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BSc Degree

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English –II Advanced English
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Essays on Reflection - II

Welcome to yet another session on the writing module of this course in English. We began talking about essay writing some time ago, and we have talked about different kinds of essays. Essays that described things, essays that discuss two sides of a controversial issue, and then we began talking about essays where we reflect upon possible issues and answers because they have no one definite answer.

As of now, we do not know on many of these issues, whether X is good or Y is good, whether we should take the road that branches left of it or the road that branches out to the right of it. On such issues also sometimes, people will have to write essays, students in particular, are examined for higher-level proficiency in or through essays of this kind. For instance, IELTS, International English Language Testing System.

Task 2 of the writing module expects an essay of this kind, where one has to reflect upon related issues of a topic and then present one's views. How do we do that? So, just as we said in the earlier session, there are some steps, there are some stages not all of us are equally learned scholars, not all of us excel in all departments. Some of us are good in some others, some of us are good in yet others. Some of us are good in one thing, some are good in something else in another, but none of us is good at everything and in everything.

What do we do, therefore? Therefore, we follow certain steps. Say, for example, before we begin writing, we divide time. Maybe for half an hour that I have available for this essay, we will take 5 minutes for creating a synopsis. Go next.

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- A good essay is not possible without revision.
- Revision will help you get rid of those little mistakes that happened because of oversight, because of haste and because of slip of hand, etc.
- On the whole, if you have 30 minutes for an essay, you should keep at least five minutes for revising it.



Then, after we have written, let us write for about 20 minutes, then after writing another 5 minutes for revising the essay. A good essay is not possible without revision, but some people can say why do we need to revise? Well, we need to revise because while writing, we are so, we may be so preoccupied with content, that quote-unquote some little things like spelling, punctuation or some minor aspects of grammar or vocabulary might be wrongly written.

These mistakes may not happen because we do not know the subject or not because we do not know the language, these mistakes still occur either because of oversight or because of haste or because of slip of hand. You may think you have written E, but it could become I. You may think you have written T, but it could become I or L. You may think you have written a V, as in victory, but it may become U as an umbrella.

So, when we revise, all these little things disappear. So, on the whole, if you have only 30 minutes for an essay a 200-word essay or a 250-word essay, then you should keep 5 minutes for creating a synopsis; Before you start reflecting upon the topic, making a note of the points as we said in the earlier session points connected with little hyphens instances, evidence, ideas, statistical evidence, definition of the topic, dimensions of the topic. Take whatever you like in the first draft, and then in the second you revise, you cut out your copy.

So, on the whole, if you have 30 minutes for the essay writing, then give 5 minutes to thinking before you begin and 5 minutes to revising after you have done it, which means

write for 20 minutes only. And you still have plenty of time, 10 words in 1 minute, which is a lot of good time. You can do a good job provided you are in control of yourself. Next?

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- A good essay must also have some stories, anecdotes, etc.
- This story can be included in synopsis in the form of instances and illustrations. While writing at least about 20-25 percent of time and words may be given to illustrations, instances from your experience.



So, first two things, a good essay is not possible without a synopsis. What is a synopsis? A synopsis is an overview of the essay. Just as you look at an entire city or village or town from your rooftop or as birds do from treetops. You see the entire essay, entire community, entire town or city, but you do not see very many details. Similarly, a synopsis helps you prepare an overview of the essay. And then you can take each point in turn, and you can write a paragraph or two as demanded by the topic and time available; you can write that.

The third thing in essays and a good essay is, you must also have some stories. The other two things that I have said synopsis everyone will do. Revision, everyone will revise; a statistical evidence, great ideas, quotations, everyone will. Everyone knows that Aristotle has said that man is a social animal. Everyone knows that. Everyone knows, Rousseau has said that freedom is the basic human right of every being, basic right of fundamental right of every human being.

So, these quotations may be there in many places, but the story related to it, how you demand it, freedom in your first job can make your story different. I remember reading about a young person's statement of purpose. He was asked to describe the most challenging moment of his life, and he said he was working in a company managing, in a mining company in Australia. And he noticed that his boss, the store manager, was deliberately buying things at a higher

price from a certain supplier and pocketing the extra amount in his own pocket, keeping the extra amount in his own pocket.

So, he wondered what he should do. Nobody has asked him to be a watch person. Should he go and tell the senior management this is what was happening? Or should he keep quiet anyway? He was not concerned. But eventually, he gathered courage and decided to tell the senior management; the senior management held an inquiry and found this young man's allegation to be true. And they not only gave him a promotion, but they also gave him all the protection required and the other man was fired.

