

## **5 TIPS ON WRITING A GOOD ESSAY**

- ✓ **Be Original**: Even seemingly boring essay topics can sound interesting if creatively approached. If writing about a gymnastics competition you trained for, do not start your essay: "I worked long hours for many weeks to train for XXX competition." Consider an opening like, "Every morning I awoke at 5:00 to sweat, tears, and blood as I trained on the uneven bars hoping to bring the state gymnastics trophy to my hometown."
- ✓ **Stay well organized and coherent**: The title and first paragraph are probably the most important elements in your essay. In the first paragraph you either hook the reader's interest or lose it. They make up their minds about whether or not to read your essay by glancing at the title alone.
- ✓ **Be concise**: Writing concisely and clearly forces you to think more clearly. Since language is a tool to express thought, sloppy use of language may imply sloppy thinking.
- ✓ **Don't "Thesaurize" your Composition**: For some reason, students continue to think big words make good essays. Big words are fine, but only if they are used in the appropriate contexts with complex styles.
- ✓ **Use gender-neutral language**: Don't use the male pronoun when it's not appropriate. For example, you can't say "I don't know who my doctor will be, but I hope he's good. For this sentence, you'd want to say "...I hope he or she is good."

## **5 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD ESSAY**

- ✓ **Stick to the topic**: No matter how interesting or well-written an essay, you will not be given any credit for your efforts unless it pertains to the topic mentioned. Your argument and evidence must be relevant to the topic. Your answer should demonstrate that you have understood what the question is asking for, that you have grasped its key terms, and that you have followed all its instructions.
- ✓ **Clear structure**: An essay should be like a good piece of architecture - built on firm foundations to carefully made plans. The points of your argument should be arranged in some structure which is logical and persuasive. If you are dealing with a number of issues, the relation between them should be clearly explained. The connections between each stage of your argument and the original question should be evident throughout the essay.
- ✓ **Arguments supported by evidence**: Essays should not be just a series of unsupported assertions. You need to provide some evidence to support them - either in the form of factual details, your own reasoning, or the arguments of others.
- ✓ **Paragraphs**: Each individual paragraph should be focused on a single idea that supports your thesis. Begin paragraphs with topic sentences, support assertions with evidence, and expound your ideas in the clearest, most sensible way you can. Speak to your reader as if he or she were sitting in front of you. In other words, instead of writing the essay, try talking the essay.
- ✓ **Conclusion**: Gracefully exit your essay by making a quick wrap-up sentence, and then end on some memorable thought, perhaps a quotation, or an interesting twist of logic, or some call to

action. Is there something you want the reader to walk away and do? Let him or her know exactly what.

## **SAMPLE ESSAYS**

### **SAMPLE ESSAY – 1**

#### ***How could a country with such poverty as India be a democracy?***

People of India have extreme faith in their government. The poor people of India are increasingly dedicated to their voting process. About 63% of Indians believe that their vote counts, which is significantly more than that of the United States. Also, the poverty stricken people of India have a three percent higher voting percentile than those of upper classes.

The Indian people live in a very different type of society when compared to the other democratic nations of the world. The Indians are a very agricultural people and not very industrialized. It has taken a lot of time for the idea of industry to catch on. It has only been recently that the Indians have become a part of the computer software industry. The main source of income in India is still crops.

The caste system of India holds the Indian people back from making a revolt against the government, because there are over 4,000 castes in India, and in the rural areas, few people talk to others outside of their castes.

This is surprisingly an asset for the Indian government. It is unlikely for the poor to rise up in revolt simply because it is not likely that the barrier between castes will ever be broken. This means that democracy will still have a good chance for survival even with the widening rich-poor gap.

With this in mind, if technology and industry were to thrive in India as they do in other democratic nations, there would surely be disruption to the Indian political process. As it is now, the vast numbers of poor people remaining uneducated and deprived are unable to advance in their socioeconomic status. Consequently, this allows the rich-poor gap continue to grow.

Under India's current conditions, it is virtually unthinkable that a democracy would ever prosper. It seems to have progressed to date amazingly enough due to the caste system and due to the fact that the people have faith in their government and voting systems. If these conditions were not present, it would be quite impossible for India to have achieved what success it has attained thus far.

