

## ESSAY

Having learnt to write effective paragraphs let us now understand the method of organising paragraphs to form a full length essay.

An essay can be defined as a short composition in prose. It literally means *an attempt*. It can be on any subject. It can give expression to one's personal experience, ideas or opinions on a chosen topic. Mostly, the theme of the essay decides the tone, the texture and the structure.

Before attempting to write an essay the writer should have reviewed in his mind the purpose of his essay and the readers for whom he is writing. This would help him in deciding the content. Then he should begin with an outline of what he wants to write with headings and sub-headings. This outline would serve as a guiding principle. This can be developed to make it concise and suitable to the occasion or audience.

### Hints to write a good essay

1. The writer should have a clear conception of the subject matter. The writer should come to the point immediately without waste of time.
2. The writer should collect sufficient material before commencing to write an essay.
3. The writer should have the purpose/goal always in view.
4. Jotting down the points before beginning to write is a must, as one is likely to forget the very matter or change the order of its occurrence in the essay.
5. Shifting the points thus made is another requirement. Not all points or ideas may be relevant. Some editing is necessary

to get the right points at the right place. Whatever one knows need not go into an essay.

Line of thought is a very important element to remember. The author of an essay should think of a logical order that would best fit his argument or narration.

7. A bare outline would help to keep the flow of thought within limits.

8. Arrange the ideas already collected according to the outline thus prepared.

9. Expand the ideas thus arranged.

10. Read the essay after writing it to see if all that you wanted to say has been said and in the order it has to be said. Reflect for a moment if the objective of writing the essay has been accomplished.

### **Characteristics of a good essay**

A good essay comprises introduction, body and conclusion. Clarity, unity, continuity, and emphasis are its hallmarks.

### **The Introduction**

The introduction is very important. For the reader, it is the first impression that tends naturally to colour subsequent impressions. It enables the reader to know as soon as possible what business is at hand. It must limit and fix the subject more precisely. It suggests to the reader what the central idea is and how the writer intends to present it.

There are several ways of writing an introduction. It is largely a matter of common sense. The approach used for the introduction may depend on the nature of the topic. However, it should capture the interest of the reader. One way of writing a good introduction is that the writer should put himself in the reader's place and ask himself what preliminary information he would need to follow the discussion intelligently. Then, that information could be stated as simply and economically as possible. A good beginning could also be made by placing an arresting fact, or by using a fitting quotation.

## **The Body**

The writer has promised to develop a fixed and limited subject along a certain line. The body of an essay should not betray the promise of the introduction. It is normally divided into convenient paragraphs and on the basis of the outline all the points are developed fully and coherently.

## **The Conclusion**

The conclusion is as important as the introduction. A good introduction initiates interest, the body feeds the interest, and the conclusion sustains the interest giving the reader the satisfaction that the writer has said all that is needed to establish the credibility of his essay. Two things must be avoided, blurred effect, ie vague generalities and repetitious, summary. The conclusion must really conclude the discussion. The theme should not abruptly stop, giving the impression that the writer has either suddenly become tired or run out of matter. However, when a summing up is aimed at, only the main argument or discussion needs to be pointed out with a special focus for the purpose of making absolutely clear what the essay has discussed. Making any kind of a new beginning towards the end is to be avoided.

## **Clarity**

The hallmark of a good essay is clarity. It is not easy to achieve, but it must be achieved. Clarity in writing means that the expressed idea is clear and that there is no difficulty in understanding the meaning. Sentences should not be too involved or complex. Being scholarly is not being verbose, ambiguous, pedantic or pompous. Long-windedness, repetitions and digressions have no place in an essay.

## **Unity**

An essay appeals to the reader as a unified composition when the fundamental interest which determines the writer's subject permeates the entire composition. It indicates that his ideas about his subject are organic and that he is not scatter-brained. The first step towards gaining unity is to limit and fix the subject.

The second step is not to talk about what is irrelevant. Ideas which do not bear directly on the subject must not be brought in.

### **Continuity**

An effective discourse has not only unity but also continuity, that is, the elements of the writing stick together. One sentence leads naturally to the next, paragraphs follow a logical sequence, and the ideas merge together. The sentences and paragraphs should fit as tightly as the teeth of a zipper.

