Communication Skills
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Lecture - 17

Good morning and welcome to NPTEL's course on communication skills. Today we will be discussing a very important aspect of communication skills, and if you remember initially we talked about communication skills in terms of oral skills as well as written skills. Today an important aspect of written skills that is report writing will be discussed.

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Report writing is a very integral part of communication skills. I will be telling why we are going to have this as a major component in this. Now before we start what we are going to have in this module. So, this is module number 6 and this is the first lecture; we will be having one more lecture on the same module. Now, in this module first we will talk about the significance of reports, why should you write reports? What is the need for it? What is the necessity for writing reports? And in what way this can become a very integral aspect of communication skills?

Then followed by this we will be trying to discuss about the characteristics and definition of report itself, what makes a report a report, and how it is different from the common reports that we talk about in day-to-day life, and then the types of reports? Oral report, written report and what kind of report that I am going to focus on considering the fact that most of you are professionally aspiring for some jobs, most of you are students who are listening to this. I am focusing particularly on the technical aspect of writing a report, or we will be focusing more on technical report. And then while focusing on that I will also talk to you about the structure of reports and then what points, how many elements of these reports you should keep in mind when you are going to write a report.

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Now just to begin with why should you write reports? What is the need for reports? Now once you get a job, once you land up any job, once you enter into the professional arena, what happens is 70 to 80 percent of your time is entirely spent either in reading or in writing or in interpreting reports or simply preparing for reports. Now that is the way you are going to spend your time about 70 to 80 percent only in dealing with reports. You will not believe this unless I am going to tell you what types of report that you are going to deal with, and once I tell this you will understand.

Simply speaking what do we mean by these reports? What is that you will be dealing spending your 70 to 85 percent of time? Any kind of factual accounts either oral or written, dealing objectively with certain aspects of business or human relationships, dealing objectively with certain aspects of business or human relationships also. Now any kind of this factual observation produced in an oral or in written form is what I call as report

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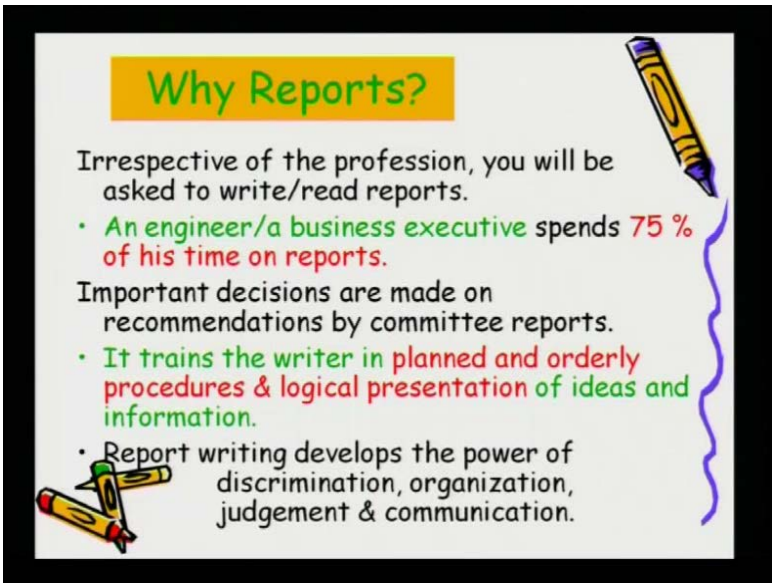

But as I said why should you spend about 70 to 80 percent of time in this, and what is the general need, and what kind of profession is that you will be spending so much time? Now you should understand that irrespective of any profession that you go, so today's job scenario is like that you will be asked to write or read reports or as I said before not just it is reading but also it is interpreting and commenting analyzing reports and more than that even preparing for the reports. Either an engineer or a business executive as I said spends about 75 percent of his time on reports and more than spending this much time. The important decisions which are being made in most of the companies whether it is multinational corporation or a private sector or a public sector whatever it is, the decisions which are made are all based by recommendations made by committee reports.

Sometimes reports are not written by a single individual; committees are being formed for writing reports, and these committees actually suggest further recommendations. Now many actions are taken based on these recommendations, and you will be part of this integral committee making suggestions, recommendations, and that is why you need to know how to write a good report. Now in this sense when you learn how to write a report it trains you as a writer in a very planned and orderly manner to deal with procedures and logical presentation of ideas and information. So, it trains the writer in planned and orderly procedures and logical presentation of ideas and information.

Report writing develops the power of discrimination, organization, judgment and communication. I repeat; it develops the power of discrimination, what does it mean? Your ability to understand what factor is genuine, what is true, what is real, and what is not real, what is unreal, what is media fabricated, what is corroborated by false facts? So, your ability to discriminate the right from the wrong, and then to organize those discriminated ideas in proper coherent manner, and then pass your judgment saying that this is the right thing and this is the wrong thing, putting that judgment and using your communication skills to present those judgmental ideas.

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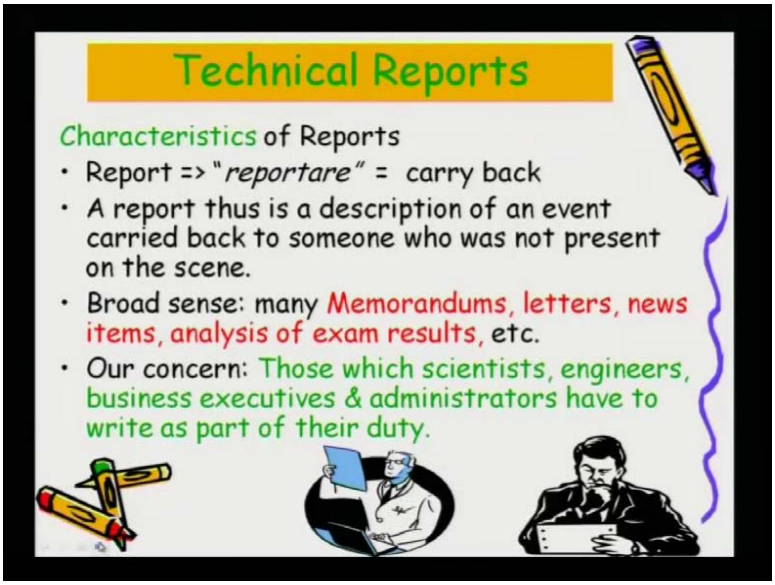

Now as I said I am focusing more on technical reports because most of you need technical reports. Now when we talk about technical reports we need to know before in general what I mean by report, what are the characteristics, and how do we define reports. Now when we say report if you go to the root meaning of this word report, it comes from 'reportare' which means to carry back. So, in ancient times and even now anybody who is just coming to you and giving you some kind of information reporting rather in a slightly objective manner will amount to report. A report thus is a description of an event carried back to someone who was not present on the scene. A colleague of yours comes to you in the morning and tells that she met with an accident, and then you ask how it happened, and then she starts describing the entire event.

Now this description of something that happened in which you were not present at that time amounts to a report. In a very funny sense even gossips will amount to reports. Rumors telling somebody have an affair with somebody or eloped with somebody; all these kind of things are also report, because you were not actually present at that time and somebody is telling you. But the only difference between a gossip and the kind of technical report that I am trying to make you familiarize with is that gossip has no objective facts; it is based entirely on rumor whereas technical report is based on objective facts, scientific analysis and your own judgment based on that your own recommendations followed by that.

