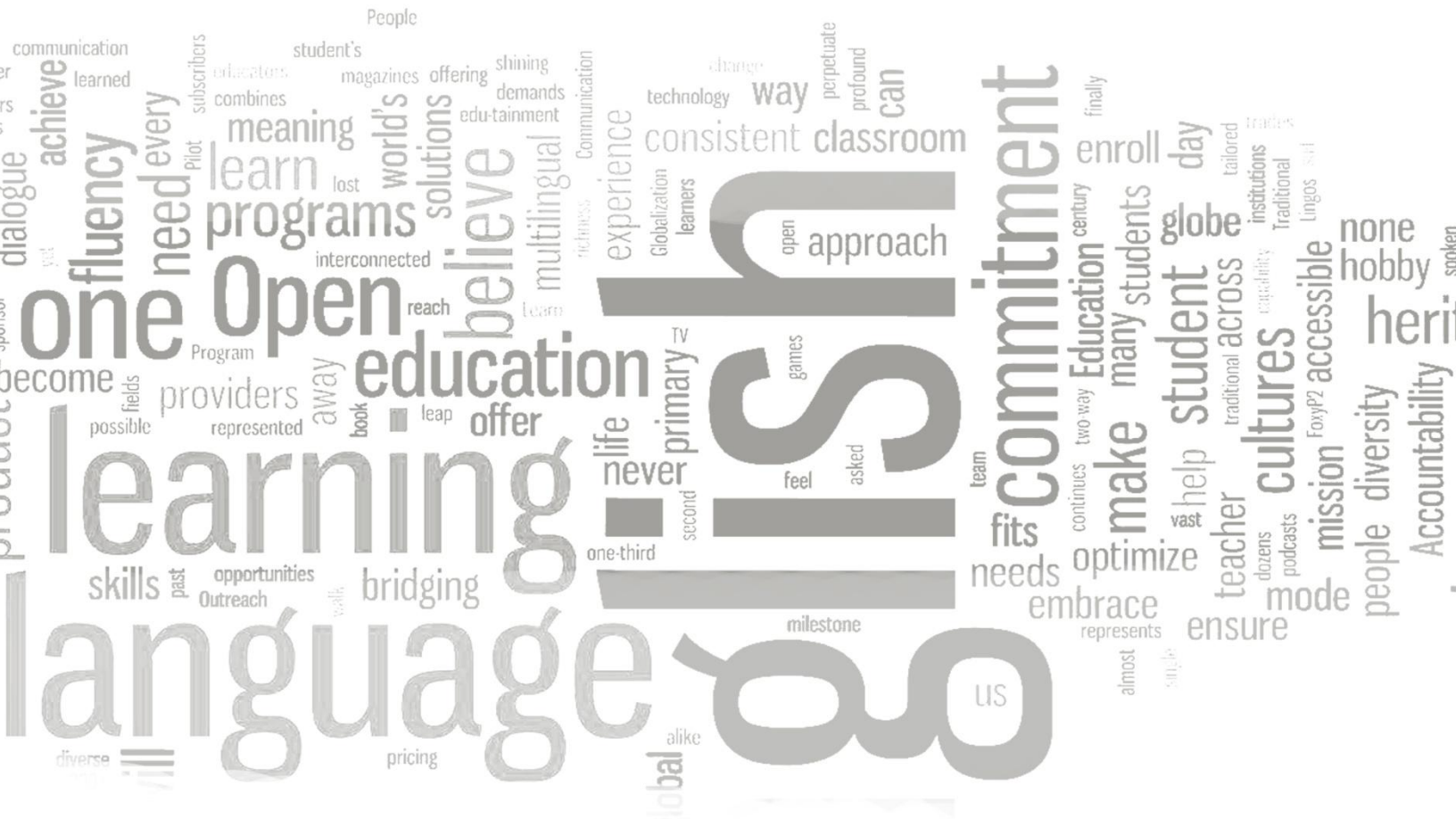


ENGLISH



INTRODUCTION TO ESSAY WRITING

What is an Essay?

An essay is a piece of writing that revolves around a particular theme and contains the academic opinions of the person writing it.

An essay can perform one or more of the following functions:

- Analyses and critically evaluates a topic
- Presents the writer's argument for or against an idea
- Describes something
- Narrates a story
- Persuades the reader

Aldous Huxley described an essay as 'A literary device for saying almost everything about almost anything'.

