indirect object tells “to whom” or “for whom” the action is done. Examples:
 - David gave Sundima the money to buy the car.
 - Rachael brought dad the newspaper.
- D. OBJECT OF A PREPOSITION: object of a preposition is the last word in a prepositional phrase. Example:
 - The boy was hurt in the accident.
- E. PREDICATE NOMINATIVE: a noun that follows a linking verb may function as a predicate nominative. A predicate nominative always renames the subject. Example:
 - My husband was chairman at the reception.
- F. APPOSITIVE: an appositive explains a noun or pronoun that comes just before it. Example:
 - Rebecca's sister, Rachael, was an intelligent student.
- G. OBJECT COMPLEMENT: object complement follows a direct object and renames the direct object. Examples:
 - They elected (Rtd) Brigadier Julius Maada Bio president.

1.3 CONCLUSION

Now that you have completed the study of this unit, we are sure that you will be able to identify, explain, and use nouns in sentences of your own.

1.4 SUMMARY

In this unit, we defined nouns as naming words. We also discussed various types of nouns such as proper nouns- which are names that are particular to persons, animals or places; common nouns, countable and uncountable nouns, concrete and abstract nouns, and collective nouns. We outlined some of features of these nouns. Finally, we explain what compound nouns are. In the next unit, we shall discuss pronouns, words which are used to stand for nouns.

1.5 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Answer the following questions.

1. Classify the following nouns into different classes:

Confidence, chairs, advice, machinery, bag, Kono, teacher, behaviour, happiness, furniture, Makeni, book, family, businessman, jury, club, shoes, father-in-law, grassroots.

2. Differentiate between countable and non-countable nouns.

3. With examples from English, discuss in detail the difference between proper and common nouns.

UNIT TWO: Pronouns

2.0 Introduction

You are welcome to this unit entitled Pronouns. In this unit; we shall undertake a thorough study of pronouns, looking at the definition, types, and the rules governing their usage in different situations.

2.1 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Explain the meaning and types of pronouns;
3. Use pronouns correctly in various contexts;
4. Demonstrate knowledge about the use of gender-neutral pronouns

2.0 Main Content

A pronoun can simply be described as a replacement for a noun to avoid repetition.

In grammar, a pronoun is defined as a word or phrase that may be substituted for a noun or a noun phrase, which once replaced, is known as the pronoun's antecedent.

There are several types of pronouns in English Language. They are as follows:

PERSONAL PRONOUN

A personal pronoun refers to a specific person or thing. These pronouns refer to three categories. They are:

- A. First person: the person speaking or reporting an event
- B. Second person: the person/thing/idea that is spoken to or being addressed.
- C. Third person –the person or thing that is spoken about or that is being discussed.

Personal Pronouns

	Singular	plural
First person	I	we
Second person	you	you
Third person	he/she/it	they

Note: The first person pronoun ‘I’ should always be written as a capital letter even when it occurs in the middle of a sentence. It should not be dotted on top.

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUN

These are used to point out or to call attention to certain things. They are: this, that, these, those

POSSESSIVE PRONOUN

Possessive Pronouns are used to indicate possession. They can be thought of as replacing the possessive adjective or noun. Example:

1 This book is **mine**.

2 These shirts are **theirs**

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUN

They simply introduce questions. The most frequent ones are: How? Who? What? Whom?

REFLEXIVE PRONOUN

They are used to refer back to nouns or pronouns in the subject of the sentence. For example:

1 He stopped **himself** from working

Note: Reflexive pronouns are called emphasizing pronouns or intensive pronouns when they add emphasis to another noun or pronoun.

A. My mother **herself** washes her clothes.

RELATIVE PRONOUNS

They are pronouns because they replace nouns and relative because they join two parts of the sentence together. For example:

1 This is the boy.

2 The boy stole the book.

The two sentences could be joined as: This is the boy **who** stole the book.

Use of relative pronouns

WHO is used to refer to the subject in a sentence. Better still, Who consistently occurs in the subject position of a basic sentence. It is also used alone for human beings e.g.

