UNIT 2 APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF MANAGEMENT

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:
- distinguish between different stages in the evolution of management thought
- explain the concept of 'scientific management' and enumerate the principles of scientific management
- analyse Fayol's administrative theory of management
- describe the features of human relations approach to management
- outline the main element of behavioural approach
- explain the Decision Theory of Management
- describe the characteristics of the modern (systems) approach to the study of management
- explain the contingency approach to management.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In unit 1 you have studied the concept of management, its nature and scope. Although the practice of management is as old as civilisation, systematic thinking on various aspects of management started only from the beginning of the last century. With the passage of time, different thinkers viewed the task of management in the light of their own experience and understanding of the process of management. In this unit, we shall discuss the more important stages in the evolution of management thought, different approaches to the study of management and theories developed in that context.

2.2 EVOLUTION OF MANAGEMENT THOUGHT

How to manage activities involving large number of people must have been known even in the ancient past. There are evidence all over the world about the practice of management since the dawn of civilisation. Without proper management it would have been impossible to undertake construction of the Egyptian pyramids, or the Great Wall and the irrigation canals of China. However, organised activities in earlier times mainly required engaging people for manual operations and getting work done under strict supervision. On the other hand, work in cottage industries which flourished during the middle ages mainly involved engagement of family members and apprentices and application of traditional skills with simple tools and implements.

Far reaching changes took place in the organisation of economic activities with the industrial revolution at the turn of the 18th century. Scientific and technical inventions
approaches to the study of management

Early Thinkers

Thinking on management as a separate field of learning and practice began early in the 19th century. It was at this time that persons like Robert Owen, Charles Babbage, Metcalf and Towne expressed their ideas on the ways and means of making management practices more effective and efficient.

Robert Owen, who owned and managed several textile mills in Scotland, emphasised the importance of human relations in management. He was very much against the existing practices of workers being employed in factories to perform manual work for as long as thirteen hours per day, employment of child workers even below the age of ten, absence of housing facilities, etc. He introduced many reforms in his own factories, reducing working hours, improving working conditions providing housing facilities, and arranging supply of goods at cheaper rates through company stores. On the basis of his own experience, he advocated that investment in human resources was more profitable than investment in machinery and other physical resources. He, therefore, recommended that industrialists should change their attitude towards the workers and devote more attention to their well-being.

Charles Babbage was a professor at Cambridge. Having studied the management of factories in the United Kingdom and France, he observed that employees and owners were totally ignorant of the basic tools of scientific methods. They were guided purely by tradition, estimates and imagination and the owner-managers never took decisions on the basis of factual analysis. According to Babbage, it is essential to apply scientific principles to work processes for increasing productivity and reducing expenses. In his writings, Babbage emphasised the importance of division of labour on the basis of skills, and also stressed the necessity of replacing manual operations by machinery.

As the manager of an army arsenal, Henry Metcalf held the view that the science of administration ought to be based on principles evolved by recording observations and experiences. The art of management, according to him, should be based on accumulated observations which are on record and are presented systematically. His book on cost of manufactures and administration of workshops suggested a system of control with the help of work records maintained in Time Cards and Material Cards and a method of automatic actions.

Henry Robinson Towne was the chief executive of a manufacture company. His contribution to management lay in defining the role of a manager as a combination of the roles of an administrator, an engineer, and a statistician. Management of industrial work, according to Towne, required combination of different qualities of good businessmen and good engineers. He succeeded in motivating engineers to study management, and advised them to be cost-conscious. At the same time, he emphasised that the process of management has multiple dimensions and engineer-managers must be aware of it.

Early thinker on management made an attempt to suggest improvements in the functioning of manufacturing organisations by different means. In that process the thinkers also provided a new background for management in practice. Growth of business and industry proceeded at a rapid pace in the Western European countries and the USA during the 19th century. Increased competition in the domestic and international markets during this period drew the attention of management towards the necessity of improving productivity and efficiency of their undertakings.
The concept of scientific management was introduced by F.W. Taylor in the USA early in the 20th century as an alternative to the prevailing system of management by initiative and incentives. Taylor started his career as machine shop worker at Midvale Steel Works. In course of time he acquired additional qualifications and became foreman and then chief engineer. Subsequently the acted as consultant of another steel company which had serious production problems. Based on observations and a large number of experiments on methods of work at the shop floor and the attitude of management towards the workers, Taylor formulated the principles of scientific management.