So, having understood this different from a simple gossip and then a seriously objective kind of report, now go further on this report apart from the normal orally reported ones. Generally when we talk about reports we also refer to many memorandums, shortly named as memos, letters most of the letters written narrating some incidents which happened; most of these letters are reports, even news items, analysis of exam results, analysis of election results. So, these are actually reports either given to you in the form of oral presentation through media or given to you sometimes in the form of published printed reports, annual reports of companies, etcetera.

Now our concern is quite scientific. So, we are more or less concerned about the kind of reports that is highly formal which will be used by business executives, administrators, and most of the times they are supposed to use these reports as part of their day-to-day activities duties. Now this is the kind of report that I am going to talk to you and then make you quite familiar with.

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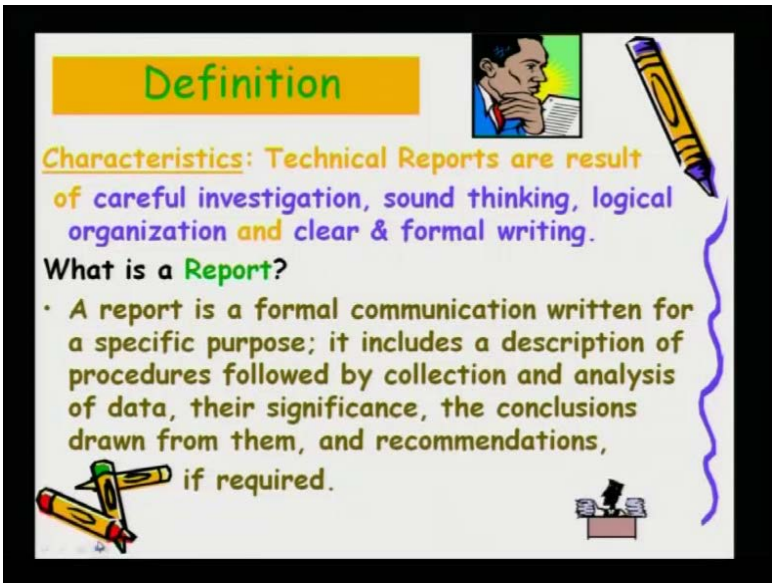

Now let us take a quick look at the definition of report. The definition also emanates from the characteristics of a report, and if you look at that all these technical reports are result of careful investigation, sound thinking, logical organization and clear and formal writing. So, in that sense if you ask what is a report? A report is a formal communication written for a specific purpose; mind you its formal communication written for a specific purpose. It includes a description of procedures followed by collection and analysis of data, the significance, the conclusions drawn from them and recommendations if required, conclusions drawn from them and recommendations if required. So, sometimes you will be asked to give recommendations, sometimes you may not be asked to give recommendations.

In that sense you do not have to actually give recommendations, but you should also understand that it is not like poetry writing. It is not an outburst of powerful feelings. Let us say you confronted with a fire accident that happened just before your eyes but as the supervisor of that site you are asked to give an objective report. Now even though your heart may be fuming figuratively that you are quite upset about the event that happened you cannot let your emotions run right; as you could do in a poetry writing here you are not supposed to let your emotions run loosely. You have to control the emotions, and you have to present it in a very objective manner. You cannot use abusive language, you cannot charge somebody just like that, but you have to use facts to prove even if somebody was guilty. Let us say somebody threw a cigarette, and then this fell on

something, and then it caught fire, and then this fellow escaped. But you need to prove using the duty chart, using some evidences, using some witnesses, that it was this person who was responsible for this instead of using a kind of unparliamentarily language in report.

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So, report is not an outburst of powerful feelings, and a report writer should examine and present objectively the data collected. His conclusions and recommendations are strictly based on the facts included in the report. So, if you do not have facts you cannot form conclusions which are emotionally conditioned. You cannot say I intuitively feel that this fellow is the one who actually is the culprit; you cannot say that in report. Your intuition if at all has to be again backed up by objective facts, scientific analysis and if required certain observations based systematically and continuously.

Look at another interesting definition, description, characteristic of report that comes from Shearing way back in 1965. He said that a report is like a bathing suit or rather like this swimming suit, this bikini kind of dress, where he says it covers everything that has to be covered but nothing more. So, what he means by this? It does not distract attention from the content by unnecessary frills. So, it is just like this lady wearing a bathing suit. So, no frills, no extra decoration, no diversions but as he says it covers the exact point, what is required is covered.

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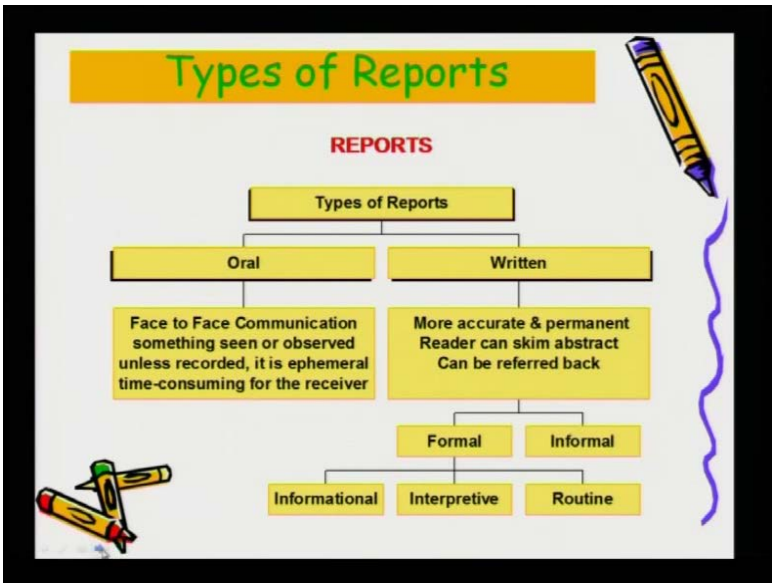

Now let us take a quick look at the types of reports. When we talk about reports basically as I said at the beginning you have oral report and written report. Now anything that is brought back to you orally is oral report, and anything that is given to you in written form, printed form, typed form is written report. Now what are the advantages and disadvantages? Why would one go for oral report? Why would one go for written report? In terms of oral report it is face to face communication.

So, the advantage that you have in face to face communication is very much prominent here also, like what? For example, when somebody is trying to tell a lie and looking at the facial expressions you will be able to detect that this person is trying to tell a lie in oral communication as well as this one. Something seen or observed is brought to you, but the disadvantage in this case unless it is recorded, unless it is taken on a camera, unless it is taken on a video, and it cannot be reproduced, then it loses its value, it becomes ephemeral.

So, in case of the receiver sometimes if he loses the time is lost, and then the receiver is not able to reproduce it properly not with graphic details. So, this is the disadvantage. In case of written which generally we recommend for technical reports, here there is permanency. It is more accurate and permanent, and the reader can skim the abstract and can be referred back time in again. Whenever the reader wants to read that again he can

go back, and the reader feels that, oh, I read these five years before but I forgot he can go back.

But in case of oral report unless it is recorded properly and stored properly you cannot retrieve that information. So, that is the problem with oral report, and hence it is mandatory in formal communication that it has to become written report in printed form, in typed form. Now in written report again we have formal and informal aspect of written report. Now under formal we have informational report that is fully dealing with passing information or analytical and/or interpretive report where analysis is done and interpretations are given to you. On the other side the informal one we do not have many, but in the formal side we also have this routine reports. So, the day to day activities sometimes are reported and they are considered under routine reports.

