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## Teaching of Composition

The word 'composition' is derived from the word 'compose' which means to put together. So composition means putting words and sentences together to express one's own ideas. It requires thinking of ideas and expressing them in the language. It is the expression of our thoughts, ideas, feelings and observations.

The main purpose of teaching English is to enable our students to understand English when read or spoken and to express their thoughts in writing or in speech. The other aim of this teaching is to enable our pupils to produce original expression in the form of stories, books, letters to editors, reporters and so on. Therefore, the teaching of composition has occupied an important place.

### Pre-requisites for Teaching of Composition: -

- (i) Students should have a fair knowledge of English language.
- (ii) They must have sufficient ideas.
- (iii) They should have their mental development of the level that they can arrange ideas in a sequence.

### Types of Composition: -

There are two types of composition: -

1. Oral - Guided, and Free composition.
2. Written- Guided, and Free composition.

### Oral Composition: -

The most important aspect of teaching English is oral composition. It is the natural and proper preliminary to written composition at the beginning of the language learning. Even in higher classes its importance cannot be ignored because speech and not writing is the vital and essential form of learning. Through the oral composition our students become able to speak English fluently and write English correctly. Pupils can express their interests, feelings, ideas, needs etc. through oral composition. Generally in our schools, oral composition is not given the place due to it. But the habit of oral composition should be kept up during the whole school period. It becomes clear from Laurie's remarks, 'The habit of oral composition should be kept up during the whole school period.' It should always precede written composition. Composition should begin with the power of speech and should be oral long before it is written.

### **Aims of Oral Composition: -**

- (i) To give practice in using English language.
- (ii) To make pupils express their interests, feelings, ideas, needs and knowledge of English language.
- (iii) To promote a clear thinking.

### **Importance of Oral Composition: -**

- (i) It helps the students for written composition.
- (ii) It develops freedom, naturalness and spontaneity of speech among the students.
- (iii) It creates interest among the students because they feel that the speaking of English is real, vital and useful.
- (iv) Language learning through this process is simple and more economical.

### **Teaching of Oral Composition: -**

In teaching English we aim at developing in the learner the four skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing). Therefore, in the primary stage students should be encouraged to form the habit of active and attentive listening to others. They should be encouraged by picture composition or by story-telling to speak fluently and clearly. The duty of teacher is only to help the students where they face difficulties. Teacher should follow the direct method. He will never use the mother-tongue until the child is unable to grasp the idea. Teacher will ask simple questions on different objects and students will answer them. Teacher should follow dramatization, recitation, and reading.

Gradually emphasis be given on greater fluency, consecutiveness, greater alertness in thought and expression. The teacher may apply question and answer method to make his pupils speak English without any hesitation. At the middle stage, the teacher can train his children in oral composition through conversation, dialogue, recitation, debate and dramatization. He may arrange excursion programmes outside the school and ask them to give an account of their visit. He may select a topic from prescribed book and have discussion on it. Full freedom should be given to the students to give their free opinion at the time of discussion.

At the High School stage, the teacher may special attention to the correctness of expression, logical and thoughtful presentation of the subject-matter and the use of idiomatic spoken English. The teacher may encourage the students to speak English fearlessly and also create the spirit of emulation and competition among them.



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In conclusion it may be said that in the teaching of oral composition the teacher should follow the direct method and structural approach. His chief aim should be to make the students able to speak English fluently and provide them good opportunity for the active use of acquired vocabulary.

Significance of Oral Composition: -

- (i) It is simple and saves time.
- (ii) It forms the foundation for written composition.
- (iii) It develops speaking ability.
- (iv) Students find it interesting.

According to Grinning, "Oral exercises are still the best means of getting good results. Writing is at best a slow and laborious process and while a boy is writing one sentence, he could say a dozen and so get a correspondingly greater practice in expressing his ideas.

Written Composition: -

Written composition is considered as an art of self-expression. It should follow oral composition. Written composition provides an opportunity to the pupils to write what they feel, wish and require.

Aims of Written Composition: -

1. To help the pupils to write legibly, correctly and in a decent order.
2. To enable students to express in writing what they speak, feel, wish and understand.
3. To create attitudes of collecting the relevant materials, logical thinking, application and methodical presentation.
4. To motivate them to think about the situation provided.
6. To teach them how to organize his own thoughts and ideas in proper way.
7. To enlarge their vocabulary.

Teaching of Written Composition: -

Before going to teach the written composition in the classroom, the teacher should concentrate upon the oral work. Though at the beginning of the language learning much stress is laid upon oral work yet writing is more important than it at the middle and higher stage. It is a tool used to enable us to express what is in our mind and for some people is almost as important as speech. Therefore every teacher should know the art of teaching written composition at different stages.

