Qualities of a Good Essay â?? How to write a good essay for UPSC Exam?

Description

There is nobody who doesnâ??t write an essay, but there are very few who score well. Why? Because only few people can write a good essay. The question, here is â?? what is a good essay? I am going to tell you about the same, briefly. Briefly, because whatever has been told to you till now was somehow to clarify what an essay is. If you get to know what an essay is, then, you naturally get to know what a good essay is. After knowing about an essay whatever you write will be good. The problem with most of the people is that they write an essay, but they donâ??t know what it is.

I am going to talk about those main points, which were not discussed properly before this.

Topicâ??s compatibility

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the major problems which I have seen while checking the copies of the essay writers is that of disorientation. Student just reads the topic and starts writing. He has been taught to write the prelude first, so he starts writing the prelude. Then he gets too absorbed in it to remember the main topic. He gets disoriented. And when he remembers that the essay had to be written on the main topic, it is then, that he starts writing on it. After writing for a while on the topic, again he gets some phrase or word, that he starts describing, and again forgets the main topic. If I am not wrong, this happens with you too.

This is actually a psychological problem. This is not only while writing an essay, but, also while talking, while asking a question and even while answering a question. If you observe this, you will find that I am not wrong. For example, you are writing an essay or having a discussion on â??the current scenario of Indian politics. Maybe, you start the essay with â??our politics is in bad shape, it has been ruined by corruptionâ??. Now, you leave politics and start talking of corruption and you start talking of its causes, consequences and the â??solutions for eradicating it. While doing this, you say that â??right to information can help in stopping this practiceâ??. Now you start talking of the â??right to informationâ??. Then, all of a sudden, you remember that the topic was about politics. So, you try to link the â??right to informationâ?? with the politicians saying, â??the right to information can help in controlling the corrupt politicians. This continues for the rest of the essay, and you fail to do any justice to the main topic. Also, the structure of your essay gets deranged.

There is definitely freedom to write anything in the essay, but it is like the definition of freedom in political science that â??my freedom ends when it starts bothering another personâ??. You should know the difference between â??freedomâ?? and â??impertinenceâ??. This impertinence can be seen in an essay which makes it weaker. This also proves the point that the person writing it is not a mentally strong person. This also shows that the person doesnâ??t have much to write on the topic. Moreover, this further clarifies that the person is not a good communicator. If he is not all this, then, do you think he should be made an IAS?

Tight texture

To be very honest, essay is a procedure that tests how expressive you are more than it tests your studies and level of understanding. It is tested by checking how tight and organized the structure of your essay is. That means:

- How well organized the facts are. It shouldnâ??t be the case that all the points or facts. are scattered. It shouldnâ??t be that as and when you remembered the points, you wrote them.
- How clearly is the essay able to leave its impression on the mind of the reader?
- To what extent does it influence the reader? An essayâ??s structure should be like that of a pyramid. I am sure you must have seen a picture of it. Its base is broad while it starts narrowing towards the top. This is law of nature. Whichever structure is made using this law will be as firm and stable as pyramids. An essayâ??s structure is also like the following:
- First you introduce your point. Although it is like a prelude, but I would like to call it â??introductionâ??. It is strange to come straight to the point. It is similar to a situation where you invite somebody for lunch and as soon as he enters the house, you ask him, â??shall we serve lunchâ??? This is awkward. If you, at least, had asked â??how are you?â?? it would have been better.

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Now you can ask how long this introduction should be. I have already discussed the problem of being disoriented while writing a prelude. Introduction means to lay down a foundation of what you want to say. It is not mandatory to write a paragraph of ten lines for this. It can be of three rows and can even be of a sentence. This is based on how long you want your essay to be. In 2013 civil service exam, you were required to write an essay of maximum 2,500 words. In 2014, essay-writing was divided into two parts. Each part carried 4 essays, and you had to choose one from each. That means you had to write total two essays which had a word limit of 1000 to 1200 words. You can keep this in mind and give 5 percent of the total words to laying down the foundation of your essay. I feel that no more words should be given to the introduction. If you write an introduction of more than 100-200 words, then, it will prove the point that you donâ??t have much to write on the main topic.

