

Writing

Essay Writing

The composition is sometimes called an 'essay'. While writing an essay one has to write well-organised, clear, and accurate English. One has to plan the composition carefully, so that it has unity. The material should also be presented in a logical sequence. One should try to write in a style appropriate to the subject. Care must be taken to be accurate in punctuation, spelling, and grammar. The imaginative composition always demands that the writer puts something of himself into his writing.

The first requirement of a composition is that it must interest the reader. An interesting story has originality and the originality is achieved when the writer puts something of himself into his composition. Everything that happens in the story must be a development carrying the narrative forward. Finally, the story must have an atmosphere.

The descriptive subject does not face the writer with a narrative problem. There is no story to tell. Even so, one must gather, select, and arrange one's material carefully. Gathering the material for a descriptive composition requires clear thought. Relying on personal experience helps you to write about real things. To write a successful descriptive composition one must find a theme-and stick to it.

A discursive composition is one in which the writer arrives at a conclusion by reasoning. He considers in turn various aspects of his subject matter and then proceeds to make a statement of his own carefully-thought-out opinions about that subject. The alternative name for discursive writing is 'argumentative writing'. One must have the ability to see both sides of an argument and to present opposing views clearly, coolly and fairly. One must also be able to move steadily through conflicting arguments and to present a clear conclusion at the end.

Examples

The Pen is Mightier than the Sword

Men are dazzled by the victories of a warrior. They cannot see the slow and sure, and far more powerful, influence of a writer. Naturally they think that the sword-the weapon of the warrior -is more powerful than the pen -the simple instrument of the writer. But like most popular notions, this is wrong.

The victory of a warrior is, in the first place, confined to a particular place and to a limited number of men. He is recognised only when he has achieved his victory; he is obeyed only by those persons whom he has been able to force into subjugation, and that most unwillingly. Not so the man who has given the world an idea. Ideas, they say, have wings. They spread over the whole world and influence millions of unknown men into a willing submission to the mind of the writer.

Then again, the effect of brute force is very temporary in its nature. As soon as the great conqueror or dictator dies, the work of his life-time begins to crumble. Those who have been kept down or held together by sheer force begin to assert themselves and undo what was achieved by the sword. We can see this in the case of mighty conquerors like Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, and Aurangzeb. The case of a really great writer is just the opposite. With the passage of time his glory and power, instead of diminishing grow greater and greater. More and more men acknowledge his greatness and pay respect to him. Who will say that Karl Marx is not powerful today than when he was living? Or Galileo? Or Shakespeare? Or Jesus? Or even Mahatma Gandhi? Such instances prove beyond doubt that ideas are stronger than strength, that the pen is mightier than the sword.

In the next place, the conquest of the sword is always to be measured in terms of misery. You have to be violent and you must terrorise your opponent into submission-when you do not kill him- if you want to gain a victory by means of your sword. One may question whether such a victory is worth the trouble. For a victory with your pen, all that you want is a sweet reasonableness. If you can in earnest and convince the public by what you write, your victory is certain. And such a victory is at least worth having for the sake of humanity itself.

We may go one step more before we conclude. The saying that the pen is mightier than the sword is not only true metaphorically; it is true in a literal sense also. In the history of the world whenever men of power come into conflict with men of ideas it is the latter who have ultimately won. The haughty users of France, who could say that they were the state, were swept from the throne by the people enlightened and encouraged by the writings of men like Rousseau and Voltaire. It was the writings of Karl Marx and Lenin more than anything else that brought about the downfall of the high and mighty Czar of Russia. In fact all revolutions everywhere have always been preceded by the fervent writings and zealous preaching of a few men possessed by an idea- thus proving beyond doubt that the pen is mightier than the sword.

Climate change

Climate change will make monsoons unpredictable; as a result, rain-fed wheat cultivation in South Asia will suffer in a big way and the total cereal production will go down.

Industrial development is important for economic growth, employment generation and improvement in the quality of life. However, industrial activities without proper precautionary measures for environmental protection are known to cause pollution and associated problems. If ecological and environmental criteria are forsaken, "industrialise and perish" will be the nature's retort.

