

WAT / ESSAY WRITING

The objective of the session is to provide students with inputs on essays

- Effective content
- Structure of an essay, and
- Effective expression.

During the process of WAT you may be presented with essay tasks to be carried out in periods ranging from 10 to 30 minutes, and essays could therefore range from 300 to 700 words (1 side to 2 sides of an A4 sheet).

A few elements of communication have relevance here, namely, clarity of thought, empathy, and effective expression. You need to also remember that a step-by-step method, with a check list, would ensure efficient use of time spent on an essay. For the same you may follow steps, in the form of a check list, such as represented by the acronym CODER.

- C- Collect ideas
- O – Organise them
- D – Develop them
- E – Express them
- R – Review

Let's understand each of them in detail –

C – Collect Ideas

Content – the topic itself – What are the key words? What is it about? What information does one have? How does one gather further information? What ideas or views does one have (or what views does one develop) on the basis of this information?

When we plan to create content we may put to use various techniques. One of the popular techniques for content creation is SPELT i.e. looking at the SOCIAL/ POLITICAL/ ECONOMIC/ LEGAL/ TECHNOLOGICAL aspects or elements of the topic in question. This technique comes pretty handy when you wish to explore various elements that cannot be recalled at the last moment. You may also consider techniques like the VIEWPOINT OF AFFECTED PARTIES wherein you consider the various stakeholders to the issue in question and the positive or negative impacts that the issue would have upon them. You may also utilize the KEYWORD APPROACH for the same. This approach can be used for framing the introduction and laying the foundation for the initial part of the essay.

O – Organise them

Organisation of ideas - Put random thoughts and ideas into coherent groups. What would be the purpose or theme of the essay? What would be the appropriate ideas to start with (or to use for introductory statements)? What are the further ideas that one could continue with, and what would these ideas lead to? What ideas would be the right ones to end with?

Effective notes and careful thought on these aspects would help the students put together properly organised content.

D – Develop them

Explanation and elaboration – What sort of readership is the essay intended for

(education, age, gender, knowledge of the topic, attitude to the topic)? What sort of information would hold their attention best? What sort of examples would they relate to? What pieces of information, what sort of explanation, and/or what examples, would support the ideas, the theme and the purpose? How long should the essay be? In an essay intended to be informative only – the writer should be careful about the selection of content to ensure that it is significant and relevant to the topic. Facts and examples used should be of interest, but should not seem out of place.

- In an essay intended to explain – the writer should have explanations that are clear and concise.
- In an essay intended to express an opinion – the writer should sequence the ideas and viewpoints, with supporting information and examples, in a manner that leads to the overall opinion that the essay seeks to provide.
- In an essay intended to analyse – the writer should present ideas and information with respect to different aspects of the topic, so as to point to the relative strengths (or weaknesses) of these aspects. The essay should be one that brings out questions on the topic and finds, or seeks to find, answers.

E - Express them

Structure of an essay – A typical essay would start with an introduction, using statements and information of general

nature that provide some background to the topic and point to the nature of the specific ideas that follow. The body of the essay would contain the specific ideas, presented in a clear and coherent manner. Each broad idea or idea set would form a paragraph. The flow or sequence of paragraphs would lead to the conclusion which would sum up the purpose of the presentation.

Effective expression – requires logical coherence and flow (as already discussed). Also requires effective use of language. The writer must stay with sentence structure, vocabulary and idiom that he/she is familiar with. Individual sentences should not include more than one idea. This way, the writer has better control over grammatical construction, punctuation, etc. This works even for a complex idea set, where continuity and flow can be established through the use of simple and appropriate connectives and sentence starters (also called Discourse Markers – dealt with below, so that some input can be provided to students).

R – Review

The writer must devote the last few minutes to reading through the essay to satisfy himself/herself that there is logical flow and coherence, and that the language is error free. Correction, replacement or repositioning, if any, should be carried out in a manner that ensures that the flow remains or is improved.

Of the steps outlined above, you should devote about 30% of the given time to steps C, O and D, about 60% to the

actual writing, i.e. E, and about 10% to R.

Some Discourse Markers that can be used:

- *Introduction of a viewpoint* – It is my opinion that..., My own view is....., As I see it....., I believe....., and so on.
- *Structuring or classifying* – To begin with....., First of all....., For one thing....., and so on.
- *Adding* – Further..., Moreover....., Likewise....., In addition....., Besides....., Equally....., Another point to be....., Apart from this....., and so on.
- *Giving examples* – For example,..., For instance....., A good example of this....., An appropriate

illustration of this....., and so on.

- *Generalising* – On the whole....., In general....., Broadly speaking....., In most cases....., To a large extent....., and so on.
- *Giving details/making things clear* – In fact....., This is clear from....., This can be seen from....., Considering this in greater detail....., and so on.
- *Analysing a point* – What this means is....., In other words....., Translated into real terms....., and so on.
- *Concluding* – In conclusion....., To sum up....., In short....., and so on.

EXAMPLE ESSAYS

Economic growth without environmental damage - a mirage or a reality

Initial Lines can start with: Economic Growth with environment sustainability is a burning issue as we are scaling new heights in technological progress while affecting environment's delicate balance. At present the world economy is booming & the environmental pollution has reached the tipping point. Here the candidates may use the KEY WORD APPROACH and state: Let us first understand what is economic growth and how is it measured

- Economic growth is the increase in value of the goods and services produced by an economy.
- is conventionally measured as the present rate of increase in real gross domestic product, or GDP

Now, talking of environmental pollution the students should lay down the kinds of pollution he is referring to i.e. Sound, air, water and soil. This will help the group to discuss every part one by one avoiding chaos.

