English Language for Competitive Exams
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Week - 02
Lecture – 09
Academic writing

Welcome back. So, today we will start with or rather we will continue with writing task and essay type questions. As already mentioned in one of our previous sessions, writing task or as it writing sections of competitive exams require you to write an essay could be of a shorter length like 150 to 200 words or it could be; the requirement could be for longer pieces. For example, 500 words onwards which are basically there to test your competitive or writing, you are writing abilities for more competitive or more challenging types of exams.

Now, in any case the essay text your ability to respond to an argument in a logically coherent terms, that we have already discussed. Now I would like you to look at your ALD that is oxford dictionary; and look at the section which tells you something about the cohesive markers and the linking words. Please go through it very carefully because in when you do your writing, essay writing type of competitive exams you will have to or you are expected to use arguments, logic, examples and there you will need the necessary transitions words.

So, this is where ALD is going to help. They are very comprehensive, let us start words here. Remember, when you are writing an argumentative kind of an essay you should use at least three arguments or assumptions or examples in your writing, and adhere to a general structure of beginning middle and end, do not be creative here. There has to be an introduction, there has to be middle and there has to be appropriate conclusion that is your end. You must know that skills of argument identification, so summarizing, structural writing, organization, critical thinking language, etcetera are crucial in attempting the section.

There are three kinds of questions in writing task where, one could be analyzing an argument, second the analyzing or interpreting an issue and then also integrated kind of writing task. For writing task might my general tips to you would be that you should organize your task. Remember that organization is the most crucial aspect of any kind of writing. Follow the essay form of an introduction, a few body paragraphs and a very strong conclusion; take a stand there. The introduction should be short and serve as an end to point your main statements, defined and developed through the body paragraph of your essay.

Finally, the conclusion should in a very logic way. Recap your previous statements and arguments. Remember to stay focus, this is a text of your writing within a stipulated time frames, so do not meander away; stay focused even when the question itself seems abstract. It could be any kind of an abstraction, but please make sure that you are using examples to support your thesis. Example should not become the sole focus of your essay; this is important. So, and remember that when you end, your essay with a conclusion it should be have a proper tie up with the introduction and also to the basic question, what is the essay topic all about.

So, there should be, you should be able to integrate all this things. Examples as I was telling you is the add value, but they should not be the focus. So, do not just take an example and walk with it throughout the remaining essay. You have to take various strengths. In integrated writing task types, you are asked for other skills set also like listening and reading, use the primary data given. Do not try to bring in new arguments of your own when you have enough data and content to work with. Defend your position, this is another where you useful tip that I can give you. Since essay type questions are open ended there is no absolutely right or wrong we have been talking about it for a long time. As long as you support your argument with relevant details, right clearly and defend your position, your essay will still hold water. If it is easier to defend the position that may not be your personal preference or world view still go for it.

The essay is not about you, it is not about you remember; it is about what are you being tested on? Remember you are being tested on your language skills and you have to clear an exam. So, do not get too carried away by the ideal logical perspectives. Outline your

essay before writing, I have already told you this make rough notes every exam gives you sufficient scope and space for making a some rough notes and outlines or a scratches. You should always remember to strike them off before you leave.

Now, the argument task we are talking about the analyzing and argument task and this kind of task requires you to analyze a particular argument in which the author makes a case for some course of action or interpretation of events by presenting claims back by reason and evidence. So, your task involves critically examining the author's line of thinking and the validity of his claims through your writing. Remember that your task is not to discuss the actual truth value; whatever has been given to you in the question is what you should be dealing with or concerning yourself with. Do not try to discuss that actual truth about this, the statements.

A question is usually bagged up here by a specific set of instructions. For instance, writer response in which you discuss possible alternative, explanations, substantiate your answers with alternative explanations. So, these instructions will tell you what course to take for your argumentative essays. You are already being told all you have to do is that practice before going for the exam. Look at some sample and model questions and talk to your mentor, your teachers, your friends who have cleared such kinds of exams and ask them, what is the specific meaning? What are you being asked here? If it is discuss ask what is meant by discuss? If it is agree or disagree ask what you are supposed to write here?

Let me give you an example, now look at the slide here and this is analyze an argument type example.

