

English Language for Competitive Exams
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Week - 03
Lecture - 13
Writing: Long Essays (Continued...)

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Sample Essay Topics on Civil Society and Governance

1. Discuss the significance of the Indian Constitution as the defining pillar of democracy in the country.
2. Can robust foreign policy sustain without foundation of a strong domestic policy? Express your opinions.
3. Right to Information could be ranked highest among human rights. Discuss.

So, we will continue where we stopped last time and please take a look at this slide. Topics on Civil Society and Governance, you should know what is civil society and governance as already talked about; you need to know what kind of exam you are appearing for. See all these kinds of topics may, may not appear for more general kinds of competitive exams; however, there are certain exams that may require without mentioning the names of those exams. So, know yourself and know your exam.

Discuss the significance of the Indian constitution as the defining pillar of democracy in the country. Can robust foreign policy sustain without foundation of a strong domestic policy? Express your opinions. The right to information could be ranked highest among human rights, discuss.

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1. Has India fulfilled Nehru's vision of a liberal, democratic and united nation?
2. It has been proposed that e-Governance is the most easy, effective and economical governance. What do you feel?
3. Do you feel that there is a need to isolate student politics from mainstream politics in India? Give reasons for your stance.

Has India fulfilled Nehru's vision of a liberal democratic and united nation? It has been proposed that e Governance is the most easy effective and economical governance. What do you feel? Now, e Governance you know for all this you have to know what is ICT; How information technology has revolutionized our society, and what is the condition of the rural section of society.

So, do not just look at the urban areas and the cities and their development, but is it possible to bring in e-Governance in the remotest part of our country? This is what you are expected to do. So, you should be able to know these things. Even in the earlier question, Nehruvian vision of a liberal democratic and united nation. So, are you familiar with the concepts of socialism? And again you should know that not having a degree in political science or in literature does not mean that you should not know about certain topics. See any exam can ask you a descriptive kind of a question on importance of sports in society and the over importance given to sports people in our country. So, whether you think they are over rated and given too much of importance or do you think that there are certain kinds of a sports which are given too much of attention as compared to more earthy, more you know the kinds of a sports which are played by our own people.

So, do you think that media and sponsoring agencies are giving more importance to let say international kinds of games such as and sports such as cricket of course, in our

country and then also of let foot ball. So, what is the reason for this and what happens to the more local kinds of sports? Do we need that or does it have to be do these sports have to be supported or not? That is a question. Now for that you have to know, what is the state of society? What has globalization brought to our country? So, those things are extremely important. So, do not just use the excuse that globalization is not your interest, if you are appearing for exams like these then globalization, civil society, some knowledge of culture, some interest in ethics etcetera. These topics have to be incorporated and you have to read them consistently.

Next question is do you feel that there is a need to isolate student politics from mainstream politics in India? Give reasons for your stance. Now again student versus mainstream politics, now do you think that there is enough student politics in India or do you think that the students are not too aware? So, what kinds of institutions in India give too much of a place a lot of importance on politics? Or has it just become an excuse for a students to gone a strike and bunk classes many people would take that position. Either way you need, ought to know something about both sides of the argument. Students are the future leaders, students are the let us say they are going to take over the reins of the country tomorrow.

So, should they be actively involved or should they be apolitical complete their studies and then get into other kinds of activities, particularly politic. So, you have to take a stand but should know about both these topics, both these arguments. A tip about tackling essays on civil society and governance, remember the general notions of civil society have been overly optimistic and have disregarded the ambiguities or and conflicts inherent in real civil societies. So, remember that the essay type questions here will likely focus on in adequacies and there will always be some kind of a conflict of interest, inherent or implicit in the question itself. So, read on the tensions between governmental control and grass route management that civil society offers. As a task often tend to focus on such problem areas.

So, familiarize yourself, think of organizations and associations that act as civil society in India. Read up on religious bodies, community groups, youth groups, service organizations, NGOs, pressure groups, interest groups, academic institutions in context. You need as the I have been telling you all through my sessions with you. You need to read good standard news papers in English language. You also need to read some good

standard magazines in the English language. Please understand that this is a class of, this is a course on English language. So, therefore, we will be talking about developing English languages skills. You may be very good in your language your mother tongue, but if you English or improvement of English language is your interest, you have to watch news in English language. You have to expose yourself to the language in order to express yourself better to you have to let me repeat you have to expose yourself enough to the language in order to express yourself better.

