IIT Madras
BSc Degree

English –II (Advanced English)

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Writing to Argue- I

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Hello, welcome to the module on writing. In the earlier part of the earlier course, we did some exercise in writing. But those exercises were limited to the basics of the fundamentals of language, and some very elementary principles concerning the creation of content. In this module, this time, in the writing module for the course called English 2, we will pay greater attention to aspects of writing like style; like appropriateness, like discourse features and content creation of higher-order, of a higher level. So, in this session today, we are going to talk about writing to argue.

We have taken some examples from the growth of the Internet, retail marketing, retail shops, online retail shops. So that is why to help us remember it better, we have called this session online grocery; and we are going to take some examples from a report that talks about the growth of this industry: online grocery. But the points that we are going to make are of a more general nature.

A lot of people say, big companies, multinationals, huge malls etc., need not get into retail marketing in areas like grocery; they are best left to local shops because they give

employment to hundreds of thousands. They are also culture-related. The kind of coffee that one likes comes only from Kumbakonam, not even all of Thanjavur, let alone all of Tamil Nadu or India. But these things will disappear in global markets, they fear.

Some others say nobody will lose any employment; the form of employment, the nature of employment would change. Actually, they might sell more. The big companies will take it from their shops and will deliver it to customers, nothing of the culture would be lost. Idli would still be Idli; coffee would still be coffee. They say it will also reduce cost, it will reduce efficiency, and it will enlarge, enhance, increase choices; whether you like coffee from the Kumbakonam or from Karnataka, Puttur. Whether you like Idli from Murugan Idli or you like Idli from woodlands, you will have greater choice, and you decide, and it is delivered at your doorstep at a lower cost without any hassle to you. You can use the money and time you save for other purposes.

So, there are arguments both sides, and deciding is not easy. How do you write when you argue? So, in this session, we are not going to talk so much about creating content; we already spoke about it, but even then, let us spend a couple of minutes on creating content.

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- Just as we speak, we often write to argue.

- Policies are rarely undisputed.

- There always are two sides, or even more.

You need content, no matter what we write, no matter what we talk about, the mainstay of any presentation, the mainstay of any piece of writing or speaking any presentation is content. Unless you have things to say, language will have nothing; you will have no language actually, unless you have things to say. The point is, the problem is or the question is: how can we have things to say?

So, imagine you have a topic like, whether big companies should be permitted into this retail sector, retail grocery sector, retail vegetables, retail fruits, perishables consumed on a daily basis, not even stored in homes. How can you create content? It is pretty simple. You already know enough make a note of them what you know, in terms of points as a synopsis, as an overview of what you are going to write and then also check, now these days internet is a huge source.

You can also look at local examples, what happened to this shop next to your house within the street? What happened to that little old woman who used to sell only guavas? She would bring a basket of a small basket of guavas in the morning and by afternoon, she would have sold them all, would leave and all the proceeds of that sale should feed her family; she would look after herself. What happened to her? If she is still there, you can say that the strength of local retailers is big; they can survive big companies. If she hasn't, you can use this as an example to say look, these species is so highly threatened.

So, you already have some data, some knowledge, some content; then you can also look around net or books or relevant sources and find out some statistics, some examples, some anecdotes; think on the subject, think on subjects related to this and if x is true of y if similar thing in retail has happened in clothes in a livestock, meat, fish, dairy. Then what is so special about grocery?

If vending of milk can be centralized in huge countries like the USA, like China, like USSR, then what is a small town and what is a small village? So, there are many ways you can gather data and use them to your best advantage. But after you got enough content, you must also know how to present them; because, just as we speak, writing to argue also has many sides.

They are usually related to policies, related to decisions about policies. What kind of policies should a public body, a municipal corporation, a state or a central government of a country follow? And there would be passionate arguments, television debates, newspaper forums, radio talks, people in private corners, social media there are lots that are being said for and against.

Now, if you want to write a very healthy, good report, then you will have to take both sides, or there may be more sides, more than two, because, the formation of any policy, the design of any policy is rarely undisputed. They are seldom or nearly never; they are seldom, I repeat

myself, and nearly never undisputed, never unanimous, never universal, somebody has to take that blame and decide in the larger interest.

But in the long-term interest, but before taking such a painful or a pleasant decision the person has to look at documents; that manager, that leader has to look at documents and these documents ideally should present both sides or all sides.

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VIDEO CLIP

Video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UK8ccWSZkic

Please watch the section 00:00 – 14:00

Source: TED

Video description: TED Talk on the topic "Does the world need nuclear energy?"
We are using 14 minutes of this video for academic purposes.

Now, let us look at an example. Maybe, this debate, this is rather an old debate, not a new one, whether the conventional energy sources, mainly carbon fuel, can be, can it be replaced by nuclear energy and there are debates both for and against, very passionate debates. Look at one.