Characteristics of a Good Essay

- **Brevity:** Express what you want concisely. Do not beat around the bush.
- **Coherence:** Every sentence and paragraph should flow smoothly and logically from the previous one. A clumsily written essay reflects not only the lack of preparation but also the absence of clarity of thought.
- **Unity:** The essay should never stray from its main purpose. Different points of view can be introduced, but they should all be used for the same subject.
- **Lucidity:** The essay should be easy to read and understand. Using tough words or difficult phrases may impress a few but can confuse many others. Great writers are praised not only for their beautiful ideas but also for the simplicity of their language.

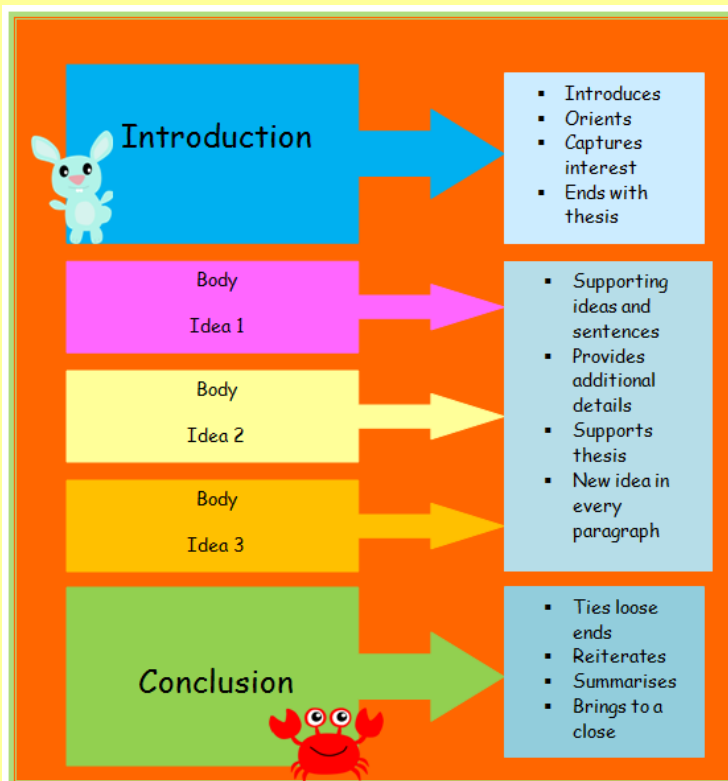
Objective of Essay Writing

Essay writing often forms a part of English written exams to test the ability of students to

- **Think critically:** Critical thinking involves understanding the task at hand and evaluating it appropriately.
- **Structure ideas logically:** The essay has to be structured and coherent. The ideas have to neatly flow from one paragraph to the other.
- **Express views eloquently:** The student should be fluent in the language he or she is writing in. Ideas when presented shoddily may not make the right impact.

Parts of an Essay

- **Introduction:** It constitutes the opening paragraph of the essay.
 - It helps the reader get oriented with the topic.
 - It states the purpose of the essay.
 - It captures the interest of the reader.
 - It presents the general idea of the essay.
 - It often ends with the thesis or the main idea of the essay.
- **Body (Supporting Paragraphs):** They constitute the supporting sentences and ideas.
 - They provide the reader with additional details about the main idea.
 - They support the thesis of the writer.
 - There is no fixed number of supporting paragraphs.
 - Ideally, every supporting paragraph should contain a different idea.
- **Conclusion:** It constitutes the ending paragraph(s) of the essay.
 - It ties up loose ends of the paragraph.
 - It helps in reiterating or highlighting the main idea.
 - It summarises all the arguments.
 - It brings the essay to a logical close.
 - It never ends in a detail.



Introduction:

- The idea is explained.
- The main idea or thesis is stated.

The Importance of the Internet

We define the Internet as 'the information superhighway'. It is a place where information is sought and shared. It is available for anyone who seeks it; such is the beauty of the Internet. All throughout human history, men have been looking for ways to simplify their lives. The Internet is not only a product of one such an endeavour but also an agent that provides convenience to its users. It is therefore one of the most important necessities in human life.

Body:**Idea 1**

- Supports the main idea through an example.

Earlier, people had to subscribe to libraries for academic purpose. They had to scour through many books to distil the information they wished to use. The tediousness of the process kept many people away from pursuing their academic passions. These days, information is at the tip of a cursor. In the age of advancements, people can learn anything they want in the convenience of their own homes.

Body:**Idea 2**

- Supports the main idea through an example.