So, this is primary condition of apply or appearing for these exams. Know enough and express yourself in a better way.

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Sample Essay Topics on Poverty

1. "An essential condition to eradicate poverty is to liberate the poor from the process of deprivation." Substantiate this statement with suitable examples.
2. The first step to eradicating poverty is providing education. Discuss.
3. In the context of globalization and neo-liberalization, where do we place poverty and policy-making on poverty?

Let us move on to another slide. Please look at the topics here, read the slide, sample essay topics on poverty related issues. The one question could be, an essential condition to eradicate poverty is to liberate the poor from the process of deprivation. Substantiate this statement with suitable examples. So, what does it mean to eradicate poverties to liberate the poor from the process of deprivation? Are you talking about more egalitarian kind of society? Are you positioning our self to become a society where it is possible to liberate the poor and the marginalized and the under privileged from their poor social conditions, do you or economic conditions do you thing that is possible? What are the obstacles? What are the schemes? And how far and what are the implications of these

schemes? What are the far reaching implications of these schemes? Are they reaching enough people? So, all those are the important questions.

Next question, the first step to eradicating or to eradicate poverty is to provide education. Do you think education is the only means for a better life, for better financial conditions of the poor people? Ask us, what about condition such as caste system or superstitions, do you think that also prove to be kind of a hindrance in the upliftment of the poor? Ask yourself these questions. So, is it just enough to eradicate poverty and what are the necessary steps? Third question, in the context of globalization and neo liberalization, please note these areas where, these topics well. What do the, these topics mean? What do these words mean? Where do we place poverty and policy making on poverty?

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4. Discuss the Poverty Line as a concept and the implications of creating a divide as a quantitative tool of analysis.
5. What are the limitations in official estimates of poverty? Where do you place alternatives and suggestions?
6. How can one effectively bridge the rich poor gap in India?

And the next slide please, look at it. Discuss the poverty line as a concept and implications of creating a divide as a quantitative tool of analysis. This is more like economic driven question.

What are the limitations in official estimates of poverty? Where do you place alternatives and suggestions? And how can one effectively bridge the rich, poor gap in India? As, is often said that, the rich poor divide is only becoming deeper and greater, not only in India, but also in other parts of the world. This is global situation more deeply felt in our country. Is it possible to address it? In what way and where, in rural areas and urban areas what are the schemes? Are these schemes reaching the right people, the needy

people? In order to tackle questions on poverty you should know that poverty is one of the more sensitive and relevant topics that may appear in your exams. They need to be this area needs to be handled with caution and some sensitivity.

Be objective, at the same time be sensitive. Align your essay with your definitions of poverty. Is it simply lack of finances or money or is it tied up with concepts of education, general device, literacy freedom, cast issue etcetera. Examine ideas such as, the condition of the urban, poor and the poor migrants. This topic might have more relevant particularly with respect to the post demonetization cash crisis in the country. So, know what is happening in the country? What are the most recent developments in society and in economics, socio political economic conditions of the country? So, just saying that I am a student of science, I need not know this. I am a student of literature; I need not know this is going to just take you backwards.

Remember that you have to examine the current policies with respects to poverty, the importance and disadvantages of external aid, efficiency of existing policies. How to improve upon them and your personal inputs in terms of feasible alternatives to the same? All these are important.

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Sample Essay Topics on Environment and Society

1. Water resources should be under the control of the Central Government. What are your views?
2. Can ecological considerations always hamper development? How is it possible to propose a feasible synthesis of the two?
3. Examine the following statement: "Environmental concern is changing the course of international politics."

Let us move on to look at other topic that is on environment and society. Please look at the slide here. Water resources should be under the control of the Central Government. What are your views? Can ecological considerations always hamper development? How

is it possible to propose a feasible synthesis of the two? And examine the following statement; environmental concern is changing the course of international politics. Do you think that different countries have a different take on environmental issues? And do you think environmental issue as opposed to nuclear or defense related issue or trade related issues, are they is environment important enough to change the course of international politics? So, think about all these. Just do not think economics here, multinationals globalization, but also think of war efforts, war strategies, defense strategies and see how much do they impact environmental issues.