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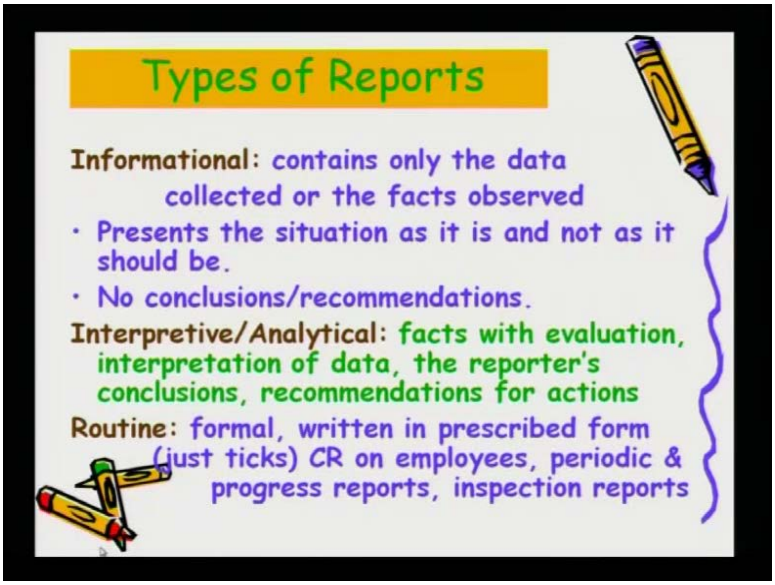

Now let us look at these reports very briefly. Informational reports generally contain only the data collected or the facts observed; informational reports generally contain only the data collected or the facts observed. Now what do they do? They present the situation as it is and not as it should be which means they will just quantify the fact whatever is observed will be given to you, but they will not say anything as how you should go ahead in future and all that will not be given to you, because it is basically informational. So, it will not give you any conclusions or any recommendations whereas in case of interpretive or analytical kind of report the facts are given to you with evolution; in the

sense they are evaluated, you can see the progress, how it is being evaluated time and again, the data gets interpreted, analyzed and the reporter's conclusions and recommendations or given to you for future actions.

What should you do in future is given to you followed by the routine report where it is formal, but it is written in prescribed form; more or less it is just like putting tick marks or cross marks just like a check list. For example in the site the site engineer is asked to give a report of the workers who came in time, not in time, what time they broke, how much work was done? So, most of the things were just in tick form, cross form, so routine one; even the confidential report or performance appraisal report of employees where the manager or the supervisor or the higher authority is supposed to just put tick mark, excellent, very good, good, poor. So, one has to just keep on putting the tick marks.

So, here there is no extra facts are added; whatever is there one has to choose, and it is of routine nature, day to day nature; once in six months it is done, once in a year it is done. For example, construction of a dam, construction of a road, again the site engineer is supposed to give this routine report, every day report, weekly report to the concerned higher authority. So, all these things will come under this. So, periodic and progress reports, inspection reports; inspection reports for example, let us say between two companies, one company sent ice creams on a truck, and then the other vendor who received it says that the ice creams came in spoiled condition. Now you as the concerned supervisor of the site or the inspector are asked to go and examine what happened.

Now you find out information that on the way the truck had a minor accident. So, it stopped for quite some time; the cooling that was given inside the refrigerator did not work properly, because of that the ice creams were spoiled. So, you get all the facts and produce it. This is called as inspection report; something went wrong, you go and then identify whether it went wrong, for what reason and then you produce it. Same thing happens suppose something is installed in a site, new equipment, again you may ask to go, check whether it has been installed properly or not, inspect it, and then send us the report. So, this is what we call as inspection report.

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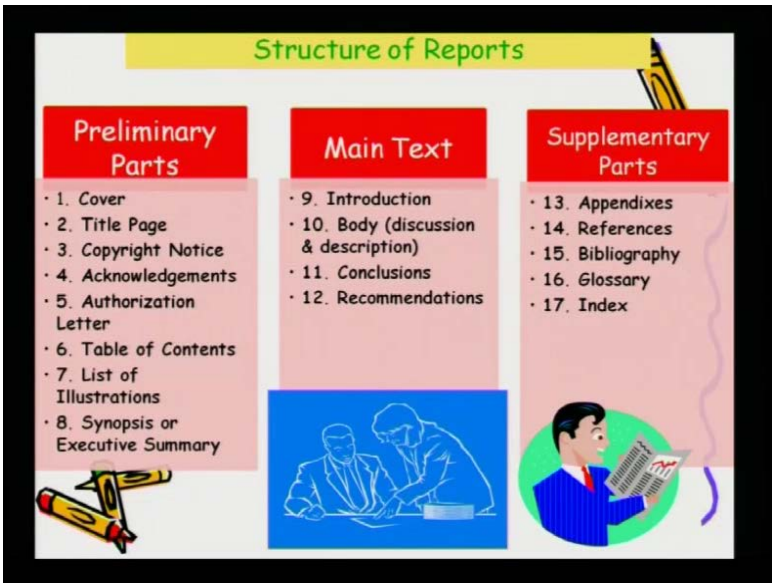

Now time to take a quick look at the structure of reports. Now instead of just telling you report contains this that, what I have done is I have tried to divide that into three broad categories, and then each category has some elements. Now if you remember for example, that there are seventeen elements in a good report in a standard report, and these elements can be classified into three major categories, preliminary parts, main text and supplementary parts. Preliminary parts are the matter which will come in the front. So, they begin; they are at the introductory part, that is why we called them as front matter or preliminary part. The main text is the body which is the fulcrum, and then this is followed by the supplementary parts what will come later.

Now let us look at the preliminary parts what are the elements, and then the remaining part of the lecture we are going to look at each part very quickly with some suitable examples. Look at the first one preliminary parts the cover, the cover page or the cover followed by title page, and then third copyright notice, four acknowledgements, five authorization letter, six table of contents, seven list of illustrations, eight synopsis or executive summary, sometimes just called as abstract also. Now on the main text we have the ninth item that is introduction followed by the tenth item which is the major body which deals with discussion and description and the eleventh element is conclusions and twelfth one is recommendations.

This is followed by supplementary parts, the third component of any good standard report. Now supplementary parts themselves contain about five components; the thirteenth item here is appendixes, sometimes single one is used then it is appendix followed by references and then bibliography and last two items in this glossary and index. Now let us take a quick look at each one of these items and it becomes familiar to you and then you know how to use them.

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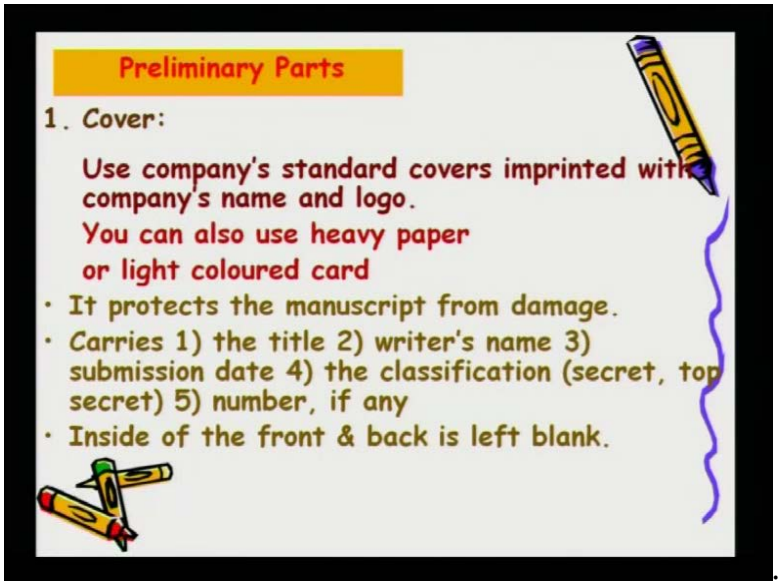

Now talking about cover, most of the companies if you are working in a company, most of the companies will tell you to use their standard cover, and this cover will have logo, the company's name, the company's water mark if possible, and they would have even prescribed the color and all that that should be used. Now if it is prescribed one it is mandatory that you use this, but in case that you are not representing any company and the company does not ask you to use a cover, then you are free to choose your own cover. But even in this case since report is of a very highly intellectual sensitive capable matter, generally flowery covers are not used, very highly ornamental shiny covers are not used at all.

