

**Effective Writing**  
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**Lecture – 07**  
**Essay Writing**

Good morning friends and welcome back to NPTEL online lectures on Effective Writing. You have been listening to lectures on effective writing by Binod Mishra and till now we have already completed 6 lectures. We are in the 7 th lecture now and this lecture I have title as effective Essay Writing.

Now the moment we talk of the word essay, your mind goes back to school and college days where you used to be given a topic to write and then it was at times a travel times at times a fun time. But now since those days are over now you are already a grown up person and you are supposed to write effective essays, whether you are a following a higher course or you are preparing for the competitive exams, you are pursuing some other advanced level courses either at the college level or at the university level, essay writing at times is a part of your academic curricula.

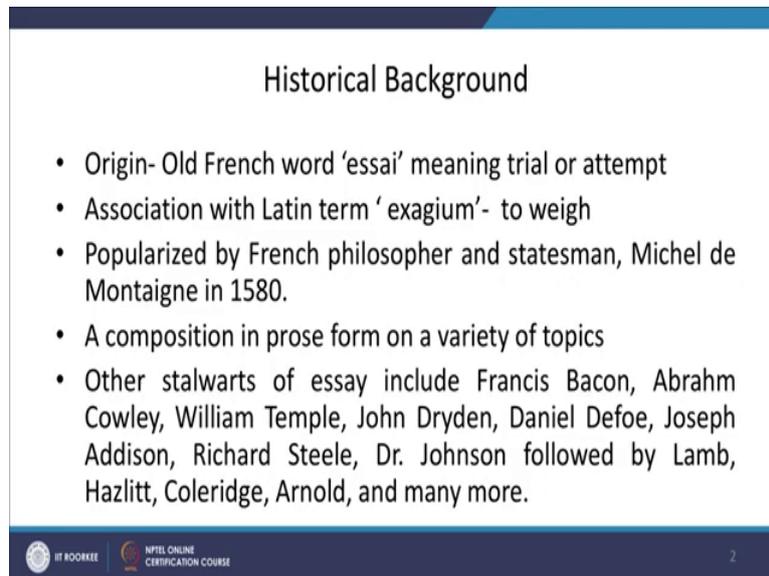
Now, in this lecture I am going to talk about how you can make your writing effective. And specially keeping into consideration all the other ingredients that we have talked of in other lectures namely what are the principles of effective writing, whether writing is an art or skill, how to maintain appropriateness and how to maintain correctness. Now is the time to start experimenting with what we have learned and that is why we begin with essay writing.

You might be thinking how this word essay came into being. The word essay which appears to you very common, it had got a golden past. The origin of the word makes us aware of how it was coined in the olden days when the word was essai e double s a i and it is actually derived from the old French word essai which actually means trial or attempt.

So, this was coined in 16th century fine, but then it also had a Latin association when the term essai came from exagium which actually means to way, to measure, to assess. The word

essay became popular when the French philosopher statesman writer Missile the Montaigne coined it in 1584.

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**Historical Background**

- Origin- Old French word 'essai' meaning trial or attempt
- Association with Latin term 'exagium'- to weigh
- Popularized by French philosopher and statesman, Michel de Montaigne in 1580.
- A composition in prose form on a variety of topics
- Other stalwarts of essay include Francis Bacon, Abraham Cowley, William Temple, John Dryden, Daniel Defoe, Joseph Addison, Richard Steele, Dr. Johnson followed by Lamb, Hazlitt, Coleridge, Arnold, and many more.

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And since then this essay not only became popular; popular for literary lovers, popular for writers, popular amongst students, but then people started thinking of it from all sorts of ideas. Somebody had an idea and wanted to express and if he wanted to give a detailed description to something he actually did it in the form of an essay

So, in general and they say can be considered as a composition in prose, but you know essays have also been written in words only by a poet. But then apart from that most of the a essays actually when it was written in words, it was written by Pope.

But then since then in all the ages if we have a look at the history of English literature and history of English, we will find there plenty of names; plenty of names who popularized this genre of essay. And it is not only confine to school and college level rather it actually has its presence felt in competitive examinations, in literature and in other forms of writing where you are going to or where we are going to make our understanding established or recognized and that we can do by writing an essay.