### **SAMPLE ESSAY – 2:**

#### ***Nowadays environmental problems are too big to be managed by individual persons or individual countries. In other words, it is an international problem. To what extent do you agree or disagree?***

An essential problem of the 21st century is world pollution. Currently the environment is so much contaminated that urgent measures should be taken. The single individual cannot be blamed for the world pollution, however every person should take care of his or her habitat. In addition, it is vital that environmental issues should be treated internationally.

Lately, many presentations, conferences and international summits are held regarding waste treatment, recycling, soil and water contamination. For sure joint efforts and consolidation can only help in the mutual war towards the environmental disaster, which is going on. For instance, governments should offer support to companies and organizations, involved in manufacturing, industry or agriculture in order to find environment friendly approaches. These could be special law regulations, recycling programs, helping courses in order to implement ISO certificates and many more.

However, the influence of individuals over environment should not be ignored. If we do not confess that our planet is our home, we will never be able to take adequately care of it. We have to contribute every day to the preservation of nature and environment. For example, always remember to save energy by switching off lamps, computers and everything that we do not use. Our next obligation is to separate waste and throw bulk only in the designated areas. Driving vehicles can also be environment friendly. For example, we have to avoid accelerating the engines too rapidly or using the air condition in the country, where it will be better to save energy and simply open the windows.

To sum up, environmental problems should be handled by local and international authorities also. Every single person should take care of environment and moreover we have to bring up our children to be conscious citizens of a clean and preserved planet.

### **SAMPLE ESSAY – 3**

***Popular events like the football world cup and other international sporting occasions are essential in easing international tensions and releasing patriotic emotions in a safe way. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?***

The World Cup football match and the Olympics are held worldwide with great national support and expectations. As a fan of those competitions, I agree with the idea that sporting events can be necessary for international relations and national unity. In this essay, I will think about the effects of these popular sporting events.

First of all, the World Cup, Olympics and other international games work for easing tensions among different nations. For example, South and North Korea have football games regularly which give two nations a chance to understand each other deeply. In the mid 1990s, hundreds of North Korean supporters came to South Korea with the footballers and they were very excited during the sporting events. Through the sports, two divided nations could reduce their political and ideological tensions and could feel the patriotic unity.

On the other hand, some sports matches can make international relations worse. For instance, football or baseball games between Korea and Japan are always big matches in two countries where tensions overflow. Sometimes, after the matches, the two rivals blame each other and their patriotic emotions explode in an aggressive way. A much worse scenario is that the troubles caused by losing games affect the players directly. As far as I know, a couple of Korean players in Japan suffered from invisible discrimination after the match between two countries.

In conclusion, I think that international sporting occasions can be one of the good ways to ease tensions or to release patriotism safely. However, I believe that games can not be the fundamental ways for the sound patriotism or peaceful international relations.

### **XAT Previous Year Essay Analysis**

**Essay Topic: "There is no right way of doing a wrong thing." (XAT essay 1996)**

#### **Analysis:**

The topic draws an inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi's famous quote that, "Means should justify the ends".

If the means are justified, then the end is also justified. Also, a wrong inflicted on someone cannot be justified. So for the topic we have to identify cases or situations where wrong means have led to disastrous ends (regardless of the intentions of those who practiced them). Humans are social animals working within a moral, social, value-driven framework. So our activities, the means we employ need to be aligned with justice, social mores and customs, and guided by a humanitarian approach.

To further elaborate the topic the following points can be used:

- Social and moral ethics
- Rule of law: The unjust can never be justified
- Humanitarian approach and human rights
- Fundamental duties
- Examples: As you sow, so you reap

**Essay Topic: "By the third or fourth week of the term, business school had succeeded in afflicting me with a variation of the Stockholm syndrome, named after the incident in which a hostage in a Stockholm bank robbery fell in love with one of her captors."  
(XAT essay 1997)**

**Analysis:**

The topic uses the concept of the Stockholm syndrome. The essay should begin with explaining the term and how it relates to the situation at hand. In psychology, Stockholm syndrome is a term used to describe a psychological phenomenon wherein hostages express empathy and have positive feelings towards their captors, sometimes to the point of defending them. Then the essay needs to correlate this syndrome with a typical business school student's experience, her/his acclimatization to the rigors of a new environment, how she/he comes to identify herself/himself with and take pride in the demanding environment. The topic also describes a shift in perspective on the part of the speaker. This should be discussed in more general terms-how adversity can make us adapt to it so well that we learn to thrive in it.

