Situational Writing

1. What is Situational Writing?

Situational Writing is found in section B of Paper I. The question assesses two components:

(a) Task Fulfilment (10 marks)
- your ability to discuss the Purpose, Audience and Context of scenario
- address the question requirements (given in bulleted points)
- extract and use information from given visual text

(b) Language (20 marks)
- Demonstrate accurate use of grammar and vocabulary
- Demonstrate the ability to use language to convey the proper tone for different scenarios (formal/Informal)

The question is made up of a scenario presented to you in a short paragraph, a few bulleted points that state what you have to address in your writing and a visual text for you to get information to write about.

30 marks is allocated to situational writing, which is the same marks awarded for continuous writing (section C of Paper I), so you should spend the same amount of time for both sections. Thus, the recommended time to spend on Situational Writing is 50 mins.

Time Management (Total Duration: 50 minutes)
- Planning: 15 minutes
- Writing: 30 minutes
- Checking: 5 minutes

Word-length
- 250 – 400 words
- You are strongly encouraged not to over-write as you will be wasting precious time and possibly make more mistakes.
How to use the Visual Texts?

The visual texts can be in any form; articles from newspapers or magazines, webpages, weblogs, extracts from print materials like books and magazines, graphs, charts, maps, diagrams, letters, advertisements or testimonials.

You will need to interpret the information in the visual text and use the information to provide some content for your writing. You should also use contextual/background knowledge that you have on the scenario or visual text to create additional content to support your writing.

You must read and analyse as well as understand the visual texts. Then, use the information from the question from the question and the visual text to answer the question in a coherent manner. For visual texts that are loaded with words, take note and highlight essential details which are relevant for your writing. Rephrasing the given text for your writing is strongly recommended.

What Tone to use?

The use of tone depends on the audience and purpose of writing. If the text type is a formal letter for someone of higher authority or a person you do not know, then you will have to use words that are more polite and be formal to suit the occasion. Likewise, if the text type is an informal letter for someone who is close to you, then you will have to use words that show a friendly and casual demeanour to take an informal stance. Depending on the purpose of the writing, the tone can take a ‘persuasive’ nature, an ‘appealing’ nature or be in the form of a ‘request’.

What is the Purpose and Context?

In this question, you can find who you are supposed to write for (the audience) as well as the purpose and the context of the letter (the imaginary situation you are in). For example, you may be asked to write a formal letter (text type) to your school’s principal (audience). You will be informing him about your proposal to invite a speaker from SPCA to address the students during morning assembly (purpose). This makes up the context.