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WRITING AND STUDY SKILLS

B.E.G.S.-183

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Content

WRITING AND STUDY SKILLS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Question Paper–June-2023 (Solved) | 1-3 |
| Question Paper–December-2022 (Solved) | 1-3 |
| Question Paper–Exam Held in July-2022 (Solved) | 1-3 |
| Question Paper–Exam Held in March-2022 (Solved) | 1-3 |
| Sample Question Paper–1 (Solved) | 1-2 |

| <i>S.No.</i> | <i>Chapterwise Reference Book</i> | <i>Page</i> |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|

BLOCK-I : IMPROVING THE BASICS

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Developing Critical, Analytical and Interpretive Thinking Skills | 1 |
| 2. Enhancing Vocabulary | 16 |
| 3. Improving Grammar and Punctuation Skills | 27 |

BLOCK-II : WRITING EFFECTIVELY

| | |
|---|----|
| 4. The Basics of Writing | 42 |
| 5. Developing Different Types of Paragraphs | 58 |
| 6. Writing A Composition | 77 |
| 7. Different Types of Writing | 90 |

| <i>S.No.</i> | <i>Chapterwise Reference Book</i> | <i>Page</i> |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
|--------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|

BLOCK-III : NOTE TAKING

| | |
|--|-----|
| 8. Learning Study Skills | 105 |
| 9. Techniques of Note Taking: Main and Subordinate Points | 117 |
| 10. Techniques of Note Taking: Use of Tables and Diagrams | 127 |
| 11. Making Effective Summaries | 139 |



**Sample Preview
of the
Solved
Sample Question
Papers**

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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2023

(Solved)

WRITING AND STUDY SKILLS

B.E.G.S.-183

Time: 2 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 50

Note: All questions are compulsory.

Q. 1. Write short notes on any three of the following:

(a) What are ‘homophones’? Give examples to show how their usage can create problems for second language learners of English.

Ans. Homophones are words that sound similar to another word but have different spellings and meanings. Understanding homophones can help you in building your vocabulary. Only if you learn the spellings and meanings of the homophones will you be able to use them correctly. Homophones, as already mentioned, have similar sounds, but different spellings and meanings. So it is necessary that you understand and learn the difference between the homophone pairs. One way to remember them is by associating them with their functions and analysing which part of speech a particular word in the pair belongs to. However you choose to remember it, only continuous usage of these words in sentences will help you understand how they work.

The word ‘homophone’ is used to describe a word that sounds the same as another word, but that has a different meaning. They can be two (or more) words that may be spelled differently, but can also be spelled the same; making these words both difficult for native and non-native speakers alike. To add to the confusion, there are different Homophones with different words used to describe them. Here is an example of some of the more common homophones – the ones you are most likely to use in either day-to-day conversation or in your academic work. A lot of native English speakers also get confused by homophones, so don’t worry if you don’t pick it up straight away!

To, two, too

- To – used in the infinitive form of a verb, such as “to walk”, and also to mean “towards”.

- Too – this means “as well” or “also”; for example, “me too”.

- Two – this is the number; for example, “two days ago”.

(b) What are the aspects to be kept in mind while writing a well developed paragraph?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 50, Q. No. 3 and Q. No. 4.

(c) What is ‘Expository Writing’? Describe the techniques that can be used in writing expository texts.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 98, ‘Expository Writing’.

(d) Briefly explain the Cornell note-taking method.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 122, ‘Cornell Note-Taking Method’.

Q. 2. Write a brief essay on any one of the following:

(a) Discuss with examples how synthesizing is a key strategy in writing.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 1, ‘Synthesizing’, Page No. 4, ‘Synthesizing as a Writing Strategy’ and Page No. 12, ‘(v) Synthesizing’.

Or

(b) Explain how reference skills together with scanning and skimming skills equips a learner with tools to find the best sources of information.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 108, ‘Skimming and Scanning’ and Page No. 105, ‘Reference Skills’.

Q. 3. Write a well-structured composition (with a clear beginning, body and conclusion) on the following topic:

“Your role as a citizen in helping to reduce pollution levels in your town/city.”