- Introduction means foundation. You have laid the foundation of your topic; now, you need to build a structure on it. You should explain everything in detail, as expected, in the structure, but you should remember that every point should be linked to the main topic, and you shouldnâ??t digress from it. You should always be careful while writing and ensure that you arenâ??t digressing from the topic. It is a psychological disease which tends to continue very cleverly.

Also ensure that you donâ??t give multiple examples or stories to explain a single point. If you do this, then, that is wrong as the car is moving but not going ahead. You end up repeating yourself which can spoil the structure. The examiner will realize that you donâ??t have any new point to say and that you are just stretching the same point. This is similar to â??talking nonsenseâ?? which I consider the biggest weakness in an essay. You should use the freedom but not to an extent that you end up forgetting the topic.

And this habit of taking freedom and giving unnecessary details will not be of any use once you have established your point and drawn the interest of the reader. Now that has been done, now you have made the reader curious enough, so, you donâ??t need to use this strategy anymore. You should, now, start putting your facts forward.

- The essay has started moving ahead and has started becoming narrower and sharper. You have started proving your points with examples and other aids. By doing this the essay automatically

becomes sharper and tight.
- The last part of the essay would be that of your conclusion. Whatever you want to prove, will come in the last part. Though, it is not necessary to finish the conclusion in a paragraph, it totally depends on the conclusion that how many paragraphs it needs. It is advised to have the number of paragraphs according to the number of conclusions. However, looking at the total structure, it is suggested not to have a long conclusion.

This way the essayâ??s structure is tight and well organized which is considered good.

The balance of logic and emotion

some essays are logic driven like, science, technology and economics related. While some are emotion driven, like life philosophy, culture and society related. It is important to note here that any essay can be either logic driven or emotion driven but it cannot be entirely based on logic or emotion. By â??primacyâ??, I mean to say neither of the above is in abundance. That doesnâ??t mean that it will only have either of these. Hence, another biggest challenge while writing an essay is that of maintaining the balance between logic and emotion. Another challenge is how well you can present logic emotionally and an emotion logically in your essay. Letâ??s know how to do this:

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- Suppose you have to write an essay on â??the contribution of science and technology in the development of the nationâ??. According to logic, you should talk about those inventions which have helped in the development of the nation. However, according to emotion, the inventions should be presented in a way that it doesnâ??t appear to be dry science. Itâ??s clear that while talking of science in relation to nationâ??s development, you will not only talk of the monetary and security related development, but also those related to life. As soon as you start talking of life, the emotional factor will automatically be included in it.
- The same point is used to include logic while talking emotionally. You should remember that emotion has its own meaning. It has its own science. It is definitely not something which shouldnâ??t be believed. It is not useless, and it has its own science called â??psychologyâ??. It has its own discipline called philosophy. If you remove emotions from the society, then, it will be nothing but a group of animals. It is obvious if you include psychology, philosophy, the scientific sociological point, then you are able to successfully instil logic.in emotions.
- The main point is that you shouldnâ??t talk so logically while writing an essay that you seem to be a lawyer, and you shouldnâ??t be over emotional like a saint who just advocates blind faith and gives baseless hopes. Both of these should be intertwined in a way similar to that of a woman who sews a beautiful sweater using two different colours of threads or wool.

Juiciness

I have intentionally used the word â??juicinessâ?? here. An essay is actually a mode which should be enjoyable to the reader. And how you can enjoy a thing unless it has some juice in it. I talked of understanding before this. But, now I am talking of enjoyment. Theseare actually not contradictory either. Till the time we donâ??t understand a joke, no matter how good it is, we cannot enjoy ourselves. As soon as it is understood by whosoever, it is enjoyed. I cannot enjoy either the classical music or classical singing. In spite of this I have seen many people closing their eyes and enjoying classical music in Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal. Since they understand it, they enjoy it. I cannot understand so I am

left. Hence.understanding is the first ofthe most important â??must be elements that makes a thing enjoyable.