Now, there is a global consensus about the threat posed by the climate change. The disagreement is only, on how to go about altering human activities that unleash greenhouse gases, fuelling global warming. The recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is the latest scientific assessment of the impact of Global Warming on human, animal and plant life. The culprit is greenhouse gases, notably carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. These are accumulating to unprecedented levels in the atmosphere as a result of profligate burning of fossil fuels, industrial processes, farming activities and changing land use.

The greenhouse gases act like a blanket around the earth, trapping too much of the heat that would otherwise have escaped into space. The IPCC is a body of 2500 scientists that brings out reports, considered the last word on the Science of Climate Change. "Warming of the Climate System is unequivocal", says the IPCC in its latest report, pointing to the increased global, air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow, and ice and rising sea levels. If the introduction of these greenhouse gases continued to soar, global temperature could rise up by 2.40C to 6.40 C by the end of the century, with far-reaching consequences for the climate, warned the IPCC. The report has given fresh impetus to finding solutions to the global warming problem.

The summit meeting of the Group of Eight Industrialised countries (G8) to be held in June in Germany is expected to launch new initiatives for collective action by both rich nations and fast growing developing countries to combat climate change.

The report provides hope that concerted action can make a real difference in the next quarter century. The panel is convinced that greenhouse gases in the atmosphere can be pegged at relatively safe levels, with measures that will not affect GDP growth.

It is little surprise that the panel found that owing to human activity, gas emissions, primarily CO₂, rose by 70 per cent between 1970 and 2004. What is of great interest to policymakers is the actionable part of the report, which addresses emissions by sectors such as energy producers, transport, buildings, land use, agriculture, and forestry. Much of that challenge lies in implementing carbon capture and storage technologies in the energy supply sector, which in the past three and half decades has been responsible for a 145 per cent increase in gas emissions.

Indian Impact

Climate change will make monsoons unpredictable. As a result, rain-fed wheat cultivation in South Asia will suffer in a big way. Total cereal production will go down. The crop yield per hectare will be hit badly, causing food insecurity and loss of livelihood. The rising levels of the sea in the coastal areas will damage nursery areas for fisheries, causing coastal erosion and flooding. The Arctic regions, Sub-Saharan Africa, small islands and Asian mega deltas, including the Ganga and Brahmaputra, will be affected most.

Changes in climate around the globe are expected to trigger a steep fall in the production of cereals, says R K Pachauri, chairman of the IPCC. He estimated that a rise of 0.5 degree celsius in winter tempratures could cause a 0.45 tonne per hectare fall in India's wheat production. The average per hectare production in India is 2.6 tonnes. Worse still, Pachauri said, total agricultural land will shrink and the available land may not remain suitable for the present crops for too long. Farmers have to explore options of changing crops suitable to weather. He also pointed out that climatic changes could lead to major food security issues for a country like India.

The report also predicts huge coastal erosion due to a rise in sea levels of about 40 cm resulting from faster melting of glaciers in the Himalayan and Hindukush ranges. It can affect half-a-million people in India because of excessive flooding in coastal areas and also can increase the salinity of ground water in the Sunderbans and surface water in coastal areas.

India needs to sustain an 8 to 10 per cent economic growth rate, over the next 25 years, if it is to eradicate poverty and meet its human development goals, according to a 2006 report on an integrated energy policy prepared by an expert committee of the Planning Commission. Consequently, the country needed at the very least to increase its primary energy supply three or four -fold over the 2003-04 level.

India's economic growth would "necessarily involve increase in (greenhouse gas) emissions from the current extremely low levels." Any constraints on such emissions by India, whether direct, by way of emission targets, or indirect would reduce growth rates, the report stated. However, the report also added, "India should be willing to contain her (greenhouse gas) emissions as long as she is compensated for the additional cost involved."

Indian Stand

India has been arguing at all climate negotiations that though it is among the top 10 emitters of carbon dioxide, the per capita emission is still one-sixth of the global average. Further, it has managed an 8 per cent growth with only a 3.7 per cent growth in energy consumption. India may oppose any move to seek its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and will ask the developed world to transfer Intellectual Property Rights with the clean technologies.

The Indian Constitution on a sensitive provision in Article 48-A states, "The State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country." This is a fundamental obligation of the state since its violation has fatal implications. Article 51A (g) creates a fundamental duty on every

individual to obey the mandate of environment and ecology.

