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BSc Degree

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English –II (Advanced English)
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Essays on Reflection - I

Welcome to yet another session in the module on writing. We write for a variety of purposes to tell our stories, to seek and provide information, to communicate our feelings and ideas and also to reflect to describe things, to discuss possible options and also to reflect upon philosophical subjects; subjects which no one understands very well, subjects that concern us all across time, across ages and yet there are no clear black or white answers.

So, we reflect upon those subjects and find our own answers, and we live accordingly. How do we write on that? How is that kind of writing different from all other kinds of writings that we have seen in this course, so far? Today, we are going to talk about, in this session we are going to talk about how to write essays on topics that require reflection; that do not have a clear black and or white answer. How do we do that? What is the structure of that essay, etcetera? Next.

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TOPIC

Lot of people say all human beings are alike. They can, therefore, live and work alike. We need not worry about local cultures, local languages. One global culture will create global happiness. Do you agree? Write an essay in about 200 words presenting your views on the subject. You can use any ideas, examples and evidence in support.




So, here we go. Let us say this is the topic. A lot of people say, all human beings are alike; they can, therefore, live and work alike. We need not worry about local cultures, local languages, one global culture will create global happiness. Do you agree? Write an essay in

about 200 words presenting your views on the subject. You can use any ideas examples and evidence in support.

Actually, at many places in Asia, especially in South Asia, examination questions are not given this way, they are stated in far fewer words, simply as write an essay on happiness. Had not been a typical school examination in India, they would quite often not elaborate the topic so much. The paper would say write an essay in about 200 words on happiness.

Here and in more other standard tests worldwide, tests of the language you will notice that topics are very clearly stated, the dimensions of the topics are also stated; that when you write you should take these factors also into account. How do we write on these subjects? These are what we call writing our reflections. Whatever we think, we may not even speak alike, but we think language. So, whatever we think on a given topic can form the subject of, can form the content of a topic like the present. Next.

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- Do not start writing at once.
 - Create a synopsis of relevant points.
 - You can also think of examples, illustrations, different kinds of evidence and ideas to further clarify the subject, as given below.



But, writing a good essay is not just a matter of knowledge, knowledge either of the world or of the language. It is also a matter of how you present what you know. It is like somebody said about good food at a good place. An experienced chef was asked: what is the difference between you cooking mutton and somebody else in a roadside, street-side joint doing it? He said nothing, not very much.

We both roast them, fry them, boil them, bake them, we do everything. The difference is a street-side restaurant perhaps does not clean its tools and utensils every day. Here, in a big

and expensive restaurant, we do so every day, that is about the only difference. We do it with perfection we do it in a system.

So, if we want to be that systematic and we want to write a good essay on the basis of what we do, then there are some very ordinary simple principles to follow, and the steps through which to walk. So, what are the first is, do not start writing at once. As soon as you get the topic, no matter what you know, already it does not matter. Sit down, hold yourself and first create a synopsis of relevant points that you are going to write.

Maybe, take about a paragraph, no more, and not in running sentences. The paragraph could have hints anyway—many school systems call it hints. So, write those hints anyway you like, they are your private paper, they are not going to be examined or evaluated. There whatever you write, write, as a clue; If I look at this, I will speak that. If I look at that I will speak this. So, you can take liberties with spelling, punctuation, grammar; you can write practically any way you like, so long as you understand the points yourselves.

So, do not start writing at once, but create a synopsis of relevant points. A synopsis of what, a synopsis of relevant points. If you have been asked to write about happiness, you should not be talking about cow or bull or dog or other pets, which might be incidental; the pets maybe universal. You can say there are 70 percent people in the city of Chennai keep pets that may or may not be universal. But you cannot make very generalized points on topics like this.

Therefore, there have been professional essay writers. People Lend, Haldane Aldous Huxley, many others. There have been, essays have been written ever since, there is language. Not written, composed or written, because the technology of writing is fairly recent, so we cannot claim that ever since they have been written, they're recent, the history of written essays is rather recent. But the point here is, they think before they write and they organize their facts in a manner such that it is always with them, at least as long as they write.

