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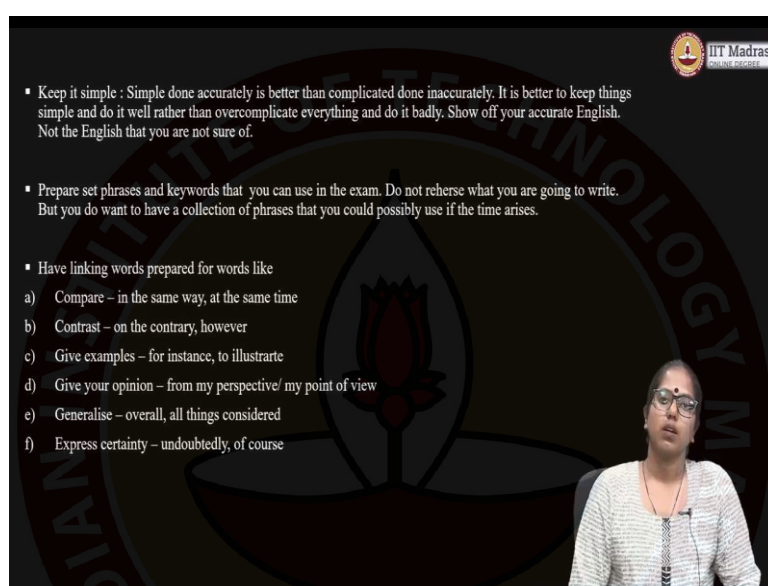
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English - I (Basic English)
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Improving your Writing Skills

Hi. In today's session, let us explore the question, how do we improve our writing skills for writing exams? So, there are many different academic writing exams, such as the IELTS. This is one example. So, in today's session, we will discuss the strategies that you need to adopt to make sure that you perform in your academic writing tests pretty decently.

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■ Keep it simple : Simple done accurately is better than complicated done inaccurately. It is better to keep things simple and do it well rather than overcomplicate everything and do it badly. Show off your accurate English. Not the English that you are not sure of.

■ Prepare set phrases and keywords that you can use in the exam. Do not rehearse what you are going to write. But you do want to have a collection of phrases that you could possibly use if the time arises.

■ Have linking words prepared for words like

- Compare – in the same way, at the same time
- Contrast – on the contrary, however
- Give examples – for instance, to illustrate
- Give your opinion – from my perspective/ my point of view
- Generalise – overall, all things considered
- Express certainty – undoubtedly, of course

Now, the first point is to keep it simple. Well, simple done accurately is better than complicated then inaccurately. In simple words, it is better to keep things simple and do it well, rather than overcomplicate everything and do badly. So, what I would suggest you is show of your accurate English and not the English that you are not very sure of.

Second is prepare said phrases and keywords. Well, that does not mean that you need to make a list of all the phrases, key words and then start marking them up and try reproducing that in the exam. No, that is not the point. The idea behind this is that these phrases and keywords might possibly come to your use when time arises.

So, I would request you not to rehearse what you are going to write. That is not the idea at all, you should not do that. You must have a collection of phrases that could possibly help you if time arises, and it definitely would arise. This is something that I have learned from my

experience. I made a good list of phrases and keywords and it really did help me during my exam.

The next point is to have linking words prepared for words like first one 'compare'. To compare you could use words like *in the same way* or *at the same time*. To contrast you could say *on the contrary* or you could say *however*. To give examples, you could say *for instance* or *to illustrate*. To give your opinion, you could say *from my perspective* or *from my point of view*. To generalize, you could say *overall* or *all things considered*. To express certainty, you could say *undoubtedly* or you could use *of course*.

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- a) Express partial agreement – in a way, to some extent
- b) Show cause – owing to, due to
- c) Show effect – for this reason, consequently
- d) Mark time – to begin with, following this,
- e) Add information – furthermore, moreover
- f) Express condition – unless, provided that
- g) Conclude – in summary, in short

▪ Do not use contractions (can't, don't, shan't, I'm, gonna)

▪ Reduce your word count : Use as few words as possible

- a) Avoid deadweight words : very, so, really, a lot
- b) Replace empty words with strong words: Really happy – elated & so scared – terrified
- c) Avoid the words "there is/there are" - There are many problems that we may encounter / We may encounter many problems.

To express partial agreement, you could say, *in a way* or *to some extent*. To show cause, you could say *owing to* or *due to*. To show effect, you could say *for this reason* or *consequently*. To mark time, you could say *to begin with* or *following this*. To add information, you could say *furthermore* or *moreover*. And to express condition, you could say *unless* or *provided that* and to conclude, you could say *in summary* or *in short*.