Analyze an Argument: Example 1

The lush and green campus of IIT Madras is carved from parts of the Guindy National Park in Chennai, and is hence a hotspot for several unique species of animal and plant life. Over the past years, due to increasing demand for housing and other facilities, authorities have sanctioned the removal of trees in controlled levels so as to ensure the well-being of students and maintain the quality of living the campus is famous for. Surveys reveal that gradual deforestation has resulted in unpredictable behaviour of the animals in campus including monkeys or deer (who are also put at unease by the use of vehicles and construction work), and has brought about a general reduction in the quality of air. While the authorities have encouraged the systemic planting of trees, the plight of the animals is sure to continue, if not exacerbate, given the actual conditions at present. The campus committee should for that reason no longer build any more buildings in IIT Madras.

Let us read it. The lush and green campus of IIT Madras is carved from parts of the Guindy National Park in Chennai, and is hence a hotspot for several unique species of animal and plant life. Over the past years, due to increasing demand for housing and other facilities, authorities have sanctioned the removal of trees in controlled levels so as to ensure the well being of students and maintain the quality of living the campus is famous for. Surveys reveal that gradual deforestation has resulted in unpredictable behavior of the animals in campus including monkeys or deer who are also put at unease by the use of vehicles and construction work, and has brought about a general reduction in the quality of air. While the authorities have encouraged the systemic planting of trees, the plight of the animals is sure to continue, if not exacerbate, given the actual conditions at present. The campus committee should for that reason no longer build any more buildings in IIT Madras.

Now, what do you think of this? Now you have seen one example of analyzing a particular task. What you are expected to do is to write a response in which you examine the assumptions of the argument. Be sure to explain how the argument depends on the assumptions and what the implications are if the assumptions prove unwarranted. You are the task here is to examine the arguments stated or unstated assumptions and discuss the implications. The assumption that unpredictable animal behavior is caused solely due

to control tree removal is problematic. Since the campus is located in the heart of the city. Animals are prone to disturbance from several factors including noise pollution and air pollution from the neighboring places also.

Similarly, likely student behavior such as vandalism, injuring animals and crouching on animal habitats are also several facts of life and which this particular passage does not talk about. The assumption that the survey points to a soul issue as the cause of all unpredictable animal behavior cannot be taken at face value. For example, who is the survey address to; who was it or who is it meant for? Are these people who have written this passage, are these researchers or environmental activates or campus officials, outsiders who are they? So, it is possible that survey results are or may be biased and exaggerated.

Also remember or something that we have to take note of is that, the assumption that systemic planting of trees is inadequate to compensate the losses of control deforestation, it is problematic remember this. It is possible that this is the viable alternative to the problem by, planting trees in more feasible areas. Also the assumption that the situation at present is addressed by simple disallowing construction is inadequate. Stopping the construction of new buildings will seriously affect the students and staff in campus, thus planting more trees is more effective than stopping all construction work.

The conclusion of this argument, "The campus committee should for that reason no longer build any more buildings in IIT Madras." is arrived at through several inadequate primary assumptions. **[THESIS STATEMENT AND TOPIC CONCLUSION]** First, it assumes that unpredictable animal behaviour is solely a result of controlled tree removal. **[REASON 1]** Second, the results of the survey itself are taken at face value, with no information regarding to whom the survey questions are addressed. **[REASON 2]** Third, it assumes prematurely that systemic planting of trees is insufficient to compensate for the losses of controlled deforestation. **[REASON 3]**

The argument disregards external factors such as student-induced vandalism, air and noise pollution from the city, and disturbances caused due to factors unrelated to habitat violation. **[TOPIC SENTENCE FOR REASON 1]** Since IIT Madras is located in the heart of city, it is plausible that the pollution levels and general deterioration of air and sound quality permeates the campus conditions as well, resulting in unpredictable animal behaviour. While the argument points to surveys connecting tree loss to animal behaviour, it ignores the other factors examined in the survey, and the possible implications of these factors on the present condition of these animals. At the same time, rogue student behaviour (typical of college-going crowds) such as vandalism, littering, causing injury to animals and encroaching on animal habitats are likely to be equally culpable, no trace of which the argument discusses nor considers. If these factors are taken into account, the basic assumption of linking troubled animal behaviour to controlled tree-felling, holds no water. **[4-5 SENTENCES THAT DEVELOP AND ANALYZE REASON 1]**

The argument's conclusion also relies excessively on the results of the surveys. **[TOPIC SENTENCE FOR REASON 2]** It is an implicit assumption that the survey results are true, while it is likely that the results are exaggerated by those taking the survey. It is also unclear as to whom the survey is addressed – for instance, students, staff, researchers, or outsiders – and it is possible that the survey measures predicted/apparent results as opposed to the fact of the situation. Since deforestation and habitat loss is linked to animal behaviour in several cases across tropical forests, it is likely that this affects survey responses among those privy to the information. The survey is not an infallible measure of truth. **[4-5 SENTENCES THAT DEVELOP AND ANALYZE REASON 2]**