Though unity and coherence are ultimately related, it is worth making a distinction between them. When we speak of unity, we refer primarily to the relation of the ideas to the subject. When we speak of coherence, we refer primarily to the organization of the ideas so as to give a continuous development to the subject.

Each section of an essay should fit into the general pattern. We can begin a paragraph, with some reference to what has gone before. A repetition or rephrasing an idea from the preceding paragraph will provide a link. Transitional words and phrases can be used to show the logical relationship and connect the paragraphs. However, beginning every paragraph with a transitional word is not desirable.

### **Emphasis**

The principle of emphasis is used to add the intended scale of importance to certain elements. There is a foreground and background of interest and the writer should be careful to place each item in its proper location. Repetition of ideas is a method followed to emphasize but the repetition should not become mechanical and dull. Emphasis through irresponsible exaggeration always repels the reader. So, the writer should ensure that the matter emphasized is worth emphasizing.

### **Interest**

Interest is captured and sustained through clear and coherent writing and forceful and fresh expression. Dullness and monotony arise due to the following three drawbacks-

inadequacy of ideas, monotonous sentence structure and limited vocabulary. The first draw-back can be easily remedied by supplementing ideas. Occasional and appropriate use of figures of speech and deliberate variation in sentence beginnings and structures will make the essay interesting. A sparkle of zest in writing is attained through vigorous vocabulary, frequently a matter of substituting precise or colourful words for over-used expressions.

### **Classification of Essays**

On the basis of the subject-matter the essays can be classified into the following seven categories

#### **1. Expository**

Art expository essay defines, explains and interprets a given topic. It explains what something is, how it is made or how it works. Expository writing is a formal style of writing. Its purpose is instruction, not entertainment. It must have a well-thought-out plan and it must be clear and precise. The writer may interpret giving examples, stating reasons and answering questions.

(eg) Essays on institutions, industries and occupations; scientific topics such as gravitation and evolution; literary topics such as the style of an essay and nature of poetry are all expository in nature.

#### **2. Descriptive**

A descriptive essay describes a person, a place or an object, a condition and so on. It paints a picture in words. The description can be from parts to whole or from whole to parts. But it leaves a photo-graphic representation of the topic described, in the reader's mind.

(eg) Essays on animals, plants, towns, countries etc.

#### **3. Narrative**

A narrative essay, as the name suggests, relates or narrates an event or a happening. It is concerned with what, where and how. The common features in a narration are the references to place, time, characters, action and the effects of the action.

(eg) Essays on personal experiences like mountaineering, voyage etc. Current events like accidents and meetings are found, narrated in news papers. Historical events, stories and biographies are also narrative in nature.

#### 4. Argumentative

Argument is needed when there is difference of opinion. The topics of argumentative essays have two sides: one supporting and the other opposing. For example "Is TV a Boon or a Bane?"

At the end the writer gives a conclusion of his own.

#### 5. Reflective

A reflection is a thought or an idea that arises in the mind. Hence a reflective essay contains thoughts which are generally abstract in nature.

(eg) Bacon's essays 'On Friendship', 'On Adversity', 'On Love' etc. Social, political and domestic topics like casteism, socialism, democracy, marriage, education are all reflective in nature. Philosophical and theological topics also come under this category.

#### 6. Imaginative

Essays based on imagination and assumption come under this category.

(eg) "If I were the P.M. of India", "If I become a film hero".

#### 7. Evaluative

(eg) This type of essay is evaluative in nature. (i) Why do scientists go abroad? (ii) Working conditions in industries.

Write essays on the following topics using the hints given below.

##### 1. Child labour

Child labour — social evil Article 24 of Consitution forbids employment of children under 14 but child labour on the

increase exploitation by employers – violation of Factories Act leading to accidents and deaths.

Abolition impossible? – children earn their upkeep – contribute to family income.

Solution – role of Government and Social Welfare Organizations – protective laws – deterrent punishment for violation of law.

## **2. The importance of newspapers**

Newspapers extremely useful – cheapest medium of information – news shortened form of north, east, west, south – gives news about the happenings of the world – sitting in chair you see the world regional, national and international news educative and entertaining.