Now here although you can use a heavy paper or a slight cardboard kind of material the light colored ones are preferred, generally light grey, light pink, light green, light cream, mostly it is the light color or generally any neutral colored ones or white colored ones; these are the preferred ones. So, color is just not diverting the attention and rather it is

just highlighting what is there in the form of title. Apart from doing this what is the purpose of cover; it is a common sense purpose that it helps the manuscript from regular wear and tear; it helps it from any kind of damage. What does it carry? What does it contain? One, the title itself followed by the writer or the author's name, and then the submission date in which it was submitted followed by any classification. So, secret, top secret, for your eyes only, classified information and so on, number sometimes each person will be assigned a project number. So, if you are given that project number that number is also mentioned there. One important thing that should be noted is that the inside of the front and back of this cover is generally left blank, nothing is written here.

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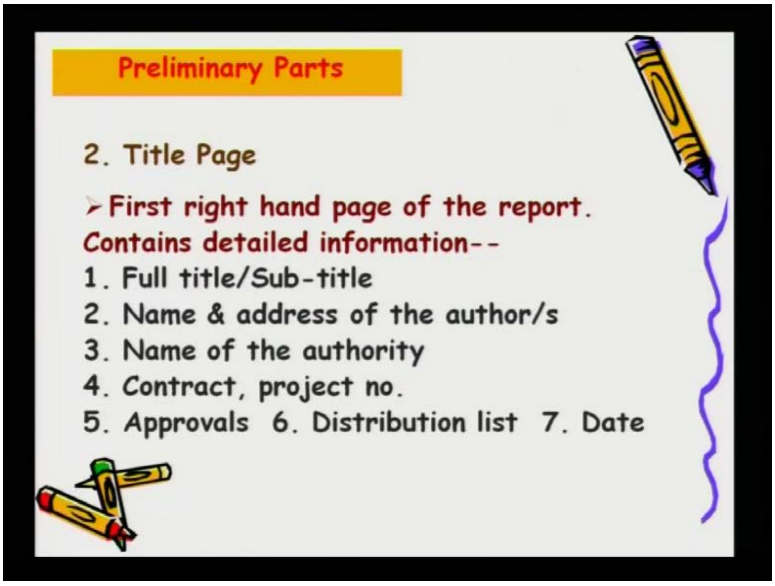

Followed by this we have the title page and in this title page this is placed in the first right hand page of a report. So, that means when you open it this is the first right hand page of a report, you see the title page, and it contains detailed information of whatever you have given in the front page rather additional information could also be given here, how? It gives the full title. So, in the title page sometimes they give a shortened title to make it quite attractive but inside the full title the long heading including the subtitle is given here followed by name and address of the authors, the complete address, the department, institution that ask them to produce it.

So, that address is given there, and the name of the authority who sanctioned it could be the supervisor, it could be the managing director, whomever it is, or it could be a

government body like MHRD. So, whichever ask them to produce this so that information is also given followed by the project number or the contract number that has been assigned to this and the approvals if any? One line it is briefly mentioned, approved by so and so followed by distribution list, what does it mean? To whom does it belong to, to which group is it submitted? Who should read this and then date? That is the date in which it is actually submitted.

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Now once you cross this, the next important thing especially if you are going to publish it is the copyright notice. Now in today's world where Wikipedia is quite prominent and then people feel that you can just take anything cut paste and then put it. So, copyright is misread as right to copy. So, it does not mean right to copy something; as a matter of right I am copying, so it does not mean that. It means that you have produced something originally, and you own that copy, and that copy cannot be reproduced without your permission. And sometimes one has to pay royalty if you have really produced a tremendous work or an original report, a path breaking report and the recommendations are worthy.

So, then they need to give you copyright, and this is used especially, if you are going to publish this. It is marked by this sign copyright sign, and then the year is mentioned, the name of the person who owns this copyright is also mentioned and with the typical note which follows which you have seen in most of the books when you open the title page on

the back of this title page you see this copyright note, All rights are reserved. No part of this report may be reproduced in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the publisher.

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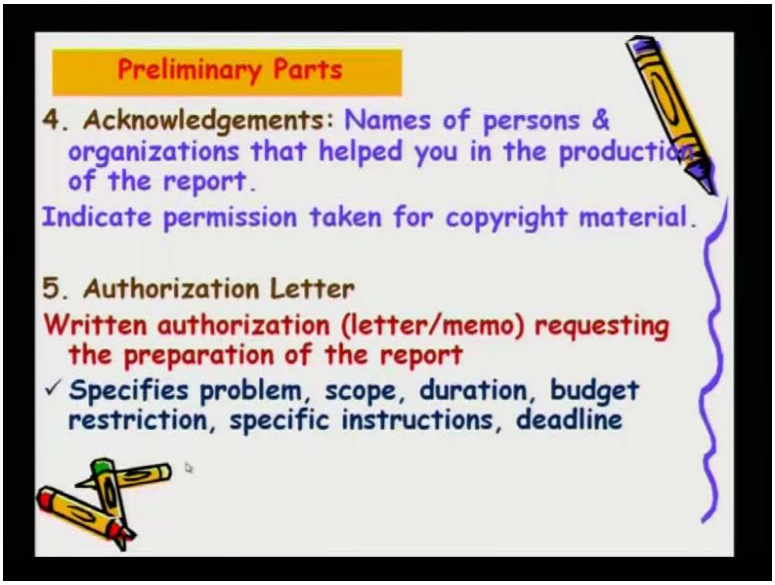

Followed by this you need to acknowledge. So, we have acknowledgements. You need to acknowledge the people who helped you write this report. So, here you make a list of the names of persons and organizations that helped you in the production of the report, even libraries that you consulted, librarians who helped you in giving you materials, even people who helped you in photocopying very valuable sensitive information. So, these people you need to acknowledge.

So, you acknowledge them and indicate the permission taken for copyright material. So, what does it mean? When you quote from somebody, when you take material from somebody, you take prior permission before publishing that material, and then you say that you are thankful to so and so for giving you the permission to do this. Followed by this we have the authorization letter which means the written authorization either in the form of a letter or in the form of a memo long for memorandum shortly called as memo, so requesting the preparation of the report.

So, your boss or some authority has authorized you to do this. So, that letter copy is also produced, and this letter specifies the problem, the scope, the duration, that is the time in which it should be finished, six months, one year, two year, five year project, the budget

restriction, how much can you use, how much you are restricted. So, that will be mentioned and specific instructions, the methodology that has to be followed, the statistical information that has to be collected followed by the deadline, the time in which it should be submitted.

