

Discuss on the following topics. Use argument and persuasion to make your points clear.

1. Lack of education has contributed to the growing abuse of human rights.
2. All citizens should be required by law to vote.
3. Indians should have more holidays and longer vacations.
4. Participating in team sports helps to develop good character.
5. People are slaves to technology.

 Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2I6N5tsKhc>  
for a lesson on writing argumentative essays

7:34
7:34/13.45



## 7.8 ESSAY WRITING

The word essay derives from the French infinitive essayist, “to try” or “to attempt”. An essay is a piece of writing that discusses, describes and analyses 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 subjects that can be substituted with the “he”, “she”, “it” or “they” pronouns.

### 7.8.1 Purpose of Writing an Essay

An essay can have many purposes, but the basic structure is the same no matter what. You may be writing an essay to argue for a particular point of view or to explain the steps necessary to complete a task. Unlike other types of writing, writing an essay has very little professional purpose and value. An engineer is required to write reports, proposals, letters and descriptive notes, but never is he asked to write essays in his profession. However, a question on essay writing features in any university or competitive examination. The students generally attempt it with no seriousness, as many of them feel that they will not be able to do justice to it. They are not familiar with the art of writing an essay. The main purpose of an essay writing is to assess the ideas and information you possess and your ability to compose a text yourself which actually reflects your English proficiency.

### 7.8.2 Importance of Writing an Essay

In the process of essay writing, the student has to gather/collect some ideas associated with the topic, analyse them, reject the irrelevant ideas and choose the relevant ones. The process acts as a health tonic to the powers of the mind of the student. His/her intelligence grows keener, reason sharper and imagination livelier. Emphasising the necessity of writing, Bacon says that writing makes a man exact, which means that it gives clarity of the mind and consistency to thoughts. The importance of essay writing, therefore, mainly consists of testing the students' ability to present their thoughts in an organised way and their intellectual capability. The more charming and effortlessly written essay seems, the harder it surely is to write. The art lies in concealing the art which has gone into it. The art appeals everywhere, but appears nowhere. Its simplicity is the hardest thing to achieve and is made up of the most complex process of thought and expression. It is the product of a severe discipline. This discipline consists of

1. Reading the best prose.
2. Reading books for matter as well as for techniques of fruitful revision of what has been written.

An essay, as Dr Johnson defined it, is *a loose sally of the mind*. It does not exhaust its subject. Its charm lies in the manner of saying a thing of common knowledge and experience as if it were something new. Observation of life is the first essential to the discipline of an essayist. A personal viewpoint is the next. Other requirements, such as vocabulary, ideas, logic, come after these. Our college essays must aim at the sincere expression of our observation and experience gained through life as well as books. Students should try to give their own impression of things. He or she must not aim at total objectivity, which is uninspiring as well as deadening. Sentence construction, paragraph linking, logical building up of ideas and some humour (if possible) are important characteristics that make an essay readable.

Here, one cannot do better than giving an example of a charming essay which judiciously combines general observation with the author's personal experience, in a narrative which is enlivened by realism of actual speech.

### 7.8.3 Types of Essays

There are many types of essays. Listed below are the different types, along with their examples:

1. **Persuasive/argumentative:** Makes a claim or takes a position and back it up with statistics, expert opinions and other evidence. Persuasive essays will advise the readers to take it as an advice, because it will be based on the correct information.

#### EXAMPLE 10

#### Sample of a Persuasive/Argumentative Essay

##### *Higher Standards of Life at the Cost of Human Values*

*With changing times, the quality of human life has improved drastically. With modernisation and inventions in electronic and e-world, life has become easier and faster. You don't have to wait in queue anymore; online bookings are available for you for most situations. You don't have to search pages and pages of encyclopaedias and books to complete your assignment; Internet has brought everything right on to your desktop. You don't*

have to arrange your high school reunion every year to catch up with your pals; everyone is there on social networking sites. Life these days looks easier and better compared to that of a decade ago. But what is the downhill to all these? Are we living a full life forgetting the values that make us human?