So, for example, in this case, we are under instruction, to create an example and then you know, create a synopsis. Let us see.

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SYNOPSIS



Definition of happiness-instances of happiness-
empathy- cut-throat competition- work life-
statistical evidence- working hours- English
language for job application- number of suicides-
mental and physical health etc.



Here is the synopsis again. Create a synopsis first. You need not know everything about any subject. There is no subject in the world which tells you: I will not open to you unless you proved yourself a scholar in all subjects; that is neither humanly possible nor desired, no need. But whatever we know, do we know for sure? So, synopsis may be a good occasion. For example, on a topic like this, unlimited happiness, shall we define the subject? What do you mean by happiness? then some instances to show that on these moments we are happy, and on these other moments we are unhappy.


Maybe every birth made us happier, and every death made us unhappier. So, definition of happiness might change, instances of happiness might change yet you must bring those examples, evidence and instances. Let us go to the next point then. The next point before me is: after elaborating the need for happiness we will have to define happiness. What do you mean? Suppose we want to give a friend 3 kilograms of happiness, even then I cannot do so unless I know where I can get a good healthy sheep or chicken or fish or anything because I want to give them a certain quantity of it.

So, happiness can differ from people to people. It is not eating fish alone that gives happiness; fish from where? Fish cooked by who? Fish served by who? all these questions may arise. In this world of cutthroat competition, there is so much emphasis on quality and saving every rupee, every penny. So, you must remember the fact that we have to write in a manner, which is succinct; which does not require anything from anyone else. It knows itself, who it is, and then it can talk about other aspects. So, these are some points on synopsis.

How do you define happiness? What do you mean actually? Then what is empathy, antipathy? What is the meaning of cutthroat? Does it mean everybody is very rich or very successful only they can compete with one another? Or how is life and work together. You can have, you can bring in some statistical evidence national level maybe; so far, we have talked about the subject only at the particular level only in specific terms, but you can also bring examples from a larger field.

You can talk about whatever you like. Your examples from outside, the particular place where students belong to etcetera, etcetera; then elaborate cutthroat competition and say how the situation is in this place—all of these things.

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- For a good essay, a good synopsis is important.

What is a synopsis?

A synopsis is an overview, like you stand on the rooftop and look at the entire city or village.



Once we make a synopsis, half the job is done. It is said that for a good essay, good synopsis is important. Before writing an essay, if you sit down and make a synopsis you will end up writing good synopsis within the given words. But what is a synopsis? We are yet to define it. A synopsis is an overview. Imagine you stand on the roof of this building, perhaps you can see entire Chennai; but would you see the details of them? So, many people are defining a synopsis, many people have said that a synopsis is an overview, a synopsis is an overview.


Perhaps, in many ways, like imagine a village or a town where you go up the roof of, at the rooftop and look around and you see the entire city in no time, entire city in no time. Actually, there is a wonderful joke. Somebody said that they wanted to see New York, all of

New York in only 17 dollars. Then the taxi driver seems to have said I can show you an entire New York in 5 dollars.

This customer was very happy and said, yes, why not. Show it to me that way. Then he said, give me the 5 dollars this customer; this passenger gave him the 5 dollars then he said, "climb back to your flat and go on to the top of the 104-floor block of flats, and you will reach the top of this tower block, and you will see all of New York". Actually, he was talking about the World Trade Center, which no longer stands there. He said go to the top of the World Bank, World Trade Center and you will see all of Chennai in under 5 dollars.

Now, this was surely a joke. But we must remember the fact that from a height we can see the entire region. So, that is the meaning of a synopsis. A synopsis is an overview; what you get when you stand on the rooftop and look at the city all around the spread all around you. So, a synopsis is a similar thing, it is an overview of what you are going to say, not necessarily in the same order. Sometimes if you like you can change the order, but generally you can speak that way. So, it is an overview. Go next.

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- A good essay for reflection cannot include everything, but it must dwell upon some important things.
 - Designing a good synopsis can help you write the best essay you are capable of writing.



A good essay for reflection for instance, cannot have everything, so it cannot take everything. No way, that is not possible. But a good essay, particularly a good essay for reflection, must dwell upon some important points, some important things. They must not go on attended or neglected.