So, many stalwarts who popularize this form of essay, they include Francis Bacon because a Missive the Montaigne who was the first to popularize this had a follower named Francis Bacon. And all of you are familiar with the name of Francis Bacon who also wrote good many essays and Bacons essays are popularly the world over. Now this Montaigne, Montaigne was Montaigne actually came from a very wealthy family.

He was not only a philosopher, a statesman, a writer, but he had a lots of things to say and through his pieces of advice which actually had become a part of a literary record. We can find variety essays written by Montaigne. Most of the essays written by Montaigne they are longer because Montaigne is considered to be a writer of discursive essays whereas Francis Bacon who popularized this genre wrote essays which were very compact, which were very simple.

But then Francis Bacon in most of the essays he had actually touched upon various essays namely as we discussed in some of the lectures of studies of truth, of death, of ambition like that and he has written on so many topics. So, after Francis Bacon came Abraham Cowley, then William Temple

I mean in all the ages this genre of essay has been popularized, then John Dryden, Daniel Defoe you already might have heard the name of Daniel Defoe who also was a novelist and then Joseph Addison. And Richard Steele in 18th century not only Addison, but in Johnson they also wrote good many essays and those people who have had a familiarity with English literature might recall the beautiful essays of Addison and Richard Steele in Tatler and in Spectator.

And then this form was also popularized by Charles Lamb, Hazlitt Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Matthew Arnold and many more even in 20 th century and in 21 st century as well there have been people who have written good essays. So, this was actually a historical background to the essays, but then you might be thinking can an essay be defined.

What can be an exact definition of an essay because the way we talk about an essay we simply think that it is in general it is believed to be a sort of writing in prose form.

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What the stalwarts say

- 'grains of salt which will rather give an appetite than offend with satiety.' ( Bacon)
- 'lose sally of mind; an irregular and indigested piece; not a regular and orderly composition. (Dr. Johnson)

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But then people like Francis Bacon, they said that essays are like grains of salt which will rather give an appetite than offend with satiety. So, grains of salt actually Bacon believes that essays are just like appetizers. They actually argument our thought processes and they are more an appetite than offend with satiety.

So, if when we come across the types of essays that people can write, you will find that there are essays which hinted so many things certain essays also hinted the picture of the society in which they lived and then there are some essays which also have got a different sort of tone. There are some essays which can be considered to be personal periodically essays. In literature, personal and periodical essays also became very popular.

But then Dr. Johnson has given another definition of essay by calling it a loose sally of mind and irregular he says an irregular. We will see why he calls a regular an irregular and indigested piece because you will find, when we discuss the various forms of essays will see why it is indigested piece. Because any essay that becomes a literary piece actually it depends upon the choice of the author as towards or the words he chooses and what is the line of the argument that he takes. It is not a regular and orderly composition.

So, at times it has been seen that an essay can begin with anything and it can end in anything, but then this is not what our aim is of essay writing. We actually I am actually here aiming at writing essays in such an effective manner that it becomes the readable that actually it becomes very much a sort of facilitating reading for our audience

So, the stalwarts like Bacon and Johnson they have given different versions of essay, but then we can that actually makes us think about its organization. Because as we have already learned by what Johnson says it is a loose sally of mind what acts exactly does it mean by loose sally of mind by sally he actually means essay is a sort of witty lively discussion.

So, when you read some essays, you will find how one can make an essay lively and how we can one can make one an essay witty. But then because we have been saying that it is an irregular piece a piece that cannot be digested so easily. So, let us see a talk about how and what is the organization of an essay, what its actually is an essay because we have said that it is generally believed to be a sort of writing in prose form.

Naturally since it is in the form of prose, what will happen is an essay will be a collection of paragraphs it cannot be a one liner, two liner. It can have a collection of paragraphs and all

these paragraphs in some way all the other, you will find these paragraphs are connected with each other. So, we will also see how when we start writing an essay, what are the things that we should keep into consideration.

