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WAT – How to go about it?

Prepared by Team INSITE

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Team INSITE
IIM KASHIPUR

WAT:

Tips for WAT:

1. Build an effective vocabulary.
2. Use quotes, words and phrases judiciously.
3. Start practicing the art of structured writing.
4. Cite sources and references for the facts and information mentioned.
5. Be clear with syntax, punctuation and tone.
6. Essay writing is an art; practice will make you perfect at it.
7. Don't clutter your thoughts. Stay focused while writing.

On the D-Day:

1. Read the topic carefully and identify what is needed.
2. Structure your ideas before you pen them down.
3. There should be consistency in your ideas. The ideas need to flow like a stream.
4. Don't scribble a lot. Maintain a neat sheet.
5. If you finish before time, underline the important points and facts cited in your essay.
6. And that's it, your work is done!

The Indian Institutes of management have over the years realized the necessity to remove the somewhat archaic selection process of a General Discussion. The problems are manifold, primary of which is the fact that the true potential of candidates is at times lost in the jostle for verbal supremacy (an attribute that doesn't necessarily validate the ability of candidates). The Written Ability Test in that respect is a far more organic method and tests candidate's idea and articulation without restricting it his/her flourish.

The problem that many faces with the WAT, however, is three-pronged. Firstly, most beat around the bush, only touching upon the topic scarcely and hoping their grammatical charm will see them through. This is one of the biggest, if not the biggest myth that surrounds the process. Secondly, the ideas are all over the place and the structure simply fails to make any impact on

the reader, let alone a professor of the IIM's. Thirdly, arguments are never assimilated and collated well enough for the interviewer to understand the line of thinking of the interviewee.

This document aims to address the key issues of tackling a WAT and also provides a sample for the candidates' perusal. There are two kinds of WAT topics broadly that the candidates are like to face:

1. Abstract Topics
2. Issue based topics

Most candidates will shed cold sweats at an abstract topic but rest assured tackling it is the same as Issue based topics. Any topic tests your ability to elucidate upon an idea by a clear line of thinking. It applies to abstract topics in the sense that the topic, however vague it may sound, should incite an idea in your head and your efforts should direct towards defending the same.

Take for example this topic that was given in the process of one of the IIM's last year. One plus One does not make two. At the outset, it looks like a lost cause to write upon. However, it was tackled in the following manner. The idea that was cast was that the ability of two individuals or the competencies of two aspects (like marketing brilliance and financial acumen) does not double up the capabilities of an organization or group. The second paragraph went ahead to talk about how two competencies or abilities are entirely different in their directions and in fact, may at times go against each other. The examples set forth were the problems faced by the Australian cricket team due to the clash between Ricky Ponting (considered a brilliant Test team captain) and Steve Waugh (considered a brilliant ODI captain), the fact that Apple in the late 1970's was touted for disaster as a result of conflicting strengths of Steve Jobs and Wozniack. Examples will help make your arguments concrete.

Based on the above, one should understand that the structure of a WAT is essential. A weaker idea that is well structured is far more effective than a strong idea that is splintered in all directions. The following methodology is advised to be followed.

Your WAT should have three paragraphs –The Introduction, The Argumentative and The Summarization.

The first paragraph should go ahead and talk about the idea and the line of thinking you will pursue. For example, if the topic is about the Odd-Even rule in New Delhi and you believe that it has been counterproductive. Your first paragraph could look something like this.

The Odd-Even Rule imposed by the AAP government and spearheaded vociferously by its head, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, is at best an effort in isolation that does not hinder the primary problems of pollution and congestion that the capital faces. The fact that the regulations leave space for manipulation, domestic realities hinder the possibilities of success (people in Delhi own multiple cars) and the fact that the necessity of the rule has not been marketed well across the city makes one wonder whether the move will quickly find its space in oblivion.

At this point in time the interviewer has understood your stand and more importantly you have pointed him/her in the direction of argumentation you will further take. The second paragraph – The Argumentative will now work towards harvesting the idea that has taken germination. In the first paragraph you have touched upon your points, in this paragraph, you build upon it. This is done primarily by putting forth an idea and giving multiple examples in support of your point. For Example, if your topic is about Farmer Suicides' in India and your idea is that farmer suicides are a result of a lethargic bureaucracy whose initiatives have failed to give benefits. Your argumentative paragraph could have these elements.

