

ESSAY WRITING TIPS FOR STUDENTS

(Please take a print out and ask students to take photocopy and distribute)

Time Limit and Utilization

1. Total time allocated is 30 minutes
2. Distribute your preparation and writing time appropriately
 - 1 min: Reading the topic
 - 2 mins: Making notes and writing down ideas on a paper
 - 25 mins: Write the essay
 - 2 mins: Review and correct errors

Word Count

1. Minimum word count should be 300
2. Essay written below 300 words will be disqualified

Punctuation

1. Please ensure you use correct punctuations
2. Use space after Comma and Full-stop
3. Use appropriate apostrophes
4. Punctuation errors would lead to reduction in overall score

Capitalization

1. Please ensure you use appropriate capitalization
2. First letter of a word after a full-stop should be capital letter
3. Any noun should start with capital letter
4. First person i.e. 'I' should be mentioned in capital letter
5. Any keyword should start with capital letter
6. Capitalization errors would lead to reduction in overall score

Structure

1. Write the first paragraph as Introduction paragraph
2. Write the second paragraph as main content
3. Write the third paragraph as conclusion
4. Structure inconsistency may lead to reduction in overall score

Grammar and Spelling

1. Write grammatically consistent sentence
2. Maintain proper Tense, Verb, Singular and Plural forms
3. Do not make spelling mistakes
4. Beware of confusing words like LOSE vs LOOSE, THEIR vs THERE, ADVICE vs ADVISE, CONFIRM vs CONFORM, EFFECT vs AFFECT
5. Grammar and Spelling errors would lead to reduction in overall score

(Please take a print out and ask students to take photocopy and distribute)
(Sample Essay for most of the topics mentioned in further pages)

SAMPLE TOPICS

1. English language proficiency is important for getting a job? Agree or Disagree.
2. Advantages and disadvantages of Facebook and WhatsApp.
3. Online shopping versus Offline shopping
4. Should smoking be banned in public areas?
5. Importance of Technologies in educational institutions
6. Effect of Social Media on Political issues.
7. Is Vegetarian a better alternative for healthy living
8. Transformation of Higher Education into e-education
9. Should there be a minimum age criteria of 21 years for alcohol consumption
10. Academic scores are important for success. Agree or disagree
11. Sports is helpful for building great character. Agree or disagree
12. Education is the most powerful weapon
13. Health or wealth
14. Role of social media in society
15. Hardwork vs Talent. What is the success factor
16. Is Attendance is necessary for college??
17. Should we replace textbooks with laptops..?
18. Competition is a reason for success. Agree or disagree OR Success needs competition or not.
19. Should there be a minimum education qualification to contest elections in India

English language proficiency is important for getting a job?

Agree or Disagree

Communication in any professional environment is as critical as domain skills. At every stage of a person's job, a good communication skill is not only essential but also critical. India is certainly largest workforce in the world today. The availability of qualified and skilled resources is the highest in the world. A major portion of the industries in India cater to international market apart from it's clients base in India itself. English is globally accepted universal language which is widely spoken across all the continents. Considering this reality, there cannot be a doubt if English proficiency is important for a job or not.

Eversince India became the global hub for IT and BPO industry, organisations from across the world have chosen the young educated and skilled workforce in India as the preferred choice for outsourcing their work. From activities like Customer Service to programming and coding, the availability of resources in India has been the biggest advantage for the corporates. However, the standard of the demand has been evolving over the time and hence the competition too has become tough among the young graduates. Today, most of the companies have their majority clients located in USA, Canada, Europe, Australia etc. Apart from strong domain knowledge and skills, its crucial to have the proficiency in English language as the only language for communication. In any organisation, communication happens within the team as well as with clients and customers. The medium could be Phone Calls, Emails and Chats. If a person is really good with his domain skills, programming and coding ability, that is not enough. He or she should also be effective in communicating with others to convey a message without any scope for misinterpretation or misunderstanding. If an employee is excellent with their work skills but fail to communicate effectively, the efforts become redundant.

Communication is not mere exchanging information. It's the ability to articulate and comprehend. In other words, it is the effective manner of speaking and understanding. In this era of high competition a person has to be proficient in English language to be truly called a Global person working in a multi-national company.