Repercussions of economic growth can be discussed in the following views

Different for different economies

- Leads to industrialization in some economies
- Leads to increase in services in others
- Leads to overall increase in consumerism
- Leads to reduction of poverty

Here it can be discussed that how some fallouts of economic growth lead to environmental damage, the others do not : There is a tendency to overlook the effects of economic growth which do not induce environmental damage. Nature has been badly wounded by our selfish & eccentric motives. We have been building skyscrapers, infrastructures, industries leading to deforestation & pollution. As a consequence our existence has been endangered due to global warming, frequent natural calamities like volcanoes, earthquakes, Tsunami etc. Apparently Economic growth without environmental damage is a mirage.

Further it can be discussed that how there are different green measures that can offset the harmful effects of industrialization which are not taken into consideration while making this generalization.

Ways to implement sustainable development – turning the mirage to reality: It's not the case that we have to return to the stone age to save the nature, just we need to tweak our demeanor towards nature. Our attitude has itself created the illusion that economic growth & environmental conservation can't go hand on hand. At present there are many alternative eco-friendly solutions. Although a transition is difficult thing to execute, we have to choose it for a better future. We must switch to renewable sources of energy in order to decrease the use of fossil fuels. Mostly developed nations have contributed to the wide spread

pollution, so we need to reach a worldwide settlement regarding environment protection. Some nations, communities & corporates have begun using eco-friendly alternatives. Green technology can change our polluted habitat to a healthier environment. There has been much eco-friendly innovation which can bring positive changes in our life, nature & other living beings. It's the time to embrace eco-friendly ways of economic growth & progress. Economic growth & environment conservation are both in our hands. Our earth may support 6 billion people on bicycles but it can't support 6 billion people on SUVs. Ultimately we have to make the choice about what type of future do we want to pass on to our coming generation.

- policy and regulations – government intervention in industry
- awareness among and involvement of ordinary citizens – people power
- renewable and alternative energy resources – hydel, biogas etc
- technological advances – reduced automobile emissions
- advanced agricultural practices – crop cycling, bio-fertiliser etc
- Economic growth without environmental damage – no longer a distant mirage but gradually becoming real

Conclusion: Economic growth without environmental damage can be achieved if we look at issue with a broad mind. It's not hard to construe that our economic growth is worthless if our

existence is itself questioned due to devastation of our natural inhabitant.

The true measure of national development would be the reduction in economic disparities, not the growth in national income.

The term 'economic disparity' would literally translate to the differences in incomes and wealth between different economic strata in society. In any economy therefore, disparities are bound to exist, since levels of skills, contribution, ownership and wealth do vary. This is as true of fully developed economies as it is of developing and underdeveloped ones. In India, however, we use the term very specifically, to point to the yawning gap that exists between the rich and the poor. We acknowledge, with occasional embarrassment, (and opposition parties with ostensible anguish), the fact that, even 6 decades after independence, this gross disparity still exists. To us, it is a reminder that we have not yet been able to eradicate poverty – the state in which more than a third of our population exists, without the minimum in food, clothing, shelter and dignity.

There is no doubt that, as the economy develops, various economic determiners will show increase at the national (or gross) levels – investments, assets, production, incomes, and so on. This, in turn will progress to growth in national wealth to a point where, as a nation we are as well off or 'developed' as any other. However, it must be remembered that a nation is but a sum of the different strata of the society within it, just as a body is the sum of its parts. Looked at in

this manner, it can be understood that only when all the parts have the minimum required development (or 'health'), that the whole can be considered developed or healthy.

At first sight, it would seem as if there's a difficult choice to be made – that investing in economic growth would mean the inability to devote national effort and finances towards lifting the poor out of their morass. However, when we take a broader view, we understand that it is through the first that the second objective can be achieved – while the benefits of economic growth must first fuel further economic growth and then be shared by all economic strata, the greater share must find its way to those at the very bottom of the pyramid, the economically disadvantaged, till we achieve the banishment of poverty. This seems altruistic, and may be so. However, it makes good economic sense too. Those lifted out of poverty would be freed from the need to devote every moment to sheer existence and subsistence, and would therefore be able to make positive contributions to social and economic productivity, to economic growth. The two objectives, economic growth and poverty alleviation are therefore related and should be targeted together, for national development.

Clearly, then, it is only when we have eradicated poverty, that we should consider ourselves developed in the true sense. This is why sociologists, and an increasing number of economists, are of the view that true development is reflected not in cold economic indices such as GDP, GNP or GNI, but in the HDI

(Human Development Index) which takes into account 3 critical 'human' parameters – life expectancy (that reflects nutrition and health), literacy (that reflects employability) and standard of living (that reflects dignity).

Profit is a bad word in business

The Candidate here can start on a note like: I read George Cloutier's 'Profits Aren't Everything, They're the Only Thing', and it got me thinking about how I usually address profit in business.

Aren't we in business to make a profit? By keeping profit in the forefront of my mind, is definitely helping me decide what I should do first second and third. Think about this in the context of a typical day. Whenever I have a productivity discussion, I would always keep in mind what are the ways I can adopt and ensure the maximum returns for myself and my stake holders. This explains that profit is definitely an inevitable part of the business.

The topic in question here, if directly interpreted, might sound a bit vague and impractical but let's look at it from a different perspective. Is it appropriate to 'talk' Profit in business and also that should it be talked about at every point of time. Looking into the activities every time and searching for profits would be like opening the refrigerator and standing in front of it every half hour. Nothing much has changed. The stuff that was in it half an hour ago IS STILL THERE.

Here the students should discuss various aspects of business like marketing, finance, human resource and

allied activities. The focus here should be to identify the core reasons of the existence of these departments/activities and how this would ultimately be driven by the idea of generating profits. Here, simply consider everything you set out to do in the context of how profitable is the activity to your life and how doing that is going to help you towards your goals.