Ans. In this era of globalization, our mother earth is facing serious pollution resulted from inconsiderable deeds of mankind. Therefore, there are four ways to reduce pollution on earth such as, practicing the 3Rs concept, reduce the usage of vehicles on road, creating awareness among citizens, and enforcing the laws.

The first way to reduce pollution is to practice the 3Rs concept namely reduce, reuse and recycle. Citizens should reduce the usage of air-conditioners as it will release harmful gases, for instant ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons which will result in reducing air pollution. One may make no difference, but when carried out together, massive changes can be made. Moving on, reuse reusable items like plastic bags, bottles, boxes and more is also one of the way to reduce pollution, For example, instead of throwing away a worn out tire, it can be used as a plantation plot. The next way to reduce pollution is to recycle recyclable items such as glass, cans, and newspapers. The recycled newspapers can be reproduced as toilet papers which will reduce extra waste on earth indirectly contributing in reducing land pollutions. Therefore, practicing the 3Rs is one of the most effective ways to reduce pollution on earth.

Reducing the usage of vehicles on road will also help in reducing air pollution on earth. The more the usage of vehicles, the more the harmful gases released into the air such as hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxides, and sulfur dioxides which will cause serious air pollutions. The usage of cars, lorries and motorbikes should be drastically reduced as the gases released by these vehicles can also contribute in green house effect. However, these pollutions can be reduced when citizens practice the habit of car-pooling and the usage of public transport like bus, trains, monorails and many more. In addition, citizens can walk or cycle to near destinations instead of driving which will lead to lesser air pollution. Therefore, reducing the usage of vehicles by no doubt can reduce air and sound pollutions.

Another way to reduce pollution on earth is to create awareness among the citizens. Awareness about the importance on reducing pollution on earth can be created through campaigns for example, the “Go Green” campaign which encourages the citizens to plant more trees and to use recyclable items in their daily lives. The “Earth Hour” is also one of the activity conducted world widely which requires everyone to turn off every lights for one hour so as to create awareness on the importance of reducing pollution on

earth by reducing the usage of electronic items. Awareness can be implanted through education for example, advertisements on televisions and articles in newspapers which are related to topics like “How to reduce pollutions”, “The consequences of pollutions” and so on. Therefore, pollution can be reduced by creating awareness among the citizens.

The government plays an important role by enforcing the laws of the country which is one of the way to reduce pollution on earth. Heavy penalties can be set to offenders such as increasing fines and extending jail periods which will force them to think twice before they pollute the environment indirectly setting a warning to those who are not involved yet soon to be involved in polluting the environment. Besides, strict monitor on factories by the government can also contribute in reducing pollution as they are the ones who causes most of the air pollution and water pollution on earth when disposing toxic gases into the air and harmful waste into the water. Therefore, pollution can be reduced by enforcing the laws.

In conclusion, there are many ways to reduce pollution on earth namely practicing the 3Rs concept, reduce the usage of vehicles on road, creating awareness among citizens, and enforcing the laws which will create a better environment for the benefits of both mankind and our mother earth. Therefore, we should buck up our shoes and be ready to reduce pollution in everything we do and anywhere we go for a better future ahead of us.

Q. 4. Write a formal letter to the CEO of a company in your town, applying for the post of HR executive.

Ans. The CEO
Star Company
8 Worli, Mumbai
Maharashtra.

Subject: Application for the post of HR Executive
Respected Sir,

As a skillful HR executive with 3+ years of expertise managing and supervising HR functions, I am excited to join ABC company in the HR executive job. I am passionate about building HR structures.

I excel in supervising and coordinating with HR staff, headhunting, identifying training needs, payroll management, supporting employees’ training needs, and adhering to labor laws. I have expertise in scheduling effective training programs for employees to increase productivity. For example, my recent initiative of

Sample Preview of The Chapter

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WRITING AND STUDY SKILLS

BLOCK-I : IMPROVING THE BASICS

Developing Critical, Analytical and Interpretive Thinking Skills



INTRODUCTION

Thinking critically refers to the ability to analyse, interpret and evaluate various ideas. Take for example, if two persons are arguing about flattening the curve of the spread of Covid19 and they have various suggestions. They have statistics, views of experts and hypothetical situations that may emerge, but their arguments contradict the figures and arguments of other experts. In that situation, we need to be a critical thinker which means we have to take considered decisions. We need to think intelligently about the issue. We have to analyse all the beliefs and evaluate them by looking at the reasons. We have to examine opinions closely and in-depth before we accept them. In other words, we have to be a reflective thinker. In this chapter, we will study about some thinking tools which will make you a better writer, reader and thinker. These tools will help us become a more reflective person. We will have the capacity to self-question and dispassionately analyse, synthesize and interpret different kinds of material available and which we can use in our writings.

