# UCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE: SEMINAR NOTES - 2023

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### Dear Candidate.

This document is an essential supplement to your class notes and the various discussions you have already had with your teachers and fellow students. May you find it fruitful as you look forward to writing your national UCE examinations, 2023

#### PAPER I: COMPOSITION WRITING

## Important DOs and DON'Ts

- ♦ When writing, be original. Do not replicate stories from movies and books.
- Do not forget to write a title.
- Do not write disjointed work NO skipping lines.
- ♦ Do not outline or number your points. Instead, use British indented paragraphs.
- Do not use subtitles/subheadings. Instead, use transition markers when shifting from one aspect to another.
- ♦ Do not use informal language: slang, jargons, direct translation from native languages.
- Do not use unnecessary abbreviations and contractions
- Stick to British English: spellings, nouns, etc.
- \* For Section A, use language/register that is appropriate to the functional writing aspect you are writing about.
- For narrative writing, you may spice up your story with new vocabulary and some figurative language: proverbs, sayings, idioms, similes, metaphors, personification, exaggeration, euphemism, etc.

## **SECTION A: FUNCTIONAL WRITING**

## **LETTERS**

# Format of informal/friendly letter

- Sender's/writer's address must be slanting
- Date correctly written e.g. 12th July, 2023
- Salutation Dear [recipient's first name or title of relation e.g. Dear Agnes, or Dear Mother, or Darling dear, etc.)/
- Body write the details of the letter in three to four paragraphs. Write in a conversational style, but observe proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation rules.
- Conclusion conclude in an informal way e.g. Yours affectionately, or Lots of love, or Your most loving daughter, etc.
- \* Writer's first name in small letters e.g. James, or Lukia, or Cathy, or Mother, etc.
- Do NOT sign.

## Format of formal/official letter

- Sender's/writer's address must be slanting
- Date correctly written e.g. 12th July, 2023
- Recipient's/addressee's address not slanting
- Salutation Dear Sir, or Dear Madam, or Dear [recipient's title and surname e.g. Dr. Masereka,]



- Reference reason for writing e.g. Re: <u>Apology for dodging a Biology exam</u> or Re: <u>APOLOGY FOR DODGING A BIOLOGY EXAM</u>
- Body write the details of the letter in three to four paragraphs. Be straightforward and use formal/official English.
- Complimentary close e.g. Use Yours faithfully if you saluted with Dear Sir, or Dear Madam. If you saluted with the recipient's title and surname, compliment with Yours sincerely.
- Signature
- Name of writer in CAPITAL LETTERS.

Letters: UNEB - UCE 2022, 2016, 2014, 2008, 2007, 2005, 2003, 2002, 2001, 1998, 1997, 1995

## **SPEECHES**

#### **Format**

- \* Title name of speaker, nature of function, date and venue
- Observe the protocol from top to bottom
- Greet the audience
- Introduce yourself name and position
- Introduce the topic
- Body provide the details of the speech using proper paragraphing
- ❖ Conclude e.g. Thank you for listening, I wish you a good day.
- Do NOT sign speech.

Speeches: UNEB - UCE 2018, 2005, 2004, 2002, 2001, 2000, 1999, 1997, 1996,

# MINUTES OF A MEETING

#### Format

- Heading/title purpose, date, time and venue of sitting
- \* Attendance members present, members absent with apology, members absent without apology, members in attendance (invited visitors)
- Agenda the items must be numbered
- Minute recordings (main body) Min./month/ year e.g. Min. 1/08/2023: Opening prayer and anthems
- Minutes must be recorded in the past tense using reported speech. The language must highly be formal.
- Closing signatures and names of the secretary and chairperson

Minutes: UNEB - UCE 2015

## CONVERSATION/DIALOGUE

## **Format**

- Heading
- Preamble introductory paragraph.
- Name the characters/people involved in the dialogue
- Use full colons (:) before each response.
- Use some stage directions (in brackets) to spice up the conversation
- ❖ Use some interjections e.g. ah, hmm, oh, wow, etc.

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Do not exceed the number of responses asked.