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4. Energy security is the prerequisite for any nation to become a super power. Do you agree?

5. Disaster management should be a top priority for all states. Write a note on the same in the light of recent developments in our country.

6. Ecotourism can be the next big thing for India, but is this a sustainable venture?

Let us look at another slide now, again continuation of the previous one. Energy security is the prerequisite for any nation to become a super power. Do you agree? Disaster Management should be a top priority for all states. Write a note on the same in the light of recent developments in our country? And ecotourism can be the next big thing for India, but is this a sustainable venture? So, something about everything so you need to know what is sustainability. You need to know, what is ecotourism? You need to know, what is energy security? You need to, why how countries become super power? Is it energy security enough; is energy security enough to make a country super power? How far do you agree or disagree.

Now, to give you some suggestions on; how to tackle essays on environment and society, remember most of the essay topics in this category will be linked to the questions of

sustainable development. So, you should know what is sustainable development? And the role you should also know the role of government and policy making in issues of environment. Know global issues as well as what is happening locally. You should also know the important debates in the area such as what is happening for example, in the state of Tamil Nadu; the controversy regarding Jallikattu. Then you should also know something about let us say stray animals, menace of stray animals. Then you should also know something about destruction that was recently caused. Even in the North East and in the North, you know earthquakes and cyclones and floods, so all these things merit focus.

You need to brush up on the ethical aspects of such topics as well before attempting them. Remember you need to have thorough understanding on the recent developments in the area such as nuclear treaties, environmental pacts, international agreements, summits etcetera, Paris agreement is something that you should know. So, all these are issues that are very commonly available in the newspapers as well on the internet. So, go through them while questions may not directly focus on these. It is essential that you mention such developments in your essay to make to give it that kind of an extra edge.

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Sample Topics on Religion and Society

1. True religion cannot be misused. Elaborate.
2. Are new cults and Godmen a threat to traditional religion? Justify your position.
3. "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind." Do you agree?
4. Is religious affiliation important in the modern world?
5. What are your views on same-sex marriage in the context of religion and society?

Now, let us look at this particular slide, sample topics on religion and society; another sensitive and controversial area.

True religion cannot be misused. You have to elaborate and are new cults and Godmen a threat to traditional religion? Justify your position. “Science without religion is lame religion without science is blind.” Do you agree? Is religious affiliation important in the modern world? And what are your views on the same sex marriage in the context of religion and society? These kinds of questions may come in National or International exams. Now you need not take a position or you need not agree with more liberal or democratic views here, but you should at least know, what are the key arguments. Remember different people interpret religion and religious beliefs in different ways and show that you do not take a single minded perspective, regardless of your personal beliefs. Your essay should be as accommodative as possible. Remember that there is no right answer here. You can interpret the question in any manner as long as you provide ample justification for your arguments.

You can even take an extreme position, but you need to look at the both sides. So, at least be well prepared. Be sure to write about what was the necessity for religion, for organized religion, its major beliefs, ethical considerations and rituals that give comprehensive well rounded assessment of the topic. It is the questions certainly, these kinds of questions do not require you to give or write a thesis on anyone particular religion, please remember that.

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Sample Topics on Science and Technology

1. Science and technology is the panacea for the growth and security of the nation. Justify your position.
2. Technology cannot replace manpower. Discuss.
3. Write a note on the charms and challenges of the cyberworld in the twenty first century.

Let us move on to the next topic. Look at the slide here and your topics or some examples on science and technology. Science and technology is the panacea for the; that panacea is another word for what? Look up the dictionary to understand the meaning of panacea. For the growth and security of the nation, justify your position.

Technology cannot replace manpower. Again, an extremely important question in the light of, so much of work being done by computers nowadays, by computers enough people even talk about replacing teachers with online education, is that possible? So, technology and man power talk about that. How important are robot for example, going to be in the future? They are going to perform surgery. Can you trust yourself to the skills of a robot when you go under the knives? So, that is the question here. So think of all these topics and areas and all these are issues that can also have impact on the ethical values of society as well think of that. Do not just give, take one unilateral or a narrow minded approach that yes technology is the thing and we no longer need human beings to you know organize or handle or operate certain kinds of things

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4. Science and Mysticism: Are they compatible? Justify your position with arguments.