1. That is the man who killed the goat.
2. The girl who took my pen is around.

In the sentences above *who* refers to “the man” and “the girl” because they are the doers of the actions in the sentences.

WHOM is used to refer to the object (the receiver of an action) in a sentence. In other words, it occurs in the object position of a basic clause or sentence in which it appears. It is also used for human beings, e.g.

1. This is my friend to whom the book was given
2. That is the man whom I am talking about.

WHICH is used for non-human beings. It can refer to both the subject and the object of a sentence, e.g.

1. The table which was brought here yesterday is broken (subject)
2. This is the book which my father bought for me (object)

THAT is used for both human beings and non-human beings either as subjects or objects, e.g.

1. The girl that came here yesterday is a fool. (subject)
2. These are the books that Jane read. (object)

WHOSE is used to show ownership/possession. It is used for both human and non-human beings, e.g.

1. The boy whose mother died is in the class.
2. The goat whose leg got broken has died.

INDEFINITE PRONOUN

An indefinite pronoun is a pronoun which does not have a specific, familiar referent. Indefinite pronouns are in contrast to definite pronouns. Indefinite pronouns can represent either count nouns or non-count nouns.

FUNCTIONS OF THE PRONOUN

A pronoun has the same grammatical functions as a noun.

USING PRONOUNS CORRECTLY

Case of personal pronouns: Personal pronouns have three cases, or forms, called, **nominative**, **objective**, and **possessive**. The case of a personal pronoun depends on the pronoun's function in a sentence.

Some pronouns are **nominative pronouns**. They can only be used to function as **subjects** of verbs in sentences. Some other ones are **objective pronouns**; they function only as objects in sentences.

Below is the table classifying the various pronouns.

CASE→ PERSON ↓	Nominative	Objective	Possessive
First person singular	I	me	Mine
Second person singular	You	you	yours
Third person singular	he, she, it	him, her, it	mine, yours, his, hers, its
First person plural	We	us	Ours
Second person plural	You	you	yours
Third person plural	They	them	theirs

You can avoid errors in choosing the case of personal pronouns if you keep the following rules in mind:

1. Be sure to use the **nominative case** for a personal pronoun in a **compound subject**.
 - A. The guitarist and **I** rehearsed a song. (not **me**)
 - B. **He** and the drummer had never met. (not **him**)
 - C. She and **I** performed together. (not her and **me**)
2. Be sure to use the **objective case** for a personal pronoun in a **compound object**.
 - A. Everyone applauded James and **him**. (not James and **he**)
 - B. Samuel brought Julius and **me** some lemon. (not brought Julius and **I**)
 - C. George refused to tell **them** and Sallay. (not tell **they** and Sallay)
3. Use the **nominative case** of a personal pronoun after a form of the linking verb 'be'.
 - A. The most skillful gardener was **he**. (not was **him**)
 - B. Gloria said that the best supervisor was **I**. (not was **me**)
 - C. The most diligent student is **she**. (not is **her**)

This rule is now changing, especially in informal speech. When speaking informally, people often use the objective case after a form of the linking 'be'. They say: It's me or it was him. Some authorities suggest using the objective case in informal writing as well. To be strictly correct, however, you should use the nominative case after forms of 'be', especially in writing.

4. Do not spell possessive pronouns with an apostrophe.
 - A. The book is **hers**.
 - B. The rake is **theirs**.
 - C. The book is ours
 - D. The hedge cutter is **yours**.

'It's' is a contraction. Be careful not to confuse 'it's' with 'its'.