Variety of news – sports, education, politics, public opinion, culture etc.

The articles and editorials educate the readers and shape their thinking.

Latest developments in Science and Technology – business advertisement useful media in a democracy.

**Read the sample essay given below and understand its composition with the help of the analysis following it.**

### **Importance of Physical Exercise**

'Health is wealth', and 'A sound mind in a sound body' are popular sayings. When our body is in perfect health, our mind can work well. Physical exercise is an important factor that ensures good health.

Sports and games help a great deal in giving exercise to the various parts of our body. By doing exercise muscles expand and contract. There is good circulation of blood throughout the body and the waste materials are removed.

When young boys and girls play outdoor games their limbs get good exercise. They breathe in more air than they normally do. By playing games their bodies attain proper growth. It

refreshes them both physically and mentally. So they can concentrate well on their studies.

Physical exercise is necessary for older people also. They may not play games but they must do some exercise in order to keep their bodies fit. They can do 'asanas' or walk a few kilometres in the morning or evening.

Thus physical exercise is essential for all, especially to young people. Hence physical education has been made a compulsory subject in our educational system.

### **Analysis of the given essay**

The two proverbial statements used in the introduction immediately arrest the attention of the readers. The reader is interested to know the significance of these statements as they are valid and accepted as correct by generations. The importance of physical exercise is at once emphasised.

The body of the essay contains three paragraphs. The first paragraph talks about the uses of physical exercise. The next paragraph says how physical exercise can help both in the physical and mental well-being of boys and girls in particular. The next paragraph establishes the fact that physical exercise is quite essential for old people also.

The concluding paragraph emphasises the established fact that physical exercise is quite inevitable to maintain sound body and sound mind. Hence, it has been made a compulsory subject in the educational system.

This essay is well-organised with unity of thought. Each paragraph elaborates only one idea and all the elaborations are relevant to the topic. There is an order and logic and the whole essay is coherent. This essay, if needed, can be made a longer one if more details, illustrations and data are added to each idea. The conclusion is simple, clear and direct.



Read the following essay and understand how they are structured. Analyse the various components of the essay as done above and point out the merits and demerits of its composition.

### Students and Social Service

Man is a social animal and he should live with others with a spirit of co-operation and service. It is our duty to render help to our fellow men who suffer much. The spirit of service can be cultivated when we are young. Students, the future pillars of any country, can help the society by doing social service. They have enthusiasm and vigour. They can serve the society in a number of ways.

Students can serve during local festivals. They can serve by assisting the policemen in regulating the crowd. Missing children may be traced and handed over to their parents. First aid can be given to the injured. Drinking water can be supplied to people.

Students can devote their leisure in teaching those who do not know how to read and write. Even children who have left their studies in the middle can also be attended to. Students can select villages nearby, visit them regularly and teach the villagers how to keep their houses and surroundings clean.

Students can help in laying roads, deepening the reservoirs and strengthening the tank bolds. Cleaning temples, visiting hospitals and speaking comforting words to the sick and controlling traffic are some other kinds of social service.

Movements like the Scouts, the Junior Red Cross, National Service Scheme train the pupils to do selfless social service. Students can join these movements and do good service to the society. By taking active part in social service, students can learn a lot in life and train themselves to become good citizens.

**Write essays on the following topics:**

1. Unemployment Problem
2. Population Explosion

3. National Integration
4. Impact of Science on the Modern Life
5. Environmental Pollution
6. Should Students Participate in Politics?
7. India and Her Neighbours
8. If I were the Prime Minister of India.
9. The Status of Women in India
10. Health is Wealth.
11. Information Technology Revolution
12. Television-A Benefit or a Curse?
13. India and Space Research
14. Educational Reforms
15. Electoral Reforms
16. Examination Reforms
17. India's Contribution to the Unity of the World
18. Human Values
19. Hostel Life-A Boon or A Bane?
20. Compulsory Military Training to the Youth in India
21. Childhood Memories
22. Future of English in India
23. Pleasures of Reading
24. Corruption and Public Administration
25. Privatisation — is it Inevitable?

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