You see, this is a 25-minute video recording of the debate; we are going to give you the link. Please watch them; watch it, watch both the speakers. And while listening to their presentations, the contents and the contents contributed by the audience also mark the language. See if there is anything special about the language in which we argue, and you will see that it is not just the contents, it is the language an appropriate language which conveys your preference for one kind of opinion on the issues to another kind of opinion on the issues that will win your audience.

So, is it for writing? It is basically accepted that writing is not sound, spelling and visible words whereas speaking is sound and audible words, but by large, it remains the same thing that arguments are presented in a very special kind of language. And while learning to write

on these subjects, we, of course, have to learn to collect and present contents, and we also have learned the appropriate language or presenting contents. Rest of the session, we will talk about that, please.

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- Language of argument is different. Here we need to talk at least about two competing issues.

- Language, therefore should be appropriate. One often finds words and expressions like

"on one hand and the other", "as far as", "as well as" "point of view", "in view", "on considering" etc.
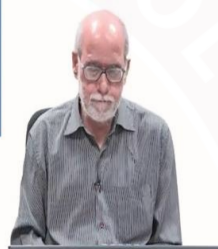
This is the language of argument. You have things like, on the one hand, as far as, as well as, point of view, in view, in my view, in my view, in view of, on consideration, on considering etc. Go next.

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- Documents of this kind frequently use adjectives of comparison, such as.

"solar power is the **least** polluting option"

- We can also have most, more, less, little, much, many.

Or you can have adjectives and adverbs, which indicate your preference or your emphasis upon different kinds of, I mean, different options on the issue, different possibilities on the issue. So, for example, when somebody says solar power is the least polluting option. If somebody could say, it is the most easily available option. So, least, most, more, less, little, much, many, this becomes the part of, this becomes parts of the language of argument. Next.
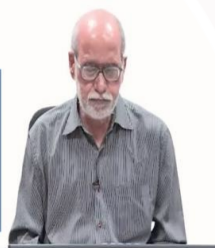
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So, with adjectives and adverbs, say you can use adverbs like most cost-effective; cost-effective is an adjective together, which qualifies the noun option. But you can further enhance it by saying most cost-effective or least cost-effective, least time taking most time taking or actually; actually, that is the only future of the big cities. The person arguing on this side wants us to believe that there are no options, we have to go for solar energy, whether we do so today or we do so after the damage is done.

Similar things for nouns, you can have things like groups, words and nouns showing groups and sections of opinion, their size, their power, so majority groups half the population. Quite sometimes presenters do not tell you how many people they surveyed, but which simply say half the people we surveyed have said ours is the best drink, ours is the best soap, how many people did this survey actually out of a population of 1,000 million, is it possible they surveyed 500 people, which would be much less, less much smaller than even 1 per cent of the population, but these things bring emphasis into their presentation. So can we, with other words, go on.

- Then there are expressions demanding consideration such as

  "before you conclude", "while we are at it", "one can as well see", "in totality", etc.

- There are other characteristics of writing to argue, you can better read on some currently debated subjects you are interested in. You can easily make a glossary of such terms. For instance:

Expressions demanding considerations, expressions requesting your attention, so you can have phrases and groups of words expressions like before we conclude or before you conclude. While we are at it, you can, one can as well see or in totality, not in partiality the expressions of this kind. So, and there are other characteristics, other signs, other features that show how people write to argue and how people plead for how they advocate for their side of the case and quite often one rather than another person wins this case and that is not only on the basis of content but also on the basis of the power of language.

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EXPRESSIONS DEMANDING CONSIDERATION

It's no longer clothes or books or makeup items that people want to buy online. Even when it comes to buying the everyday groceries, peoples are increasingly turning online, amid the pandemic. A recent study indicates that online grocery shopping is likely to grow more than two-fold as more shoppers are now ordering items online.

Next, look at this example. When we said it, we are just curious; is retail marketing in grocery and vegetables, fruits, is it also growing? And when we checked the net, we found a long report; and I have taken, we have taken one paragraph from this report, look at the language and highlighted expressions. Next.
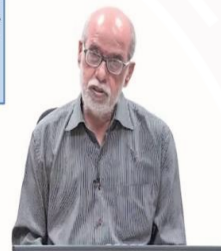
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ACTIVITY 1

- Find similar terms in the following paragraphs.

Amazon and Flipkart have also seen an increase in grocery orders. As reported in Economic Times, BigBasket says that since March, its new customer acquisition grew three-fold in terms of orders, compared to pre-COVID, while retention of new customer cohorts has increased by 60%.

But as I have been telling you, languages are best learned by doing, so here is another extract from the same report. Can you look at it? Go next.