Keeping in touch with the larger community is one of the biological urges of man. Thanks to the Internet, one can search for one's long lost friends and classmates on social networking sites. It is easy to be in regular contact with one's relatives and friends over the Internet. Messages can be transmitted instantaneously through instant messaging and electronic mails.

Body:**Idea 3**

- Supports the main idea through an example.

Citizens can also voice their opinions through micro blogging sites and play a conspicuous role in the democratic process of the nation. They are free to relay their messages to reach a large number of people through blogs and social networking sites. They are no longer in the dark about the workings of their government and can now effectively express their opinions about its policies.

Conclusion:

- The main idea or thesis of the essay is reiterated.
- The essay is brought to a close.

The Internet is therefore a versatile, cheap and effective medium to procure and share information. In today's world, it has to be given the status of a basic need along with food, clothing, shelter and education. One cannot emphasise enough the importance of the Internet.

Types of Essays

Narrative Essay: A narrative essay tells the reader a story or narrates an incident. This type of composition is addressed in detail in the chapter 'Introduction to Story Writing'.

The characteristics of narrative essays are

- They follow a chronological order.
- They may contain firsthand accounts of the narrator.
- They may use first person, second person or third person narrative techniques.
- They may contain dialogues or conversations between characters.
- They use vivid descriptions of scenes, characters and moods in the story.
- They can contain elements of suspense or twists in the conclusion.

Sample 1

One Lie Often Leads to Another

Lying is universally denounced as a sin. No matter where you belong, intolerance to a lie is a hallmark in every religion and society. There is a moral stigma attached to the act mainly because deception is seen as an abominable trait in human beings. Through a story, I want to highlight why it is undesirable to lie. The truism that 'One lie leads to another' is illustrated through this instance.

I know a friend who craved for acceptance and admiration from everyone around her. She never divulged anything from her private life. Instead, she would elaborately construct stories to make her life seem extremely interesting. A few of her close friends, including me, knew about her penchant for fibbing and stretching the truth. Despite all our efforts, she never mended her ways.

Once she was regaling a few people at a party with her 'inside stories' about people in the entertainment industry. She brazenly lied about connections and how she knew about the private lives of the rich and the famous. One person asked her how she knew so much. She said that her father worked as an assistant director to a leading Indian movie maker. Someone in the room asked her, "Which movie did he work on?" She named some movie which had apparently been the film maker's bigger hit. The surprised man said, "In that case, he might know Mr Desai. He was the set designer!" My friend broke into a cold sweat, but being an accomplished liar who might have found herself in similar situations before, she easily found a way out of it. She said, "Of course, I know him! He is a dear friend of my father. His daughter and I grew up together."

The man said, "Then you should have recognised me. I am Mr Desai and I am a chronic bachelor." Muffled laughter emanated from the room, and I could see my friend sweating profusely and trying to mask her nervousness by taking large gulps of water from a bottle. She wiped her sweat and left the party in haste.

Her confidence as an accomplished liar was shattered as somebody beat her at her own game. She learnt a valuable lesson as she tried to cover one lie with another.

Descriptive Essay: A descriptive essay simply describes something to the reader.

The characteristics of descriptive essays are

- They appeal to one or more of the five senses of the reader—sight, smell, sound, taste and feel.
 - **Sight:** ‘The light travelled through the canopy of leaves to break into various fragments. The flowers in various colours stood in full bloom.’
 - **Smell:** ‘As soon as you enter her house, you will be greeted by the fresh, warm and savoury smell of bread baking. You also catch a citrusy whiff of her famous lemon pie.’
 - **Sound:** ‘The corridor reverberated with the sound of sharp clicks emanating from the heels of somebody’s shoes. The sounds were well spaced with a difference of a second between each click.’
 - **Taste:** ‘As soon as I bit into the exotic-looking fruit, my mouth was flooded with its succulent juices. It was the tastiest thing I had ever had.’
 - **Feel:** ‘Tinkerbelle my Persian cat brushed against my face in a rare show of affection. Her soft, cottony fur grazed against my chin and her pointy whiskers tickled me.’
- They try to replicate in the reader the emotions or feelings experienced by the writer.

Sample 2

An Early Morning Walk

Yesterday, I decided to turn a new leaf by adopting a healthy lifestyle. For maintaining my overall health, I decided to go for early morning walks. The next morning, I wore a comfortable pair shoes and set out on my morning walk. I decided to walk to the public garden alone so that I could enjoy the beauty of nature in peace.

The sun hadn’t risen completely so the surroundings were still dim. The air was filled with the fragrance of wet foliage and flowers. I could smell traces of jasmine, parijata, champak and other assorted flowers in the air. Though the air usually turns balmy by midmorning, the morning air was pleasantly cool.