Well, another thing that you need to keep in mind when you practice for a writing test is these writing tests, tests are considered to be a serious affair and therefore, it is considered formal writing. So, I would suggest you not to use contractions, such as, *can't*, instead of *cannot* or *don't*, instead of *do not*, *shan't* instead of *shall not*, *I'm* instead of *I am* or *gonna* instead of *going to*.

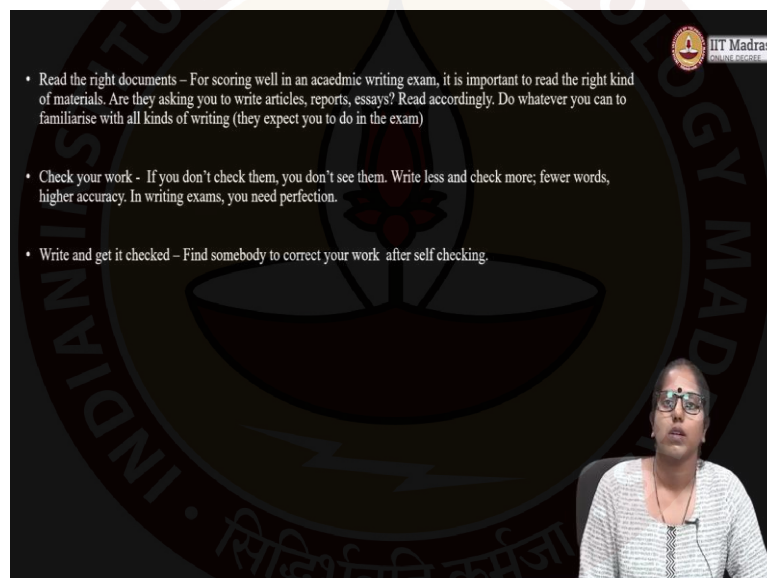
Instead, I would say this takes me to the next point, you should work on reducing your word count. That is use as few words as possible. And how do you do that? One is by avoiding

deadweight words. What a deadweight words, words like *very*, *so*, *really*, *a lot*. Then the question is, what do we use instead of them?

Well, it is to replace empty words with strong words. For example, instead of saying *very*, *very happy* or *really*, *really happy*, you could say *elated* or instead of saying *so scared* you could say *terrified*. So, this is how you need to replace strong words with empty words and avoid the deadweight words that follows empty words.

The third strategy to reduce your word count is to avoid the use of *there is* and *there are*. For example, instead of writing, there are many problems that we may encounter, you could always write, we may encounter many problems. And that definitely makes perfect sense. So, why write unnecessary words and these are all considered deadweight words.

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- Read the right documents – For scoring well in an academic writing exam, it is important to read the right kind of materials. Are they asking you to write articles, reports, essays? Read accordingly. Do whatever you can to familiarise with all kinds of writing (they expect you to do in the exam)
- Check your work - If you don't check them, you don't see them. Write less and check more; fewer words, higher accuracy. In writing exams, you need perfection.
- Write and get it checked – Find somebody to correct your work after self checking.

Now, the next point, I want you to keep in mind when you prepare for a writing exam, an academic writing exam is to read the right kind of documents. For scoring well, in academic writing exam, it is important for you to read the right kind of materials. Are they asking you to write articles, are they asking you to write reports, are they asking you to write essays, based on that you need to read accordingly.

So, do whatever you can to familiarize with all kinds of writings that they expect you to do in the exam. I mean, if they are expecting you to do a notice writing in the exam, then there is no point in learning the format and phrases and keywords required for letter writing. Therefore, I urge you to prepare with the right kind of materials.

The next point is, check your work. Well, the key phrases or the key sentences, if you do not check them, you do not see them. What do I mean by them here? Well, if you do not check for errors, you do not see errors in your writing. Write less and check more. And the fewer words, the higher the accuracy. So, keep that in mind in writing exams, what is expected of you is perfection. Rather than having a lengthy essay, I would suggest you to write a short essay, which is more precise, accurate and perfect.

And the final suggestion would be to write in time, get it checked by someone else, this is I am talking about it during the preparation stage, this is something that you can do once you are done self-checking, it would be great if you could approach your teachers or friends who are better than you at writing or your siblings or somebody senior to you. You could approach someone who is good at language and who has had the experience of proofreading and ask them to go through your material and correct your work.

In that way, you will have a few inputs from others about your writing and this can definitely help you improve your writing. So, these are the tips and strategies that I would suggest and recommend if you are preparing for an academic written test. So, with that we are coming to the end of the session. I will see you with a different topic on a different day. Until then, stay safe. Stay cool. Bye.