The most significant assumption that the argument makes is that the systemic planting of trees in the campus is insufficient to compensate for the losses caused by previous tree-felling behaviour. **[TOPIC SENTENCE FOR REASON 3]** With official sanction and budget to increase forest cover in campus, the habitat loss that the author argues for can be compensated and restored. If unpredictable animal behaviour is a direct cause of tree-felling, it can be argued that increase in forest cover can also directly induce a favorable condition for the concerned animal life. By that logic, the author's argument falls flat. His assumptions do not arise from any verifiable ground. **[4-5 SENTENCES THAT DEVELOP AND ANALYZE REASON 3]**

In sum, the argument relies heavily on assumptions, perhaps too heavily. Denying any one of these assumptions results in a weakened, or in some cases, invalid conclusion. Nevertheless, it is crucial to examine the bigger picture of habitat and forest loss, and the resultant effects on the quality of life to both animals as well as human beings. Despite the nature of its assumptions, the argument does point to the evils of technological advancement at the cost of the environment. **[RECAP]** To strengthen the argument, the author would need to not only address these implicit assumptions but also to firmly establish a link between unpredictable animal behaviour and deteriorating forest cover in IIT Madras. A healthy society is built only in relationship with the environment. While calling out the inadequate assumptions in the argument, it is important indeed to understand the importance of nature and conservation in the midst of our busy lives. **[EXPANDS POSITION]**

Let us look at this. Another example, it is a continuation of the, whatever we have been doing go through it, the conclusion of this argument, the campus committee should be for that reason no longer build any more buildings in IIT Madras. This is arrived at through several inadequate primary assumptions. This could be your thesis statement and topic conclusion. Also see that the argument this, I am talking about the second paragraph. The argument disregards external factors such as student induced vandalism. Go through the slide very carefully and see how you can extend, develop and explore various strengths while you are looking at a particular statement. Now what should be your essay check list? Essay should correspond and response to the topic argument. Key assumptions in the argument should be analyzed in a though full manner. You should provide the reader with the cogent critic bagged up by strong analysis. Idea should be returned in a comprehensive and clear fashion.

Transition should be such that they help connect the ideas together in an organized fashion. Always demonstrate proficiency, fluency of language, maturity in the sense in the way you construct your sentences and some range of vocabulary. Remember that written elements of the language such as grammar, spelling, punctuation should be adhere to strictly with very good command.

Now, let us look at the second example. Look at the slide. Over the past two years, the sales of movie tickets in Phoenix Mall, Chennai has increased dramatically while the popularity of the mall shops has been noted to have fallen steadily. Many store owners in Phoenix Mall are of the opinion that their poor business is due to the high number of movie-goers in the mall. There has also been a drop in other entertainment businesses in the mall such as the gaming, arenas, pubs like Hard Rock Cafe and band performances at the stage placed in the mall entrance.

Thus, we recommend that the city, in the interest of businesses, exert control on the movie theatres in Phoenix Mall by introducing dynamic pricing or regulating the ticket prices accordingly. If this is done, we predict that business in Phoenix Mall will return to its previously high levels now, discuss.

One solution could be that remember a successful essay should look at alternate explanations also. So, something is given in the passage, movie theatres are bringing down the business. You should be able to look at the other side of the argument also. It must your (Refer Time: 15:07) also account for the assumptions, statement stated in the essay. The crux is movies are the only things that are responsible for fallen business of the shop, in the mall. Now this argument is; obviously, inadequate in capturing the

distribution of consumer interest in the mall. External factors such as the economic condition of the city or its mall goers the quality of shops, the cultural interests of the people of the city all these things are ignored.

There is inadequate evidence to prove that the movie theatres can attract shopping crowds. Since the two provide different categories of entertainment, hence we should examine alternate propositions. Instead of introducing dynamic pricing as the essay suggest or as the statement suggest or regulating tickets at the movie theatres. The city should instead perform an inspection of the shops installed in the mall to ensure that their quality and pricing is up to the mark and satisfactory to the consumers. There should be surveys to gage consumer interest and what they would prefer to see and experience in mall shops, then these shops can revise their policies accordingly. The shops must ensure that their timing are appropriate to mall goers. So, that the crowd does not gravitate towards movie theatre instead of shopping.

So, now I would like you to try writing the essay for this question using the pointers that I have just given to you. See to it that you are covering both sides of the argument. This should be your homework. Please do it as well as you can and discuss it with your friends.

Thank you very much.