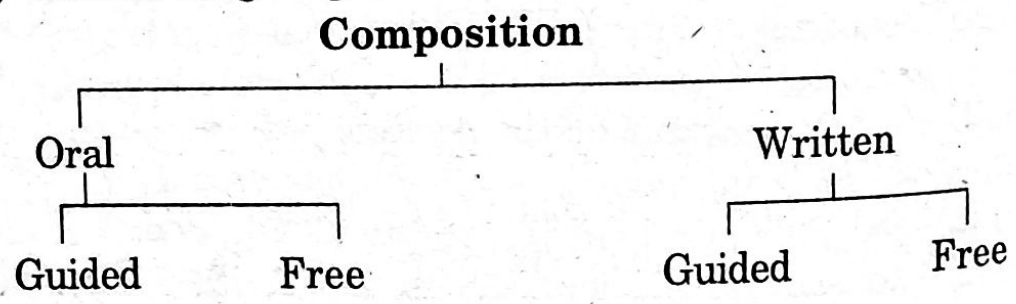


Expression of ideas in English is one of the aims of English teaching. *Thompson* and *Wyatt* are of the view, "The power of expression in a language is a matter of skill rather than of knowledge." To develop the skill of expression in pupils, there is need of teaching composition. *Bhatia* and *Bhatia* have defined composition as, "It is the expression of child's thoughts, his own ideas, feelings and observations. It includes both the process and product of composing. It refers to the process of collecting thoughts, arranging them in accordance with recognized standards of form. The product may take the shape of a letter, an application, a paragraph, a story, an essay, a description or narration, a poem, etc." The pre-requisites for the teaching of composition are :

- (i) Students should have a fair knowledge of English language. This involves the knowledge of sufficient English vocabulary, structures and spellings. The students should be able to speak, read and write English.
- (ii) They must have sufficient ideas.
- (iii) Their level of mental development should be such that they can arrange ideas in a sequence.

Types of Composition and Their Teaching

There are two types of composition : (1) Oral and (2) Written. There are two types of each; (1) Guided and (2) Free. This can be shown by the following diagram :



We shall come to know about these one by one.

Oral Composition

Oral composition is of immense importance, as is clear by Laurie's remark, "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

Following are the aims of oral composition :

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

Teaching of Oral Composition

The teacher can teach oral composition to students at an early stage by the following manner :

(a) Asking students to produce sentences which the teacher speaks, e.g.,

Teacher : I am writing.

Pupil : I am writing.

(b) The teacher asks a few questions about some object or some activity. For instance :

Teacher : What is that ?

Pupil : That is a black-board.

Teacher : What is this ?

Pupil : This is a chalk.

Teacher : What am I doing ?

Pupil : You are writing on the black-board.

(c) Giving commands to students for execution, e.g., open the window; write on the black-board.

(d) Asking students to read a substitution table like this one :

She	gets up takes bath worships takes her breakfast	in the morning
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Then, they may be asked to substitute the table with other suitable words, e.g., substitute the words in the second column.

She		in the evening
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(e) Asking questions on a picture after describing it, e.g.,

Teacher : Who is he ?

Pupil : He is Denu.

Teacher : What is he doing ?

Pupil : He is bathing ?

Teacher : Who is taking bath ?

Pupil : She is Denu's sister.

Teacher : What is she doing ?

Pupil : She is washing clothes.

(f) Asking questions from the text-book.

(g) Initiating conversation with pupils and among pupils on simple topics.

(h) Narrating simple stories and asking students to give the gist.

(i) Asking students to play simple short dramas.

The teaching of oral composition at later stages should be done by the following exercises :

(a) Reproduction of stories,

(b) Description of objects and pictures,

(c) Conversation,

(d) Dialogue,

(e) Debate,

(f) Dramatization,

(g) Speeches, and

(h) Description of incidents.

Significance of Oral Composition

Following are the points showing the 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.

(v) It helps students to think clearly.

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

Written Composition

Written composition should follow oral composition. Its aims are as follows :

- (i) To enable pupils to express their ideas in writing.
- (ii) To develop their writing ability.
- (iii) To enable them to present their ideas in a clear and logical way.