Apart from me, the only early risers were the little sparrows. Their melodious chirping in the morning is nothing short of divine. As I walked on carpets of orange-stemmed parijata flowers strewn on the ground, I inhaled the heady perfume emanating from them. I observed that there was fresh dew on the blades of the grass. Tiny colourful butterflies had been fluttering around the bushes.

By 6:30 am, the roads were buzzing with activity. Some health-conscious individuals were running along the jogging track. The fragrance of flowers was now intermingled with the aroma of freshly brewed tea. Office goers crowded tea stalls for their early morning fix of teas and coffees. Dogs, small and big, on leashes pulling their masters along; the boys on cycles delivering newspapers; milkmen rousing sleeping households with their incessant ringing of the doorbells; and the chattering of school children on the way to schools were the common sights.

I made my way back home at 7 o’clock. The sunrays broke out of the cloud curtains and had flooded the surroundings. Prayers and sounds of bells emanated from houses. When I reached home, a warm cup of milk and poha awaited me. I sat next to the window with my breakfast and savoured the last few minutes of the pristine morning hours. Mornings indeed have a way of energising our bodies and our minds.

Expository Essay: An expository essay explains an instruction, a process or a method. The purpose of such essays is to orient the reader with the knowledge the writer wishes to share.

The characteristics of expository essays are

- They present facts or details in an objective and organised manner.
- They provide information and analysis.
- They may use compare and contrast features.
- They may use the cause and effect method.

Sample 3

How to Train Your Dog

Nobody can resist dogs. How they steal our hearts with their shiny eyes and amuse us with their antics. They truly are 'Man's best friends'. As much as we love them for their unconditional love and their warm companionship, they also frustrate us with their unruly behaviour sometimes. In order to avoid embarrassing situations in front of guests and friends, it is important to train dogs.

Training works well when the dog is still young. It is easier to train puppies than to train full-grown dogs. The first lesson in dog training is making it respond to its own name. Turn off all the distractions at home such as music and television. When you have the dog's complete attention, say its name in a clear voice. Immediately, give the dog a treat or a toy to play with. Repeat this action 10–20 times with pauses in between. When the dog is not looking, call out its name. When it looks at you, give it treats and lavish praises on it. Shower it with affection and treats every time it responds to its name.

The next step is to teach it how to sit. First, get down at the dogs level either on the floor or on a chair next to him. Hold a treat in your hand and place it close to its nose. Its head will follow the treat when you move your hand up. When its head moves up, it will assume a sitting position. Once it sits, release the treat. Repeat this trick every day till your dog learns how to sit.

If the dog is easily excitable, you have to teach it how to stay. Take your dog's mat and keep it next to a comfortable chair. Tell your dog to go to the spot and point towards the mat. When the dog moves to the mat, give it a treat and praise it. Ask it to lie down and then say, "Stay". Count to 10 and then give it a treat. Repeat this about 10 times.

Follow these steps and you will have your dog listening to your every command. Remember to praise it and shower it with affection every time. Don't forget the treat! Your doggie deserves the best.

Argumentative Essay: An argumentative essay tests the student's ability to convince the reader about the topic given in the prompt. The writer has to defend his or her position by giving evidence to the reader.

The characteristics of argumentative essays are

- They are written either for or against an argument.
- The writer has to sound convincing by providing evidence to support his point of view.
- The tone of the essay should be persuasive.
- Unlike expository essays, argumentative essays present the readers with opinions of the writer.

Sample 4

Private Tutions are a Necessary Evil

For

Private tuitions are institutions that offer academic coaching for students apart from the training given at their schools. The existence of these institutions is questioned by many. They debate whether it is correct on the parents' part to send their children to such places. I do believe that the services they provide are overpriced, but I do not believe that they should be done away with. On the contrary, I believe that students do need help with their academic work. That's when private tuitions step in and give them a helping hand.

Gone are the days when the only vocation of an average student was studies. Today, students are made to partake in many activities. They are allotted marks for participation in sports and creative activities. Students have a lot on their plate and often find it difficult to give undivided attention towards studies. Schools expect them to be all-rounders who excel at everything they do. Under such circumstances, it would be helpful for students to receive some help for their studies.

I strongly believe that private tuitions should exist alongside academic institutions such as schools and colleges since it provides an alternative to classroom education and can bolster the child's confidence in academics.