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The slide is titled "Organization" and contains the following content:

- Collection of paragraphs
- All paragraphs to have unity
- Every paragraph must have one subject or theme
- An irrelevant paragraph has no room in an essay

Handwritten notes in red ink include "Plan" and "gutter" next to the bullet points. A red line connects the words "unity" and "subject or theme" in the second and third bullet points, respectively. A red bracket is drawn around the quote below.

✓ Good manners are also important when you are with your own friends. When you speak to anyone, speak clearly and sufficiently loudly for the person to hear. It is an insult to a person to ask his attention and then speak so that he does not understand you. And remember it is your responsibility to make yourself understood.

( J.C. Hill, Good Manners)

At the bottom of the slide, there are logos for IIT Kharagpur and NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE, and the number 4 in the bottom right corner.

So, an essay will be a collection of paragraphs and all these paragraphs will have a sort of coherence because these paragraphs will have a sort of unity. What exactly I mean by unity? By unity I mean suppose you have a topic and when you have a topic naturally, you might be thinking of how to begin an obvious person who write wants to write an essay it starts thinking when he or she is given a topic or when it decides write an essay on a topic,

So, first he has to think how should he start, how should he begin and when he begins because naturally when we will begin he will write the first sentence. And we write the first sentence he will also write other sentences because an essay is a collection of paragraphs and

one paragraph will have so many sentences and all these sentences have to have a sort of coherence. I mean there will be a sort of linking sort of thing the paragraphs have to be linked every paragraph.

Now, here he realize the question how we can bring unity in the paragraphs every paragraph when the paragraph will begin as a curious at an effective writer what we have to do is the first sentence of the paragraph naturally will be a topic sentence and other sentences will support the first sentence. And this way this paragraph will be framed every paragraph will have one common theme.

Suppose you are going to write an essay on a particular topic. So, naturally depending upon your topic, depending upon your knowledge because an essay also gives an essay is a sort of result of your understanding on a subject how much have you understood. Because an essay will present your view your thought your opinion your reflection and how you take that subject. So, that is very important any and suppose in an essay if there is any irrelevant paragraph.

So, while you are planning because you cannot write an essay as you want to write some other thing know, you have to plan. When you get the topic, you start planning. So, this planning stage is very important and when you plan after the topic sentence when you are going to develop it. So, you must think because before developing, what you will do? You will actually plan, you will gather you will gather the points no.

When you are making a sort of outline, what you will do? You will gather the points and on a piece of paper all these points will be there. Now, it is your time. How you are going to relate? Because you will bring certain things to one part some other things to another part. This is how you will make a sort of division and sub division of your essay before you are going to tailor it finally.

For example, if we take the if you take some paragraph from some essay, here is a one to one paragraph I have taken it from a J.C. Hill and the topic of this essay is good manners. Suppose the topic is good manners, now see how the author begins? The very first sentence,

he begins with good manners are also important when you are with your own friends. Now I have not taken it from the beginning of the essay, but I have taken an isolated paragraph isolated paragraph.

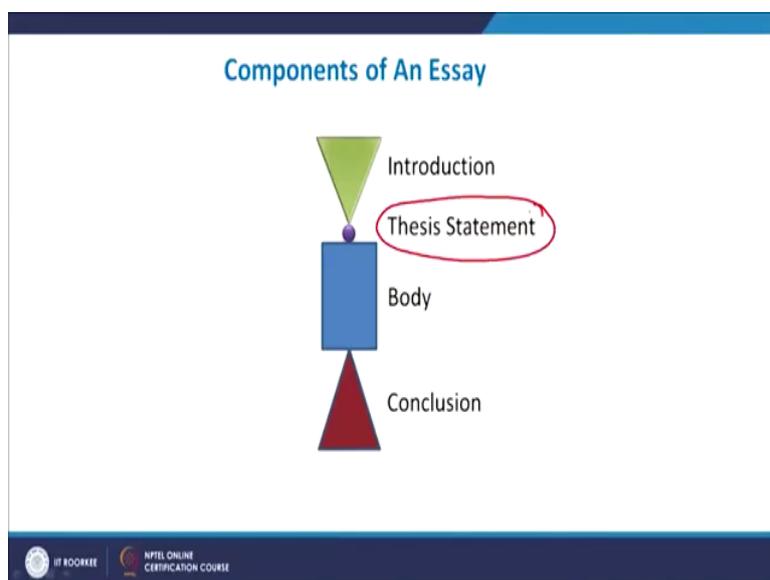
What exactly is my aim? My aim is to show that even though this paragraph is isolated or different this paragraph has one subject or a theme. What is the theme? Good manners are also important when you are with your own friends. When you speak to anyone speak clearly and sufficiently loudly for the person to hear. It is an insult to a person to ask his attention and then speak so that he does not understand you and remember it is your responsibility to make self understood.