- A. **It's** her book.
 - B. **Its** cover is torn.
5. Use a possessive pronoun before a gerund (-ing forms used as nouns)
 - A. **Your** working late will be helpful.
 - B. **Our** singing didn't seem to bother the neighbours.
 - C. **Her** hammering disturbed the landlord.
6. Use the **nominative case** for a pronoun that is in apposition to a subject or a predicate nominative.
 - A. The first contestants, she and Raymond, debated well.
7. Use the **objective case** for a pronoun that is in apposition to a direct object, an indirect object, or an object of a preposition.
 - A. The principal congratulated the winners, Joe and **her**.
 - B. The judge gave the funniest speakers, Eddie and **her**, a special award.
 - C. He had some good words for the scorers, Grace and **me**.
8. For the pronoun following **than** or **as**, choose the case of the pronoun that you would use if the missing words were fully expressed.
 - A. They arrived at the party earlier than **she**.
 - B. The play amused our guests as much as **us**.
9. Use **himself** and **themselves**. Do not use ***hisself** or ***theirselves**; they are incorrect forms.
 - A. Paul corrected the **error himself**.
 - B. My parents **themselves** put out the fire.
10. Do not use a **reflexive** unnecessarily. Remember, that a **reflexive pronoun** must refer to the person who is the subject.
 - A. INCORRECT: Stella and **myself** are going to the mall.
 - B. CORRECT: Stella and **I** are going to the mall.
 - C. INCORRECT: Jenneh and **yourself** are invited to the performance.
 - D. CORRECT: Jenneh and **you** are invited to the party.

2.3 CONCLUSION

Now that you have completed the study of this unit, you should be able to explain what pronouns are and how they can be used in different situations.

2.4 SUMMARY

In this Unit, we concluded discussions of the pronoun. We explained the following types of pronouns: interrogative, indefinite, reflexive, emphatic or intensive pronouns, reciprocal pronouns and relative pronouns. We gave some of the features of these pronouns and mentioned how they could be used in sentences.

2.5 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1 .Use the following pronoun types in different sentences: reflexive, emphatic, indefinite, interrogative, relative and possessive pronouns.
2. Explain the following: interrogative pronouns, indefinite pronouns, reflexive pronouns, emphatic or intensive pronouns, reciprocal pronouns and relative pronouns.

UNIT THREE Verbs

3.0 Introduction

You are welcome to this unit titled Words Grouping, which is also known as Parts of Speech. We are going to make an explicit discussion of verbs. These include the definition, types and functions. We shall discuss action verbs, auxiliary/helping verbs, verb phrase, linking verbs, regular and irregular verbs, transitive and intransitive verbs. We shall explain how you could use, identify and distinguish these various kinds of verb in accordance with their functions; and how to distinguish verbs generally from other parts of speech. Verbs do not only express actions, but they can also express state of beings and allocate times to the actions they express. As a result of these roles, they are the most important parts of speech. As you go through this unit, have a pen and paper with you to jot down important ideas to remind you in the future.

3.1 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. define verbs and state their roles
2. identify different kinds of verbs and their uses
3. distinguish verbs from other word groups
4. use verbs in correct sentences of your own

3.2 Main Content

Definition: Verbs are words that can express action or state of being in a sentence. It is interesting to know that verbs can also indicate time or allocate time to the action they express.

Consider the sentences below:

- a). Momoh bought a bag (last week.) b). *He* buys bags (every semester).
a). We ate bread (yesterday.) b). They eat bread (every morning.)

The underlined words in the sentences above are verbs. Note that they are not only expressing actions, but they also indicate the time of their action. Without the time adverbs in the brackets, the verbs in the first sentences (a) indicate that the actions they express took place in the past; while the verbs in the second sentences (b) indicate that their actions are habitual or they happen often.

Types of Verbs: There are several kinds of verbs. The first one is the action verbs. These are verbs that express actions. Eg: eat, sleep, drink, walk, speak etc.

Functionally, action verbs could also be placed into **transitive** and **intransitive**. When an action verb is used in a sentence in a way that its action transfers to something else in the sentence, it is considered as **transitive verb**. Eg: a). John **knocked** the door. a). The police **stopped** the car. In the two sentences above, the actions of the verbs transfer to the door and the car respectively. On the other hands, verbs are said to be intransitive if their actions do not transfer to anything in the sentence. Most often, such verbs are followed by adverbs or adverbial phrases.

Eg: b). John **knocked** at the door b). The car **stopped** immediately.

In the sentences above, *at the door* and *immediately* indicate where and how the actions occurred respectively. The actions expressed by the verbs do not transfer to anything in the sentences.