With today's concept of "work more earn more", people have become too busy and find little time for their families resulting in broken homes and neglected parents. Google calendar reminds you of birthdays of your siblings and parents; you are too dependent on your computer, you forget personal matters like these. Many say social networking sites are for connecting people. But, in real sense, how many of us are indeed connecting with friends and families! Social networking sites have become a place for people to show off their fake concerns and fake love. Nothing is real over there. Also, it has become a trap to various immoral and criminal activities. Yes, modern life is easy and fast, but it is without the values and morals that make us concerned about our family and fellow humans.

2. **Comparative:** Demonstrates similarities and differences between two topics. Comparative essays will be like comparing two things and enunciating the good and bad effects of it.

### EXAMPLE 11

#### Sample of a Comparative Essay

##### *Facebook Conversations vs. Face-to-Face Conversations*

One of the most important developments in modern communication is the introduction of social networking sites. Last decade has seen a number of these kinds of sites introduced into our lives. The idea behind these sites is to get connected with our long-lost friends and share ideas, photos, videos, links, etc., with the friends we make and thereby enhance personal interaction. One such popular site is Facebook. Facebook allows us effective commutation with the chat, wall, share, like, etc., facilities provided. The ideas or photos we share on our wall or timeline get a number of response from our friends and we naturally feel connected with them always.

But on a second thought, are these Facebook commutations real? Are they playing a role in improving any personal bonds? The answers are not always positive. Most of the times, we hardly know the people we engage in discussions with and the people we know well personally hardly enter into conversation with us. The fact is that people prefer conversing through Facebook, they care less about face-to-face communication. It also creates a situation where we communicate with strangers and friends in the same way. It affects our personal relationship with the real people around us. The thing we should remember while using Facebook is, it is not the real world. The real world is where we meet real people and talk to them face to face.

- 3. Descriptive:** Explains or describes "what", "why", "how", "when" and "where". For example, describing nature.

### EXAMPLE 12

#### Sample of a Descriptive Essay

##### *Our Computer Practice Laboratory*

I have been in front of computer since my 5th standard. It was meant for just playing games, browsing Internet, and suing other fun applications till I was introduced to the computer practical lab in my college. The lab lectures contained a manual for the practical. There was proper examination which was to be held for the lab. My lab told me that my computer never ever understood the commands I wrote in English, but he just understood the binary commands, i.e. 0 and 1. It also taught me how to code and decode the games I loved playing when I was a kid. My lab explained to me how virus affects my computer as they affect our bodies. It explained to me the basics of programming and logics that are needed to work with computers. It told me about the regular up gradation of languages in which we do encoding and programming. All in all I always thought that my computer lab made me mature enough to understand the basic anatomy of computers. Once I understood the computer, I started playing with own PC with a serious note, more respectful and more careful.

- 4. Evaluation:** Describes a thing or event and explains its importance, value or relevance.

### EXAMPLE 13

#### Sample of an Evaluation Essay

##### *Use of Computers in Modern Life*

A computer is a general-purpose device that can be programmed to solve many arithmetical, numerical and logical problems. From the first of its kind developed in the 1940s to the modern days' PCs and tablets, computers played a major role in communication, education, business, banking etc. Software applications in personal computers such as word processors, spread sheets, databases, etc., have made documentations in offices, banks easier. Modern-day luxuries like ATM counters and even vending machines function on the technology of computers. There are a variety of applications in computer developed to make communication easier for the deaf and blind such a voice recognised typing software, reading software, etc. Computers are used extensively as a medium to connect to the World Wide Web. Internet has revolutionised the world of communications. Long distance calls gave way to online chats. People hardly use the hard-bound encyclopaedias these days. We get the same amount of information on our desktop in fractious of seconds. Computers can support a variety of input/output devices we use in our day to day life. From printing a document through the printer attached to saving useful data from machines in accelerators, hospital labs, etc., computers have become an essential part of modern life.

5. **Narrative:** Tells a story in a sequence of events. There should be some point, lesson or idea gleaned from this narrative to make the essay meaningful.