Against

Private tuitions are institutions that offer academic coaching for students apart from the training given at their schools. They debate whether it is correct on the parents' part to send their children to such places. Though the very existence of private tutoring points to the inadequacies in our academic institutions, I do not believe that 'Private tuitions are a necessary evil'. On the contrary, I believe that these institutions destroy the very spirit of learning which is innate in every child.

Tutors have fancy degrees and often charge an exorbitant amount of money for less than 20 hours in a month. I believe that it gives undue advantage to a privileged child as compared to his less privileged counterpart. In a world where opportunities are rare, the underprivileged student may never get a chance to come up in life since the rich student has the access and the means to them.

Some parents foolishly trust such people and expect them to miraculously improve their children's grades. The value of school teachers also diminishes in the eyes of students. Owing to these reasons, I strongly oppose the practice of private tutoring. I urge students to study independently without taking help from these so-called 'tutors'.

Reflective Essays: A reflective essay is a mirror of the writer's psyche. In a reflective essay, the writer analyses his or her own mind and writes by drawing on his or her personal experiences. It expresses how the experiences have changed the writer or made him or her grow.

The characteristics of a reflective essay are

- It is not a product of the writer's extensive research.
- It is a product of his or her beliefs and experiences.
- It identifies the outcome of his or her experiences.

Sample 5

The Most Beautiful Memory of My Life

There are many instances in my life that I reminisce with fondness. But there is one instance that I hold very close to my heart. This is an instance from my childhood, the happiest years of my life. As a child, I was particularly fascinated with the moon. My mother used to regale me with stories about a giant rabbit living on it. She would tell me, "If you behave yourself and be a good girl, uncle moon will reward you. But if you misbehave and are naughty, uncle moon would punish you." I would listen to my mother's words with great wonder in my eyes.

As a child, I used to follow my father wherever he went. One day I insisted on accompanying him to the shop at night. The sky was starry and the moon was in its waxing phase. Being too slow to keep up with my father's long strides, I insisted on being carried to the shop. My father, who would always comply with my wishes, lifted me up. With my chin resting on his shoulders, I look up into the starry sky and find the king of stars gleaming in all its glory. I noticed something peculiar that day: the moon seemed to follow me! Every step my father took, the moon seemed to keep pace with us. No matter how fast my father walked, the moon was always close on our heels. Even on our way back, we were followed relentlessly. I was suddenly reminded of my mother's warning, "Did I do something wrong to upset uncle moon? Was he following me around because I misbehaved? But I was extra good today."

Upset at this perceived injustice, I broke into tears. Puzzled my father asked me what was wrong. Between sobs, I told him the tale of the angry moon. My amused father then assured me, "Uncle Moon follows you because he doesn't want his special girl to leave his sight." It was only then that I stopped crying.

Today when I think of that tender moment, I smile thinking not only about my inane fears but also about the thoughtfulness of my father. It is an instance that brought me immense happiness as a child and it still brings a smile to my face after all these years.

Proverb Expansion Essays: A proverb expansion essay is one in which a proverb or a saying has to be expanded and explained to the reader.

The characteristics of proverb expansion essays are

- They are based on how the writers interpret the proverbs.
- Proverbs are not to be understood literally; context is provided in the form of examples.
- They are not scientific in nature.
- The writers do not present scientific data.
- The tone is sombre or reflective.

Sample 6

Cowards Die Many Times before their Deaths

Death is inevitable; there is no escaping it. It is said that cowards die many times before their deaths. It means that cowards who fear death so much that they run away from it. Surrendering to their fear makes them die even before their actual death. The brave face every situation with aplomb and live life to the fullest.

The life of a coward is marked by insecurity and constant fear. He fears the lunge of death at every step and in the bargain fails to live his life normally. He thus dies many times before his death.

In Julius Caesar, Calpurnia, Caesar's wife, fears for the life of her husband. She has a terrible foreboding about Caesar's death. Caesar brushes away her concerns by saying that it is pointless to cower in fear. He praises the virtue of bravery by saying that only the brave taste death only once and cowards die many times before their deaths.

In conclusion, one can say that there is glory in victory, there is glory in defeat but there is none in cowardice. One should face all the challenges bravely without fearing the outcome. Life is not always a bed of roses. It is a bittersweet mixture of experiences. We should be brave enough to face the unpleasant the way we face the pleasant.

Tips for Writing an Essay

Preparation:

- **Read:** The more you read, the better you get. Reading essays will give you inspiration to write. It will fill you with knowledge which you can use to enrich your writing.
- **Write:** Practise writing essays. This will give you the necessary confidence that you require during the exams. Writing also sharpens your thought process preparing you to deal with essay questions with much ease.