By the physical appearance of verbs relation to tense aspect, verbs could be divided into **regular** and **irregular**. All verbs that take *-d* or *-ed* to form their past and past participle tenses are regular verbs. Other verbs that form their past and past participle in any other way different from taking *-d* or *-ed* are irregular verbs. Observe the examples in the table below.

REGULAR VERBS					IRREGULAR VERBS			
Present	Present Participle	Past	Past Participle		Present	Present Participle	Past	Past Participle
love	loving	loved	loved		write	writing	wrote	written
dance	dancing	danced	danced		eat	eating	ate	eaten
jump	jumping	jumped	jumped		set	setting	set	set
look	looking	looked	looked		drive	driving	drove	driven

The helping verbs are also known as auxiliary verbs. They do not express action but they play more than one grammatical roles. There are four sets of them. First set includes: am, is, are, was and were. In the second set are: do, does, did, have, has, and had. Will, would, shall, should, can, could, may and might are in the third set. Note that all these verbs are referred to as **helping verbs** when each appear in a sentence with a main or action verbs; in such case it helps the main verb to complete its meaning.

Eg: I **am** dancing. She **is** sleeping. You **are** reading. He **was** working. They **were** waiting.

In all the sentences above, the helping verbs appeared with main verbs. Besides this role, these verbs can also function as linking verbs; that is when each appears alone in a sentence without a main verb.

Eg: I am happy. She is my sister. You are our leader. He was in university. They were busy.

In these sentences, these verbs function as linking verbs, linking the subjects to the subject complements.

The helping verbs in the second set function as action verbs when they appear alone without a main verb. Eg. As helping verbs: John **has** gone home. They **have** eaten the bread. Susan **does** not study for any exam. We **did** not play the game well.

As action verbs: John **has** my pen. They **have** some bread in the cupboard. Susan **does** her homework. We **did** the work very quickly.

The third set of helping verbs is also known as **modal auxiliary verbs**. They include the present and past tense forms as stated below:

Present Tense	Past Tense
will	would
can	could
shall	should
may	might

They are used to express feelings or commitment of a speaker to what he/she is saying. These include ability, willingness, permission, obligation, possibility, uncertainty etc. towards what the speaker is talking about.

Modal Auxiliaries verbs and their use:
Can is used to express ability and permission.

a). Will or would used to express willingness

- i). I **will** buy books for my children.
- ii). He **will** eat when he is hungry.
- iii). I **would** handle my dad's bag when he returned from work.

b). Shall and should used to express commitment.

- i). We shall pay attention in class.
- ii). I shall study for the exams.

c). You should to express obligation or reasonable needful.

- i). You should listen to your parents' advice.
- ii). We should pray every day.

d). Can, could and may are used to express ability, permission, uncertainty and possibility.

Ability

- i). I **can** write good English.
- ii). Peter **can** speak very well.
- iii). I **could** hardly write a simple letter when I was in primary school.

Permission

- i). **Can** you call me your father.
- ii). **Can** I speak to you.
- iii). I asked my dad if he **could** give his car on my last birthday.
- iv). **May** I come to see you?

Uncertainty

- i). I **may** come to see you?

ii). They **may** pass the exam.

Possibility

i). We **can** work and succeed in life.

ii). I **can** write a letter.

iii). I **could** suck my mother's breast when I was a baby.

3.3 CONCLUSION

Having completed the study of this unit, you are advised to embark on continuous practice of the concepts you have learnt. Every action has its own label, and in process of communication, we use more of verbs to express ourselves. So accumulate more words including verbs so that you will be able to freely express yourself.

3.4 SUMMARY

In this unit, kinds of verbs and their different functions have been vividly discussed. The explanation of each concept is followed by series of examples. These examples are your guides to follow for easy comprehension.

3.5 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Answer the following questions and submit them to your tutor for marking. Remember to request for the marked script from your tutor so that you can go through it to learn about your mistakes. You are free to ask questions about things that you do not understand for more clarifications.