5. Increasing computerization would lead to the creation of a dehumanized society. Do you agree?

6. The march of science and technology leads to an erosion of human values. Discuss.

But you have to understand that in a country of with one billion populations, is it feasible? Is it possible? Is it ethical to for technology to replace man parts. So, thing along these lines, third question write a note on the charms and challenges of the cyber world in the twenty first century. Next question science and mysticism are they compatible? Justify your position with arguments. Also increasing computerization

would lead to the creation of a dehumanized society. Do you agree? And next question the march of science and technology leads to an erosion of human values, discuss. Do you agree or disagree with this? March of science and technology, do you think that is possible? The erosion of human values, I would like you to discuss this.

Let us talk about how to tackle essays on science and technology. Remember essay topics on science and technology are usually tied up with other topics including economy and development, religion, labor policies, human values etcetera. When you are preparing do keep in mind to relate your research to these issues. Remember that you need to keep abreast of the most recent developments in the field. This does not just involve new inventions or discoveries, but also failures things have failed things were tried, but failed disasters in the say, area. So, think of all those perhaps in a, you can think of examples like a new gadget was introduced with great fanfare. Many people believed that company and they wanted to try it out. They booked pre booked for that particular gadget or equipment and then it turned out to be a total fiasco.

So, what do you think it is a possible or do you think it is advisable to trust technology so much? You should be also accommodative of destructive developments in science like the rise of nuclear energy and weaponry arms, arms raise etcetera. All these things should be noted as they form an important area of debate and discussion. You should, your essay should be nuanced include both sides of the argument. Do not feel the need to take only one side as I keep repeating in such kinds of essays, do not take a unilateral position. As the advantages and disadvantages of both positions, need to be brought out in your essay. Please do not take this advice lightly, you have to look at both sides of the argument; advantages, disadvantages this is what is meant when the question uses the word discuss or interpret or analyze. Let us move on and look at this slide now.

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Sample Topics on Ethics and Values

1. Words are sharper than the two-edged sword. Discuss.
2. In the context of Gandhiji's views on the matter, explore, on an evolutionary scale, the terms 'Swadhinata', 'Swaraj' and 'Dharmarajya'. Critically comment on their contemporary relevance to Indian democracy.

Sample topics on ethics and values, look at the slide. Words are sharper than the two-edged sword. Discuss. In the context of Gandhi's views on the matter, explore, on an evolutionary scale, the terms 'Swadhinata,' 'Swaraj' and 'Dharmarajya.' Critically comment on their contemporary relevance to Indian democracy. What do these words mean to you? Swadhinata is independence, Swaraj self governance, Dharmarajya a richest kind of governance not just religious kind, but more riches. So, how are these concepts interpreted in today's society? People who are not very nuanced in the thinking, who cannot think critically, they may have very different interpretations of these concepts. We would like you to look at the real meaning the exact meaning what did the father of the nation mean by these concepts.

So, this means that you need to have some familiarity with the constitution of our country, civil society and of course, ethics.

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4. Modernism and globalization have destroyed our traditional socio-ethical values. Discuss.

5. Is a sting operation an invasion on privacy? Describe your views.

6. Provide your views, with justifications, on the following statement: "As civilization advances culture declines".

Look at the next slide please. Modernism and globalization have destroyed our traditional socio ethical values, discuss. The very debatable and very popular kind of an essay topic, many people blame globalization, they call it westernization and westernization means everything that is bad. Westernization has led to break down, the breakdown of moral values in our society. It has led to the breakdown of the joint family system in our society. Many people feel that globalization is synonymous with westernization and it they associate it with all the negative attributes that are associated with the west in our mind set.

So, please ask yourself how far do you agree or disagree with this statement. Next question is a sting operation and invasion of privacy, describe your views; this is something that is becoming very popular and is it ethical. So, again lot of material or information is available on the net. Even historically and not just in our own country, but this is something that has been practiced all over the world, it is a very global kind of a phenomenon. Ask yourself and read up on this topic and see whether the situation is better or worse in other countries and do you thing sting operations can be a corrective to corruption and other social ills. Next question provide your view with justification on the following statement as civilization advances culture declines.