Besides designing a good simple, good synopsis, designing a good synopsis can help you write the best essay you are capable of writing. Please trust me. As Vivekananda said our abilities are hidden within us, all we need is somebody to come and uncover it so that it comes out. It is so true also of this essay. Whatever you want to say is already there in your head, but we do not use them at the right moment.

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- If you have only 30 minutes to write an essay, as in many national and international tests, spend atleast five minutes writing a synopsis.
- This will save your time, it will help you produce as good an essay as you are really capable of.



Use that time. If you have only 30 minutes to write an essay then out of those thirty minutes please, for god's sake, use at least 5 minutes to create a synopsis. You can say if I have given everything to only creation synopsis where am I going to write? My answer is the following. You see, you will write much more easily with greater felicity. as they say, and yet you will take fewer words that may be possible for, possible because of these techniques. Namely that you say the same thing in fewer words; so that is why it requires practice.

If you make a good synopsis, it not only saves your time it also helps you produce the best essay that you are capable of writing. So, you need not wander in the dark, in a dark room, not knowing which way to go; you can trust yourself, think on a topic, give yourself some time and it is highly unlikely that you will write less than the best possible essay. Provided you search your brain, search your mind, look into your own experience in the light of the template that you may have made. Next.

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ACTIVITY 1

- Make a synopsis for writing an essay on the following topic.

Should one have unlimited freedom? Should there be no censorship for mass media. Write an essay in about 200 words presenting your views on the subject. You can use any ideas, examples and evidence in support.



Let us do an activity for the sake of practice. Here is the rubric. Should there be only unlimited freedom? So, write an essay in about 200 words presenting your views on the subject. You can use any ideas, examples and evidence in support; that is the topic. I must also take inside and say that many school systems in Asian countries do not elaborate the topic in this manner. They simply give the topic and expect the students write, but it is always good to have a topic clearly elaborated.

Imagine you do not have a topic so clearly elaborated and you still have to write upon those topics. How do you do it? The principles are the same. Number 1: first make a synopsis, first make a synopsis. Go next.

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SYNOPSIS- 1



Print media- electronic media- new media-
movies- creative freedom-freedom of press-
surveillance- certification-emergence of online
streaming sites post Covid



So, here for instance is a synopsis for the topic already given. What are you going to write? Print media, then electronic media, together they make the new media or the new mass media. Then there are movies. Then there are other sorts of stories, novels, plays, whatever we call by the name of creative freedom, the freedom of thinking. The more you think, the more you will find, you have things inside your head, and they are relevant to this topic. And you can make through this broken line, through this short hyphens or long dashes you can collect these points and keep them before you when you write an essay.

Actually, many school systems allow you to write an essay where you can write the synopsis first on top of the page, and then looking at the synopsis, you can develop one paragraph to each bullet point and you can make some good essays. Next.

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COMMENTS



- Many of us do not look at all possible aspects of a topic that makes only a partisan essay.
- A good synopsis should reflect such a comprehensive thought.
- In the synopsis given above, the writer intends to say nearly all about censorship in public life; but the writer says nothing about individual- should one have unlimited freedom.



Now, look at some problems. There, however, are some problems; even when you make a synopsis, it takes time. But we said that time invested in creating a synopsis is actually not a waste; it will save your time elsewhere, because you will write in a connected manner with felicity. But even while making synopsis many of us take a partisan view. We either forget to look at all aspects of the topic, or perhaps we do so deliberately, that is not clear. But many of us do not look at all possible aspects of a topic that would otherwise make it a great essay.