Writing

- Think about the idea given in the title or the prompt.
 - What type of essay will be appropriate?
 - What could be the main ideas?
 - How to write the introduction, the body and the conclusion?
 - Write all the ideas.
- Structure your essay.
 - Create an outline of your essay.
 - Do not use more than two sentences to introduce the idea and to conclude.
 - Plan your essay instead of writing spontaneously.
 - Arrange the ideas in a chronological order if you are attempting a narrative essay.
 - Arrange them in the increasing order of importance while attempting a descriptive or an expository essay.
 - Remember to conclude the essay.
- Use a consistent tense form while writing the essay.
- Express clearly.
- Be original in your ideas. Don't be afraid to think out of the box.
- Use your own memories or your experiences to enhance the essay.
- Recheck for any grammatical errors after finishing the essay.

More Samples

Narrative Essay

Sample 7

A Sleepless Night

After the exams, Karan, Aditya and I decided to crash at Karan's place for a sleepover. We were also joined by Karan's elder brother Jay for the night. We played videogames all evening and ordered pizza for dinner. Jay had a good collection of games ranging from *Skyrim* to *Call of Duty*, and he let us play to our hearts' content. At about 10 pm, Aditya started feeling drowsy. It was no surprise that he was nodding off since he had stayed up studying History the previous night. To keep him up, Jay came up with an idea. He first brewed fresh coffee for all of us and served them biscuits. He switched off all the lights and asked us to sit in a circle. He held up a battery-operated torch against his face after wrapping a bedsheet over his head. He said, "Now I will tell you the story of the Ghostly Old Lady..."

Aditya who was half-asleep awhile ago, sat upright with his ears pricked up. Karan and I also huddled close to each other trying to listen to Jay's ghostly tale. In the back of my mind, I knew that Jay loved to spin yarns. But I was willing to make an exception this time and believe his tall tale about some phantom lurking around the streets of Mumbai. He cleared his throat and started, "Long ago in the 1970s, there was a lane not far from where we live. It is called, S. K. Street." "What does S. K. stand for? Aditya interrupted. "Weren't you feeling sleepy awhile ago? Hush and reserve all your comments and questions for later," Jay continued, "Where was I? Oh yes! The old abandoned street was once thriving with activity. One night, a taxi driver was driving his car at midnight when he suddenly ran over a woman at S. K. Street. The driver panicked and refused to get out of his car. The woman made several pleas to the driver to take her to the hospital. When the driver did not budge, she cursed him with dire consequences before she breathed her last."

I could hear the sound of bones rattling. I looked over to the right to see that it was Aditya who was finally out of his sleepy stupor shivering with fright. We were suddenly startled by the sound of an owl hooting. Jay continued in his determined manner, "Years later, when the driver unknowingly happened to drive by S. K. Street, out of the mist appeared a comely young woman who appeared to be floating. In a bid to swerve the car out of her way, he met with a gruesome accident and died. The passenger in his car was strangely unhurt and lived to tell the tale about the mysterious floating woman. The identity of the woman could never be ascertained by the police. Every year on the anniversary of her death, the woman is said to appear out of the mist in front of unsuspecting people. Sometimes, people even claim to have seen them inside their own homes." Jay paused, "Tonight is the anniversary of her death.."

Beside my own, the faces of Aditya and Karan had gone pale. We huddled close to each other at night and slept under the thick blanket. In the cold winter air, we could hear unearthly hoots and groans. That was probably the longest night of our lives.

Sample 8**Riding a Bike for the First Time**

I was always intimidated by the idea of riding a bike. Bicycles scared me. I always wondered how could something so light and slim balance my bodyweight let alone sustain me on it. My father noticed me staying away from my friends' bike ride sessions. I would immerse myself into a book or make up some excuses in a bid to avoid going with them. For my next birthday, he gifted me a bicycle. It horrified me since I was expecting a set of encyclopaedias. Besides, the bicycle was the last thing I wanted. I may have been happier not receiving a gift at all that year. I had no choice but to accept it.

The bicycle lay in my yard for many days until the inevitable happened. My father questioned me whether I intended to use the bicycle at all. After trying my luck with some flimsy excuses to evade him, he ultimately caught my bluff. He was determined to teach me how to ride the bike since he felt that I was missing out on my childhood.