Taylor's concept of scientific management essentially consisted of a scientific approach to management. Its primary objective was to replace methods based on trial and error and rule of thumb. The new approach rested on the following principles:

1. Development and use of scientific methods in setting work standards, determining a fair day's work and the best way of doing work.
2. Scientific selection and placement of workers best suited to perform the various tasks and provision of their training and development for maximum efficiency.
3. Clear cut division of work and responsibility between management and workers.
4. Harmonious relations and close cooperation with workmen to secure performance of work in accordance with the planned jobs and tasks.

A number of techniques were developed to facilitate scientific management. Taken together the following techniques constituted the mechanism of the new approach:

1. Time Study to analyse and measure the time taken in doing the various elements of a job, and to standardise the operations as well as determining a fair day's work.
2. Motion Study involving close observation of the movements required to perform a job with a view to eliminate wasteful motions and decide on the best way of doing the job.
3. Standardisation of tools, equipments and machinery and working conditions.
4. Incentive wage plan with differential piece rate of wages for efficient and inefficient workmen.
5. Functional Foremanship involving different specialist foremen supervising machine speed, group work, repairs, etc.

Taylor presented his ideas on scientific management as a systematic body of thought. His main contribution to management practices included the following aspects:

a) The importance of applying scientific methods of enquiry, observation and experimentation to the problems of management.

b) Separation of planning of work from its execution so as to enable workers to perform at his best and earn accordingly.

b) Emphasising the aim of management to be the maximum prosperity of the employer along with the maximum welfare of each employee.

d) The necessity of a complete mental revolution on the part of both workmen and management to derive the benefits of scientific management through harmony and cooperation rather than individualism and discord.

Merits: The primary benefit of scientific management was conservation and proper use of every ounce of energy. Moreover specialization and division of labour have brought about the second industrial revolution. Time and motion techniques are important tools to organize the tasks in a more efficient and rational way. In short, scientific management is not only a rational approach to solve organizational problems but it also facilitates the professionalisation of management.

Although the basic principles of scientific management were originally developed by Taylor, several associates of Taylor like Gantt, Frank and Lillian Gilbreth, and Emerson further elaborated the ideas, developed new techniques and improved upon the new approach to management. In practice, scientific management proved to be so fruitful in increasing productivity and efficiency of operations that it was widely accepted in the USA and Western Europe.
2.4 FAYOL’S ADMINISTRATIVE THEORY

Scientific management was primarily concerned with increasing the productive efficiency of individual workers at the shop floor. The role of managers and their functions in the total organisation were not given adequate attention. Around the same time, that is the first quarter of the 20th century Henri Fayol, director of a coal mining company in France, made a systematic analysis of the process of management. His approach to the study of management is also known as the process or Functional Approach.

According to Fayol, business activities in any organisation consist of six inter-dependent operations viz., technical, commercial, financial, security, accounting and administrative or managerial operations. He analysed the nature of managerial activities and skill requirements which were so far given little attention by thinkers. He considered the process of management to be of universal application and distinguished between five elements of the process viz., to forecast and plan, to organise, to command, to coordinate, and to control. The concept of management was, thus, defined as the process of performing certain functions like planning, organising, etc. These functions were expected to be performed by managers at all levels in the organisation as well as in all types of industries and in all countries.

Fayol emphasised that management involved the application of certain skills which could be acquired by persons on the basis of systematic instructions and training. Once acquired, the skills could be applied to all types of institutions including the church, schools, political as well as industrial organisations.

Besides a systematic analysis of the management process and management functions, Fayol formulated a set of fourteen principles as guidelines for implementing the process of management. You will study these principles in detail in Unit 3. These principles were stated in flexible terms and expected to be of use of managers under all circumstances. The skill and abilities required for effective management were stated to be dependent on the managers’ positions at different levels of the organisation.

