

ISS

INDIAN STATISTICAL SERVICE EXAMINATION

(Completly revised study materials)

GENERAL English



ESSAY

What is Essay Writing?

The word **essay** derives from the French infinitive *essayer*, 'to try' or 'to attempt'. The first author to describe his works as essays was the Frenchman Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592). An essay is a short piece of writing that discusses, describes or analyzes one topic. It can discuss a subject directly or indirectly, seriously or humorously. It can describe personal opinions, or just report information. An essay can be written from any perspective, but essays are most commonly written in the first person (I), or third person. An essay is a piece of writing, usually from an author's personal point of view. Essays are non-fictional but often subjective; while expository, they can also include narrative. Essays can be literary criticism, political manifestos, and learned arguments, observations of daily life, recollections, and reflections of the author.

What are the Elements of Essay Writing?

The Following are the elements of essay writing :

1. NARROW THE ESSAY TOPIC

A common problem of beginning writers is wallowing around in a topic too wide for their purposes. General words such as "media," "war," "life," or "nature" are often incorrectly used as if they were topics. Students often begin to write essays with nothing more in mind than a general concept, and the result is a vague and generalized essay, of little interest to the student and less to the instructor. We should start with a broad area, concentrate on narrowing subject, it will also help to deal with a topic within the length of the paper assigned and the time which have been given to complete it. Topic can be narrowed by considering a particular approach to the subject, or a sub-topic within it.

Following are the types of Brainstorming:

Individual Brainstorming

When you brainstorm on your own you will tend to produce a wider range of ideas than with group brainstorming - you do not have to worry about other people's

The Thesis

All essays that involve the development of an argument require a thesis: the point you are arguing. While the topic is your subject, the thesis defines your position on that subject. Your essay will take a position and will provide convinc-

ing evidence to support that view. It is important to develop a working thesis early because it will help direct your thoughts and research.

Brainstorming

If you are having trouble developing a thesis, try brainstorming. You can brainstorm verbally with other people, or work alone, writing all your ideas on paper. The important thing about brainstorming is not to edit your thoughts. Write down everything which occurs to you about the topic, no matter how irrelevant or bizarre.

The next stage is to make connections between your ideas, and to group them into sub-topics, expanding those that you can explore in more detail. Then put the groups into some kind of logical order, discarding those that do turn out to be irrelevant or bizarre. In most cases you will find that you have the beginning of an essay — something that implies a basic point of view which can be explored further and refined into a fully developed argument

The statement of Thesis

Once you have discovered a thesis, sharpen it into a concise statement. The thesis statement usually appears in the introduction of your essay, and is best expressed in one sentence as a definition of your position, or the point you intend to prove in your essay. A good thesis statement will help organize your essay and give it direction; it is the central idea around which the rest of the essay is built.

Organise Thesis

Now that you have narrowed your topic and formulated a thesis, organizing your essay will help you determine how to write it. While a well-formulated, sharpened thesis will give your essay purpose and direction, careful structuring and organization will ensure that every part of your essay works to support and develop that thesis. If you devise some structure for your essay before you begin to search for supporting evidence, you will be able to conduct a more effective and directed search.

Here are some principles of organization

Chronological order

Paragraphs separate the process or series of events into major stages. A chronology explains by listing events in order; it is a particular kind of narrative, where the sequence of events

is important, and is carefully signalled:

Classification

Paragraphs divide the material into major categories and distinguish between them.

Increasing Importance

Paragraphs are arranged so that the most important point comes last, thus building the essay's strength.

Cause and effect

Indicates causal relationships between things and events. Be careful, however, not to mistake coincidence with causality, nor to disregard other possible causes. See the various pages that deal with logic.

Comparison and contrast

Involves lining up related ideas for a detailed account of similarities and differences. In this kind of essay it is important to decide whether you will be concentrating on similarities or differences. In general, the more similar things are, the more you concentrate on the differences, and vice versa. If you are comparing two works by the same author, or two love poems, for example, what will most interest you will be the differences between them.

These principles apply to both the greater structure of the essay and each individual idea.

THE ESSAY OUTLINE

Once you have determined your method or methods of development, put together a working outline. This plan can range from a brief sketch of main points to a detailed -by-point outline complete with paragraphs and topic sentences. The idea is to provide yourself with a rough map of where the essay will go, making a diagram of your thoughts to sharpen and define your purpose. At this point you can also give your essay a working title. The outline shows where to begin and breaks the assignment into manageable parts.

Introduction

An essay is an exploration of an idea which needs to be defined before it is developed. Because the material in an essay always relates to this central thesis, it is necessary for the writer to introduce that thesis and make the reader aware of its importance and relevance. The introduction is the place where the essay has to make a good impression. Informing the reader what is to come and encouraging him or her to read further

Body of Essay

Usually the easiest part of the essay to write is the part where you turn your notes into paragraphs to support your central theses according to the particular method of organization that you decided on when you were sketching it out.

If the introduction is an inverted triangle, the middle section

is a sequence of paragraphs that support your thesis, provide the information you promised in your introduction.

Conclusion

In the introduction you gave the reader an idea of what was to follow, trying to attract interest.

In the conclusion, you have the weight of the essay behind you, and you can state your case succinctly, knowing that the reader has all the information you have provided. What you say in your conclusion should match what you said when you introduced the essay; it should be a restatement (but not a mere repetition) of your thesis, really in a way that shows more fully and clearly what you have been arguing.

As the diagram above suggests, the triangle of the introduction is inverted in the conclusion.

Instead of narrowing, you expand. Begin by restating your thesis, retracing the steps of your argument.

By doing so you remind the reader of how the components of the essay fit together and strengthen their cumulative effect. Because this paragraph is a conclusion, you must be conclusive; that is, you must present your thesis in its final, most persuasive form.

Types of essay writing or various styles of writing?

The following are the types of essay writing :

1. Cause and Effect

The cause and effect essay explains the reasons of the event or interprets the consequences of the event.

In such type of essay, a situation is introduced, causes which give rise to a situation are explained and results are studied. Another way of starting such an essay is to describe some event and then analyze its consequences. e.g. What are the causes of earthquakes and what are the consequences.

For Example

Effects of Watching Too Much TV

Discoveries and invention of devices are always welcome till we, humans, find a way to abuse its benefits and be adversely affected by it. This was the case when Wilhelm Roentgen discovered x-ray and within five years, the British Army was using a mobile x-ray unit to locate bullets and shrapnel in wounded soldiers in the Sudan. TV was also invented with positive thoughts in mind - there would be no national borders, education and communication would be worldwide, etc. However, we are now trying to overcome its physiological and psychological adverse effects on human beings.

One of the physiological effects of watching TV in excessive amounts is eye-strain.

It is true that there are specifications for watching TV; TV