1. State the three functions of verbs.

2. With examples, state the differences between these kinds of verbs;

Mental state verbs and physical verbs

Transitive verbs and intransitive verbs

Regular verbs and irregular verbs

3. State the general grammatical role of helping verbs.

5. Apart from the general grammatical role, state the other grammatical roles of first and second sets of helping verbs.

Paul F.M. Ai-Gbahan Lahai & Saidu Challay (2020). English Grammar & Writing Skills.

UNIT FOUR Verbs Two

4.0 Introduction

Tenses are the aspect of verbs that allocate time to actions or state of being which the verbs express. Tenses are very important in communication, because they enable speakers or writers to communicate events of different times. In this unit, we are going to discuss the first six tenses. Observe the verbs or the verb phrases of each tense, learn about the appropriate circumstances to use them and practice using them correctly.

4.1 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. define and identify the first six verb tenses
2. identify the different types of verb phrases
3. use them correctly to communicate events of different times

4.2 Main Content

Definition: A tense is the aspect of verbs that can indicate time of action. To understand the tenses, first try to understand the four principal parts of verbs. The four-principal-parts is referred to the four different physical appearances/structures verbs take to enable them to indicate different times of their actions. Observe the sentences below.

Present	Present Participle	Past	Past Participle
go	going	went	gone
eat	eating	ate	eaten
drink	drinking	drank	drunk
write	writing	wrote	written
love	loving	loved	loved
dance	dancing	danced	danced
jump	jumping	jumped	jumped

- i). I go to school.
- ii). I went to school.
- iii). I will go to school.
- iv). I am going to school.
- v). I was going to school.
- vi). I will be going to school.

The underlined words or groups of words are verbs or verb phrases; they indicate different times of the action.

i). The verb in the first sentence is in the **present tense** indicating the action is habitual or truth at the moment. This tense is also appropriate to express actions or events that are permanent truth. In this tense, the verb is normally selected in the first category in the table above and it does not appear with any helping verb; but it take **-s** or **-es** if the subject of the sentence is the third person singular (**he, she** or **it**).

ii). The verb in the second sentence is in the **past tense** indicating the action took place and was completed in the past. The verb is selected in the third category and it does not appear with a helping verb.

iii). In the third sentence, the verb is in the simple future tense; it is used to express action or event that will take place in future. The main verb is selected in first category and it appears with helping verb (**will** or **shall**). The phrase **going to** could be used to express the same action. Eg: I am **going to** study for the exam.

iv). The verb in the fourth sentence is in the **present continuous tense**, it expresses actions or events that are going on at the moment as the speaker speaks. The main verb is selected in the second category and it appears with helping verbs am, is or are. The subject **I** appears with **am**; **he, she** or **it** appears with **is**. While are appears with **you, we** and **they**. Eg: I **am writing** a story. She **is sleeping**. We **are eating** bread.

v). The verb in the fifth sentence is in the **past continuous tense**, and it indicates two action occurred in the past; one was in progress when the other one occurred. The main verb is selected from the second category and it appears with helping verb either was or were. Choose was if the subject is **I, he, she**, or **it**; and choose were if the is you, we or they. Eg: John **was studying** when the light went off. They **were dancing** in the room.

vi). The verb in the sixth sentence is in the **future continuous tense**, and indicates that the action will be in progress at a specific time in future. The main verb is selected from the second category and it appears with two helping verbs shall or will and be. Eg: He **will be going** to Freetown tomorrow. We **shall be starting** schooling next week.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The first six verb tenses have being vividly discussed with many examples in this unit. Give not less than five examples of your own for each tense. Practice them until you become conversant with rule and techniques. Note that two different tenses may convey similar message but their verbs or verb phrases will never be the same.

4.4 SUMMARY

Tenses are very necessary for meaningful communication. If the tenses are not properly understood and correctly used in communication, it will not be easy to understand the communication.

4.5 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1). The subjects and verbs are given; construct sentences in the following tenses:

a). He / drive

simple present tense

.....

simple past tense

.....

simple future tense

.....

present continuous tense

.....

Past continuous tense

.....

future continuous tense

.....

b). They / give

simple present tense

.....

simple past tense

.....

simple future tense

.....

present continuous tense

.....