Dialogue: UNEB - UCE 2013, 2007, 1996

# CCURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

#### Format

- \* Title/ heading
- Biodata/personal information name, sex, date of birth, nationality, marital status, next of kin, permanent address, telephone, email, etc.
- Objective/personal profile one short paragraph
- \* Education background Year/period, institution, qualification/award.
- Special skills and competences
- ❖ Work experience Year/period, employer, position
- Language proficiency
- Hobbies and interests
- Referees for each referee, state the name, position, place of work, and contact information
- Declaration

### **GIVING DIRECTIONS**

#### **Format**

- Title/heading
- Introduction one short paragraph e.g. When coming from Mubuku to Rwenzori High School....
- Be elaborative enough when directing someone. Use some of the following.
- Man-made features such as buildings, roads, bridges, transformers, dams, boreholes, etc.
- Natural/physical features small features like hills, swamps, valleys, wells, wetlands, etc.
- Signposts and road signs
- Compass directions
- Duration e.g. move straight for about four minutes...
- ♦ Useful choice of words e.g. turn left, move straight, cross the road, etc.

Giving directions: UNEB - UCE 1998, 1995

#### WRITING INSTRUCTIONS

#### **Format**

- Heading/title
- Make a clear plan of your instructions.
- ♦ Use concise and precise sentences brief with all exact and important information.
- Write the steps in a chronological/systematic/logical order.
- Use proper word choice e.g. during, once, before, after, then, having done, etc.

Giving instructions: UNEB - UCE 2000

#### WRITING A RECIPE

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#### **Format**

- Heading /title
- \* Requirements list of ingredients and their respective amounts; equipment to use during the preparation of the meal.
- Procedure write precise and concise steps in paragraphs. Show the estimated duration required during particular stages. Show how the meal should be served.
- ❖ Use appropriate word choice e.g. pour, stir, boil, knead, fry, cook, dough, sieve, serve, etc.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NOTICES

#### **Format**

- Title
- The information should be brief to the point.
- Mind the audience you are addressing.
- \* Try to avoid repetitions as much as possible.
- \* Do not forget key specifications such as date, time, and place (venue).
- \* The language should be highly formal/official

## **WRITING A MEMO**

#### **Format**

- Name of institution/organisation
- The word MEMO or Memo
- From: [position of the writer]
- To: [group being addressed]
- \* Reference number:
- Date:
- Subject: [topic of the communication]
- ♦ Body the content should be precise and concise. Write formal language.

## **WRITIN AN EMAIL**

## **Format**

- \* Title e.g. An Email
- \* From: [email address of the sender e.g. shakespearek@gmail.com]
- \* To: [email address of the recipient]
- Cc: carbon copy
- Bcc: Blind carbon copy
- Subject: purpose of the email
- Body details of the email. Use formal language. The message may be well detailed or brief depending on what is asked.
- Do NOT sign emails.

## **NEWSPAPER ARTICLES**

## **Format**

- ❖ Title eye-catching and in present simple tense.
- By-line name of the author of the article.
- Lead paragraph this is the opening paragraph.
- The story it explains the what, who, where, when, where, why and how.
- \* Make thorough research about the news story.



- Ensure that the language is highly formal
- \* The language should be appropriate to the register of journalists
- Indicate the sources of information used
- Use some direct speech and punctuate it properly.

## Articles: UNEB - UCE 2005

#### WRITING A WILL

#### **Format**

- Heading/title
- ♦ Biodata/personal information in a short opening paragraph.
- Marital status indicate the wife's/wives' name(s)
- \* Revocation of previous wills indicate that the will you are making is the valid one and replaces all other previous wills.
- Bequeathal/disposition of property write the distribution of property by clearly indicating who should take what.
- Indicate any restrictions (conditions) you would like to impose on the beneficiaries of the property.
- Forgiveness of debts
- Indicate the wishes about your burial.
- Indicate your heir (if necessary).
- Severability clause
- No contest
- Signature
- Witnesses signatures and names.