In the early stage the small children are not able to write correct sentences or express their own ideas in correct form. Then their muscles and hands are not properly developed to write the letters by pen and paper. Therefore in this stage the teacher should distribute written work into (a) penmanship or simple hand-writing, and (b) as a form of exercise in learning the language. He should encourage his students to write controlled composition with the help of key points. The plan of written composition work in all classes should be graded, and should be keeping with the natural interest of the students. At the initial stage the teacher should not give the students hard composition on the objects out of their imagination. He uses pictures and asks them to write accordingly, even one paragraph stories may be written by the class, one questions should be well distributed over the class. Loud reading by the student should be done. It provides a good and varied preparation for writing. The start can be made in writing. To start with the students may be encouraged to write letters to their parents, sisters, brothers, relatives, friends etc. Letter writing encourages spontaneous and natural self-expression. But at the high school stage written composition should be free and unassisted. Therefore the most important duty of the teacher in this stage is to give selected and planned questions from the text-book and other written materials, He should guide them properly and make correction of the given task. Not only question answer but also other written compositions such as translation, paragraph writing, essay, letter, précis etc. should be given to the students properly at right times. Stress should be laid on quality not quantity. At the time of correction the teacher will discuss the common errors. Written composition develops the originality in self-expression.

The significance of written composition is obvious from the aims which are proposed to be achieved.

### **Guided Composition: -**

Guided composition is a technique of controlling writing in language learning. In it students are presented with controlled situations by providing them with ideas, structures and vocabulary. They are given to understand fully about the topic of composition, its sequence and arrangement, the structure and to some extent the vocabulary too that will be used. Guided composition is closed-ended. In it the students are to follow the teacher's suggestions or guidance and does composition work accordingly.

Guided composition is not strictly controlled composition. It is an effort to lead the students nearer to free composition. In a controlled composition the students are not given the freedom to construct sentences of their choice and their use of vocabulary is also strictly controlled. Oral or written compositions are guided when:

- (i) The topic for composition is carefully selected by the teacher.
- (ii) The various details of the topic are given to students by the teachers.

- (iii) The teacher also decides the procedure for the practical completion of the topic.
- (iv) The vocabulary and structure to be used is thought over by the teacher.
- (v) The teacher is always ready to guide students in the - composition work.

**Guided composition can be done by the following exercises:**

- (a) Substitution tables.
- (b) Transcription.
- (c) Dictation.
- (d) Transformation of sentences.
- (e) Composition of incomplete sentences, and
- (f) Reproduction etc.

**Merits of Guided Composition: -**

- (i) It paves the way for free composition.
- (ii) The teacher can correct the mistakes of students at the very beginning.
- (iii) The assistance of teacher makes composition writing for little children interesting.
- (iv) Guided composition also corrects grammatical mistakes.
- (v) Students learn structures too.

**Free Composition: -**

In free composition student is free to make use of any structure and vocabulary items that he likes. It is that type of composition which gives the student freedom to choose words, structures and ideas. However, the teacher may help the student in collection of ideas by giving an outline. In this way he may supply to students some language material also. Free composition is open ended. In it each student is free to express his ideas in his own language.

Free composition should be introduced at the later stage. French correctly stated, free composition in which the child has to make up his own thoughts has no place in first three years of a six- or seven-year course. If it is used, it will only result in a large number of most discouraging mistakes.

**A free composition is one in which:**

- (i) There are no restrictions on pupils for use of vocabulary and structure.
- (ii) There are no restrictions on the length of the composition.
- (iii) Pupils are free to tackle the topic set for them.
- (iv) Pupils are forced to think freely.



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**To enable the students to write good composition following points may be helpful:**

- (i) The topic should be specific rather than general and related to the interest and experiences of the students.
- (ii) Oral composition should precede written composition.
- (iii) Individuality should be encouraged.
- (iv) The best attempts should find their way in the wall magazine or printed magazine.

**Types of Free Composition:**

There are mainly five types of free composition: Narrative, story type, reflective e.g. essay writing and letter-writing, Imaginative and Literary writings e.g. abstract writing, explanation writing etc.

**Significance of Free Composition:**

- (i) It helps the students at the higher stage of learning and in their later life.
- (ii) It paves the way for logical thinking and creative work.
- (iii) It develops translation ability, because pupils first think in the mother-tongue and then translate the ideas into English.

**For efficient teaching of composition the teacher should follow the following suggestions:**

- (i) Students must be prepared or motivated for composition writing by oral questioning, using pictures, reading aloud, short speeches, lectures and silent reading.
- (ii) The teacher should provide many good and relevant ideas such as:
  - (a) Having occasional talks on interesting topics.
  - (b) Reading aloud to pupils from interesting books.
  - (c) Encouraging pupils to collect information in various ways.
  - (d) Encouraging pupils to read more.
  - (e) Having general knowledge periods once a week.
- (iii) The teacher must remove the grammatical mistakes of the students.
- (iv) The teacher must emphasize on the clarity of ideas.
- (v) The subject of composition should be chosen by using the principle of *utility* and *interest*. It should be from their everyday life.



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### **Evaluating composition:**

The aim of correction work is to point out the mistakes of the pupils so as to enable them to acquire the correct forms. The teacher's job is not only to find out errors but also to offer suggestion to each student as to how he can improve his composition. Teacher is expected to point out not only the mistakes of language but also short-comings in the subject-matter as also in the way of its presentation.