Advantages/Disadvantages of Facebook and WhatsApp

The world has changed over last 2 decades. Earlier one could communicate with someone who is physically around. Or someone far away could not be contacted through hand written letters. Then telephones came where we could speak to anyone at a far off distance. However, the internet changed the whole behaviour of communication. Today a person can not only communicate with another person living in a different part of the world but they can also find and search a person from the past. That's the power of social networking sites like Facebook. Secondly, communicating with someone without spending money for every message is always a welcome factor. That's how WhatsApp has made a huge impact.

Both Facebook and WhatsApp has transformed the way we connect with people in general. Though both are quite different from each other, the benefits or advantage is not too different. The biggest advantage is ability to connect with someone regardless the physical distance. If one thinks about a social network, first and only tool that comes to our mind is Facebook. It not only allows a user to communicate with someone but also build a network. Many of us have found our childhood friends on Facebook with whom we were not in touch for so many years. Secondly, it allows us to share our thoughts and moments. We can share pictures which brings sweet memories back to life. More importantly, Facebook is the best marketing tool for any product or service company. When we think about WhatsApp, the biggest advantage is the user need not spend money for every message. Secondly, one can communicate with a group of people at the same time without having to send the same message to multiple people. And the biggest advantage is the user can send files and pictures without spending extra money.

However, the biggest disadvantage of Facebook is absence of privacy. The personal information is out in open where anyone can use the posted pictures and use it for wrong or unethical activities. WhatsApp on the other hand has big risk of exposure of personal data. A person can also hack a smartphone through a malware sent on WhatsApp message. And ofcourse, the more we get involved in Facebook and WhatsApp, we fail to communicate with people who are right in front of us.

Like every invention, even a tool like Facebook and WhatsApp has advantage and disadvantage. The responsibility lies with the user how they want to use it. The users have to be careful to take the benefit of these 2 tools and not lose out to the disadvantages.

Online shopping versus Offline shopping

The progress in technology has made an impact in all aspects of human life. One of the biggest influences is internet and the utility of it. Especially in consumer behaviour, internet has played a major role of transformation. When it comes to shopping, we can see the change clearly. Earlier, one had to travel to the shop to buy what they needed. Sometimes, they would not find the product of their choice and come back empty handed. One solution was to travel to another shop. And if it's a far off location, the buyer would prefer not to buy. This particular behaviour has changed due to the online shopping.

Today a major portion of consumer purchases happens over online transactions. From grocery to clothes and memory cards to televisions, a person can sit at home and not only buy a product but can also look for the best deal and discount. With so many online retailers offering not just discounts but also lucrative offers like free delivery, free gift etc. a buyer has more reasons to choose online shopping over offline shopping. Secondly, flexibility of product return and refund apart from festive discounts has given more freedom and power to a buyer. However, there are some crucial factors which offline shopping has which can never be substituted. First one is the ability to touch and feel the product. As a buyer, when one spends hard earned money, they want to ensure they get the best for the money spent. An offline shopping gives this freedom and scope to a buyer. Secondly, what we see on internet or shopping site is not always true. For example, a product may look great with amazing specs and features when we read it on the website. But when we get the product, it turns out to be of inferior quality. Most often we have seen cases where a faulty product gets delivered or sometimes a fake product gets delivered. These kind of issues does not exist in offline shopping.

Today in the era of internet, the connection between humans have moved to internet completely. We don't meet people anymore, we send message on whatsapp. We need to bring back the human connect. That's the bigger advantage of offline shopping and it should always remain so.

Should smoking be banned in public areas?

Smoking is undoubtedly one of the most common habits among the people worldwide which is also the biggest reason for various cancer. Every year 2 million people die around the world because of smoking related ailments. We all know the perils of smoking and the World Health Organisation has repeatedly created various awareness programs to curb smoking. However, what is another cause of worry is passive smoking. So those who don't directly indulge in smoking too are exposed to the health risk

Smoking in public in any form has to be strictly prohibited and monitored. Various countries around the world has strict laws to prohibit public smoking. Country like Bhutan has blanket ban on sale of tobacco products. Singapore has very strict laws about sale and consumption of smoking products. The problem lies with the general attitude of people in countries like India. The smokers don't care much for their own health and that's why they indulge in this addiction. What they fail to understand is they are subjecting innocent people around them to serious health hazards. Elderly people, women and children are especially prone to the evils of smoking. Banning smoking in public places should be a universal rule across all the countries. And what is important is that the punishment should be severe. One can make stringent laws but following the law is another hurdle. In India smoking is banned in public places. But we do see people indulging in smoking in open areas, bus stops, railway stations, restaurants etc. The role of general public is very crucial to ensure the ban is followed. Health is wealth as we all know and surely cannot let it effect because of irresponsible people.