## **BIOGRAPHY/AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

#### **Format**

- ❖ Title e.g. Autobiography of Exevia Kule
- Body use paragraphs to write the body. This includes
- Place and date of birth
- Other relations (names of wife and children, if any).
- Place of residence (current address)
- \* Education background: primary, secondary, university, etc.
- Work experience: current and previous jobs
- Parentage
- Achievements and future plans
- Conclusion

## **COMMENTARY**

# Format of a sports commentary

- Title names of the two competing teams, name of venue
- Greet the listeners/viewers
- Introduce yourself: name and where you are commentating from
- Mention the time, date and weather
- List the two line-ups of players
- Mention the names of the officials: referee, assistant referees, fourth official, VAR staff,



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etc.

- Mention the official sponsors of the match/tournament if any.
- \* The body: kickoff the live commentary.......

## **REPORT WRITING**

# Format of an incident report

- Heading/title e.g. A report on....
- Introduction short bio of the person reporting
- Narration of the incident the what, who, when, where, why and how of the incident.
- Recommendations
- Sign on the left-hand side.

# Format of an investigative/research/long report

- Title/heading
- Introduction/preamble
- \* Terms of reference the committee, objectives of your study, deadline of submission and recipient of your report.
- Procedure/methodology/methods of data collection
- Findings
- Conclusion
- Recommendations
- Signature and name of the writer.

## Format of a short report

- Heading/title
- Introduction
- Body it should be written in sections using subtitles.
- Conclusion
- Signature

Reports: UNEB - UCE 2019, 2017

## WRITING A BOOK REVIEW

#### Format

- Title of book
- Name of author/writer
- Mention the publisher and year the book was published.
- Write a brief introduction about the book.
- Write a short plot summary of the book
- Write about the book's setting, characters
- \* Evaluate the characters: do the characters appeal to you?
- Which character do you like most and why?
- Did the story make you sad or happy?
- Which part of the story did you like most and why?

Book/film review: UNEB - UCE 2007

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## **WRITING ADVERTS**

#### Format

- Name of company/organisation
- Use a very eye-catching starting phrase
- Use straightforward but persuasive language
- Indicate the physical address of the business
- \* Contact information: phone number, email and website
- Business/company slogan a catchy phrase that calls clients to action.

Adverts: UNEB - UCE 1999

## **POLICE STATEMENT**

#### Format

- \* Title/heading
- Introduction short paragraph
- Body narration of incident/offence: the what, who, when, where, why and how
- Conclusion
- Signature
- Date

#### WRITING CIRCULARS

#### **Format**

- Name of institution centre-aligned
- Date
- Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (recipients e.g. parents/guardians, doctors, customers, etc.)
- \* Re: summary of reason for writing
- Preamble/introduction greetings
- Body written in subsections using subheadings
- Conclusion
- Signing

#### PAPER I - SECTION B: CREATIVE WRITING

## **Narrative Writing**

# Elements of a good story

- ♦ Title short, relevant and eye-catching. Underline it if written in small letters.
- Setting describe the places, time and weather in your story.
- Plot your story should have sequence: beginning, middle and end. Use flashback sparingly, if you must. Write a reasonable number of paragraphs, preferably six – for a short plot of about 500 to 600 words.
- Characters name the people involved in your story, describe their physical appearance and behaviour, and show the relationship between them.

# Writing an opening paragraph

- Avoid writing a boring opening paragraph. Instead, start your story with a catchy (attention-getting) paragraph. You could start by
- describing the main character

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- describing the setting the places, time and weather.
- describing the main event of the story
- write a short conversation between two characters.

## What must not miss in your story

- \* Action create action that creates some suspense; do not just write a flat story.
- \* Emotions/feelings describe the feelings of characters. You could use adjectives like heartbroken, disgusting, overjoyed, excited, mesmerised, awestruck, terrified, terrific, etc.
- \* Thoughts describe the thoughts of characters at particular critical moments e.g. the thoughts of a schoolgirl being expelled from school after she is found pregnant.
- Dialogue create some conversation. Remember your story is about people, so they must speak at particular moments.
- Description this is the most key aspect in storytelling. So, describe the characters, places, time, weather, action, thoughts, and feelings.

