

ACE YOUR EXPOSITORY/ ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

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OBJECTIVES OF AN EXPOSITORY/ ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

To assess:

- ▶ the student's **maturity of thought**
- ▶ the **ability to think independently**
- ▶ **proficiency in language use**

OBJECTIVES OF AN EXPOSITORY/ ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

Students are expected to:

- ✧ Develop a **critical awareness of continuity and change (trends) in society** in order to have a better understanding of the world we live in.
- ✧ Develop a **global perspective** and yet relate it to what is happening to **Singapore and the region**.
- ✧ Appreciate the **interrelationship of ideas across disciplines** (economy, policies, environment, education etc).

OBJECTIVES OF AN EXPOSITORY/ ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

Students are expected to:

- ✧ Critically assess arguments and opinions **and developed informed arguments and opinions** of your own.
- ✧ Demonstrate skills of **clear, accurate and effective communication** (using correct spelling, punctuation, grammar, vocabulary, expressions).
- ✧ **Read widely and independently.**

HOW TO READ ACTIVELY

As you read an article, note the following:

- ✧ Topic & Issue (to note possible type/classification of essay questions)
- ✧ Key Points and Examples (to aid in the development of ideas and potential examples)
- ✧ Vocabulary and expressions related to the topic
- ✧ Personal reflection on the article (helps you to develop an opinion on the issue and formulate your own responses to it).

➤ Content: 30 Marks

➤ Language: 20 Marks

ESSAY CONTENT

You have to:

- ✦ answer the question in a manner that reflects **a clear understanding of the topic and issue raised in the question.**
- ✦ Be relevant by **addressing the requirements** of the question **throughout the essay.**
- ✦ **Reflect a breadth of knowledge of the issue** based on your readings and observations.
- ✦ **Use appropriate and wide-ranging examples to illustrate and support your points**
(that are current, significant and span the local/global contexts).

ESSAY CONTENT

You have to:

- ✧ Develop your own voice through a **critical, personal evaluation of the issue**. This entails an **awareness of different views**, thus providing for a **balanced discussion** which reflects **maturity of thought**.
- ✧ Organise your essay coherently (e.g. in **the 6-paragraph expository essay format**). Effective paragraphing and linkage will help the essay flow logically and coherently.

APPLYING THE ESSAY WRITING PROCESS

1. **Analysing the Question** (Topic Focus, Core Issues to be Addressed)
2. **Brainstorming** (Coming up with ideas related to the topic)
3. **Planning** (Selecting the most cogent, relevant points/examples for inclusion in a coherent essay structure – Thesis Statement/ Topic Sentences/ Support & Exemplification)
4. **Drafting** (Building the points into paragraphs – Topic Sentence/ Support & Exemplification/ Link to Topic Sentence)
5. **Reviewing** (Proof-reading for grammatical, spelling, punctuation errors)

✧ Note that these steps are iterative in nature

✧ You can use Argument Trees to organise your stance/ideas

CHOOSING THE RIGHT QUESTION

1. Read through all 6 questions
2. Eliminate questions that you do not understand, confuse you, have no interest in, have no ideas about.
3. Compare the remaining questions that you have shortlisted
4. Analyse each one such that you understand fully the requirements
5. Choose the one you have **a clear stance/ concrete & salient examples** to write on.

✦ **Good question selection gives you confidence and enables you to demonstrate thorough preparation.**

ANALYSING ESSAY QUESTIONS

- ▶ Read the entire question carefully
- ▶ Note the keywords
- ▶ Look out for qualifiers (*always, ever, no, never, only, worst*)
- ▶ Check for ambiguity, vagueness and subjective terms
- ▶ Check out for additional conditions in the question
- ▶ Develop your thesis and balance

USEFUL PLANNING/ BRAINSTORMING STRATEGIES

Aspects to explore (SPEEEET):

- ✧ Social
- ✧ Political
- ✧ Economic
- ✧ Environmental
- ✧ Education
- ✧ Entertainment
- ✧ Technological

This will help you to jumpstart the focused brainstorming process. This will ensure the incorporation of a range of aspects/ideas that will facilitate a cross-disciplinary discussion.

STARTING THE ESSAY

An effective introductory paragraph should:

- ✦ Reflect a comprehension of the question (definition of the key terms and scope of the topic and/or a hook)
- ✦ An awareness of all the implications inherent in the question – and the provision of background information the reader needs to contextualise the information provided.
 1. Why are we discussing this question?
 2. Why is this question important or relevant?
- ✦ A clear line of argument – as embodied in the content-driven thesis statement (State Issue@ Hand - Provide your stance - Explain why)

STARTING THE ESSAY

You can begin with:

- ✧ A general statement/ question/ quotation
 - ✧ A general misconception that you wish to correct
 - ✧ A scenario or story
- ▶ This should be complemented with a content-driven thesis statement (state issue at hand/state your stand/ explain why)

THE PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

1. Topic Sentence
2. Elaboration:
 - ❑ Relevant examples, facts, figures
 - ❑ Analogies to illustrate an abstract idea
 - ❑ Classification of ideas
 - ❑ Comparison and contrast of ideas
 - ❑ Explanation of cause and effect
 - ❑ Problem-solution analysis
3. Concluding sentence/ Link back to Topic Sentence

CONCLUDING THE ESSAY

- ▶ The conclusion can make or break your essay.
- ▶ A good well-written conclusion can reinforce your thesis statement and the main body of the essay and provide a clear sense of closure.

METHODS FOR WRITING THE CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH

- ▶ Summarise the main points in the essay (with paraphrasing)
- ▶ Provide thought-provoking questions for the reader to consider
- ▶ Include a prediction
- ▶ Include a recommendation (that suggests what can be done about the problem or situation)
- ▶ Include a relevant quotation/anecdote that supports your viewpoint

ANY QUESTIONS?

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