We went to a park nearby early in the morning. The fact that it was empty relieved me a little. Even if I were to fall in the most embarrassing way possible, I would still be saved from becoming the laughingstock of the town. Mounting the bike was the scariest thing to do. Even with my petite frame, I was perpetually frightened of flattening the tyres of the bicycle. It took me awhile to understand that it could take my weight. After a lot of coaxing and cajoling from my father, I managed to mount the cycle. He firmly held the seat to ensure that I don't fall. I stepped on the foot pedals and moved my feet gingerly. With my father behind me, I wasn't afraid of anything. I enjoyed the beautiful morning air and admired the tiny flowers growing on either side of the narrow path. The tiny song birds welcomed the morning sun with their melodies of their own. I took a deep breath of the fresh morning air and said, "Dad I think I like this bike. You think I am doing well?" There was no reply from his side. I turned around to see that he was no longer behind me. Instead, he stood 30 metres away and was waving to me. I rode the wobbly cycle for a few feet and bumped into a tree.

My father came running to my aid. "Are you ok?" he asked. I was so livid that I stuttered in anger, "Wh-why did you let me r-r-ride on my own?" My father said, "Can't you see? You rode for 30 seconds on your own. Had you not realised I was no longer behind you, you could have kept riding." I realised something that day; it was my own mindset that stopped me from trying out new things. I was so preoccupied with failing at the task that I barely gave myself a chance to succeed. That day I turned a new leaf and vowed to believe in myself no matter what.

By the end of the vacation, I mastered the art of riding bicycles. I could not only ride my bike intrepidly along the bumpy road but also beat my friends at the bicycle race.

Descriptive Essay

Sample 9

My Favourite Superhero

I, like most children of my age, fawn over comic books and comic book heroes who perform superhuman tasks of saving mankind and restoring the order in a chaotic society. Characters like Superman, Spiderman and Batman fuel the imagination of children all over the world. Each has his or her own story why a particular superhero is special to him or her. For me, the best superhero has always been and will always be Batman.

Batman's real name is Bruce Wayne a multimillionaire and a philanthropist who heads the colossal Wayne Enterprises. Under his suave and handsome exterior is a past that is painful and heart wrenching. As a child, he witnesses the murder of his parents at the hands of a mugger. The incident scars him for life and shapes his decision to become a vigilante.

Batman becomes the protector of Gotham City fighting wrong doers and saving the innocent. As a child, Bruce Wayne was afraid of bats. He overcomes his fear for his childhood enemy and turns the fear into his strength. He turns into Batman, a vigilante and a masked avenger who watches over his city.

Unlike other superheroes like Superman and Spiderman, Batman does not possess any superpowers. He relies on his intellect, his brawn, his intuition and the gadgets he develops with the help of his wealth and technology. This makes him more believable and respectable. He is the master of tact. Batman possesses the unique capability to formulate solutions for the toughest of situations. He lurks in the shadows spying and studying the criminals from a distance before attacking.

Batman is also a dark and brooding character with a slightly cynical attitude towards life. He lacks the optimism of Superman, the youthful charm of Spiderman and the righteousness of Captain America. He comes across as a flawed and a deeply hurt man trying to ease the pain of his parents' untimely demise by rescuing people from becoming victims to evil forces. In Batman I see a very realistic character who is not without his flaws. Like most of us, he is not perfect and is constantly evolving. I admire Batman because he gives us hope that anybody could become a superhero.

Sample 10**A Vacation in Kashmir**

After a particularly tiring year, I proposed the idea of a trip to my family. We decided to take a vacation in probably one of the most beautiful places in India, Kashmir. Although every place has its own specialty and each is beautiful in its own way, Kashmir holds a special place in my heart. The place is nothing short of a paradise with its temperate climate, pristine air, lush vegetation and snow-capped mountain tops.

We had planned the itinerary in such a manner that we could not only witness Kashmir's scenic beauty but also learn about its historical and archaeological wealth. We were astonished by the beautiful landscape of Kashmir with its tall Chinar trees and green valleys. The place is abounding with rich flora and fauna. Its high altitude regions are home to rare varieties of animal and plant life.

Temperate vegetation studded the lush landscape of Kashmir. Wild strawberries grew in abundance and exotic flowers carpeted velvet valleys. Even though we clicked many pictures, none of them could do justice to the stupendous scenic beauty we had witnessed with our eyes. Kashmir houses shrines of sages and temples of Hindu gods and goddesses. The Shankaracharya Temple situated to the southeast of Srinagar stands out for its architectural beauty.