According to Fayol, administrative skills were more essential for higher level managers, while technical abilities were required more at the lower level positions. He also believed that managerial training was essential for people in all walks of life. He stressed, for the first time, the necessity of formal education and training in management. In short, Fayol’s analysis provides a set of means (viz., planning, organising, commanding, coordinating and controlling) for viewing the management process, and guidance (i.e., the principles for implementing the process).

The Administrative Theory of Management and Functional Approach to management may be said to have developed on the foundations laid by Fayol. He provided a conceptual framework for analysing the process of management. At the same time, he isolated and analysed management as a separate, distinct activity. Management as a body of knowledge gained immensely from Fayol’s analysis of managerial skills of universal relevance and principles of general management developed by him. Although some critics called it inconsistent, vague and pro-management based theory, still this theory excerts considerable influence on the practice as well as teaching of management the world over.
Check Your Progress A

1. State which of the following statements are True and which are False.
   i) Thinking on management as separate field of study began with the dawn of civilisation. ....................... 
   ii) Henry Metcalfe suggested a method of control with the help of work records and automatic action. ....................... 
   iii) The concept of scientific management is based only on the application of scientific techniques like time and motion study. ....................... 
   iv) Taylor developed the principles of scientific management in the light of his observations and experiments on methods of work. ....................... 
   v) Taylor was concerned mainly with the management of work at the shop floor. ....................... 
   vi) The abilities required by a manager depend on his position and rank in the organisation. ....................... 
   vii) Fayol distinguished between five elements or functions related with the process of management. ....................... 
   viii) Fayol’s approach to the study of management is known as administrative approach. ....................... 

2. Fill in the blanks:
   i) The importance of workers’ well being was emphasised by an early thinker on management.
   ii) Supervision of work by different specialist foremen is known as
   iii) The concept of management was defined by Fayol as the process of performing certain
   iv) Trade unions are opposed to scientific management because it leads to increased of employees.
   v) According to Towne, a manager should combine the roles of an and

2.5 HUMAN RELATIONS APPROACH

We have discussed earlier the elements of scientific management concerned with the efficiency and productivity of workmen at the shop floor. We have also discussed Henry’s functional approach to management which aimed at improving the managerial activities. Between 1925 and 1935, opinions of many experts were directed towards the human aspects of organisational activities. It was felt that earlier approaches to management were incomplete as there was little recognition of the importance of workers as human beings, their attitudes, feelings and needs. Indeed, the technical approach to work methods in scientific management did not produce durable results in all cases. Individual and group relationships in the workplace often prevented maximum benefits to be derived from planning and standardisation of work or monetary rewards offered for efficiency.

The human relations approach to management developed as a result of the series of experimental studies conducted by Elton Mayo and his associates at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company in the USA. The Hawthorne studies were aimed at finding out what factors really influenced the productivity and work performance of labourers. The finding were as follows:

1. Physical environment at the workplace do not have any material impact on the efficiency of work.

2. Favourable attitudes of workers and work-team towards their work were more important factors determining efficiency.

3. Fulfilment of the workers’ social and psychological needs had a beneficial effect on the morale and efficiency of workmen.

4. Employee groups based on social interactions and common in the rests exercised a strong influence on workers’ performance.
Workers cannot be motivated solely by economic rewards. More important motivators are job security, recognition by superiors, and right to express their opinion on matters which are of concern to them.

The human relations approach to management problems is based on the view that the modern organisation is a social system in which the social environment and interpersonal relations govern the behaviour of employees. It emphasises that the authority responsibility relationship between superiors and subordinates should relate to the social and psychological satisfaction of employees. It is only by making employees happy that an organisation can secure their full cooperation and thus increase efficiency. Management should encourage the development of social groups on the job and provide opportunities for free expression of the employees' viewpoints. Managers should recognise the importance of democratic leadership, so that there is free flow of communication and subordinates may participate in decision-making.

It must be noted that the objective of human relations approach was to make workers more productive. But it was emphasised that employee satisfaction was the best means of achieving the goals of higher productivity and efficiency. For this purpose, it was necessary that managers must know why employees act as they do and what social and psychological factors motivate them. Attempt should be made to create a satisfying work environment in which people may fulfil their own needs as well as contribute to the achievement of organisational goals.