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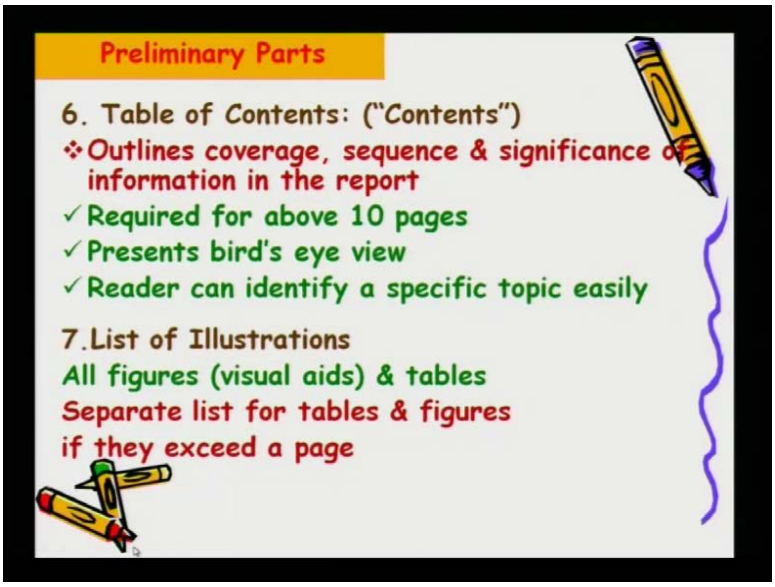

Now after acknowledging, the next thing that comes is the table of contents or shortly referred to or simply referred to as contents. Here it outlines the coverage, the sequence and significance of information in the report. So, it will be usually mentioned in the form of sometimes chapters, chapter one, chapter two, chapter three, chapter four, chapter five, chapter six, beginning with preface, acknowledgments, etcetera, etcetera, ending with the back matter that is conclusion, recommendations, glossary, index, etcetera. You need to do it only if it is exceeding ten pages. If it is a short one you can do away with this. Then what does it do? It gives a kind of birds eye view a kind of quick overview for the reader.

The reader can decide from that page itself what he is really interested in, in a entire book, lengthy book of long written report; he can directly decide let me read only the fourth unit or the fourth chapter, and fifth point of this chapter. I am more interested in this; you can go directly to that. So, that is the aim of this to make the reader identify easily a specific topic that he or she might be interested in, followed by the seventh element list of illustrations.

Now list of illustrations will detail list all the figures, figures here refer to all the visual aids, pictures, graphic designs, photographs, all that you have drawn, photographed and kept reproduced, everything will come under this figures and tables. In case the figures and tables are going to spread through two three pages and will not come within a single page, what you should do is you should make separate list for tables and separate list for figures. Keep in mind that you need to do that if only they exceed a page; otherwise, it is not required.

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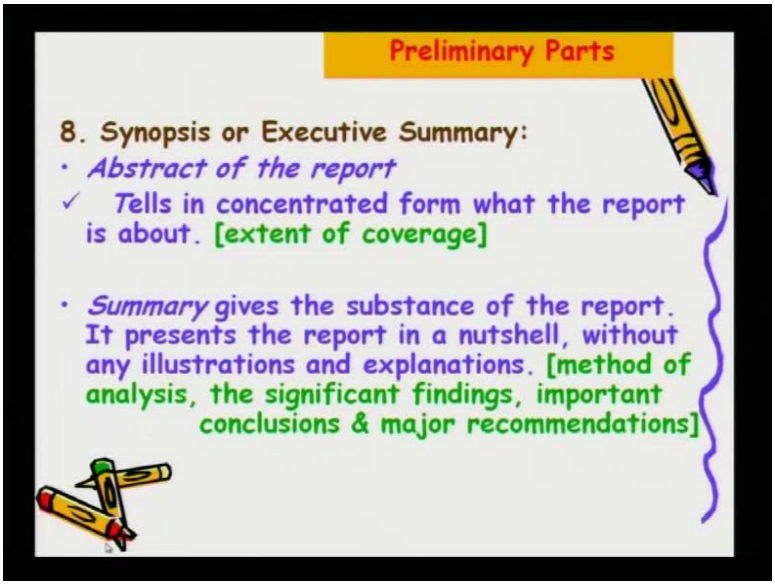

The next item is synopsis or executive summary which comes under again preliminary parts. It is also shortly called as abstract. In fact you actually give the abstract the condensed format of the report. It tells in concentrated form what the report is about, the extent of coverage is also mentioned here, and in summary it tries to give the substance of the report, it presents the report in a nutshell. It tries to tell you without any illustrations and explanations, and it also talks about the method of analysis, the significant findings, important conclusions and major recommendations.

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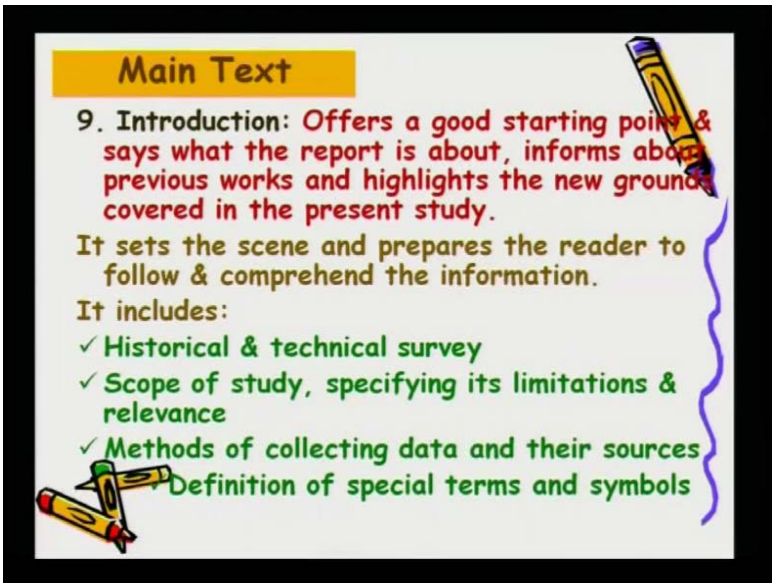

Now the next important part is the main text and the main text starts with the introduction. Under introduction what is done is the main body gets started. Here if you are the writer you offer a good starting point, and tell your reader what the report is about, and you also inform about previous works and highlight the new grounds covered in the present study. Introduction sets the scene and prepares the reader to follow and comprehend the information. It includes the following. The historical and technical survey, the historical and technical survey that is how it started, how it went on both in a chronological sense and also in a technological sense, and it gives the background that way. It offers the scope of study followed by discussing the specifying the limitations of the study and its relevance also. It also deals with the methods of collecting data and their sources and definition of special terms and symbols.