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

THINKING CRITICALLY AS A WRITER, READER AND TROUBLESHOOTER

Before we write anything, we should think critically in the following ways:

- (i) **As a Critical Thinker:** It means we have to think critically about all the information we have collated from different sources including internet, books and journals.
- (ii) **As a Critical Listener:** It means we have to be a critical listener as we hear about experiences, beliefs and ideas of other people.

Strategies for Reading Critically

Reading and listening are essential before we write. For effective writing, we need to be a thoughtful reader.

A thoughtful reader means a reader who is mindful of inferring, interpreting, analysing and evaluating the ideas in the text. The reader needs to adopt different strategies for reading different types of texts. In critical reading, the reader has to understand the text on its own terms and critically questions the ideas and language in that. The critical reading strategies, adapted from Axelrod and Cooper, are given below:

Annotating: It means recording or taking notes of our reactions, interpretation and questions as we read the given text.

Taking Inventory: It refers to listing and categorizing the annotations or note to find meaningful patterns in them. For this, we have to look for repetitions such as recurring images, stylistic features like repeated words or phrases, repeated examples or illustrations. We may get some meanings in these patterns.

Outlining: It implies listing the main ideas or the gist of the text and important supporting details given in the text.

Summarizing: It means extracting the key ideas or gist of the text.

Synthesizing: It implies integrating our own ideas with the information inferred from other sources.

Contextualizing: It means placing the text in its historical and cultural context and to see whether it is useful or relevant in our context.

Explaining the Significance of Figurative Language: It means examining how metaphors, similes, personification and other literary devices have been used in the text with an intent to convey different meanings and evoke feelings in the reader.

Reflecting on Challenges to Our Beliefs and Value: It means thinking about our own ideas and belief system in the context of the contradictory information given in the text. We do not have to outrightly reject the contradictory information.

2 / NEERAJ : WRITING AND STUDY SKILLS

Evaluating the Topic of An Argument: It refers to understanding whether the arguments in the text is well reasoned and adequately backed by facts.

Recognizing Emotional Manipulation: It means knowing whether the text is unfairly manipulating us, based on exaggerated or false views.

Judging the Writer's Credibility: It implies identifying whether the writer represents different points of view and has satisfactory information on the topic or subject s/he has written.

These strategies would help in the writing process and make us a reflective writer with a vision and with considered and rational opinions. We can similar strategies when we are listening to a lecture.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-1

Q. 1. What are the strategies that you use to be a critical reader?

Ans. The strategies that we use to be a critical reader are:

- (i) **Annotating:** It refers to recording or taking notes of our reactions, interpretation and questions that we raise while reading.
- (ii) **Taking Inventory:** It means listing and categorizing the annotations to get meaningful patterns. We need to look for repetitions like recurring images, stylistic features such as repeated words or phrases, repeated illustrations or examples. Some meanings may emerge in the patterns.
- (iii) **Outlining:** It means listing the main ideas or the gist and important supporting details in the text.
- (iv) **Summarizing:** It is extracting the main ideas or gist of the text concerned.
- (v) **Synthesizing:** It means integrating our own ideas with the information collected from other sources.
- (vi) **Contextualizing:** It is placing the text in its historical and cultural context and to check whether it is useful.
- (vii) **Explaining the significance of figurative language:** Here, we will examine different figurative devices like metaphors, similes and personification in the text.
- (viii) **Reflecting on challenges to our beliefs and value:** We have to think about our own ideas and belief system in the context of the contradictory information used in the text. We should not reject the contradictory information without understanding them.

(ix) **Evaluating the topic of an argument:** It is understanding whether the arguments in the text is well reasoned and adequately supported by facts and figures.

(x) **Recognizing emotional manipulation:** Here, we should know whether the text is unfairly manipulating us, based on exaggerated or false views.