Smoking in public not only causes discomfort but also leads to serious health issues for even those people who don't smoke. Hence, there should be a complete ban.

Importance of Technologies in educational institutions

Technology today has simplified our lives in general. Education system in India has evolved over the last 10-20 years and the kind of knowledge one gains in school and college has the blend of our history and our future. Technology is an integral part of our future and our educational institutions should adopt this change.

In the past, everything in an educational institution was manual and mechanical. But when the system wants to produce bright minds and build a better future, it has to adopt technology apart from imparting knowledge about technology. Something as simple as attendance system can be automated in a school. Or something as complex as analysing a student's mind set can be tracked through technology. When an educational institution adopts technology, it is creating the right platform and foundation for the students. School and colleges of today's era wants to compete with the global standards. Technology can bridge the gap between the available information and what we wish to know. For example, a school in a remote village in Andhra Pradesh can make use of technology by getting access to internet and watch training programs on YouTube. Sometimes it becomes difficult for a good teacher or a trainer to travel to every corner of the state. Technology can bring the access to information closer to the students. Another example can be attending seminars. Students from various part of the state cannot travel outside India to participate in seminars and conferences. But they can attend it through Video Conference.

Technology certainly has the capability to transform the system and learning process of a student. And every institution should create the right infrastructure to adopt it. The government can provide various facilities and funds to enable the institution get the required benefits. A better system in school or college will result in bright mind and better students for the country who will build the future of the state and the country.

Effect of Social Media on Political issues

Social media has changed the picture of how news reaches people in general. Today Social Media's reach is way higher than the usual media like news channels, radio or newspaper. The impact of social media has both positive and negative results. Like any other important issues in a country, even political issues have seen big impact because of social media.

Let's take the example of Lokpal Bill when Anna Hazare went on hunger strike in New Delhi. There were more than 1 lakh people who participated along with Anna Hazare. Getting the support of so many people could not be possible without the smart use of social media. The support of common people not only on New Delhi but also around the country made the government and politicians listen to the public and agree to their demands. That is the effect of Social Media. Like this there can be various examples where common people are aware of what is happening around the country and the world. Politicians can no longer fool the people. That is because the people of the country very well know about the real truth no matter how much its hidden. Social media has made news travel faster than what it used to be. If something bad happens in a small town, it takes less than an hour for the whole country to know. One doesn't need TV channels and press reporters to carry a news. It has changed. But the social media has also resulted in wrong information creating problems in the society. Most of the videos or posts are sometimes fake and there is no way to find out the real truth.

As much as the social media has created the right impact, the awareness of people in general has gone up which has made the politicians more careful and watch themselves. We need to use the force in the right way to get solution before its misused.

Is Vegetarian a better alternative for healthy living?

Healthy living is not an option, it's a need which most of the people have considered a choice. Being healthy cannot be a choice, it has to be the way of life. There is a long running debate about what contributes to healthy living. It's a combination of various factors with the major aspect being what we eat. Historically, mankind has divided food into 2 primary categories: Vegetarian and non-vegetarian. Vegetarian food is primarily dependent on resource availability whereas non-vegetarian was primarily based on hunting ability. As we moved ahead in time, the choices became directed towards religion, race and culture.

Today, across the world, we can see the rise and growth of 'Organic' food. Organic food basically focusses on production and processing of vegetarian food using natural means. Non-vegetarian food today contributes to massive economic growth and employment but it has made a serious impact on our health. We have seen scores of instances of animal-borne diseases which got passed over to humans when they consumed animal products. For example, Bird Flu, Foot & Mouth Diseases, Zika etc. has made serious damage to the health of the people in general. When we compare this to Vegetarian food, the risk is not just low but barely existing. Vegetarianism not only contributes to the will-full destruction of animal lives for food, but also majorly contributes to healthy living. Various researches have shown the change the human body goes through when it shifts from meat consumption to vegetable consumption. Vegetarianism is not just an alternative; it should be the preferred choice of people in general. More than the exposure to deadly diseases, vegetarianism advocates love and compassion for every living organism on our planet.