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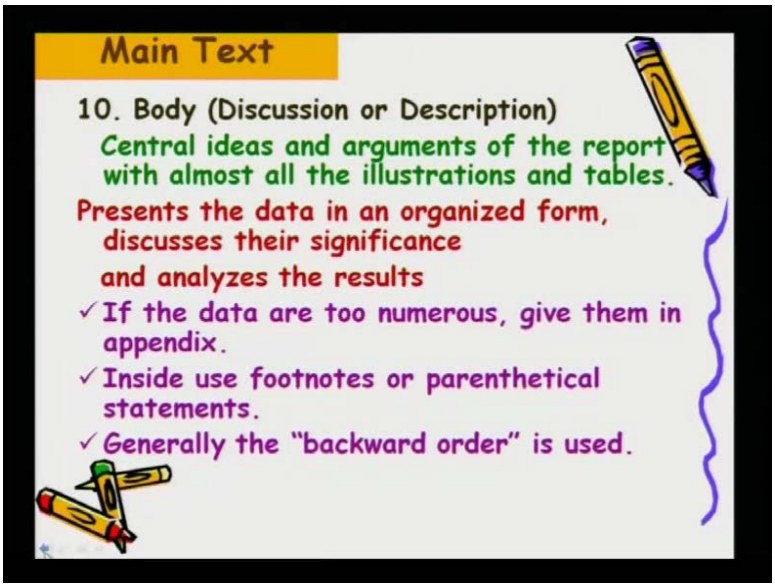

Now under main text the next point that we need to talk about is body, the body will deal with discussion or description. The major component of the main text of report is the body which contains the discussion or description part of the report. In terms of length this is the lengthiest part of a report whereas front matter although I gave lot of elements in that we will just come to in some case just 5, 6 pages, but in a lengthy report this can go even about 80 pages, 100 pages depending on the length of the report.

Now considering this what is happening here? This contains the central ideas and arguments of the report with almost all the illustrations and tables. The body presents the data in an organized form, discuses their significance and analyses the results. If the data are too numerous, the data is not presented in the main body, but it is given in the appendix. Why we will discuss when we go to appendix but right now just sufficient to tell you this will interrupt the main flow of thought, ideas; just to avoid it it is given in the appendix.

Then you can also use inside footnotes or parenthetical statements. Then generally the backward order is used here, what does it mean? Now you started with one, you went to the lab, you found something, after six months, one year of experiment analysis, you conducted some state for two years and then you got it, but you do not go with what you did at the beginning, but you may rather begin with what you found at the end and then you start enumerating it. So, that is why it is mentioned as backward order. You start

with the end at the beginning with your findings and then go on enumerating and explaining why and how you found it and what for you did that experiment or study, whatever it is.

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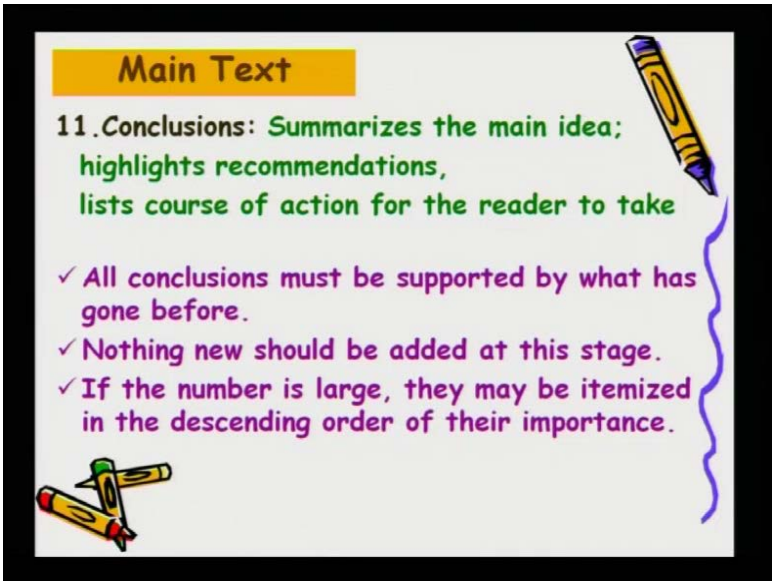

Now the main text ends with the concluding remarks by you which is mentioned as conclusions which will actually summarize the main idea and highlight the recommendations. So, there are recommendations which are written separately when they are longer, but if they happened to be shorter they just come under conclusions, and conclusions will generally serve the function of summarizing whatever went before. If the writer has said something important, and the reader has missed it. So, this is one more time where the writer can reiterate that important point and then summarize succinctly, so that the readers mind it can be reiterated once again, it can be reverted very firmly.

Now the conclusion will also list the course of action for the reader to take. Now you have narrated an incident, now you are telling what the reader should do after reading that. So, you will also suggest further course of action, all conclusions must be supported by what has gone before which means no new things will be written there in the conclusion. Whatever is written in the conclusion are actually logical conclusions of what went before in the form of discussion and description in the main body.

Now here you are actually trying to just support what happened before and reinforce all the thought pattern that happened before. So, no new idea will come here if it is not mentioned at all; nothing new should be added at this stage, and if the number is large they may be itemized in the descending order of importance. So, if the number is becoming larger in terms of recommendations then they may be itemized in the descending order of their importance.

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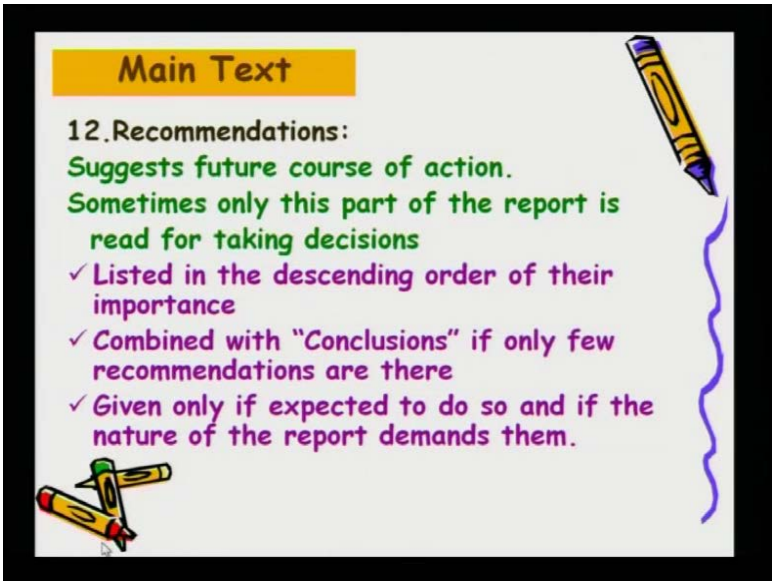

As I said if the recommendations are very few then it goes in conclusions, but if they are larger, then they are written separately, and recommendations by nature they suggest future course of action for the reader, and sometimes only this part of the report is frequently referred to especially for taking decisions. So, what you did, how you investigated, what results you brought out people are not interested, but what you are recommending at the end of it, that is what most of the readers are interested in, and they will directly go to that recommendations, the last few pages of your report skipping whatever you have written before.

So, in that sense this is a very important part of your report and this is again listed in the descending order of their importance; the most important one will be coming first combined with conclusions if only few recommendations are there, otherwise it is given separately, and recommendations are given only if expected to do so. If you remember I said at the beginning also you recommend only if you are asked to; you do not pass your

judgment if you are not asked to. Then you just present only a kind of informational report. You do not interpret and you give recommendations on the data that you have collected. If the nature of the report also demands then also you can give recommendations, but otherwise you do not give it, you do not volunteer recommendations on your own.