(xi) **Judging the writer's credibility:** It means identifying whether the writer represents different points of view and has satisfactory information on the topic or subject s/he has presented.

Thinking Critically as a Writer

When drafting essays, assignments or stories, we need to be a critical thinker. We should objectively review what we have written. We have to be our toughest reader-critic. For this, we may ask:

- (i) Whether the ideas included are clear and logical?
- (ii) Whether the opinions are well-developed and well supported?
- (iii) Whether the writing reflects the core beliefs in a considered, well-thought of way?

To become a reflective person, we need to know the following issues:

- (i) **Learn to differentiate fact from opinion:** A fact remains the same always. Facts have been verified by research and generally accepted by everyone. Tigers are wild animals and cows are domestics are facts. There are different opinions about the killer of John F. Kennedy. Some people say – Lee Harvey Oswald killed him, others say two shooters killed him, and some people even blame the CIA.
- (ii) **Support your opinions with evidence:** Examples and illustrations, statistics, opinions of experts or even experiences of family and friends should be provided to back opinions. The more convincing the evidence means the more likely readers accepting your views as true.
- (iii) **Evaluate the strength of your evidence:** The evidence should support the topic sentence. The information should be included from a reliable source. We must be sure that the experts are unbiased and their research is careful and professional. The sources should be acknowledged. We must develop a critical eye for choosing the best evidence to support

the topic we are writing about. We should look at the writing from the point of view of the reader. We must see the relevance and the clarity as we read along. We must check whether the material is adequate to buttress the arguments or the views are vague. We must check whether our views are too general or we can improve the sentence structure.

- (iv) **Avoid biases and strong emotions:** Prejudices and strong emotional attitudes that may distort the information that you are presenting, especially in argumentative and persuasive essays. Thus, we should check such elements. The writing should be sensitive to gender, caste, racial or religious issues. For examples, we should know the stereotypes like “All girls like pink colour.”

ANALYSING AS A STRATEGY

The skill of analysing and synthesizing are needed for effective writing and we must develop them. Analysing, which is more a reading strategy, and synthesizing, which is more a writing strategy, go hand in hand. Analysing involves pulling things apart. Analysing an argument means we need to read it closely and critically. Axelrod and Cooper say analysing arguments involve two categories: Basic Features and Motivating Factors.

The basic features are:

Issues: What the writer wishes to address, which means what problems or issues s/he has written about and how the writer defines or frames the issues.

Position: The writer’s own views on the issue, which is normally be the ‘Thesis Statement’ of the essay.

Arguments: What evidence the writer provides to support his/her position, including facts, examples, statistics and views of experts.

Counter-argument: How the writer refutes the opposite point of view – whether s/he concedes to some of the opposing arguments or how strong are the writer’s own views vis-à-vis the view of opponents. Certain factors could be explicitly stated or even implied in the writer’s arguments, called motivating factors.

Values: These are moral, ethical or ideological considerations of the writer, which inevitably get included in writings.

Needs and Interests: This are the need of the writer to highlight any burning issues in his/her life.

Priorities/Concerns: The fears and concerns of the writer would inevitably become his/her priority.

Read the passages and answer the questions below:

Passage-1

This book, *Animal Liberation*, is about the tyranny of human over non-human animals. This tyranny has caused and today is still causing an amount of pain and suffering that can only be compared with that which resulted from the centuries of tyranny by white humans over black humans. The struggle against this tyranny is a struggle as important as any of the moral and social issues that have been fought over in recent years.

Passage-2

This book is an attempt to think through, carefully and consistently, the question of how we ought to treat non-human animals. In the process it exposes the prejudices that lie behind our present attitudes and behaviour. In the chapters that describe what these attitudes mean in practical terms – how animals suffer from the tyranny of human beings – there are passages that will arouse some emotions. These will, I hope, be emotions of anger and outrage, coupled with a determination to do something about the practices described. Nowhere in this book, however, do I appeal to the reader’s emotions where they cannot be supported by reason. When there are unpleasant things to be described it would be dishonest to try to describe them in some neutral way that hid their real unpleasantness. You cannot write objectively about the experiments of the Nazi concentration camp “Doctors” on those they considered “Sub-human” without stirring emotions; and the same is true of a description of some of the experiments performed today on non-humans in laboratories in America, Britain, and elsewhere. The ultimate justification for opposition to both these kinds of experiments, though, not emotional. It is an appeal to basic moral principles which we all accept, and the application of these principles to the victims of both kinds of experiment is demanded by reason, not emotion.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-2

Q. 1. What is the main idea of the two passages?

Ans. The main ideas of the two passages are:

- The tyranny of human over other animals.
- The fight against this cruelty is like any of the moral and social issues.
- How we should treat other animals.
- Experiments performed on non-humans are cruel.