# Use of new vocabulary and figurative language

In order to create an impressive story, use some or all of the following. However, you must use them sparingly: do not overuse them.

- Proverbs e.g. once bitten twice shy; an apple a day keeps a doctor away, etc.
- Sayings e.g. love is a beautiful thing.
- Similes e.g. My girlfriend is beautiful like an angel.
- Metaphors e.g. My girlfriend is an angel.
- \* Exaggeration e.g. Holding her so tightly onto my chest, her breasts pierced my heart and I died.
- Personification- e.g. She looked skyward and could clearly see the moon smiling at her.
- \* Euphemism e.g. making love (to have sex), passed on (died), manhood (penis), etc.
- Sarcasm and irony e.g. Washing utensils at home, I mistakenly dropped one glass and it broke into pieces. My mother, watching me from the kitchen window, calmly said, "Oh! That's wonderful, please come for more."
- ❖ Idioms e.g. to eat a humble pie, to build castles in air, etc.
- Phrasal verbs e.g. check in, look up to, look down on, shut up, etc.
- New words e.g. mesmerised, scrutinise, etc.

# Types of questions set on narrative compositions

- Starting with a given expression e.g. Write an original story beginning: "It was going to be the longest of all the holidays I had had so far..." Your first paragraph must STRICTLY START with the given expression.
- ❖ Ending with an expression e.g. Write a story ending: "I stealthily walked through the back door, not wishing to go to that room again". Your last paragraph must STRICTLY END with the given expression.
- Stories based on proverbs write a story bringing out the meaning of the proverb. Do not use the proverb as your title.
- Stories based on a dream. write as though everything is real; show that it was a dream at the end of the story.

# Argumentative/Discursive/Essay Writing

# Parts of an essay

1. The introduction – define key terms (words) and provide any necessary background



- information if any. The introduction sets pace for the whole essay, so make your essay as interesting as possible.
- 2. The body for every paragraph, write a minimum of three sentences. State the point, explain it, exemplify (give examples) and relate it to the topic you are writing about. State your topic sentence using a complete statement, NOT a sentence fragment (half sentence). To avoid boring the reader, you must not start two paragraphs the same way. Instead, use sentence connectors. Do not use subtitles if the you are writing a two-sided topic e.g. advantages and disadvantages. Use a transition
- 3. The conclusion sum up your arguments in a conclusive paragraph.

# PAPER II: SUMMARY WRITING, COMPREHENSION AND GRAMMAR Part I: Summary Writing

- 1. The Reading -
  - \* Focus when reading the passage. You are advised to read it at least twice.
  - Locate the points in the passage by underlining them, and transfer the information to the rough copy.
- 2. Rough copy -
  - Write the title of the summary. The title is derived from the question, NOT from the passage.
  - Write the rough copy in one paragraph even if the question asks for two aspects e.g. causes and effects.
  - Use the rough copy to reduce words and organize your work.
  - \* Do not cross out your rough copy because it is an official part of the examination.
- 3. The Fair Copy -
  - The rough and fair copies MUST have the same title complete and grammatical.
  - Start your paragraph with a subject e.g. *Divorce* is caused by....
  - Write your points in a neatly punctuated paragraph.
  - \* Do not introduce your answers with a colon (:) or semi-colon (;).
  - You must write complete sentences.
  - \* To avoid sentence fragments, you have to write interconnected answers.
  - Use commas and a conjunction when joining points in a sentence; do not use more than two commas in one sentence.
  - Whether the question requires you to summarise two or aspects e.g. causes and effects, you MUST stick to the principle of using ONE PARAGRAPH. You can use a transition word/statement such as <a href="https://example.com/however">however</a> when shifting from one aspect to another.
  - If two summary questions are set, for example (a) and (b), you must write two (2) rough copies and two (2) fair copies.
  - Do not write more than the required number of words.

## Part II: Comprehension

- Before answering any question on comprehension, read the passage carefully and confidently.
- ♦ Write precise and concise answers answers that are brief to the point.
- ❖ Avoid repeating every word in the guestion e.g.