**EXAMPLE 14****Sample of a Narrative Essay*****My Difficulties in Adjusting when I Joined the College***

Passing out from school and joining college was one of the exciting moments in my life. First few days in college were more than thrilling; there was no more school uniform, the college bag was lighter than the school backpack and the best part was the cafeteria. But slowly, I realised that, college is "not-that-all" a happy place when compared to school. There was a difficult phase initially before I got adjusted to the whole college life-style. The first difficulty was finding own classrooms. We had to run around whole building in search of classrooms and labs for different subjects. Sometimes some classes will be in different buildings, and not every building was marked on the map. Another difficulty was finding a place in the library. It was always crowded; finding a place to sit was difficult. Finding the required books from the numerous sections in that huge library was even more difficult. It took days to finally get familiarised with the whole building. Apart from other minor issues, the thing it took weeks for me get adjusted was the hostel. The food, the light-out restrictions were all new and difficult initially. Though the initial days were hard, now I am adjusted to the campus and enjoying a normal college lifestyle.

**7.8.4 Easy Steps for Writing an Essay**

To write an effective essay, following steps are necessary:

1. **Research:** Begin the essay-writing process by researching your topic, making yourself an expert.
2. **Analysis:** Start analysing the arguments of the essays you are reading. Clearly define the claims, write out the reasons, the evidence. Learning how to write an essay begins by learning how to analyse essays written by others.
3. **Brainstorming:** Ask yourself a dozen questions and answer them. Meditate with a pen in your hand. Take walks and think until you come up with original insights to write about.
4. **Thesis:** Pick your best idea and pin it down in a clear assertion that you can write your entire essay around.
5. **Outline:** Sketch out your essay before writing. Use one-line sentences to describe paragraphs and bullets to describe what each paragraph will contain. Play with the essay's order. Map out the structure of your argument and make sure each paragraph is unified.
6. **Introduction:** Now, sit down and write the essay. The introduction should grab the reader's attention, set up the issue and lead into your thesis.
7. **Paragraphs:** Each individual paragraph should be focused on a single idea that supports your thesis. Begin paragraphs with topic sentences, support assertions with evidence and expound your ideas in the clearest, most sensible way you can.

8. **Conclusion:** Gracefully exit your essay by making a quick wrap-up sentence and then end on some memorable thought, perhaps quotation, or an interesting twist of logic or some call to action.
9. **MLA style:** Format your essay according to the correct guidelines for citation.
10. **Language:** You are not done writing your essay until you have polished your language by ~~containing~~ the grammar, making sentences flow, incorporating rhythm, emphasis, adjusting the formality, ~~going~~ it a level-headed tone and making other intuitive edits.

### 7.8.5 Structure of an Essay

When you write an essay for a particular course, your instructor will be more likely to give some guidelines. Many students assume that essays must be of five paragraphs, and this is simply not the case. These elements include the following:

1. Introduction
2. Thesis
3. Body paragraphs
4. Conclusion

### 7.8.6 Style

Like any form of style, good essay style is almost impossible to teach. Also it is difficult to be fully aware of and objective about your writing style (e.g., your dress sense).

1. **Clarity:** One of the enemies of clarity is the use of overlong sentences. Do not tax the attention of the reader.
2. **Appropriateness:** Avoid writing with unnecessary rhetorical flourishes, irony, ambiguity, and informal language. For example: psychological journal articles.
3. **Grammar:** Check your spelling either electronically or manually. If you use your word processor's spellchecker, make sure it does not replace any psychological terms with approximations.
4. **Vocabulary:** Use different words with appropriate meaning in the correct places. Repetition of words can be avoided.
5. **Sentence coherence:** One sentence should have link with other sentence/idea. All ideas should focus on the focal point/main idea.

### 7.8.7 Characteristics of a Good Essay

The essay is a long piece of composition on a theme or subject. It is self-contained (i.e., it has a beginning, middle and an end). The beginning usually introduces the subject in general terms. The middle of the essay develops the theme and presents the writer's thoughts on it. Then, the essay is brought to a close in a suitable concluding passage. A good essay must have the following qualities:

1. **Unity:** The essay must have one aim. If you are writing an essay, try to tell yourself what your specific purpose is in writing it. Say to yourself, for example, in this essay I am going to discuss the reasons why I consider college unions to be of no value in training for leadership.
2. **Balance:** Closely related to unity is balance. It is not enough to avoid irrelevant material. The points that are included must be given the treatment they deserve by their importance. If your introduction

is too long, it delays your attention to the main point. Also, on the other hand, if your conclusion goes on and on after you have made your last important point, your essay loses balance.