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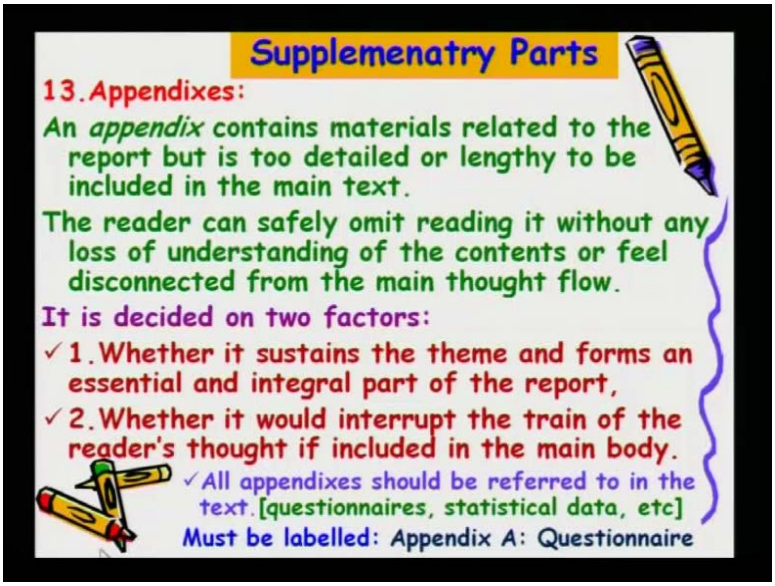

The supplementary parts that is the back matter of the report is equally important so that they give you the scientific evidence of the fact that you really conducted an objective report, what do they conduct, what do they have? The first important thing it contains is appendixes. What is an appendix? An appendix contains materials related to the report but is too detailed or lengthy to be included in the main text. This means the reader can safely omit reading it without any loss of understanding of the contents or feel disconnected from the main thought flow. So, while reading the report if you want to give too detailed information about some part of the report use that in the form of an appendix, or if you think that it is getting diverted too much then also you take it to the appendix to the concluding part where you can put it safely, and if the reader is interested he will always go to that part.

Now to give an appendix or not is decided on two factors. What are the two factors? One, whether it sustains the theme and forms an essential and integral part of the report; does it stand by the theme and then is it actually forming an essential and integral part of

it? So, these aspects are taken care first, and secondly whether it would interrupt the train of the reader's thought if included in the main body; that is will it cut the thought flow, the reader's flow that he is getting. If it is going to disrupt then you better keep at the end. Some quick points, all appendixes should be referred to in the text, be it questionnaire or statistical data, etcetera, they should be always referred to in the form of parenthesis or directly it should be referred to, then it must be labeled also. For example, appendix a questionnaire, appendix b statistical data collected from this, appendix c, etcetera, etcetera. So, you label them and then you mention them in the text which is very important for appendix.

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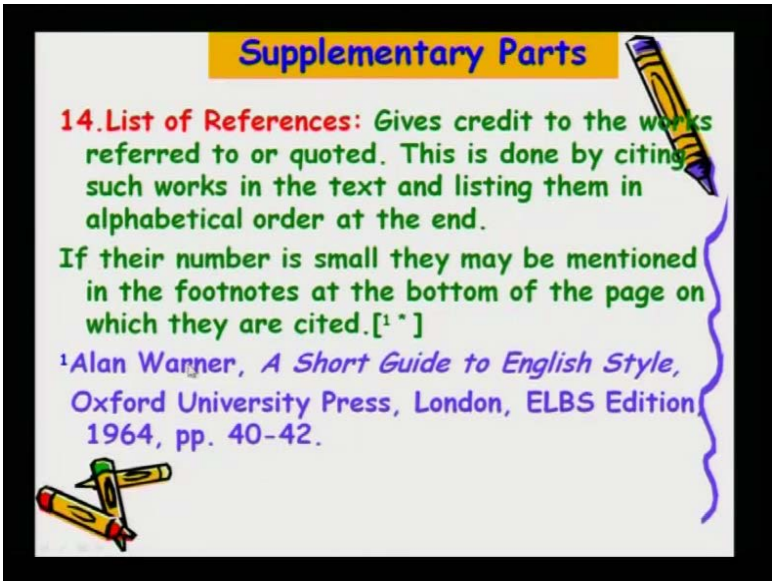

This is followed by list of references. What do we have in the list of references? It is actually to give credit and tell that you have not plagiarized from any source. Now here you give credit to the works that you referred to are quoted, and this is done by citing such works in the text and listing them in alphabetical order at the end. If their number is small if it is just one or two references then you can mention it in the form of footnotes. Footnotes just at the bottom of the page in which they are cited by putting some asterisks or some star or some kind of mark and then you can just mention that at the end; look at this; this is one way of putting that as a footnote.

So you put one and down here, but in a reference see the way it is mentioned also Alan Warner, A Short Guide to English Style, the author's name, full form, title full form,

then the details about the press, publication details, Oxford University Press, London, ELBS edition, year of publication, page numbers that you have referred to. Now this is a typical example of a reference where commas are used, and then the author name is mentioned fully.

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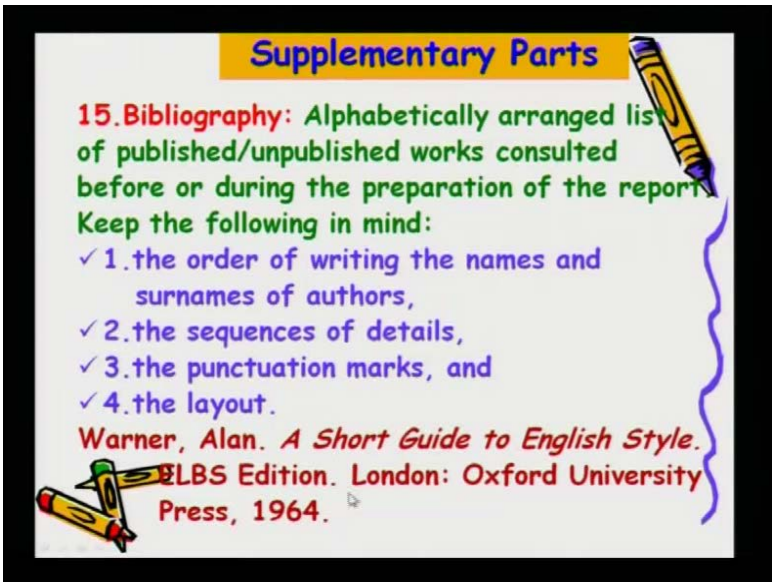

When we look at bibliography you will see the difference that it is separated not by commas but by full stop. Now bibliography literally means the list of books that you have referred to, but it also by extension refers to the articles or any kind of work that you have referred to. Now in this case it is alphabetically arranged list of published/unpublished works consulted before or during the preparation of the report. You need to keep the following in mind. One, the order of writing the names and surnames of authors, the sequence of details, and the punctuation marks and the layout, look at this example the same example I have used.

In this case the second name comes first or the surname comes first. If you remember in reference you wrote Alan Warner, here it is Warner Alan, and according to this that is W it will be arranged alphabetically. Then A Short Guide to English Style. Here there is no change title of the book; the only difference is it is separated by full stops not comma. Then the next detail is the edition comes before, the place of publication again separated by a full stop, and here this becomes a separate unit. Place of publication London and

then name of the publisher Oxford University Press and comma year of publication 1964.