However, this is not everything. Simplicity is definitely the key to understand something. That is why it is suggested that you shouldnâ??t be like an expert while writing an essay. IÂ· you mention some heavy facts, or you gather a crowd of irrelevant figures from here and there, and if you use heavy and difficult words or long sentences of English or Hindi, the then simplicity of the essay will not be there. That is why the following things are said:

- An essay should be directed to common people. Its language should be simple and easy to comprehend.
- You should not write words that are not so common or taken from Sanskrit.
- Use of only one language should not be focused on. It is definitely not a problem if you use few words from other languages like Urdu, English while writing an essay in Hindi. However, this is important that they come naturally and not forcefully. These words should also be the popular ones which other people are aware of. This definitely polishes your language and also improves the way of saying something.
- You should avoid making complex sentences. They should not be puzzling to the minds of the readers.
- The purity and use of correct language is very important as far as making your essay enjoyable is concerned. If you write wrong Hindi or English, then, it has a very bad impression on the examiner. As soon as he notices a spelling mistake, the whole impression is spoilt. That is why you shouldnâ??t take writing mistakes lightly. It is not only important for the essay paper, but, also for other papers. You can create that juiciness and enjoyment in your essay if you work hard on your language and use it correctly. I would like to advise you (if you are from Hindi medium) something. There is a book of mine, â??correct Hindi, beautiful Hindiâ??. It is also published from the same publisher as that of the book you are reading at the moment. I feel you should read that book as it will help you a lot in the following manner.

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First, your Hindi will become more pure and more correct. It is quite possible that you are used to writing few words and sentences which seem to be right to you, but are actually incorrect. This happens with everyone. However, you can very easily correct such mistakes.

Secondly, you will learn how to make your language adorable. This will help you not only while writing an essay, but, also throughout your life. You can become a great communicator with this.

Thirdly, use of correct and good Hindi will help you in other papers of IAS too as this is the only medium with you to present your opinions and thoughts in front of the examiner. Even the best of thoughts fails without a good language. On the other hand, even if your thoughts or views are not that strong, they can be made more influential by using an effective language. I donâ??t feel the need to say that you speak during an interview and not write. And while speaking, two things are necessary- your voice and a good command on the language.

An essayâ??s juiciness not only depends on the comprehensibility of the language, but also on the way you have chosen to put forward your point and the way you have structured it to get that flow in it. It can be called as a meadow river. A meadow river is a river which flows smoothly without any obstacle maintaining a steady pace. There is another kind of rivers that we know as mountain rivers whose water get obstructed by rocks. You have to make your essay a meadow river that flows without any obstacle

maintaining a steady pace. The question is how will you do it? I will give you few tips:

- You get stuck in those topics which you donâ??t know very well. So, you should write only on those topics about which you know very well to avoid having a flow less essay.
- You also get disoriented at a point where you donâ??t have enough points, but you have to write to reach closer to the word limit. Hence, you should be careful while writing anything.
- You must practice writing an essay. You must look at a house which is being constructed. You will observe that the floor is repeatedly cleaned to get that shine and smoothness. â??Practice to write an essayâ?? is also like this grinding process. The more you practice, the more flow there will be in your writing.
- You shouldnâ??t just write and forget about that essay. Rather you should analyse it. You should read every essay a number of times and try to make it better.
- You should see which difficult words can be replaced and which words can be used in a better way in the essay.
- The difficult sentences can be rephrased to make the essay longer or shorter.
- You should also look at the chronology of your points. If they are not in an order, you should rearrange the paragraphs.
- You must have left few points while writing. So, now, you should include the left-out points too.
- After doing all this, you should write the whole essay again and compare it with the first one to see which one is better. I am not giving you any answer here; you have to find that on your own.

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Although, I have told you all this, I know this will not benefit you much. This is not because whatever I have told you is not beneficial. You will be benefitted by this only. But the problem is that nobody does it. I have had a bad experience in this that people ask, listen and even assure that they will doit. Sadly, they donâ??t. Either they find it meaningless, or they escape with an excuse of not having enough time to do this. They protect their inertia and laziness with this meaningless excuse. In such a case, nobody can help, not even God. I am telling you this because I know you will also undergo with such a situation. So, I am alerting you in advance.