QUESTION: Mention the two categories of people that are at a higher risk of getting the coronavirus.

DISCOURAGED: The two categories of people that are at a higher risk of getting the coronavirus are old people of 70 years and above and people with other diseases. ENCOURAGED: The two categories are very old people and people surviving with other diseases.

- Maintain the tense as given in the question e.g. QUESTION: Why would it be important to practice good sanitation and hygiene? ANSWER: It would prevent the spread of diseases.
- Use context to give the meaning of words and expressions <u>as used in the passage</u>. Maintain the tense, number, and word class when explaining using synonyms. Consider 1. Her striking beauty caught my eyes.
  - 2. The boys have been <u>caught</u> while <u>striking</u> at school. Explain the meaning of striking and caught as used in the two sentences.
- When you are asked to give evidence from the passage, it is advisable that you quote a statement, verbatim.

#### Part III: Grammar

Grammar is a broad aspect, but in this write-up, we have summarise a few topics and expressions.

- 1. Either...or... e.g. Either Marion or Mackline is coming to help you today.
- 2. Neither....nor.... e.g. Neither Gerald nor Gordon wastes time in class. [None of them wastes time.]
- 3. Both...and... e.g. Both Gerald and Gordon do not waste time in class.
- 4. Not only....but also... Not only is he a good at academics but also music.
- 5. Besides *apart from/other than...*.e.g. Besides teaching Literature, Mr. Kule is a copywriter and editor.
- 6. Beside next to/at the side of ... e.g. There is a small chair beside the cupboard.
- 7. Because e.g. Because of heavy traffic on the road, the minister decided to ride his bike.
- 8. Owing to *because of* ...e.g. Owing to heavy traffic on the road, the minister decided to ride his bike.
- 9. As soon as... e.g. As soon as we arrived at the venue, the students stood up to welcome us.
- 10. Immediately e.g. Immediately we arrived at the venue the students stood up to welcome us.
- 11. No sooner...than... e.g. No sooner had we arrived at the venue than the students stood up to welcome us.
- 12. Scarcely/barely/rarely/hardly ...when... e.g. Scarcely had we arrived at the venue when the students stood up to welcome us.
- 13. Although e.g. Although she is strikingly beautiful, she has failed to find a good husband.
- 14. Much as e.g. Much as she is strikingly beautiful, she has failed to find a good husband.
- 15. Even though e.g. Even though she is strikingly beautiful, she has failed to find a good husband.
- 16. In spite of e.g. In spite of her striking beauty, she has failed to find a good husband.

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- In spite of being strikingly beautiful, she has failed to find a good husband.
- 17. Despite e.g. Despite her striking beauty, she has failed to find a good husband. Despite being strikingly beautiful, she has failed to find a good husband.
- 18. For all *despite/in spite of* e.g. For all her striking beauty, she has failed to find a good husband.
- 19. ...as/though...- e.g. Strikingly beautiful as she is, she has failed to find a good husband. Strikingly beautiful though she is, she has failed to find a good husband.
- 20. Notwithstanding *despite/in spite of* e.g. Notwithstanding the consequences, many students engage in premarital sex.
- 21. Regardless of *without consideration/irrespective of* e.g. Many students engage in premarital sex regardless of the consequences.
- 22. As long as You can go out with your friends as long as you return home in time.
- 23. Provided that as long as/on condition that e.g. You can use my computer provided that you do not damage it.
- 24. Unless e.g. Unless you wear your facemask, I will not allow enter my house.
- 25. Or else e.g. Eat your food now or else you will be late for work.
- 26. It's time/it's high time e.g. It is time we went for lunch. [= It is time for us to go for lunch.]
- 27. ...so... that... e.g. The lesson was so boring that most students walked out of class.
- 28. So... e.g. So boring was the lesson that most students walked out of class.
- 29. In case e.g. He has carried an umbrella in case it rains. He carried an umbrella in case it rained.
- 30. So that e.g. He travelled with his smartphone so that he could take some photos.
- 31. In order to e.g. He travelled with his smartphone in order to take some photos.
- 32. In order that e.g. He travelled with his smartphone in order that he could take some photos.
- 33. Used to/accustomed to e.g. Linda is used to making noise in class. I am accustomed to listening to music.
- 34. Conditional clauses IF 1 = If +present +future e.g. If I get money, I will take you out for a photoshoot. IF 2 = If + past simple + would... e.g. If I got money, I would take you out for a photoshoot. IF 3 = If + past perfect + would have e.g. If I had got money, I would have taken you out for a photoshoot.
- 35. Should e.g. Should I get money, I will take you out for a photoshoot
- 36. But for *if it was not for/ if it had not been for* e.g. But for my timely arrival at the bus park, the bus would have left me.
- 37. That-clause *the fact that* e.g. That this American can speak good Lhukonzo is amazing.
- 38. What-clause e.g. What makes me happy is the way he smiles. [=The way he smiles makes me happy.]
- 39. Participle phrases e.g. Moving along Margherita Street, I met my uncle going for shopping.
- 40. Not being e.g. Not being careful, the little girl burnt herself with hot tea.
- 41. Question tags e.g. Martin went home yesterday, didn't he? Let us play volleyball now, shall we?
- 42. Direct and indirect speech e.g. He said, "It will be a great pleasure to perform my poetry tomorrow." [He said that it would be a great pleasure to perform his poetry the next day.]