Now, here the writer is talking about one of the good manners, what is one of the good manners? One of the good manners is when you are talking to somebody what you do is you actually want him to understand your point of view. So, you can find here that how the author when he is writing a paragraph, he is actually trying to make this paragraph speak for one theme.

Likely, but then this paragraph is not the beginning of the essay because in the beginning of the essay, you will have to have a sort of introduction. Now again the components of an essay can be an essay can be divided naturally you know it can depend upon your length and depending upon the scope of your topic, you can have the paragraphs. But see to it that the paragraphs are not too many because if the paragraphs are too many when it becomes difficult for a reader.

So, in general we can divide an essay into four parts. We can have an introduction and it is very difficult for new people to think of the introduction what they should write.

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An introduction what they do? They will write a thesis statement as to what they want to tell, what they want to write, what exactly they want to convince. They want to convey and once they have settled, once they have set, once they have decided a thesis statement; then they will think of the body of the essay. I mean in the development of the essay and in the body maybe, there are two paragraph three paragraphs.

As I said depending upon your topic and then finally, you will have the conclusion of the essay. So, this is a rough way of dividing your essay. Now since we talked about the thesis statement care has to be taken as to what the thesis statement says. My dear friends, I have made it amply clear by giving examples by providing you this slide so, that you can understand it thoroughly

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**Thesis Statement**

- A good thesis statement should blend several ideas into just one or two sentences.
- It also includes the topic of the essay.
- It should clarify the author's stand with regard to the topic.

It reveals the topic to the reader

It mirrors a judgment about the topic

It provides the reader with a idea of what is to come in the paper

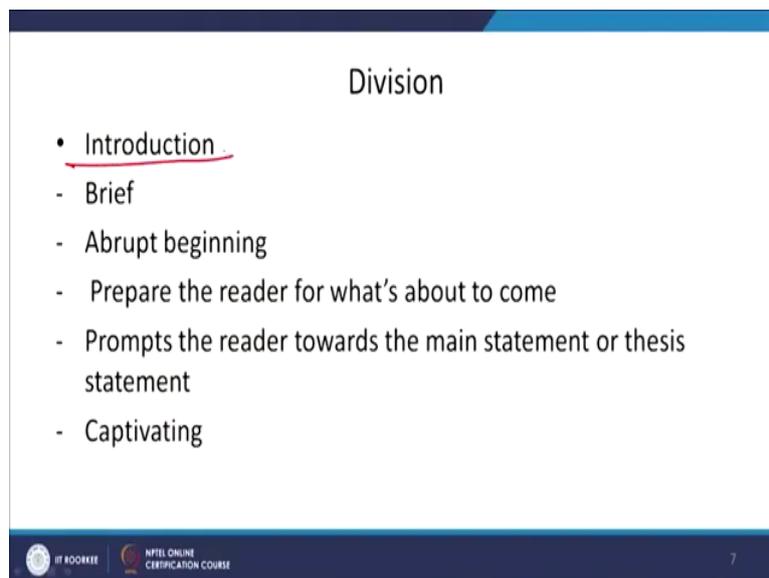
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So, when you are working for a thesis statement, it is actually the combination of so many ideas several ideas, but into just one or two sentences. But think of it that this sentence should also relate to the theme. I mean the topic of the essay, it should also include the topic of the essay and even in the beginning when you are making a thesis statement, your reader will come to understand what actually is the stand of the writer what actually is the viewpoint of the writer the angle of the writer.