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Grocery is the largest consumer segment by far in the Indian market, and Indians spend more than 50% of their monthly income on groceries. In addition, the retail market in India has undergone a major transformation and has witnessed tremendous growth in the past 10 years. The overall retail market is set to cross the $1.75 trillion mark by 2026, according to data available with Invest India – during which period India's e-commerce market is set to grow at a CAGR of 30% for gross merchandise value to be worth $200 billion by 2026.

And can you look at this rather long extracts? And can you find words, expressions, phrases, idioms that indicate that here is somebody arguing for or against or comparing conventional

market with big online retail market? And you will at once see that the language of arguments is different. Next.

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- Check your answers with the model answers given.
- Model answers:

Amazon and Flipkart have also seen an **increase** in grocery orders. As reported in Economic Times, BigBasket says that since March, its new customer acquisition grew **three-fold** in terms of orders, **compared** to pre-COVID, while retention of new customer cohorts has **increased** by 60%.

Grocery is the largest consumer segment by far in the Indian market, and Indians spend more than 50% of their monthly income on groceries. In addition, the retail market in India has undergone a major transformation and has witnessed tremendous growth in the past 10 years. The overall retail market is set to cross the $1.75 trillion mark by 2026, according to data available with Invest India – during which period India's e-commerce market is set to grow at a CAGR of 30% for gross merchandise value to be worth $200 billion by 2026.
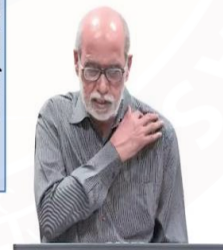
Here is our model answer. Once you have done, comeback please to the earlier. Once you have looked at these texts, these extracts and you have marked, underlined or highlighted or made note of relevant portions of language to show that these expressions are there, because the writer is arguing; then you can compare your work with the model answers we have given. Please go to the next.

ACTIVITY 2

- In about 200 words write an essay on the following topics:
1. Some people say young children should not have unrestricted access to computers and cellphones, they can harm themselves. Some others say that everyone has to learn to use these things, so why not start early. Examine the two sides of this issue and present your own opinion in this subject. Use your own ideas, arguments and evidence to support your arguments and conclusions.

Go to next. After comparing your answer with the model answers, we have given once again, please do some more. You can write your own essay; you can write your own arguments, say, for example, in about 200 words, write an essay of about three or four paragraphs, not more on a very controversial topic in our times. Some people say young children should not have unrestricted access to computers and cell phones; they can harm themselves, these people say.

There are some others, on the other hand, who say that everyone has to learn how to use these tools. So why not start early? Why not let people, why not let children learn when they learn it best? As all of us know, a child is the keenest and the fastest learner if the child wants to. So, examine the two sides of this issue, and present your own opinion on this subject. You can use your own ideas, excuse me, arguments and evidence to support your arguments and conclusions. To help you, please go on.

Synopsis:

We live in computer age- but computer is not ours-difficulties in using computers – demanding in nature – instruction required – important for job and life – harm from computers to mental and physical health – addiction – detrimental to social skills-better begin early - create safeguards – parent lock.
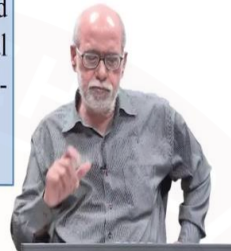
We have given you a brief synopsis. You can keep these points in mind and then write an essay in about 200 words, including all important aspects on both sides of the case, and then presenting a conclusion that you feel is the best.

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Model Answer

The twenty-first century may be inseparable from the existence of computers and cellphones, but children having unrestricted access to such devices is a contested notion.

Access to computers and cellphones implies access to various communication platforms, digital, mass and social media and the internet. Children having unrestricted access to this endless source of information is the digital equivalent of leaving a child alone in a crowded amusement park. Lack of guidance and supervision can harm the child.

However, computer skills are essential in both personal and professional settings. In today's setting, mobile devices and digital media are part of a child's surrounding growing up. A child's environment determines the growth and aptitude of a child. By restricting access to everyday objects and not letting children experiment, adults may dampen the natural curiosity of a child and make way for the child to act out.

Although it may not be ideal or possible to keep children away from computers, it can be argued that restricted access in the form of child locks, filters, adult supervision, guidance and limited screen-time are necessary. With the internet being unrestricted, it is upon adults to oversee usage to ensure a healthy growing environment for children.

Once you have done that, compare it with the work that we have given and if you feel you have already done a good job, wonderful go on to other topics; if you feel you need to do it again, please do not hesitate to do so again.

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OTHER TOPICS

2. Should one of the parents stay at home until the child is at least eight years old. Support your answer with ideas, arguments and evidences.

because writing is a skill and skills are best learned by doing again and again and several times over again; until you reach perfection. Thank you and good luck.