

A Guide to Continuous Writing

The continuous writing component is worth 30 marks and the marks rewarded will depend on accurate use of language, wide range of appropriate vocabulary, clear organisation of relevant content and appropriate tone and register.

What is considered appropriate or relevant depends on the type of essay you are writing. This guide will introduce you to three common types of essays and how you should write them.

1. Discursive

A discursive essay is one where you discuss a specific topic. If the topic is contentious, you have to provide a balanced discussion especially if the question explicitly demands you to do so.

Sample Questions:

- Discuss the pros and cons of social media.
- What are some important qualities that a friend must have?

The purpose of your discursive essay is to inform your reader about a particular topic. One common mistake made by students is that they take a one-sided view of a contentious topic and try to persuade the audience to hold the same view as them.

To do well for this essay, organise your ideas clearly. Dedicate one paragraph for each main point with supporting details and use linking words or phrases to ensure coherence.

2. Reflective Exposition

The reflective exposition essay question is a deceptively easy question. You are required to discuss a particular topic based on your experiences and the lessons or values you have learnt from those experiences that are related to the topic.

Sample Questions:

- "He who wills wins." Is this always true from your own experiences?
- Write about some of your concerns and hopes for the country twenty years from today.

While you are expected to share your thoughts and perhaps experiences too, do not fall into the trap of thinking that the reflective exposition is a personal recount question.

Like any other essay, your writing should be engaging but your purpose for this essay is to inform your audience your thoughts and views on the given topic. This is not a recount essay and your purpose is not to entertain.

3. Argumentation

The argumentation essay question will require you to take a stand on a particular topic and explain why you hold that view. The main purpose of the essay is thus to convince your audience to hold the same view and stand as you.

Sample Questions:

- "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Do you agree?
- Do you agree that parents today are overly conscious of their children's safety?

To do well, you have to use persuasive language and your arguments must be backed by supporting details such as anecdotes or findings of a research or study. You should also be using words and phrases to express your certainty in your own views. For example, instead of writing, "I think...", write, "I strongly believe that...".

Final Note:

Many candidates get too excited when they see a question on a topic that is familiar to them. They start writing immediately upon reading the question. Such an approach however, can potentially be disastrous especially when candidates realise that they do not really have much content to write.

It is this crucial that you plan your essay first. Pen your thoughts on a blank paper before you start writing proper.

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