The problem of farmer suicides is prevalent especially in states like Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. These states also happen to be the ones where schemes like Krishi Udyog Yojna and MGNREGA are at its most intensive. These schemes claim that they cover almost 75 percent of the farmer population in the states and yet the suicides are at an all-time high. This goes ahead to prove that these schemes at some level fail to meet their objectives.

At this point, you will wonder how you are to give such examples. There is nothing to worry about we have attached relevant WAT topics you could prepare upon. Moreover, the topics will be extremely current in nature, so basic newspaper reading should suffice in giving you the ability to put forth examples.

The ultimate paragraph – The Summarization should simply collate the different ideas you have argued upon and reinforce your idea in totality. Going back to the same topic of Odd-Even rule. Your summarization could look like the following

In summary, there is ample evidence to see that the rule will not have any sizeable impact on the twin ailments of pollution and congestion. We have seen that congestion has only marginally decreased and the air pollution levels of Delhi continue to paint the sordid picture of menace as they did. The long-term issues of poor marketing and non-considerations of the pattern of usage in Delhi ensure that the Odd-Even rule while being counterproductive will also come with a volatile shelf life on its path to obscurity.

Points to remember while tackling the WAT

- Have a clear idea, it does not have to be populist and you shall not be judged on whether your idea is in contravention to the opinion of the interviewer. Your evaluation is purely done on the basis of your ability to put forth your idea.
- Examples are a must. Basic newspaper reading is imperative and does also go through the sample topics we have sent for this year. They have been prepared based on exhaustive discussion of current scenario
- Don't make grammatical errors but do not simply rely on your grammatical prowess to get through this process.

Now you shall find a sample WAT topic, inculcating the above methodology. Once again let us take this opportunity to wish you the very best for the process!

Topic – Censorship and Objectification in Indian Cinema

In the land of the Kamasutra and Khajuraho where sexuality and artistic freedom have been cited as examples, it is truly lamentable to see the times we live in. Whether it's cuss words, lovemaking or something as innocuous as a political statement – they all find themselves at the behest of the scissors of the censor board. But is Indian cinema truly a white-gowned saint that does not indulge on the erroneous side of morality? Censorship no doubt is a menace that plagues a film industry, which is one of the oldest and most revered in the world. Yet, the blatant objectification – sexual, cultural and otherwise- speaks volumes about a country where patriarchy, misogyny and bias are being sold as entertainment.

Censorship and Objectification are two different aspects and in the Indian context are seldom a causality to one another. Censorship isn't justified by objectification and the other way around. The idea here is that Censorship should be directed towards Objectification. But does that happen? In late 1975, a film directed by Gulzar titled *Aandhi* was perceived to be a commentary on the personal life of Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India. The result? The censor board did not clear the film till such time a new government came to power in 1977. Even the case of the film "*Kissa Kursi ka*", whose prints were confiscated by the censor board citing inflammatory content, was a scathing commentary on real life political figures. Censorship at its core is about preventing socially regressive and hurtful ideas to the populace. It should not be directed against the freedom of expression of art. It is understandable when the censor board asks scenes of violence against women to be toned down, but dismissing the scene completely citing cultural reasons is unacceptable. Take for example the case of the 1996 film *Bandit Queen* directed by Shekhar Kapur. The film displays some brutal sexual violations inflicted upon the protagonist. The then censor board banned the film completely citing it showed "*Madhya Pradesh and India in poor light*". Censorship is being used a political tool, propaganda centre and a pleasing faction and that is troublesome as it leads to a culture where not only art is stifled but also manipulated to fit a political narrative. Coming to the issue of objectification, it's hilarious to note that a censor board that deems cultural appropriation at every juncture, happily overlooks the fact that several women are portrayed gyrating in skimpy clothes while men lust over them. Where they are reduced to mere objects of sexual gratification. How does the board not think that is against our culture? Or is the censor board justifying it as entertainment? Because if that is so, the film *Fifty Shades of Grey* should be seen as entertainment and the nudity factor cannot be taken into account to ban the film. Or for that matter *Rang Rasiya*, a biopic on Raja Ravi Verma shouldn't get banned as the nudity it portrays is in tandem with historical facts. Censorship in India needs to be directed towards toning down narratives that deride women, not ones that show her enjoying natural pleasures. That is a patriarchal view that by allowing to be propagated, is being normalised in the minds of the viewer.