Teaching of Writing Composition

At the early stage, written composition can be taught by doing the following exercises :

- (a) Copying and dictation.
- (b) Completing incomplete sentences and writing them.
- (c) Using words in sentences and writing them.
- (d) Writing answers to simple questions based on lessons in the reader.
- (e) Writing description of an object or a picture in a few sentences.
- (f) Writing short paragraphs on given topics.

At the later stage, written composition involves the following activities :

- (a) Write answers to questions based on lessons in the reader.
- (b) Writing the description of a scene or an incident experienced by pupils, e.g., college field, a journey.
- (c) Writing explanation of a paragraph.
- (d) Writing dialogues.
- (e) Writing essays.
- (f) Writing letters : personal, official and business.
- (g) Writing translations of paragraphs from the mother-tongue into English, and
- (h) Using idioms and phrases in sentences and writing them.

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

Guided Composition

At the early stage, the composition whether oral or written should be strictly guided, because pupils should proceed from imitation to improvisation, from reproduction or original expression. Oral or written compositions are guided when :

- (i) The topic for the composition is carefully selected by the teachers.

- (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.g.*,
 She is walking : (Change the gender)
 He is walking.
 (Change into past tense)
 She was walking.
- (e) Composition of incomplete sentence.
- (f) Reproduction.
 - (i) Reproducing a situation, *e.g.*, the teacher says : "This is a table. I am putting a book on it. The book is mine." Then students will be asked to reproduce the sentence by replacing book with some other object.
 - (ii) Reproducing a picture description.
 - (iii) Reproducing answers, and
 - (iv) Reproducing a story.

Merits of Guided Composition

- (i) Guided composition 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 also learn structures.

Free Composition

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

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

H. Champion says, "The ultimate aim of composition is to enable the pupil to freely arrange his own ideas in his own way, and also to choose his own word freely. Hence, the term 'free composition'."

Types of Free Composition

There are mainly five types of free composition :

- (a) Narrative,
- (b) Story type,
- (c) Reflective, e.g., essay writing, letter writing,
- (d) Imaginative, and
- (e) Literary writings e.g., abstract writing, explanation writing.

Significance of Free Composition

- (i) It helps 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 idea into English.

Suggestions for Improving Teaching Composition

A teacher can teach composition more efficiently, if he follows the following suggestions :

- (i) First of all students should be prepared or motivated for composition writing. In this regard, P. Gurrery has suggested these types of preparation : (a) oral questioning, (b) using picture, (c) reading aloud, (d) short speeches or lectures, and (e) silent reading.

- (ii) The teacher should provide good and relevant ideas. P. Gurrery has suggested the following devices for it :

- (a) Energetic questioning focussed on well-known details.
- (b) Reading aloud from interesting books.
- (c) Encouraging pupils to collect information in various ways.
- (d) Acting, play making and puppet-plays.
- (e) Encouraging pupils to read more.
- (f) Having generral knowledge periods once a week.
- (g) Having occasional talks on interesting topics.

(iii) The teacher must remove the grammatical weaknesses of pupils.

(iv) The teacher must emphasise on clarity of ideas. In the words of *P. Gurrey*, "Some examples of short explanations can be shown to the class on black-board and pupils are asked to find that where are the ideas muddled or too vague; and then asked for alterations and finally the class can be asked to choose the clearest of these. The class should practice for finding unclear expression in their own writings and make suggestions for improvement. The teacher can question the class more precisely than usual whenever they are to write on complicated or confusing subject."

(v) The subject of composition should be chosen by using the principle of 'utility' and 'interest'. It should be from their everyday life. According to *P. Gurrey*, "Indeed, it should be an unwritten law among us that pupils who are learning a foreign language, must never write about things which they have not seen in their lives—at least not until they can use the language freely and correctly in speech and writing."

(vi) The teacher must correct thoroughly the oral or written composition of students. He can make his work easy by :

- (a) Writing difficult words on the black-board.
- (b) Encouraging pupils to find out their own mistakes.
- (c) Students should be given time to revise their composition.
- (d) The written work of students can be interchanged. They may be asked to find out each others mistakes.¹