Now when you write an essay on honesty or on something of this sort, and you illustrate it with this kind of his story, your essay suddenly becomes richer, better, more meaningful than many other essays. It definitely becomes different, because not all of us have the same stories, same anecdotes. So, many people say a good essay must have, must also other than definitions other than statistical evidence, it must also have relevant stories; stories that illustrate a particular point that you want to make in relation to that essay. This story can also be included in the synopsis.

A synopsis is your plan for how to write an essay, just as you make a budget; no matter how much money you have every month. Maybe you have a very small allowance, you live on a very low scholarship, or you have no scholarship. You are a student earning some money working part-time in evenings and then managing your life and your studies. Even then, you have a plan that you will pay so much for rent, so much more for conveyance, then so much for charging your phones, etcetera, then that leaves you about X out of Y about 40 rupees out of 100. Now these 40 rupees on these 40 rupees you have to manage your lunch or dinner or breakfast or all the 3 or only 2.


Similarly, a synopsis is your plan for the essay you write all the points. Now all the points need not be illustrated at the same length, need not be expanded at the same length. Some points may take 2 paragraphs, some may take only 1. Some may take half a paragraph. But if you have a synopsis which also includes other than statistical evidence, definition, and ideas; Some stories, some personal anecdotes, but some such personal anecdotes that we can share in public, and that is a decision you have to make, then that will make your essay different.

So, the principle is, and you see, remember these things are not rules. Nobody can say you must do these things, no. You can. The word here is you can; you can do these things. And if you do these things, chances are you will write a better essay. These things alone will not

make a good essay, but these things in combination - if you write grammatically correct language, if your words are appropriate; which means you are taken care of your grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling, then a good synopsis illustrated with good anecdotes or stories and supported by evidence both personal and statistical, both anecdotal and statistical, will give you a great essay.

Will give you an essay, which will be read alike everywhere by your friends and by your examiners and will fetch you good marks. Next?

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- The final draft must be easy and interesting to read.
 - Sentences and paragraphs there must not remain unconnected.
 - One must lead to the other, the other must follow from the preceding which means you should use lots of cohesive devices connecting sentences and paragraphs.



Now, the final demand on essays that you see when we write in this manner: synopsis, paragraphs, illustrations and statistical evidence. The chances are that we might write lots of sentences just next to bullet points and unconnected. But sentences and paragraphs must not be so; they must not remain unconnected, they must make a coherent reading, they must be put together in a cohesive form in a cohesive structure.

One sentence must lead to the other, one paragraph must lead to the next or one must follow from the previous from the preceding paragraph. And all sentences within a paragraph and all paragraphs must be connected thematically, and wherever required by what we generally called words that are called connectors or discourse markers; connecting those sentences and paragraphs. Look at it. Next?

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- Some of these devices are as follows: As, example, for example, here, henceforth, hence, illustrating, nevertheless, so, however, howsoever, thus, therefore, that is why, etc.
- Using these markers, using prepositions properly, using pronouns only after nouns, etc. strings the sentences into meaningful paragraph.



Some of these devices are as follows. Such as, use words like, when you connect sentences and paragraphs, we can use words like: as or example or for example or here or henceforth, hence or illustrating, nevertheless, regardless, however, howsoever add those words. So, thus, therefore, that is why, - all of these things help you connect otherwise isolated sentences into a meaningful, cohesive paragraph. They make a coherent reading.

So are words like pronouns, prepositions, etcetera, etcetera. Besides these markers like thus, therefore. Imagine if you do not use prepositions properly. If we do not say freedom is the basic need of every human being. If we do not use of before human being, we use something else. Freedom is the basic need on human, every human being. For this little, one little word your sentence might become confusing.

What do you mean? Freedom is the basic need on human on every human being? by every human being? to every human being? no, that is not. Only 2 or 3, 1 of the 2 or 3 propositions can be, can fit there. Either you can say freedom is the basic need of every human beings, or for some of these 1 or 2 things. So, prepositions must be used correctly to link sentences in sight, so that they make; and then the sentences must also be interconnected.

So, for example, nouns or pronouns; you cannot every time say saints have said that giving up sacrifice brings you happiness, saints have said that sharing brings happiness, saints have said that sacrificing brings happiness, saints have said that non-accumulation brings happiness. Then it becomes monotonous, melodramatic, boring. So, what we do is sometimes

we say saints have said that we need to accumulate some perhaps, but sacrificing giving away also brings happiness.