2.6 BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH

The behavioural approach to management developed as a corollary to the human relations approach. But it also reflected the findings of intensive research carried out by 'behavioural scientists' belonging to the disciplines of sociology, social psychology, and anthropology, as well as management experts. The behavioural approach was concerned with the social and psychological aspects of human behaviour in organisations. Many of the conclusions of the Hawthorne studies were reaffirmed by subsequent research studies, but certain ideas were extended and others highlighted by the behavioural scientists.

Some of the more important elements of the behavioural approach are outlined below:

1. Individual behaviour is closely linked with the behaviour of the group to which he belongs. A person may be inclined to resist pressures to change his behaviour as an individual. But he will readily do so if the group decides to change its behaviour. With work standards laid down by the group, individuals belonging to that group will resist change more strongly. Moreover, what workers believe to be the management's expectation of output often determines or influences the level of production. This is because management generally do not have any specific level of production it considers proper, and workers often believe that if they work harder their pay rates would be reduced.

2. Informal leadership, rather than the formal authority of foremen and supervisors, is more important for setting and enforcing group standards of performance. As a leader manager may be more effective and acceptable to the subordinates if he adopts the democratic style of leadership. If the subordinates are encouraged to participate in establishing the goals, there will be positive effect on their attitude towards work. Changes in technology and methods of work, which are often resisted by employees, can be brought about more easily by involving the employees in planning and designing the jobs.

3. By nature most people enjoy work, and are motivated by self-control and self-development. It is for the managers to identify and provide necessary conditions for the human potential to be used in the service of the organisation. The managers' attitude toward human behaviour should be positive. They should know that the average man is not lazy by nature. He is ambitious. Every man likes to work and prefers to assume responsibilities.

2.7 DECISION THEORY

Decision-making is defined as the process by which a choice is made from among
Various alternative courses of action to achieve goals. Thus, decision-making involves establishing objectives or goals, defining the problems, searching for available alternatives, evaluating them, selecting one, and implementing the decision. All organisational activities require decisions to be taken preceding action. Every manager has to take decisions to direct action at different intervals. At lower level, managers have to take routine decisions for day-to-day action under their limited jurisdiction. At higher levels of management, decisions are taken having wider impact and long-term significance. Positions held by managers are known as decision centres.

According to the decision theory of management, the process of management essentially consists of human problem-solving on the basis of analysis and reasoning followed by appropriate decisions. This involves individuals making choices and behaving on the basis of their understanding of the environment and their needs. The key to an understanding of the organisational functioning lies in the identification of decision centres and the channels of communication. The objective of managerial decision-making is to secure and co-ordinate effectively the contributions of others in the decision-making process. This can be accomplished by influencing as far as possible, the viewpoints of participants on various alternatives before making a choice, so that the resulting decisions may fit the requirements of objectives.

The decision theory admits that it is not always possible for managers to make perfect decisions. This is due to several reasons. The basic requirement in the decision process is the availability of all information relevant to the decision situation. But data collection, analysis and evaluation often prove to be too costly and time consuming. Secondly, the decision-maker may not have complete knowledge of available alternatives and their potential outcomes under conditions of uncertainty and risk. Thus, decisions are actually based on individual judgement.

2.8 MODERN (SYSTEMS) APPROACH

In simple words, a system may be defined as a set of interdependent parts forming an organised unit or entity. These parts, known as sub-systems, interact with each other and are subject to change. They are interrelated as well as interdependent. Thus changes in any sub-system lead to changes in others. Any working organisation may be said to consist of three broad sub-systems:

a). Technical sub-system which represents the formal relationships among the members of an organisation,
b) Social sub-system which provides social satisfaction to members through informal group relations, and
c) Power sub-system which reflects the exercise of power or influence by individuals and groups.

The total system emerges as a result of the interaction of the various sub-systems. The total system and its sub-systems also interact with the environment, which may influence or be influenced by the system or the sub-systems.

The systems approach has the following features:

1 System is a group of interrelated but separate elements.
2 The arrangement of all the elements must be orderly.
3 There must be proper communication facilitating interaction between the elements.
4 Finally the interaction should lead to achieve a common goal.