India needs to chart out a roadmap for itself in the light of the report on climate change. Climate change can be mitigated in many ways, such as improving the efficiency of energy - intensive devices, vehicles and buildings, all of which involve direct and indirect gas emissions. Developing countries like India must adopt new energy - efficient technologies.

Fuel - efficient vehicles, hybrid vehicles, and affordable and safe public transport need policy support in the form of lower taxes and promotion of usage. The government can mandate that buildings integrate green technologies such as solar photovoltaic systems, which are particularly relevant in a country with plentiful sunlight. The energy efficiency of end user equipment can be ensured through appropriate tax brakes and certification systems. The improved cooking stoves and high efficiency lighting, heating and cooling devices are available even today. What they need is promotion.

Composition

Practical compositions of all kinds demand clarity and economy of writing. Practical or factual writing is writing that gets things done. It is writing that is performed to achieve a clear-cut and practical result. The successful performance of writing that gets things done depends upon the writer's ability to be clear and not to waste words.

Your writing is likely to get things done if it possesses clarity and economy; and it will be clear and economical if you present your material in a logical order.

When describing an appliance, a piece of apparatus or equipment (a ball point pen, for example), divide your material into parts corresponding to the component parts of the object being described.

When describing or outlining a transaction (applying for a driving licence, for example) divide your material into stages corresponding to the stages of the transaction.

When describing a process or giving instructions (how to make tea, for example) divide your material into steps that must be taken to perform the task that you are describing.

Example

Article: Moral Courage

'Courage' means fearlessness, and moral courage denotes that fearlessness of mind which enables one to stick to what one thinks to be right, even in the face of the opposition of the whole world. Man is a social animal; he lives in a society and has to depend upon it for most of the comforts and conveniences of his life. He is therefore reluctant to incur the disapproval of that society. Now, every society is sometimes lamentably wrong. It clings blindly to customs and conventions that might have been useful at one time but are positively harmful today. Even its sense of justice is sometimes too conventional to be really just. Ordinary men accept these standards and live by them, even if they do not approve of them. A man with moral courage stands up and boldly challenges them-sometimes with painful results to himself; but he does not care. Of such are the reformers of the world.

The persecution of Raja Ramamohan Roy for having the courage of his convictions is well known; Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar's moral courage has passed almost into a proverb. The bold stand that he took in the matter the remarriage of Hindu widows, the prevention of polygamy, and the spread of English education in the country showed the great moral courage that he possessed. His views on all these matters were too advanced for most of his countrymen in those days, and he had to face bitter criticism from many quarters, but nothing daunted, he forged ahead and finally succeeded in all his attempts. Not only in public life, but in his private life too, Vidyasagar showed tremendous moral courage and an unbending strength of mind. His utter disregard of the cruel caste-system in his personal life is known to all.

Moral courage cannot bring us wealth, but it gains us the respect of the whole world. Even those who are opposed to the man of moral courage have the highest respect for his integrity. The case of Mahatma Gandhi is an example of this. He was ready to risk his life for the thing that he considered to be right, and he did so more than once. It was his unbending will and steadiness of purpose that won him the respect of the whole world, including that of the people whom he fought (though always by pacific means) throughout his life.

But if moral courage is to be admired, obstinacy must be condemned, and that in the strongest terms. There are some men who are so possessed by the idea of their own importance that they cannot give up their viewpoint even when they feel that they are wrong. This is not moral courage, but sheer obstinacy or pig-headedness. Obstinacy is moral courage run amuck just as bravado or rashness is physical courage run amuck. Obstinacy gains nothing for a man; it only makes him unpopular.

Like all other virtues, moral courage has to be cultivated. We should not make moral cowards of our children in the name of obedience. We should teach them to be just, upright and honest if we want them to make a success of their own lives and raise their own nation, as well as humanity, to a higher level. 'Love truth, feel for others and

stand for the right ' seem to be three simple rules of conduct which, when followed, will make everybody morally courageous. Material failure, even death, is nothing when weighed against the personal worth of a man. We should teach our children that 'cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste of death but once ' ; we should teach them that 'one crowded hour of glorious life is worth an age without a name ' ; for it is only when they have absorbed such lessons that they will learn to look with contempt on the mean tactics of playing for safety.