Past continuous tense

.....

future continuous tense

.....

c). We / spend

simple present tense

.....

simple past tense

.....

simple future tense

.....

present continuous tense

.....

Past continuous tense

.....

future continuous tense

.....

2). Name the underlined verbs or verb phrases in the sentences below:

- a). We drove to the town.
- b). They are waiting for you.
- c). She writes stories for children
- d). It was looking at us.
- e). You will kill that snake.
- f). I shall be dancing in the party.
- g). She has my book.
- h). He was our prefect.

3). Use the verbs and verb phrases below in sentences:

is laughing, were talking, loved, gives, will run, shall sit, will be looking, moves, am reading,
shall be speaking

UNIT 5: SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

5.0 Introduction:

You are welcome to another unit of this module titled **subject-verb agreement**. In English grammar, the word ‘**agreement**’ means ‘**likeness**’. To make two words agree is to make them look alike in some respect. You should note that, when we speak or write, there should be an agreement between the subject and its verb in order to have a sound language usage. .

5.1 Objectives:

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Explain what subject verb means.
2. Apply the various rules associated with subject verb agreement.
3. Construct correct sentences using the appropriate agreement rules.

5.2.0 MAIN CONTENT

The subject of a sentence determines the verb form to be used. There are two numbers in grammar: **singular and plural**. (See unit one of this module).

A word is singular in number if it refers to one person or thing. A word is plural if it refers to more than one person or thing. Except for the ‘**to be**’, English verbs often show a difference between singular and plural only in the third person and in the present tense.

The third person singular present form ends in ‘-s’

I	{	drink	he	{	drinks
you			she		
we			it		
they					

The verb '**be**' presents several special problems in agreement. First, the second person pronoun '**you**' is always used with the plural form of the verb. '**you are**', '**you were**'.

Second, the difference between singular and plural is shown in the past tense as well as in the present tense.

Singular

Plural

I was

we were

you were

you were

he, she it was

they were

Present Tense

Past Tense

I am

we, were

you, are

you, were

he, she, it, is

they, were

A singular verb is used with a singular subject.

The class **is** interesting

James **works** hard.

Fatmata **lives** in Makeni.

This letter **was** written by George.

A plural subject is used with a plural verb.

The classes **are** interesting.

The boys **work** hard.

These women **live** in this house.

The letters **were** written by George.

The words '*with*', *together with*', *along with*', *as well as*, '*in addition to*' '*accompanied by*', '*plus*' and so on, are used as prepositions. The objects of these prepositions have no effect upon the number of the verb.

Joseph's carelessness, *plus* her irregularity *is* the cause of her failure.

The old woman *accompanied by* her son *was* the first to arrive.

The secretary *together with* the receptionist *receives* visitors between 10am- 1pm.

Intervening Words and Phrases

The verb agrees only with its subject. Sometimes words or phrases come between a subject and its verb. These words or phrases usually have no effect upon the number of the verb even though they are closer to the verb than the subject is. However, the number of the words in the phrase does not determine the number of the subject.

The *bus*, carrying fifty passengers *is* on its way to Freetown.

The *power* of the directors *was* very great.

The *dogs*, waiting in front of their trainer, *obey* his command.

Indefinite Pronouns as subjects

Indefinite pronouns are pronouns that refer to people or things. Indefinite pronouns generally fall into three groups. Some indefinite pronouns are always singular. Others are always plural. Some may be either singular or plural.

Always Singular	Always Plural	Singular or Plural
<i>each someone neither</i>	<i>Several</i>	<i>some any</i>
<i>either no one either</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>all enough</i>
<i>neither no body</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>most more</i>
<i>one anyone every</i>	<i>both</i>	<i>none plenty</i>
<i>everybody something</i>	<i>many</i>	
<i>anything everything nothing</i>		

Each student and lecturer *is* present

Each of the tests *is* challenging

Everybody *is* here for the game

Several boys *are* at the football match

Both of contestants *were* congratulated

Many *were* surprised at the final score.

Singular or Plural

The words *some, all, most, none and any* are singular when they refer to a *quantity*. They are plural when they refer to a *number of individual items*.