The enterprise operations are viewed in terms of basic elements engaged in procuring and transforming inputs into outputs. Money, employees and the managers themselves are parts of the system. Inputs are the materials, information and energy, flowing into the organisation. The outputs are products, services, and satisfactions provided by the organisation. The organisation transforms input into a variety of outputs (in the form of products, goods and services) and offers the same to the external environment. Sale of the outputs provides the necessary energy which is called feedback to repeat this systems cycle. Look at Figure 2 which shows this cycle.
This systems approach to management views organisations as extremely complex entities subject to changes from within and outside. To meet various needs of such an organisation, a balanced and integrated approach to management is required. At the heart of the systems approach lies a Management Information System and communication network for collection, analysis and flow of information and quantitative data so as to facilitate planning and control. It emphasises the importance of decision-making as the primary means of balancing the different parts of the organisation. Modern thinkers consider management as a system of integrating activities aimed at making the best use of scarce resources. Management is viewed also as a sub-system of the social system. As a sub-system management is required to adapt and cope with environmental changes.

This systems approach has the following advantages:

1. It provides a unified focus to organisational efforts.
2. It provides managers an opportunity of looking at the organisation as a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts.
3. This theory treats the organisation as an open system. Moreover, the process of interaction between subsystems is dynamic.
4. Modern theory is based on multilevel and multidimensional approach, i.e., it includes both micro and macro aspect. It is micro within the nation's industrial network and macro with respect to its internal units.
5. The system is based on multiple variables because an event may be the product of many factors which in turn may be interrelated and interdependent.
6. The feedback mechanism provides an opportunity to organisation to rearrange its parts according to the change in the environment. Although system theory has given fascinating appeal still it has some limitation.

In fact, this is not the complete explanation of the whole organisational system. It does not explain how the subsystems of a specific organisation are uniquely related in a given environment.

### 2.9 CONTINGENCY APPROACH

Contingency approach is based on the view that there is no one best way to manage. In fact there are many effective ways of performing a given job. This theory emphasizes that the best way to lead, plans, organize and conduct managerial activities varies with the situation. A particular method may yield fruitful results in one situation but may drastically fail in other situations. There is no universal principles to be applied in all situations. Managers must analyse different situations and use the best approach which is best suitable in that particular situation. For example to improve productivity, supporters of scientific management may prescribe work simplification and additional incentives, the behaviorist may recommend job enrichment and democratic participation of employees in the decision making process. But the supporters of contingency approach may offer a solution which is responsive to the characteristics of the total situation being faced. Work simplification would be ideal where there is limited resources, unskilled labour, limited training opportunities and limited products offered to the local markets. Job enrichment would be ideal for that organisation where there are abundant skilled labour force. This shows that managerial action depends upon circumstances within a given situation. In this approach managers are supposed to diagnose a given situation and adopt to meet the conditions present. In short contingency approach emphasizes on two aspects. 1) It focuses attention on specific situational factors that influence the appropriateness of one managerial strategy over another. 2) It...
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highlights the importance of developing skills for managers in situational analysis. Such skills will help managers find out important contingency factors what influence their approach to managing.

The main advantage of this contingency approach is that it compels us to be aware of the complexity in every situation and forces us to take an active and dynamic role in determining what best would work in each case. Like a system theory it does not only examines the relationships between subsystems of a specific organisation in a given environment, but also offers solutions to particular organisational problems.

This theory has been criticised on the ground of heavy theoretical complexity. For example a simple problem has to be analysed on a number of organisational components, each of which having innumerable dimensions. So its empirical testing becomes very difficult.

Check Your Progress B

1 Which of the following statements are True and which are False?
   i) The objective of human relations approach to management was only to make people happy.
   ii) Scientific management did not attach any importance to workers' attitudes, feelings and needs.
   iii) Individual behaviour is closely linked with group behaviour.
   iv) All decisions are taken by higher level managers.
   v) Systems approach to management emphasises management as an integrating activity.
   vi) Contingency approach emphasises that there is no universal principles to be applied in all situations.

2 Fill in the blanks:
   i) Human relations ensure the fulfilment of the workers' needs.
   ii) Workers are not motivated solely by incentive.
   iii) Decision-makers do not have complete knowledge of the potential outcomes of various alternatives, hence decisions are based on.
   iv) The technical sub-systems represents the among members of the organisation.
   v) Human relations approach is based on the view that the modern organisation is a system.