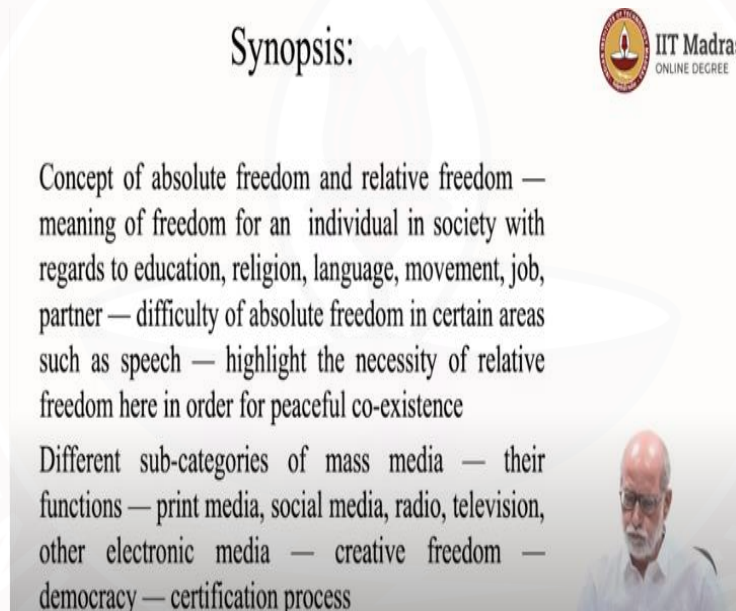
As a result, it declines into a partisan essay looks like you are talking for a particular side alone. Similarly, a good synopsis should reflect such comprehensive thought, it should show that all aspects have been taken into account in the synopsis that we saw. Please come back. In this synopsis, it is otherwise a good synopsis, covers many points, many important points. But does the writer talk about one individual person who is being advised here not to waste their time on electronic media?

Who are being told that happiness would lie this way or that way, or that you need to have unlimited freedom? They forget. There is one another aspect to that essay is stated in the very first bullet point. Go back to the topic. The topic said, should one have unlimited freedom? and then it says censorship for mass media. So, this writer in our preoccupation with the topic with the content forgot to make a synopsis about a very important part of it, which goes like as follows, should one have unlimited freedom? Next.

So, many of us do not look at all possible aspects of topic. We also saw this while writing a précis. As a result, even when we do not want so we ended up making a - writing a partisan essay, writing a partisan answer. A good synopsis ideally should reflect this education, this thought, the experience, everything that you have gone through and everything that is relevant to the topic on hand; and then you will find you are able to write a good synopsis and therefore, a good essay.

If you sit down and think on the topic, some people think alphabetically. Ask to find an example they will say what first with A then with B, then with C, like this they make. Some others directly also go to examples. But without examples, your synopsis may not have the same strength. Over. Next.


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Synopsis:

Concept of absolute freedom and relative freedom — meaning of freedom for an individual in society with regards to education, religion, language, movement, job, partner — difficulty of absolute freedom in certain areas such as speech — highlight the necessity of relative freedom here in order for peaceful co-existence

Different sub-categories of mass media — their functions — print media, social media, radio, television, other electronic media — creative freedom — democracy — certification process



Model Answer



The concept of freedom has long been understood to mean absolute freedom with no limitations whatsoever. However, in any civil society, relative freedom is necessary for peaceful co-existence, especially in today's globalised world.

For the individual in society, freedom is usually seen in terms of the choices available to them in their daily lives. Freedom concerning their choice of education, religion, language, movement, job, and partner, to name a few. An individual will always make choices based on personal circumstances and other aspects that are important to them, so freedom is limited in this sense and not absolute. In these matters, unlimited freedom is a right.



Regarding the freedom of speech, absolute freedom is curtailed to relative freedom. Absolute freedom would entail hate speech, threats, and verbal abuse. Absolute freedom is also curtailed when it is used to harm another or to justify it. Relative freedom in this regard is what is meant by freedom in civil society.



Freedom of speech is another hotly-contested topic with regards to the mass media. Mass media such as print media, social media, radio, television, other electronic media possess absolute freedom of speech devoid of hate speech, threats, abuse, and slander. Censoring mass media is an undemocratic principle, especially as it would censor creative freedom and works of art. Rather, a certification process to determine kinds of content for categorisation purposes is needed. Censorship curtails the relative



So, look at this synopsis. This is what is being said. Next. Coming back to the point we began with; a good essay requires good preparation. What do you mean by preparation? We mean by before you start writing, you should jog your memory, and you should see how much I know on this subject? How much of what I know is relevant? If you can do these 2-3 things you will be able to write a great essay. Thank you very much, and good luck.