What is the difference, advancement of civilization and cultural values? In order to tackle the essays on ethics and values, remember these topics are usually based on

statements that carry some ethical and philosophical implications. You might need to examine the given a statement and provide your views on ethical aspects of the topic. Remember you have to ensure that you brush up on important philosophical concepts and frame works. This is important; read up on something on utilitarianism or egoism etcetera. These are important concepts that may help you in tackling these higher order essay type questions. Remember you can also tie up your ethical concerns with long standing concepts of relevance in the country such as traditions, culture, religion, etcetera.

Several topics deal with the erosion of traditional values in India and how it is important in the light of contemporary globalized times, but let me again caution you do not take a narrow unilateral approach to these things. You need to again in order to address these essays broaden your understanding of Indian philosophies and ethics, as seen through the Indian perspective. So, read up on that this will enrich your essays when you bring in both perspectives of or think learn to think on either side of ethical thought.

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Sample Topics on Culture

1. Does Indian cinema shape our popular culture or merely reflect it?
2. What do you think is the role of media in good governance? Justify your position.
3. Elaborate on the responsibility of media, if any, in a democracy.
4. "Modern youth cultures are irretrievably shaped by mass consumerism." Discuss.

Now, let us move on to talk about culture, look at the slide. Does Indian cinema shape our popular culture or merely reflect it? Does cinema influence society or is it just a mere are mirror to society? So, what which or what influences what? That is the question.

Are film filmmakers only showing you what is actually happening? Or do they create situations and society emulates them? What do you think is the role of media in good

governance, justify your position. Elaborate on the responsibility of media if any in a democracy, this is the very important question role of press, role of internet, role of television, citizen activism, citizen journalism.

So, all these things are becoming so popular nowadays people just take a picture on their mobile phones or their smart phones and it becomes news. People are posting information on Instagrams and Face books. So, social networks, social media is becoming also very important. So, is it a step ahead for democracy? Are people doing the jobs responsibly? These are the question. There are lots ethical issues also related to this. Modern youth cultures are irretrievably shaped by mass consumerism, discuss.

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1. Cities are the citadels of culture. What are your views?
2. "Above and beyond realistic representation, there is a responsibility on filmmakers and writers to envision better worlds, better possibilities." Do you agree with this statement?

Now, the issue related to mass consumerism is also very important. You should know what is that? Next question, cities are the citadels of culture. What are your views? Above and beyond realistic representation, there is a responsibility on filmmakers and writers to envision better worlds, better possibilities. Do you agree with this statement? Again this is an age long, age old kind of a debate that film makers have a responsibility to make social statement and make cinema with a social consciousness. Some recent films do have this kind of an angle, but do you thing that it is important or is it being done sufficiently? So, discuss this.

Remember and these are the tips that I can give you essays on culture cover, range of topics such as popular cinema, literature, cities, mass media, music etcetera. You need to

be aware of such popular culture and its relevance in contemporary times. An important focus point in these essay questions will be on the responsibility of such cultural actors, sorting out of cultural factors sorry sorting out your stance on these earlier we know just thinking of these and making certain notes will help you make your essay more informed one. Remember topics on culture are inevitably associated with questions of politics and governance. Freedom of speech is extremely important, democracy, right to expression and privacy all these things come into play when you talk about media and culture.

So, they have you have to brush up on these things. Be acquainted with the notion of globalization, liberalization, urbanization, these are the buzzwords nowadays and you must remember to time with culture and implications in the context of, implication of all these concepts in the context of twenty first century India. So, we have been now for the last two classes this one and the our previous one, we have been talking about long essay type questions. They are basically; they are to test your knowledge of a variety of topics and not just your language. Unless and until you read a lot and you expose yourself to lot of areas of interest. Remember that it will be very difficult for you to think of in spite of having the right of amount of language it would be difficult for you to think of enough material to bring in your essay. So, make sure that you read up on a wide range of topics. So, this is something that I would advise you to do on your own. Thank you very much we will soon meet for our next class.