3. **Coherence:** The essay should follow a clear order and move steadily towards a goal. Ideas are arranged in a definite pattern so that important ones stand out prominently, and the relation between ideas is clearly seen.

4. **Length:** The length of the essay depends on the writer's purpose in writing. If it is intended for a particular set of readers, its length will be influenced by the readers' background and needs. In any case, the essay should not be loose or rambling. Every part of the essay should contribute to the total effect.

5. **Preparation for writing the essay:** Since an essay must have unity and coherence, you have to plan it before you start writing it. The preparation includes reading about the subject and discussion of the subject with others. Using the material you have thus gathered, you should write an outline of the essay. To decide what should go into your outline, you should define your subject very clearly and know its limits. Narrow the theme of your essay to reasonable limits. The theme should be more specific, greater in its unity and also be effective in its rich style. If you have sufficient background information on a subject, you can write an essay on it by gathering your thoughts and organising them.

We have already learned about report writing in Chapter 6. Both essay and report writing need formal writing, analytical thinking, solid reasoning behind every conclusion, careful reading and neat presentation, but a report-writing layout is very different from essay writing.

<i>Essay</i>	<i>Report</i>
Presents information and opinions	Presents facts and information specifically, no opinions
Generally no abstract	Usually has abstract
Written for everyone in general	Written for a specific audience, specific set of people
Rarely needs recommendations or appendices	Usually has both
The structure is casually flowing in paragraphs	The structure is crisp and clean, using pointers and numbered headings and sub-headings
Rarely includes graphics	Usually includes graphics to prove a point
Has a logical flow of thoughts and no need of a summary	Often needs a quick summary addressing highlighting points
Always needs references and a bibliography	May not need these
Does not have an appendices	Often has appendices

- EXERCISE 9**
- In many countries, smoking is not allowed in public places, such as roads, railway stations, airports and other public buildings. Do you think that this is justified? Explain with the help of specific reasons and examples.
  - The responsibility of the environment rests with the individual and not only with the government. Do you agree?
  - The Internet has provided great benefits, but at the same time it has also created new dangers and inequalities. Is it possible to control some of these problems?

Following are important points to remember when writing something new:

### 1. Topic

*Talk about what matters to you.*

- Give serious thought to what you are going to write.
- Write about a topic that you know very little or nothing about.
- Talk with people about your topic.
- Do not forget to put your own personal stamp on your topic.

### 2. Style

- Write a story only you can tell.
- Be honest and be yourself.
- Use formal English, but not too formal.
- Try to force your essay to be funny or overly dramatic.
- Try to be clever in unproductive ways.
- Just recreate your activities and awards list.
- Brag or put down others.
- Forget to show the admissions officers who you are.
- Stay away from clichés and commonly confused terms and expressions.
- Obsolete expressions
- Let others read your writing.
- Work on your essay for more than a week and do multiple drafts.
- Cut out unnecessary words and phrases.
- Turn in your first draft.
- Write like you talk.
- Rely on a thesaurus.

### 3. Aesthetics

- Be neat.
- Type your essay on the computer or typewriter.
- Use single spacing.
- Make sure that the essay fits in the allotted space.
- Use font that is too big or small.
- Handwrite your essay.
- Attach extra pages.
- Turn in anything smeared, blurred or messy.

1. Write two coherent paragraphs on the problems and benefits of technology.
2. Write a coherent paragraph on the best ways of protecting the environment.
3. Write two paragraphs of 100 words each on the importance of forest resources and on the measures that you would recommend to preserve forest resources.
4. Write a paragraph (200 words) on the merits and demerits of the best alternative source of energy for India.
5. Write a paragraph of 100 words each on the topic of why India should go for renewable energy sources.