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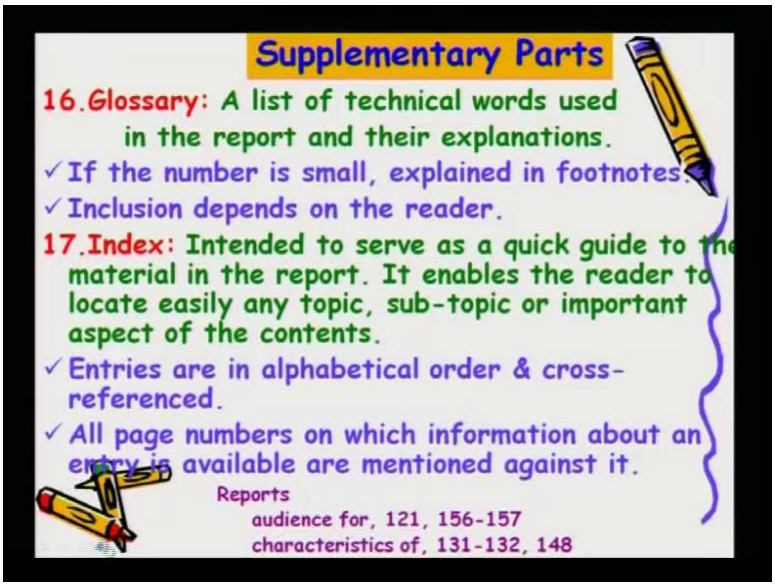

Now last two items that is glossary which is a list of technical words used in the report and their explanations. What happens sometimes you use jargons, technical words which are not understood by everybody, then you take them separately and offer them in the form of a small dictionary format, so that is glossary. Now if the number is again small it can be explained in footnotes. The inclusion depends on the reader; if the reader is not up to the level in which you have written the report glossary is a must. Index is again intended to serve as a quick guide to the material of the report. It enables the reader to locate easily any topic, sub-topic or important aspect of the contents.

So, it comes at the backside and key words are entered again arranged in alphabetical order, and then they are cross referenced. Now all page numbers on which information about an entry is available are mentioned against it. For example reports, audience for 121, 156 to 57, so this is mentioned here. Characteristics of report in this book it is mentioned in these two pages extensively it is also mentioned in this page. So, this is how index will look like, and it will be arranged again according to alphabetical order

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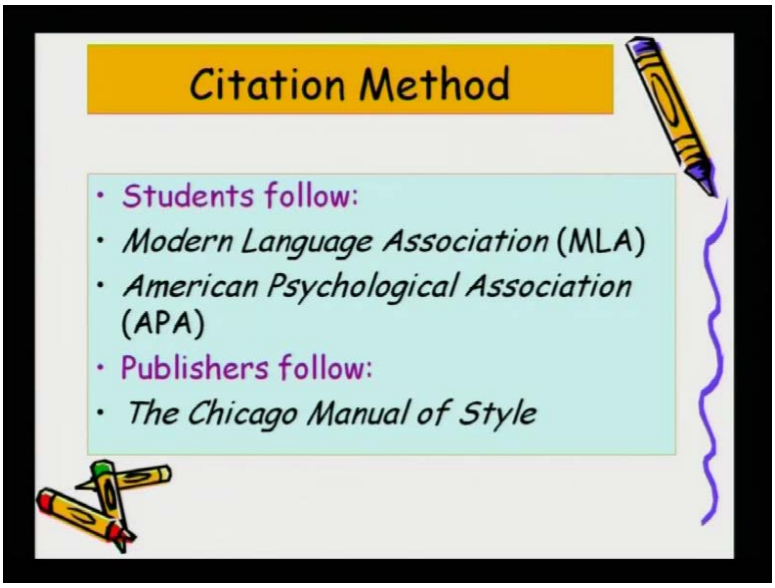

Now towards concluding I should tell you one point that the citation method used in this report there is something called style sheet; you cannot follow anything randomly. There are two style sheets which students are supposed to follow. The first one is followed or given by Modern Language Association shortly called MLA hand book, MLA style book. The second one again students are supposed to follow especially students of psychology, social sciences is this American Psychological Associations APA, APA style sheet. Now generally publishers will be using what is called as the Chicago manual of style; publishers will ask you to follow this style.

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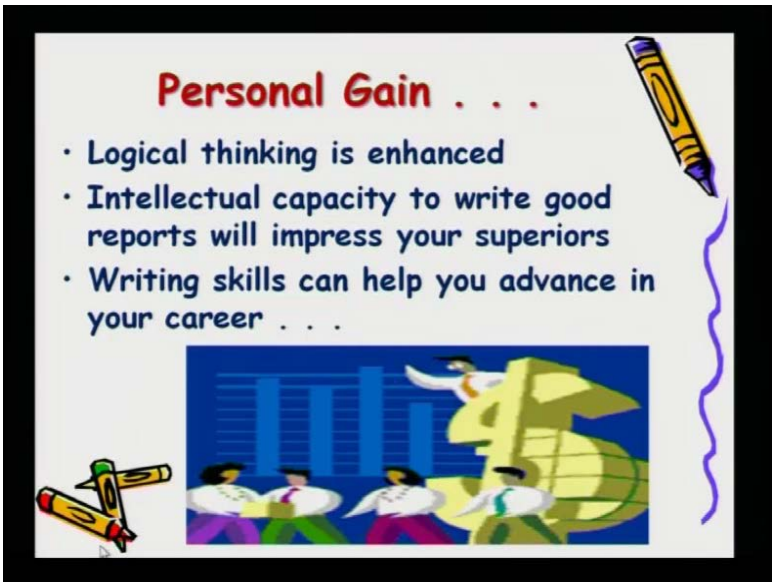

Now towards concluding I should just recapitulate very quickly that in this lecture we tried to understand the definition of a report, description of a report, characteristics of a report, and why report is necessary. And towards explaining that I also tried to tell you that we need to understand that in terms of the types of report and then we studied the various types of report, and we focused more on technical report. Followed by that we tried to understand a technical report in terms of the elements; about 18 elements are being discussed to you and then these were bifurcated under three categories which could come under preliminary or front matter, main body, main text followed by the back matter or the supplementary items.

Now once you master this, once you know how to write this, this comes out of repeated practice. I should conclude by giving you one note of personal gain that you may have which is generally used for any writing skills. You should know that once you start writing reports, your logical thinking is enhanced. You try to be more and more objective, at the same time you enhance your logical thinking skills followed by proving your intellectual capacity to write good reports which will definitely impress your superiors, and today you know that without improving your superiors you know that you cannot win that promotion, you cannot really climb up in your career.

Now writing skills by and large and specifically report writing skills can help you advance in your career tremendously; although it is laborious, although sometimes some of you may feel that it is quite dull and monotonous; nevertheless mastering this skill and learning from this, learning to think logically, putting your ideas coherently and adhering to the style format. These things will make you highly dependable, highly reliable, highly sought for in any professional situation, and it will give you that cutting edge in any career-oriented job where you are likely to be promoted, because the boss needs you. You have become a favorite of the boss, because you know how to write good reports, and he may use the reports that written by you, he may ask you to interpret reports for him. So, these skills surely will take a long way.

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And with wishing you all the best for becoming a good report writer and fetching that job I will just very quickly tell you that you can go to some further references of some books which deal with this report writing exclusively. There are two books; one by Lesikar Raymond which deals particularly on report writing for business, and there is a simple book written by John Seely again on writing reports. The other books which I have been frequently referring to you in communication skills course by Bovee and Courtland on Business Communication Today, and then Andrea Rutherford's Basic Communication Skills as well as Krishna Mohan's and Sharma's book on Business Correspondence and Report Writing. They all have exclusive chapters on report writing. Now use these books for developing your skills further, and I thank you so much for your patient listening and paying attention to me for this one hour lecture.

Thanks.

We are meeting again in the next lecture where we deal more about report writing.

Thank you.