We visited the Martand Sun Temple near Anantnag. The temple is very unique and according to the experts, the building reflects the Gandhara, Greek, Roman and Syrian-Byzantine style of architecture. The Chasme Shahi or the Royal Spring is known for its therapeutic values. The waters of the spring are known to have cured many of their ailments. The Iranian inspired garden surrounds the spring. We were refreshed just by being around it. A boat ride on Dal Lake was the highlight of the trip. We enjoyed a sublime ride on the Shikara while admiring the picturesque sights. It was both invigorating and relaxing at the same time.

As we returned from our trip, our minds were full of the sublime images of Kashmir. The words of Emperor Jahangir, "If there is a heaven on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here." was spoken in order to describe the beauty of Kashmir. One couldn't agree more with him.

Expository Essay

Sample 11

How to Grow a Bonsai Plant

Bonsai is a Japanese word that literally means 'planted in a container'. It's an ancient horticultural practice which involves systematically pruning branches and stems of plants to create dwarfed versions of trees. The process of creating bonsais requires patience and precision. One cannot hope for achieving results overnight. The process spans months or even years, but in the end, it is worth the entire wait.

The first step is to acquire a perfect tree for the process. Not all plants can be turned into a bonsai so one has to be very careful while selecting a plant. Ascertain whether the plant is to be used at home or to be placed in the garden. If you want to keep the plant outdoors, select a deciduous plant for yourself. Otherwise, tropical species such as snowrose, jade or olive are good for indoor decoration.

Bonsai plants have to be repotted; growing it in a pot may cause the soil around the roots to solidify. This can prevent the water and other essential nutrients from getting absorbed by the plant. Repotting also lets us prune the roots and give shape to the plant.

Select a tree with a strong trunk, but ensure that it is still young. Older plants may find it difficult to adapt to the new pot. Check the roots of the tree; ensure that they are spread out in all directions. Stay away from the plants that have entangled roots or the ones that are growing in a single direction.

Pruning and wiring are important procedures when it comes to shaping the bonsai. It is necessary that we snip and shape the plant regularly. It is important to maintain the health and appearance of the bonsai by giving it good care. It is a commitment that can last a lifetime. Japanese families were known to have handed down bonsai plants from one generation to another. Watering the bonsai is as important as watering other plants. Ensure that the soil is damp but not saturated with water. Keep them in a corner where they receive plenty of sunlight and moisture. Fertilise it like you would do regular plants and watch out for any parasitic infection.

Creating a bonsai is a very rewarding experience. Try it only if you are ready to look after it all your life. It can be a valuable gift that you could give to someone who is very important to you. It is symbolic of your relationship with him or her: something that was nurtured with a lot of love, care and patience.

Sample 12**Production of Chocolate**

Everybody loves chocolate and it is a common item in a lot of foodstuffs such as milkshakes, chocolate bars, energy bars, cookies and breakfast cereals. From the ancient Aztecs to us in the modern world, no one can resist its deep, nutty taste. The production of chocolate is a complex procedure. It involves harvesting cocoa, refining the cocoa seeds, shipping them to the manufacturing plant where it is cleaned and ground, and ultimately exported to various countries to be transformed into different types of chocolates.

The cocoa plant is a tropical evergreen tree found in the wet lowland tropics of Central and South America, West Africa and Southeast Asia. For commercial purposes, these trees are harvested manually in the forest. The cocoa beans are carefully selected from the plant and are shipped to the manufacturer.

Cocoa beans are harvested from the pods that grow on the trunk and branches of cocoa trees. They can grow as large as a rugby ball sometimes. The harvesters single out the ones that are yellow or deep orange since they are ripe. The raw ones will still be green. These yellow and orange pods are hacked off the tree trunks with the help of machetes.

Machines are not used for picking cocoa pods as it is a process that involves care. They could risk damaging the cocoa tree or the clusters of flowers and pods that grow on its trunk. Hooked blades are used to extract pods that cannot be reached. The pods are collected and processed. They are split wide open and the beans are removed. Each pod can contain about 50 beans and they do not have the distinct colour or taste of chocolate yet.

The beans are fermented by placing them in large shallow trays and heating them. During the fermentation process that takes five to eight days, the beans turn brown. They are later dried in the sun for a week. During this process, the beans reduce to half of their original weight.

Once they are dried, they are sent to factories where they are refined into chocolate or cocoa butter. The fermented cocoa beans are roasted and winnowed. They are melted to make chocolate liquor and milk is added along with sugar. The molten mixture is poured into moulds and cooled to make chocolate slabs. They are packed and sent to the retailers for sale.