So, what a thesis statement does is it reveals the topic. It actually provides a judgment about the topic, it provides a judgment about the topic and then it also tells the reader as to what actually is likely to come. So, in the thesis statement, you are preparing your readers to know to expect to anticipate rather to make them prepared for what is going to come.

As I said that your essay can be divided into four parts and the very first part is introduction. Now people may also ask us as to what should be the length of the introduction.

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The slide is titled "Division" and lists the following characteristics of an Introduction:

- Introduction
- Brief
- Abrupt beginning
- Prepare the reader for what's about to come
- Prompts the reader towards the main statement or thesis statement
- Captivating

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Introduction should be like introduction is not it? Fine, many people will start to trying to show their scholarship only in the introduction, but they should remember that a good introduction has only to be brief. Why brief? I mean it has to be very specific and as you will see in many essays because as Dr. Johnson has also said that it is an irregular piece. So, maybe it has got an abrupt beginning, but remember even this abrupt beginning is very specific abrupt beginning is with an aim.

With an aim is to captivate you know, why you are having a abrupt beginning? Because you want to captivate the reader in the first place and after having an abrupt beginning, you are orienting your readers to think to think what is going to come. And now, after this beginning

your readers are waiting for the main statement or the thesis statement. Now if we have already seen how the how one of the isolated paragraphs from J.C. Hills good manners, they actually provided a sort of unity. But see how J.C. Hill in the same essay when it begins the essay how he starts, you see in order to captivate.

You look at the line what you know there are so many ways to start people can start you know straight know, but then every essay does not have the requirement of starting it straight.

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Contd.

➤ There was once a young man who was strong and healthy and enjoyed his work. In every way he felt on top of life, and had no sympathy for the uninteresting folk who seemed to form such a large proportion of the population. One day he got an attack of influenza. He had had it before and paid little attention to it, but this time he developed pneumonia and was dangerously ill. When he recovered he could only move slowly. (Good Manners)

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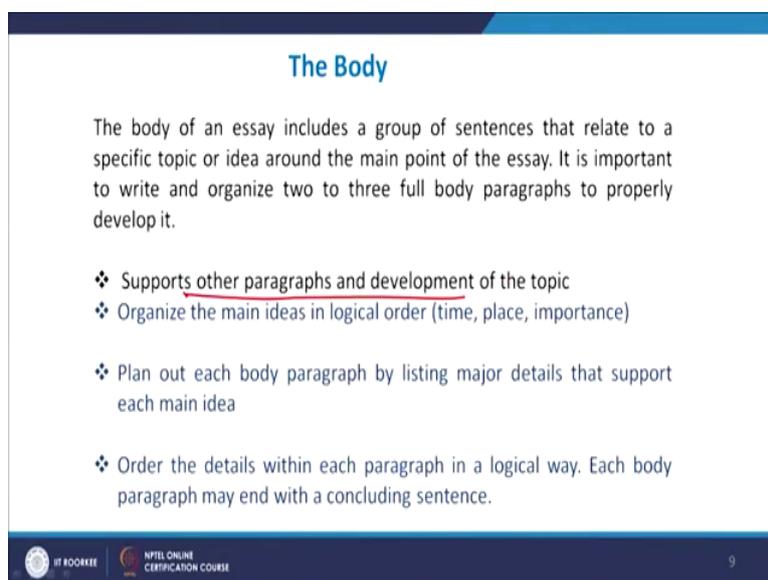
Now, here the writer has created a sort of background and though he is talking about good manners, but in order to captivate the readers in order to captivate the attention of the audience members, what he did what he says is there was once a young man who is strong and healthy and enjoyed his work in every way he felt on top of life.

And he had no sympathy for the uninteresting folk who seemed to form such a large proportion of the population. One day he got an attack of influenza he had had it before and paid little attention to it, but this time he developed pneumonia and was dangerously ill. When he recovered, he could only move slowly

Now, by saying all this what the writer is doing? The writer is actually trying to create a thesis statement. So, writer is preparing the reader and the reader and not only preparing the reader, but he is actually keeping the readers interest intact. There is some amount of suspense in this and when the writer goes on to create a sort of background. So, that the readers wait as to what should come and then the paragraphs that will come because by the end of this paragraph as readers, you will understand where the writer wants you to where the writer tries to put his own stand.