They have also said that ultimate happiness lies in disowning things rather than owning them. So, prepositions, pronouns used properly in a meaningful manner make good reading. They are like glues that put sentences together. Imagine a building where bricks are just kept one upon another without anything to join them. So, they are joined with mortar, with iron bars, with superstructures; columns are kept in place by beams and beams are supported by columns; that is how we make houses.

Similarly, here in an essay, these discourse markers keep sentences together, and it is the sentences that keep discourse markers together. Without either of them, the essay will become a loose body of isolated sentences like they are next to bullet points; unconnected. We do not write in that manner; use of cohesive devices is important. Next?

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ACTIVITY



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.



Writing an essay like writing anything is a skill, and it is best learned not just by listening to instructions that your friends, advisors or teachers tell you; it is best to learn for doing things. And also, we have also said that no matter how clever one is, it is seldom that the first draft itself is the best draft; but if they evolve, second draft is better than the first, third is still better, fourth is still better. And by the time we do the fifth or sixth draft, we know that this is the best I could have done.

And once you write in this manner for about a few months or one or two semesters, then it becomes a habit with you. And then even when you do only 1 or 2 drafts, you do a good job. So, it is a good idea for us to do these activities. I have one here for you. What does it say? Look at it. Next.

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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 a synopsis for that. Next.

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DRAFT 1

The definition of happiness is different for every individual. While some may consider being close to nature gives them happiness. Others may think that splurging on shopping brings happiness to them. The United Nations presents a World Happiness report through a survey. The survey includes various parameters such as mental illness, diversity, communication, work, food and shelter, etc. According to the report, Finland continues to be the happiest country for the third consecutive time.



We have also given you a draft. And do not worry, no first draft is perfect. We can revise it; you can revise it. Compare your work with ours, and we all can learn. Next.

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- We seldom get perfect work in the first draft itself.



As I said, we seldom get perfect work in the first draft itself. Of course, there are said to the people. In India we say Brihaspati was born reciting Vedas. Many people say Shakespeare did not revise anything he wrote. There always are in God's world we have all kinds of excellent examples. But by and large, a lot more people need to learn through trial and error, and they do; that is it. Next.

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DRAFT 2

God made country, man made towns, goes a saying in English. In god's world there are no boundaries or compartments. Its one world that god created. But because of our convenience or because of our fear or pride, we divided this world into many cultures and countries. Sometimes, we consider them important for the growth of mankind. Unlike other animals, man does not live only by food. Man also needs company and joy. Because all human beings are differently inclined, different cultures have emerged.



Same thing, we made another draft compare the difference, compare the two. And it will be obvious to you, you will see what we have not used which words have gone, which sentences have changed, and we are still saying the same thing. Next.

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These cultures have evolved in hundreds of thousands of years. They have not been made overnight like government projects. But they can be destroyed in no time. The temple at my village is just a lump of clay under a tree but that lump of clay has protected the entire village for centuries, as the villagers believe. Global cultures may not respect these little local cultures but their contribution to the evolution of mankind is unquestionable. Could Gautham Buddha have been born in a poor family or could Jesus Christ have been born in families other than that of a shepherd? Happiness is defined as a state of mind free from pain and anxieties. There is also a positive definition. Happiness is getting a desired thing or experience but because man is affected by the cultures he lives in, happiness is a dynamic phenomenon, it depends upon many factors not always under any one person's control



Go on, Go on. Next. Next. You might count, and you might see that the draft that I have given you has more than 200 words. Now, we have only 200 words. So, what can we do? Once we have written everything, do not worry in the first draft about length. That does not mean you should write 2,000 words, where you have to write only 200. It only means that you are anyway coming back.

So, even if your first draft is 300 words, no problem. While, when you start revising, you can get rid of many words that are there, as I said earlier that are there, that are redundant, that can be replaced by one word. And similar, if we rewrote the sentence, we can reduce the number of words. So, by doing these 3 or 4 standard things, as editors do, you can always bring your essay within manageable limits; And then compare your work with the instances we have given. Check with your reviewers, check with your friends, help one another. But the best way to learn to write a good essay is, before I finish, just to revise these two things.

Number 1: follow certain steps. Synopsis should include a definition, instances, illustration a statistical evidence, any other thing, the different sides of the story, etcetera, etcetera. Then write, revise, usually spend one-third of the time planning the essay and revising the essay and in two thirds writing the essay. Once you do that, you will definitely do a very good job. Thank you, and good luck.