2.10 LET US SUM UP

There are evidences all over the world about the practice of management since the dawn of civilisation. However thinking various functions involved in the process of management received increasing attention of management experts only after the industrial revolution. Early thinking on management started with Robert Owen, Charles Babbage, Metcalfe and Towne, who suggested ways and means of improving upon the existing practices of managing industrial organisation.

The concept of scientific management was introduced by F.W. Taylor as an alternative to the prevailing system of management by initiative and incentives. Its primary objective was to replace rule of thumb methods by scientific methods of enquiry, observation and experimentation in management. Scientific management was concerned with increasing the productive efficiency of individual workers at the shop floor. The role of managers and their functions in the total organisation were not given adequate attention.

Henry Fayol made a systematic analysis of the process of management and the functions of managers. He formulated a set of principles as guidelines for implementing the process of management. The Administrative Theory of Management was developed on the foundations laid by Fayol.
Human relations approach to management developed as a result of the series of experimental studies conducted in the USA. It is based on the view that the modern organisation is a social system and that employees satisfaction is the best means of achieving the goals of higher productivity and efficiency. For this purpose management should create a satisfying work environment, in which people may fulfil their social and psychological needs as well as contribute to the achievement of organisational goals.

The behavioural approach to management was an extension of the human relations approach. It reflected the extensive research carried out by behavioural scientists belonging to the disciplines of sociology, social psychology and anthropology. It recognised that individual behaviour is governed by the behaviour of the group to which he belongs. It emphasised that informal leadership and democratic style are more effective means of setting and enforcing group standards.

According to the decision theory of management, the key to an understanding of the organisational functioning lies in the identification of decision centres and the channels of communication. The systems approach to management views organisations as extremely complex entities subject to changes from within and outside. To meet the various needs of such an organisation requires a balanced and integrated approach to management. Management is regarded as a system by itself as well as a sub-system of the social system. Here, the organisation transforms various inputs into a variety of outputs and offers the final products to the environment which in turn provides necessary energy called feedback to repeat the cycle. Contingency model emphasizes that there is no universal principle to be applied in all situations. It focuses attention on specific situational factors that influence the appropriateness of one managerial strategy over another and highlights the importance of developing skills for managers in situational analysis.

### 2.11 KEY WORDS

**Administrative Approach:** Analysis of the process of management in terms of management functions and skill requirements.

**Behavioural Approach:** Understanding individual and group behaviour in organisations.

**Differential Piece Rate:** Piece rates of wages which apply differently to efficient and inefficient workers.

**Functional Foremanship:** Supervision of work by different specialist foremen.

**Hawthorne Studies:** Experimental studies conducted to find out what factors motivate workers on the shop floor for improved performance.

**Human Relations Approach:** Motivating employees with a satisfying work environment and fulfilment of their social and psychological needs.

**Motion Study:** Observation of the movements required to perform a job so as to eliminate wasteful motions and decide on the best way of doing the job.

**Scientific Management:** Application of scientific methods to resolve management problems in place of rule of thumb or trial and error methods.

**Systems Approach:** Understanding management as a balancing and integrating system.

**Time Study:** Technique used to analyse and measure the time taken in doing the various elements of job.

### 2.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Check Your Progress A**

1. (i) False  (ii) True  (iii) False  (iv) True  (v) True  (vi) False  (vii) True  (viii) False.


**Check Your Progress B**

1. (i) False  (ii) True  (iii) True  (iv) False  (v) True  (vi) True.
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2 (i) social, psychological, (ii) economic, (iii) judgement, (iv) formal relationship, (v) social.

2.13 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Give a brief outline of the evolution of management thought during the 20th century.
2. What is meant by scientific management. Discuss its main principles, merits and limitations.
3. Explain the significance of the behavioural approach to management. What are its main features?
4. Describe the main elements of the human relations approach to management.
5. Explain Fayol's contribution to management thought.
6. Explain the systems approach of management. Discuss with example how does it provides feedback mechanism to continue the whole cycle.
7. Critically evaluate the contingency approach to management.
8. What are different approaches to management? Discuss about each of them briefly.

Note: These questions will help you to understand the unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not send your answers to the university. These are for your practice only.