Naturally having said the thesis statement having stated the thesis statement, the writer will move towards the body and the body of the essay will have the development of the topic sentence will have the development of the thesis. And there what are the things that one should do is one should actually to support because in an essay maybe there are two, three, four paragraphs depending upon the length and the need and the topic.

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The slide is titled "The Body" in blue text. Below the title, there is a paragraph of text: "The body of an essay includes a group of sentences that relate to a specific topic or idea around the main point of the essay. It is important to write and organize two to three full body paragraphs to properly develop it." Below this paragraph is a list of four bullet points, each starting with a blue diamond symbol. The first bullet point is "Supports other paragraphs and development of the topic", where "other paragraphs and development of the topic" is underlined in red. The second bullet point is "Organize the main ideas in logical order (time, place, importance)". The third bullet point is "Plan out each body paragraph by listing major details that support each main idea". The fourth bullet point is "Order the details within each paragraph in a logical way. Each body paragraph may end with a concluding sentence." At the bottom of the slide, there is a dark blue footer containing the IIT Roorkee logo on the left, the text "NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE" in the center, and the number "9" on the right.

### The Body

The body of an essay includes a group of sentences that relate to a specific topic or idea around the main point of the essay. It is important to write and organize two to three full body paragraphs to properly develop it.

- ❖ Supports other paragraphs and development of the topic
- ❖ Organize the main ideas in logical order (time, place, importance)
- ❖ Plan out each body paragraph by listing major details that support each main idea
- ❖ Order the details within each paragraph in a logical way. Each body paragraph may end with a concluding sentence.

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So, what one can do is one can support other paragraphs and development of the topic the main ideas can be organized in an order. Now while we will discuss why we will discuss the types of the essay, we shall be talking about how we can maintain an order. There can be a chronological order, there can be a spatial order, there can be an order of significance; I mean prioritizing. So, all these orders how you are going to maintain in the essay that you have to decide depending upon once again the choice of your topic.

Each paragraph has to have major details which actually support the each main idea because every paragraph will have one main idea or which we can say one main theme. And all these details are to be ordered within a paragraph with a sort of logical in a very logical manner, in a very logical systematic way and each body paragraph when the body paragraph will end it will have a concluding sentence.

So, every paragraph will not only have one theme every paragraph the last line of every paragraph will conclude. Because as an author as a writer of essay, what you are actually trying to achieve is you are actually trying to achieve is a sort of coherence is a sort of cohesion my dear friend. Now since you are going to provide a sort of cohesion and unity, what can you do and why should you do?.

There are three things which appear very important J.C. Hills in his famous book, he talks of the three requirements of bringing unity in an essay. The first is relevancy; by relevancy what we mean is whether we are actually confining ourselves to the topic because relevance matters when you write the first sentence and you have to see all the supporting sentence are. You know they are in a way s assisting the main sentence the topic sentence.

So, when we talk about relevance, we ought to say that we have to as a writer we have to confine ourselves to the topic. So, all the sentences which are separate, there some way or the other are relevant to it. Then comes proportion. Now what will proportion do? When after the topic sentence and after the topic paragraph, you move on to other paragraphs. You will find that since you have a lot of information as while you are telling the information selecting the information you had lots of information.

So, how you are going to create a balance? By dividing it, by putting it to some certain segments to some certain heads and then you should ensure the order. If it is a descriptive essay naturally, the order will be special; I mean you will be describing. So, we will find how we can in arrangement we can ensure order and when you have done all that what is left now? What is left now is conclusion and how are you going to conclude?

Imagine your essay has got three paragraphs and in conclusion; what is conclusion? Conclusion is actually the findings conclusion is actually the essence of all that you have said all that you have either discussed explained. You are actually going to tell that in a very brief and convincing way. Maybe if you started with something no actually while you are going to conclude, you should try to conclude it in such a manner that it becomes a sort of circular fair.