- 43. Appositives *provide extra information* e.g. Elizabeth, my closest friend is coming here tonight.
- 44. Since followed by time/date e.g. He has been living in Kampala since 2015.
- 45. For followed by length of time e.g. He has lived in Kampala for five years.
- 46. Ago how long before something happened e.g. He lived in Kampala five years ago.
- 47. Order of adjectives *OPSSHACOM* e.g. I met a handsome tall light-skinned Ugandan film actor.
- 48. Comparison of adjectives for short regular adjectives, add <u>er/r</u> and <u>est/st</u> in the comparative and superlative. For long regular adjectives, use more (for comparative) and most (for superlative).
- 49. Enough to *sufficient* e.g. The girl is old enough to do the homework herself.
- 50. To at the start e.g. To escape from school did not seem a good idea for him.
- 51. Too...to... e.g. The assignment is too difficult for Shakira to do. I am too tired to watch a movie now.
- 52. Needn't *not necessary* e.g. We needn't write any notes today.
- 53. -ever and no matter clauses e.g. Wherever you go, I will always love you. No matter where you go, I will always love you.
- 54. Only e.g. Only after he had left for Rwimi did we feel lonely.
- 55. Little *not as much as may be expected* e.g. Little did she know that her uncle had arrived home.
- 56. Never e.g. Never shall I forget you, my friend. Never did she abuse her father.
- 57. Under no circumstances/means... e.g. Under no circumstances was he allowed to break the curfew law.
- 58. In no way e.g. In no way can she disturb an innocent boy.
- 59. At no time e.g. At no time should you enter the science laboratory without the teacher's permission.
- 60. On no condition e.g. On no condition will you be excused for your misconduct.
- 61. Not until Not until the teacher had arrived did we keep guiet.
- 62. Seldom rarely/not often e.g. Seldom does she visit us at home.
- 63. Look forward to [something/doing something] e.g. I look forward to my sister's wedding. I look forward to visiting you this weekend.
- 64. Prefer [something] to [another thing] e.g. They prefer goat meat to beef.
- 65. Prefer [doing something] to [doing another thing] e.g. Exevia prefers editing documents to writing poetry.
- 66. Prefer [to do something] rather than [do another thing] e.g. Exevia prefers to edit documents rather than write poetry.
- 67. Would rather [do something] than [do another thing] e.g. Exevia would rather edit documents than write poetry.
- 68. Would sooner [do something] than [do another thing] would prefer e.g. Exevia would sooner edit documents than write poetry.
- 69. Active and passive voices e.g.
  - ACTIVE: They brought some soda here.
  - PASSIVE: Some soda was brought here.
- 70. Phrasal verbs *consist of a verb and a preposition; they are used idiomatically* e.g. He is a good writer; I look up to him.

I wish you success in your forthcoming UCE examinations, 2023.

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