IIT ROORKEE

NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE

EFFECTIVE WRITING

Lecture-08: Types of Essays

BINOD MISHRA

DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



Types of Essay

- Narrative
- Descriptive
- Reflective
- Expository
- Argumentative
- Imaginative

Narrative Essays

- Author's point of view.
- First person perspective
- Use of present or past tense.
- Narrator's experience or reflection
- Chronological order

(A visit to a zoo/fair/book fair, The happiest day in your life)

History,
Biography,
Legend or
Story,
Any current
event,
Facts

Descriptive Essays

- Observation and description
- Writer's language to enable readers to imagine and understand the subject clearly.
- Spatial order

(A Football match, A Rainbow, The Titanic, A Village Fair etc)

Object, country, important places and monuments etc.



Reflective

- Subjects of general or abstract nature
- The writer expresses his thoughts
- Topics such as punctuality, discipline contentment etc.

Political, Moral, Social, Literary Criticism

- A list of articles lost by railway travelers and now on sale at a great London station has been published, and many people who read it have been astonished at the absent-mindedness of their fellows. If statistical records were available on the subject, however, I doubt whether it would be found that absent-mindedness is common. It is the efficiency rather than the inefficiency of human memory that compels my wonder.

Expository Essays

- To explain or expound something
- Facts rather than thoughts
- Less abstract than reflective
- Results rather than opinions
- Topics like Cinema, Advertisements, Technology etc.

❖ We have become so familiar with the wonders of science that we have ceased to wonder at them. There is hardly any sphere of human activity that science has not invaded.

Argumentative Essays

- Presents with both sides impartially
- Takes up one position
- Investigates disputable issues
- Aims at decisiveness

Argumentative essay topics are mostly debatable.

Of Liars

There is not a man living whom it would so little become to speak from memory as myself, for I have scarcely any at all, and do not think that the world has another so marvellously treacherous as mine. My other faculties are all sufficiently ordinary and mean; but in this I think myself very rare and singular, and deserving to be thought famous. Besides the natural inconvenience I suffer by it (for, certes, the necessary use of memory considered, Plato had reason when he called it a great and powerful goddess), in my country, when they would say a man has no sense, they say, such an one has no memory; and when I complain of the defect of mine, they do not believe me, and reprove me, as though I accused myself for a fool: not discerning the difference betwixt memory and understanding, which is to make matters still worse for me.

Contd.

- But they do me wrong; for experience, rather, daily shows us, on the contrary, that a strong memory is commonly coupled with infirm judgment. They do, me, moreover (who am so perfect in nothing as in friendship), a great wrong in this, that they make the same words which accuse my infirmity, represent me for an ungrateful person; they bring my affections into question upon the account of my memory, and from a natural imperfection, make out a defect of conscience. "He has forgot," says one, "this request, or that promise; he no more remembers his friends; he has forgot to say or do, or conceal such and such a thing, for my sake." And, truly, I am apt enough to forget many things, but to neglect anything my friend has given me in charge, I never do it. And it should be enough, methinks, that I feel the misery and inconvenience of it, without branding me with malice, a vice so contrary to my humour.

Imaginative Essays

- Based on imagination
- No previous experience
- Aims at creating aesthetic pleasure
- Language may be figurative

The Writing Stage

- After planning and arranging your main ideas and major details, begin writing your body paragraphs.
- The number of paragraphs depends on the topic's intricacy, inclusiveness, and your purpose for writing.
- Usually a short essay contains four to five body paragraphs, besides an introduction and a conclusion.
- Think of using transitions to make smooth shifts between sentences and paragraphs.

Style and Diction

- Clarity
- Sincerity and confidence
- Proper referents
- Short and familiar sentences
- Use of proper punctuation
- Revision

Things to Avoid

- Use of colloquial language and slangs
- Imitating others
- Use of difficult and ambiguous words
- Use of too many quotations

Writing an Effective Essay

- Concentrate on the topic and avoid beating about the bush
- Incorporate facts, data, and other analytical information
- Use appropriate tone to add emotion and keep things interesting
- Make use of rhetorical questions and hyberbole at times
- Work on your first paragraph to prepare your readers
- Start small and utilize escalating agreements
- Use short and to-the-point statements
- Keep the readers' interest intact

Of Travel

Travel, in the younger sort, is a part of education; in the elder, a part of experience. He that travelleth into a country before he hath some entrance into the language, goeth to school, and not to travel. That young men travel under some tutor, or grave servant, I allow well; so that he be such a one that hath the language, and hath been in the country before; whereby he maybe able to tell them what things are worthy to be seen in the country where they go ; what acquaintances they are to seek; what exercises or discipline the place yieldeth. For else young men shall go hooded, and look abroad little. It is a strange thing, that in sea voyages, where there is nothing to be seen but sky and sea, men should make diaries; but in land-travel, wherein so much is to be observed, for the most part they omit it; as if chance were fitter to be registered than observation. Let diaries therefore be brought in use.

Contd.

When a traveller returneth home, let him not leave the countries where he hath travelled altogether behind him; but maintain a correspondence by letters with those of his acquaintance which are of most worth. And let his travel appear rather in his discourse than in his apparel or gesture; and in his discourse let him be rather advised in his answers, than forward to tell stories; and let it appear that he doth not change his country manners for those of foreign parts; but only prick in some flowers of that he hath learned abroad into the customs of his own country.

Summing up

Don’t discuss yourself for you are bound to lose; if you belittle yourself, you are believed; if you praise yourself, you are disbelieved.

- Michel de Montaigne

Thank You