IIT ROORKEE

NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE

# EFFECTIVE WRITING

## Lecture 05: Notions of Correctness and Appropriateness, Part I

**BINOD MISHRA**

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**



## Correctness

# Follow standard grammatical rules

- ✓ Use of Capitalization
- ✓ Double Negatives

  -- He couldn't hardly foresee the result of his lethargy.

  --- I have never seen nobody.
- ✓ Verb use
- ✓ SVA, Number agreement,
- ✓ Sentence structure
- ✓ Use of Voice

# Capitalization

- ✓ **Capitalize the first word and all important words in the title. Also capitalize all nouns , pronouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and prepositions that stand last or contain more than five letters.**

  The Baltic Sea, The Renaissance, World War II, The Russian Revolution, The Grapes of Wrath

- ✓ **Any title preceding a name or as a substitute for the name is capitalized.**

  President Kalam, Shri Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister,

- ✓ **When designations are not part of the title, they are not capitalized.**

  He became a professor at the age of 40.

  The country has now a new president.

- ✓ **Names of particular courses, journals, universities etc. are capitalized.**

  Effective Writing, Indian Journal of English Studies, University of Madras

  Mother Teresa was a noble soul.

# Punctuation

**Period (.) A period is used after abbreviations and designations.**

Dr., Mr., Messrs., M.A., Ph.D, D.Litt.,

**Colon(:) A colon is used to indicate further explanation, and also to introduce list of items etc.**

Man is full of desires: he loves only those who can satisfy them all.

The three major Romantic poets include: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats.

- ✓ **Semi-Colon(;) Used to indicate two independent constructions joined without a conjunction. It is also used to separate independent clauses joined by 'however' and 'therefore'.**

Wise men learn by other men's mistakes; fools by their own.

He doesn't have much money; he will, however, help his relatives without any hesitation.

- ✓ **Comma (,) Used in dates, degrees, salutations and parenthetical expressions**

September 09, 2019. 09 September, 2019. Dr. Shrama, M.D. Dear Shiv,

The people of this country are, I believe, extraordinarily courteous.

The new minister has, I think, made rigorous rules for ensuring everyone's welfare.

# Standard and Error Free Writing

- Loss of standards of written English.
- Faulty use of prepositions, pronouns, articles etc.

When we grow old, we become sensitive *against* all sorts of happenings.

The performance of the new pipe is superior *than* the old ones.

Sin dogs even *to* death.

'Who ever loved that loved not in first sight?'

- Always remember that **relational verbs** such as '*appear,' 'belong to', 'consist of', 'contain', 'equal', 'fit', 'include', 'owe', 'require', 'resemble', 'seem', 'suffice'* cannot be used in their progressive forms.

Why is he appearing so sad today?

He is not resembling his father.

You are seeming tired.

# Some Troublesome Verbs

- Verbs of emotion such as *adore, abhor, detest, like, dislike, hate, love , wish* etc. do not take progressive forms.

Indians are *adoring* Gandhi even today.

- Verbs like *hear, see, smell , taste* are verbs of perception.

He cannot hear anything.

The judge had been hearing everything patiently.

The old man cannot see.

He will be seeing the minister tomorrow.

- Verbs of possession like have, own and possess

He has a multi-storied house.

She was having breakfast when I met her.

He has a fleet of cars.

He has a good memory.

# Contd.

- Words such as believe, feel, forget, know, mean, mind, realize, recall, recollect, think, trust, understand are verbs of cognition.

  We feel that he is going to crack the examination this year. ( Think)

  I am feeling better now. ( Physical/mental condition)

  I don't think he is so bad. (Opinion)

  He is thinking of buying a new car. (Possibility)

# Articles, Pronouns

- *The choice of article 'a' and 'an' is not confined to vowel letter but it also depends upon the vowel sound.*

  *He is a university professor.*

  *He is an old scientist of repute.*

  *An honest person always stands true even in adverse conditions.*

*The* thing of beauty is a joy forever.

"What's in *the* name? That which we call *a* rose
By any other name would smell as sweet." *(Romeo and Juliet)*

"That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
"Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
"Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed? *( The Waste Land)*

# Agreement or Syntax

- **When the subjects connected by either…or, or neither ….nor differ in number and person, the verb agrees with the nearest subject.**

Either the manager or the accountant has to admit that there was some discrepancy in my account statement.

Neither the culprit nor the witnesses were issued summons in the case.

Either you or he has to record the proceedings.

- **The verb of a relative clause agrees with the antecedent of the relative pronoun.**

He is only one of those students who submits assignments in time.

He who stands firm against all odds succeeds finally.

# Contd.

- **A number of' and 'the number of'**

A number of questions remain unanswered in everyone's life.

The number of registrations for MOOC courses has increased highly over the last two years.

- **A clause acting as the subject of a sentence agrees with the notional subject.**

What was once a dream has become reality.

What were once fearful jungles have been converted into model townships.

- **Some words ending in 's' and acting as subject of a sentence take a singular verb.**

Politics is the art of the impossible.

Measles is still a fatal disease.

The acoustics of the hall deserve our appreciation.

# Use of Voice

- **Passive transformations enable writers the deletion of the agent.**
- **A sentence in the active voice appears vigorous and the relationship between the agent and the action appears natural.**

- Passengers at the emigration counter were asked to show their valid passports.

  Revd. The officer asked the passengers to show their passports.
- It is believed that there is life on the moon.
- His case was not discussed in the meeting.

- We have dispatched your consignment this morning.
- The board of governors has decided to consider his case sympathetically.
- Clearance of past dues authorizes you for all credit applications in future.

- The need to keep layouts simple, clean and attractive has been stressed by most desktop publishing and design guides.

# Thank You