Report and Speech

Ties with Iran: Desai's Hope A Report

The Prime Minister, Mr Morarji Desai, today expressed the hope that India's close economic ties with Iran would continue whichever was the Government there.

At Mr Desai's press conference here, a correspondent referred to the events in Iran and mentioned that India received oil from that country and had joint projects. He wanted to know the likely impact on India.

In his reply, Mr Desai expressed the hope that 'these relations will continue, when the Government there settled down-whatever the Government'.

Note the following points about this report:

(1) It is a report on a 'press conference ' in which the Prime Minister met press reporters and explained to them his Government's actions and policies. He also answered the pressmen's questions.

(2) The report uses indirect form. What actually happened in the press conference was something like this:

Reporter: Mr prime Minister, may I draw your attention to the recent developments in Iran? Great changes have taken place in the political set-up there. Now, India has certain contracts and agreements with that country. We get oil from there and we have many joint projects. How does your Government view these events?

The Prime Minister: We are watching the developments there and waiting for the country to settle down. It is our hope that our close economic ties with Iran will continue, whatever the Government.

Example: Public Speaking

This motivation speech was written for presentation at a Toastmasters club meeting:
“Mr. Toastmaster, ladies and gentlemen, my speech tonight is not simply about me, but also about being different. I have chosen this topic because it is something that is very dear to me and something I have made a personal philosophy and which I endeavour to live by.

I think it all started when I was 18 years old and in my first year at campus. That was about the time that I started to observe people's behaviour and just to think about life. I was taking a walk with two friends and was in deep thought. They were chatting, but I was not paying attention to what they were saying. Then suddenly I said

“You know guys; I am pretty disappointed with the adult world.”

One of them asked me why and I explained that when I was going to campus I expected a lot of change and difference in the behaviour of the people around me. After all, they were adults. I always thought being an “adult” was a lot different from being a kid. However I felt after being on campus for a few months that the adult world was not what I had expected.

Everyone just seemed to behave like they were still teenagers. Nobody seemed to be outstanding in any way. There was no distinction, as far as I could see, between the 18 year old and the 50 year old apart from their age! Where was the wisdom and excellence I had come to expect. There was no change!

I did not know it then, but over the years I have come to see that the reason people don't change is simply that they do not dare to be different.

What does being different mean?

Being different means:- Not being afraid to challenge the norm.- Being willing to take a chance.- Asking why.- Making your own track, not just following the well trodden path.- Charting your own course and destiny.- Being the person that you were meant to be.

I believe that everyone is born unique. But through the years we work very hard to be like everyone else. We conform to society's so-called "common-sense." Unfortunately it is just that "common sense." That does not mean its "good sense."

If I were to take just the people in this room, it is likely that most of you have spent anything from 15 to 20 years getting an education so you can get the jobs you have. Doesn't it strike you as irresponsible that one can spend so much time getting an education and yet so many people don't make any deliberate effort to develop their greatest asset themselves!

Most people think once they have a qualification that's it. They have arrived. Is it any wonder they don't grow? They are stagnant. Stuck at 18!

Most of us won't even read unless there's an exam in sight. But you know what? Everyday of your life is an exam. Everyday you either pass or fail the test of life. Everyday is an opportunity to grow beyond your present barriers and circumstances. Everyday is a chance to become a better person.

The saddest part is most of people don't realize this. If they had to be graded at the end of their lives you know what they'd get? D, D and more D's. And yet they thought they were doing very well. They let society's "common sense" grade them

If I can leave you with one piece of advice it would be this: READ

Society celebrates mediocrity so much that it does not take much to set yourself above the rest. Doing that one thing regularly will put you way above the rest. Read books that challenge you and that make you think.

I have decided to read at least one book every month. I'm already amazed at the results.

MY FINAL WORDS

In closing I'd like to say to those of you that are skeptics out there, those of you that are saying "oh, he is just drink with the omnipotence of youth. He'll get over it, and then he'll be just like everyone else."

My words to you are:

"I ain't going out like that. I know that I have an abundance of potential within me and I will bring it out to fruition. Why?"

"Because...**I'M DIFFERENT!**"