So, provide a logical and convincing statement which actually sums up the main idea and then remember that in conclusion, one must not give any new information and throughout as we have been saying that the readers interest has to be sustained. But the last paragraph, the last paragraph is our take home paragraph in an informal way. We should say that it is something that actually provides a lasting impression on the readers and the readers are carrying something with themselves at is what the conclusion of an essay should be my dear friend.

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**Conclusion**

- ❖ Provide a logical and convincing statement that sums up the main idea.
- ❖ Avoid adding any new information in the conclusion.
- ❖ Sustain your readers interest.
- ❖ Leave an impression on the readers
- ❖ Recapitulate or restate the main point.
- ❖ Leave a lasting impression on the reader's mind.

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## A Sample Conclusion

*Good manners come from having sympathy with others and from understanding our limitations. 'The Truth' is too big for any one of us to understand. 'The truth' as we see it is only our truth and part of a larger truth. We should always realize that we are humble, unimportant little people on this earth and try to help the world as much as we can in our short time here. 'I expect to pass through this world but once. any good, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I cqn show to any creature , let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.*

(Good manners, J.C.Hill)

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Now, in order to validate my point, again I am taking something from good manners because I started with good manners good manners is an essay a very significant essay which you might have come across or which you may read for her own pleasure for own satisfaction. You see how after having given all these paragraphs, now this is the paragraph where the writer wants to conclude and we shall see we shall just at the proposition that we have already provided.

And what the writer says good manners come from having sympathy with others and from understanding our limitations the truth is too big for any one of us to understand. The truth as we see it is only our truth and part of a larger truth we should always realize that we are humble unimportant little people on this earth. And try to help the world as much as we can in our short time here I expect to pass through this world, but once any good.

Therefore now, look at it how the author, how the author is struggling to come to a conclusion and then he makes use of references. He makes use of linkers he makes use of internal summaries having said and, but once any good. Therefore, and as an effective writer J.C. Hills also makes proper use of punctuation. So, that the readers may not because when the readers read your written documents the you are not there.

So, either you want to provide a sort of relief or you want to give them some amount of pause that you are indicating through the punctuation marks that I can do or any kindness that I can so to any creature. Let me do it now, you see. Let me do it now. The author becomes very assertive, let me not defer or neglect it for I shall not pass this way again. So, having said this the writer actually concludes his paragraph.

So, this sample conclusion was actually provided here with a sort of intention to let the readers know. Let the writers of essays know that the last paragraph has to be a paragraph which not only states which not only reevaluate which not only reviews, but which provides the readers with a sort of alternative and with a sort of impression that they can carry something back home.

Now when we have done all that my dear friends having understood, how we can go for an essay Because we must first know why we are going to write on this topic. Once you know your topic, you also must be having certain ideas or you are going to gather ideas fine.

Because essay cannot be written you know very spontaneously, you have to make some amount of planning you may you have to make a sort of outlining and then when you have done that and you have had all sort of ideas and those ideas have been clubbed into several segments into several topics subtopics enter into several heads. And then you are going to finally, organize it as to how you begin the first sentence, how you bring another sentences that actually support and then how the first line of the paragraph should keep you counting you from time to time.

So, that when you come to the last line, you actually provide a sort of cyclic repetition in a way, but providing a sort of circular momentum where everyone every reader can have a sort of feeling that they have really got something beneficial. So, my dear friends essay writing is not a difficult task.

You can make it easy, but only when you have an intention to make it easy because as the founder or as the person who started this genre of writing he says Missile De Montagne. You remember the name, he says there is no knowledge so, hard to acquire as the knowledge of how to leave this life well and naturally.

Let me say it in a different manner, there is no knowledge so hard to acquire as the knowledge of writing essay. But writing essay when you know, what you are going to say? So, that you your essay may become well your essay may become natural. You always say may have a smooth flow your essay might be effective and your essay might provide the readers something worth carrying something worth cherishing.

I hope you are now in a position to know what actually are the requirements of writing an essay even though you might be knowing. I think this sort of information will add to your information and make you more effective.

Thank you very much, I wish you all a good day. But till then keep thinking of how to write essays on different topics and before, we come for the next lecture keep thinking, keep planning, keep organizing, keep experimenting and keep writing.

Thank you very much.