In Summary, Censorship is not justified on the accounts of cultural appropriation, factional pleasing or political narrative. The above are expressions that artists by virtue of being born in a democratic country to have the right to project. However, Objectification, the menace that it is

and the effect it has on the minds of an already patriarchal society, needs to be found at the culling end of the Censor board.

*(The viewpoint of this sample are completely the personal views of the author and IIM Kashipur is not liable for any of it)

Personal Interview – Demeanour and Approach

Prepared by – Team INSITE, IIM Kashipur, PGP 2016-2018

A lot many websites advise candidates as to what they should do and not do in a personal interview, however, they don't help you deal with the kind of questions you will be subjected to. While the write up is not going to tell you about the questions you will face and how to give a standard answer to these. It will point you in the direction you need to take and how you should structure the answer.

Let us first bust a few myths about the interview process:

1. Stress Interview: Yes, some people will tell you it's a stress interview and how they were being bombarded with questions. These are isolated instances. In fact, you are given succinct opportunities to take the interview in a direction you wish to. In the event that you don't have a substantial reasoning to the kind of answers you have given, it will become a stress interview. My interview was quite relaxed

2. Short interviews mean you did not get through: Absolutely not. While I had a 30-minute interview. Many of my peers had interviews ranging between 10-15 minutes and managed to make it to the IIM's and I know many who had 45 minute long interviews but did not make it through.

The Personal interview tests candidates on three key factors - Knowledge, clarity and thinking on your feet.

Under each of these attributes, the write-up intends to give you an analysis of how you should direct the interview. Having a background in professional debating, the intention will also be to give you aesthetic advice with regards to the PI.

1. Knowledge - You are definitely required to read the newspaper and be adept at answering questions on current affairs. But unlike popular view, you can direct the interview to be able to promote the depth of your knowledge in a particular field. For example, you are usually asked a question asking you to describe yourself. In my case, in answer to that, I stressed upon my theatre experience and subsequent follow-up questions on theatre helped display the extent to which I knew of the subject. This is a manner you can enhance your chances by bringing the interview to a discussion you are good at and are comfortable with.

2. Clarity – There are a series of questions which are absolutely unavoidable. These usually pertain to your career choices. Why MBA? What domain in MBA do you prefer? Most candidates have a tendency to beat around the bush when these questions come about. First, think clearly as to why you want to do an MBA and remember that no answer is senseless. Stress on past experiences that make you feel MBA is going to help your career. For example, I talked about the fact that I was fascinated by Banking and the industry and the fact that my engineering education while important was not able to quench that thirst. It's okay to admit that your aspirations took shape later in life. Aspirations are dynamic. An interviewer will not look down upon you for saying that during your engineering you developed an interest in Marketing, till such time you can substantiate the claim.

3. Thinking on your feet – A certain set of questions are designed to test your observation skills and your thinking prowess. For example, a friend of mine was asked to describe the 10 rupee note. There are two ways to answer this question. One you could entirely focus on describing its physical attributes, that will help you display your observational skills. The other method is to describing the note in what it offers in terms of the fact that it's a promise from the RBI governor to give you purchase power of 10 INR or any converted currency of equal value. Be careful! Not to sound pompous if you choose the latter. These questions are the ones that usually give the interview an air of stress primarily because the candidates go on edge. Instead take a deep breath and answer, if you don't know about it say it in as many words. The negative impact of trying to cover up is far more than simply admitting that you don't know something.

Along with these some general aesthetic guidelines for the interview process:

- When you go into the room shake hands firmly with all interviewers if a handshake is offered. The initial confidence will be on display here.
- Answer in a manner that you are writing a WAT (refer to our article on WAT). Have an introduction to your answer, a body and a summary. Don't make it too long
- For single part questions, keep the answer crisp. Less than a minute unless the question in itself talks about something that needs a lengthy description (like your final year project, last job description)
- Don't tend to be highly opinionated nor come off as meek in your observations. It tends to derail your interview.
- You might be given an opportunity to ask a question from the panel. You don't necessarily have to, but if you do use this opportunity to show that you are really zealous. Ask a question about MBA or the process in itself. Refrain from asking rudimentary questions which do not matter to the process or your MBA career.
- There are condiments offered in the end. Take one if you are offered and don't take one if you are not. This has no bearing on the PI process and is just a matter of courtesy.

Once again, we take this opportunity to wish you the very best for your interview process.