Some of the money *was* stolen (*quantity*)

Some of their answers *were* wrong (*number of individual items*)

Most of the sugar *is* gone (*quantity*)

Most of the books *were* interesting (*number of individual items*)

All of the food *was* donated (*quantity*)

All of the tools *were* expensive (*number of individual items*)

Singular words joined by ‘*or*’, ‘*nor*’, ‘*either...or*’, ‘*neither...nor*’ to form a compound subject are singular. They therefore agree with singular.

Kemoh *or* Jatu *deserves* the scholarship.

Neither his sincerity *nor* his reliability *is* questioned.

Neither Manchester United *nor* Arsenal *has* the chance to win.

When a singular word and a plural word are joined by ‘*or*’, ‘*nor*’, ‘*either...or*’, ‘*neither... nor*’ to form a compound subject, the verb agrees with the subject that is nearer to it.

Neither Musu *nor* her friends *are* at home.

Neither her friends *nor* Musu *is* at home.

The management *or* the unions *are* making concessions

Either the judge *or* the lawyers *are* wrong.

Subjects joined by ‘and’ take a plural verb.

Jinnah and his twin brother *look* alike.

The walls and the ceilings **were** decorated.

Physical fitness and mental agility **are** necessary for athletes.

However, when the parts of a compound sentence are considered as a unit a singular verb is used.

Bread and butter **is** good for breakfast.

The rice and beans **looks** delicious.

When the parts of a compound sentence refer to the same thing, person, animal, place or idea, a singular verb is used.

Hawa's friend and companion **expects** her tonight.

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal of USL **is** out of office.

1. Collective nouns may be either singular or plural. Common collective nouns include;

audience *committed* *swarm*

crowd *flock* *team*

class *herd* *troop*

The **team were** talking over with some new players.

The **team was** ranked first in the nation.

The **family have** agreed among themselves. (In this usage, *family* refers to the *individual members*)

The **family is** the basic unit of our society (In this usage, the *family* is considered as *a unit*).

2. Expressions **stating time, money measurement, weight, volume, fractions** are usually singular when the amount is considered as a unit.

Fifty thousand Leones is not enough

Ten years in exile *seems* like a long time.

Fifty kilograms of rice *is* needed.

Half of the class *was* absent.

Two hours *is* not enough for this examination.

However, when the amount is considered as *a number of separate units*, a plural verb is used.

There *are* two ten thousand Leones with the cashier.

A title (*of a book, magazine, story, movie, musical, play, television programmes*) refers to an individual work. It is singular even if a word within the title is plural.

A few nouns ending in ‘s’; such as measles, civics, economies, mathematics, physics although plural in form take a singular verb.

Measles *is* a disease to take seriously.

Economics *is* an important discipline.

Certain nouns that end in ‘-s’ such as scissors, plants, eye glasses take plural verbs

The scissors *were* sharp.

Your eye glasses *need* repairs.

Please help me get *a pair of scissors*. (singular form)

5.2.1 CONCLUSION

Having completed this unit, you are expected to explain what subject-verb agreement means as well as apply the various rules you have studied in order to speak and write good English.

5.2.2 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed subject verb agreement in detail by explaining the various rules that can enhance the agreement between the subject and its verb in sentences.

5.3 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

WRITE EACH SENTENCE, USING THE FORM OF THE VERB IN PARENTHESES THAT AGREES WITH ITS SUBJECT.

- i) Neither the pupils nor their teachers (were/was) in school.
- ii) Every student (were/was) required to submit his or her assignment at noon.
- iii) Economics (is/are) an important discipline.
- iv) The old woman accompanied by her son (is/are) waiting on the doctor.
- v) Four years in college (seem/seems) too long.
- vi) The British army as well as the UNAMSIL (were/was) protecting Sierra Leone.
- vii) Alice's daughter (do/does) well at communication skills.
- viii) Ten thousand Leones (is/are) not enough for our intended project.
- ix) Either Joseph or Hawa (has/have) the keys to the office.
- x) None of the five boys (were/was) was in class.

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