Vegetarianism certainly makes a person healthy as the food is a gift of nature and the organic character of the food adds to the nutrients a person always needs.

Transformation of Higher Education into e-education

Education system in general has evolved over the decades. The key trigger for this evolution is the need for it and the demand for the same. The global curriculum focusses on the changing demography of the world where every country emphasises on their own culture and heritage. However, one hurdle that creates issues is the traditional method which has been the method for many decades. Today, the race of knowledge is against the time and keeping pace with the world. The transformation takes a better shape when education system adopts technology and blends e-education into the system.

e-education system has the capability of bringing strong and dynamic process into education system especially higher education. Higher education needs to focus on innovation and global knowledge which can be possible only through e-education. For example, a business school in small town in India having students with good skills and capability aspire to get jobs in some of the best companies in the world. In a conventional or traditional system, the students' knowledge access will be limited to the books and their physical library. However, adoption of e-education platform will broaden their access to an ocean of information. Some of the best institutions have dedicated platform of e-education which has made a huge impact on the standard of knowledge and education. E-education provides the much important flexibility and strong platform for students to gain knowledge and the management to have effective control and functions. Infrastructure like e-learning labs helps the student get access to huge resources and communicate with experts and peers from across the globe. Facilities of e-learning enables the student improve their skills and capabilities by getting access to state of the art technology. Assignments, projects, reports, alumni support etc. gets a complete overhaul and provides a robust platform for the students.

e-education has the power of transformation that our education system needs today in order to compete with the dynamic and competitive world.

Should 21 years be the minimum age to consume alcohol?

Alcohol consumption around the world is related to social and cultural roots. Alcohol traditionally was fruit extracts consumed for revelry purposes by ancient tribe. However, the social changes in the society and cultural impacts changed the behaviour. Today alcohol consumption is attributed to not just social purpose. It has become a reason for serious addiction around the world. There has been many cases of alcohol consumption resulting in serious evils in the society, breakdown of family etc. Considering all these aspects, like any other social habits, alcohol consumption also has good and bad effects. There is a saying which says 'Great power brings great responsibility'. And age brings the maturity to understand the responsibility.

A person below 21 years of age is not considered physically ready and matured and hence deemed vulnerable. People below that age do not have a strong wisdom to judge and much depends on guidance and hand holding. A person below the age of 21 can easily be swayed to something which will not have positive impact. Allowing alcohol consumption for a person below the age of 21 should be completely prohibited without any exceptions. The problem with laws like prohibition is the lack of tracking and monitoring. Regardless of the issue, a person below 21 years of age certainly should not be allowed to consume alcohol even with parental guidance. We have seen many cases of young people driving cars under the influence of alcohol and causing fatal accidents. There should be a minimum age for indulgence and the right age is 21 years especially when it comes to alcohol consumption.

We as a society have a social responsibility towards our people and safeguarding them should be our prime motive. Once a person crosses 21, he or she is independent to take their own decisions. However, till that age it's our moral responsibility to curb any kind of abuse.

Should there be a minimum education qualification to contest elections in India

Political Career has traditionally been a social service and platform. However, it has turned into a full time career. Especially in a country like India where 1.2 billion people rely on policies made by legislatures and parliamentarians, the decisions made by few hundred people decides the course of the country. Considering the aspirations and strengths of the nation, it becomes crucial that we have the right to pick the smart minds than mere people who have mass support.

Politicians have been given the job of taking care of the country and serving the people of the country. A basic education ensures there is a threshold of the kind of people we elect. However, the fact is far from the ideal scenario. Today, we have politicians deciding the future of the country who themselves are not educated enough. For example, a health minister who makes policies about basic healthcare as well as complex infrastructure needs to know the intricacies of medical systems. We cannot have a junior school level person sitting as a minister in a conference who cannot differentiate a CT scanner with an MRI. We as the people of the country have every right to choose educated and intellectually strong politicians. But the problem arises when such people do not exist. People are forced to pick politicians whose past and reputation is questionable. As a progressive nation, we should make it mandatory to have politicians hold basic education apart from an impressive track record of public service. When we have a highly educated minister, it helps the nation go forward through strong policies and framework.

The opinion needs to change to a decisive policy which makes it mandatory for a person to be atleast a graduate in order to lead a country and make decisions which has impact on every citizen of the nation.