Q. 2. Does the author appeal to people’s emotions?

4 / NEERAJ : WRITING AND STUDY SKILLS

Ans. The author appeals to people's emotion by referring to the tyranny by white humans over black humans and the experiments of the Nazi concentration camp "Doctors" on those they considered "Sub-human" without stirring emotions; and the same is true of a description of some of the experiments performed today on non-humans in laboratories in America, Britain, and elsewhere.

Synthesizing as a Writing Strategy

Synthesizing means presenting facts, ideas and information collected from various sources and suggesting ways in which these sources have a link. For example, facts from a particular article could be extended in another book; or arguments in one research paper may be contradicted in another source. According to Alexrod and Cooper, when we synthesize material from different sources, we develop a talk among various sources and in that conversation we also participate.

Synthesizing is crucial in the process of writing on any topic, especially if you are using multiple resources. To create an effective synthesis, we must read the all material we have collected, albeit superficially; and then focus on the source we have selected as most appropriate for your topic. If we are basing our assignment on multiple source synthesis, we need to pick up relevant arguments/facts from these different articles/books and perhaps a quotation or two as well to describe the points.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-3

Q. 1. Select a passage which has an argumentative focus and follows the basic issues and motivating factors which are outlined.

Ans. The following passage has an argumentative focus:

Higher education is very important in our life. It provides more job opportunities. It widens the scope of employment opportunity. For example, a graduate can apply for most of the government job opportunities. A post graduate degree further increases the job opportunities in both public and private sectors. Higher education enhances knowledge. In school, we study about all subjects and they are not extensive, but in high education we study extensively about a specific subject. It makes us expert in a specific field. Higher education increases the confidence level of a person. It makes us more responsible in whatever we do. We take proper decision and implement them. Higher education improves our communication skills. In higher education students are required to more written assignments, work in groups and participate in discussions. All this lead to excellent written communication, speaking skills, and

group communication. Studies have found that people with higher education are better in critical thinking and decision making. They are taught to ask questions, reflect and analyze – all critical skills for later success. When an entire society is highly educated, productivity increases, average income increases and unemployment decreases. This leads to the economic growth and stability of the country. Thus, higher education has both personal and social benefits.

Basic Issues: The importance of higher education. It has various benefits for an individual and the society.

The Motivating Factors: Higher education makes a person a better individual.

Values: Higher education has both personal and social benefits.

Needs and Interests: Productivity and average income increase.

Priorities should be: Higher education.

Q. 2. Write an essay on any topic of your choice which follows an argumentative framework.

Ans. Title: Democracy is the best form of government

Democracy is a form of government in which the people have the authority to select their governing legislators. The notion of democracy has evolved over time considerably. There are two types of democracy – direct and representative. In a direct democracy, the people directly deliberate and decide on legislation. In a representative form of democracy, the people elect representatives to deliberate and decide on legislation.

Democracy is the best form of government for the following reasons: This system of government provides the kinds of freedom necessary for all round development and growth of the citizens. A democratic government depends on the wishes of the people who rule. Thus, it is a more accountable form of government. A democracy requires that the rulers have to attend to the needs of the people. It is a form of government in which rulers are elected by the people. It is based on free and fair election and those currently in power have a fair chance of losing. In democracy, the final decision making power rests with those elected by the people. A democratic government rules within the limits set by the laws of the land. A democratic decision involves many people, discussions, consultations and meetings. All these take time, but reduce the chances of rash or irresponsible decisions which further improves the quality of decision-making. In a diverse society, people are bound to have differences of opinions and interests. To iron out these differences, democracy is the only known solution as there is no permanent winner and no permanent loser. Democracy is based on the