The following points can be used to explain it further.

- Reorientation in a business school environment
- The importance of an openness to learn
- The carryovers from attending business school.
- The importance of management education.

**Essay Topic: Max Weber, a German Sociologist, defined state as an entity that has a monopoly over legal violence. India proves that the converse is also true; if criminals cannot be punished by the law, its effect they become the state.  
(XAT essay 1998)**

**Analysis:**

The topic underlines the importance of rule of law and equal treatment of law towards everyone. It also highlights that failure to ensure this leads to criminalization of politics.

Following points can be used to further elaborate the topic.

- State: a single entity as exercising authority on violence over a given territory
- Indian scenario: State vis-à-vis Criminals
- Social Economic and political justice
- Rule of Law: Justice delayed is justice denied
- Need of judicial reforms and judicial review: Suo Moto

**Essay Topic: That is what a Television really is; it is another eye so you can see anywhere; another part of your heart so you can feel and care about things you never felt and cared about before; another ear to hear strange music ... the first and only International language.  
(XAT essay 1999)**

**Analysis:**

The topic tries to dispel the myth or idea of an “idiot box” and describes how this idiot box has become our partner/companion and our window into the world. It has opened the floodgates of information for the viewers all across the world and connects them.

The following points can be used to write the essay.

- Impact of globalization on communications.
- The global village and its entertainment.
- Culture not limited by geographies.

**Essay Topic: 'Ships in harbor are safe; but that is not what they are built for.'  
(XAT essay 2000)**

**Analysis:**

The author is trying to emphasize the need for risk-taking in life. Safety is a valid concern but it cannot be the only concern in life and business.

Following points can be used to elaborate the topic further.

- Safety is important but having purpose and goals in life is just as important.
- Sail Forth: Considering the risks
- The existence of an entity lies in its growth and not only in its maintenance
- New ventures and risk management

**Essay Topic: "Economic Growth without distributive justice can only lead to violence"  
(XAT essay 2001)**

**Analysis:**

The preamble to the Indian constitution advocates the social, economic as well as political justice to the people of India. The Imbalanced economic growth of a society, region or country is bound to generate dissatisfaction and discontent among the members. The fruits of development should be distributed equally otherwise regional factionalism would compromise the integrity of a pluralist nation such as India. A participative model of economic growth is the need of the hour. M S Swaminathan once said, ‘remember a grain is mightier than a bullet’. For a just society this problem should be mitigated as soon as possible.

Following points can be used to elaborate on the topic.

- Preamble to the Indian Constitution: Source for economic justice
- Participative and distributive economic growth
- Production and consumption: By all for all
- Regionalism, Factionalism, Naxalism and other problems threatening national integrity and

- Internal security and their roots in imbalanced development.
- A blueprint for socioeconomic growth and development to tackle the problem of disparity.

**Essay Topic: "Indian Economy in the Post WTO Era."  
(XAT essay 2002)**

Indian economy has seen many phases since independence. It has been proved as a sleeping giant as it is going to topple Japan and become third largest economy in the terms of people's purchasing parity (PPP). After the processes of liberalization, privatization and globalization, India is becoming a industrialized nation belying its image as an agricultural country. Though India has moved beyond the days of slow annual growth before 1991 it still needs to gain better access to the international market for its agricultural exports to flourish.

Further the following points can be used to make it more explanatory and more elaborative.

- Indian economy: A sleeping giant before the WTO regime
- A giant leap after the policy of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG)
- Indian agriculture and its access to the global market
- Patent regime and self sufficiency in the field of food production
- Free Trade Agreements (FTA) and 'trade sans borders'

**Essay Topic: "To give real service, one needs to add something that cannot be bought or measured, like sincerity and integrity."  
(XAT essay 2003)**

**Analysis:**

The writer seems to highlight the importance of offering something to the customer that makes a service/ effort 'human' in a real sense. A purely mechanistic approach towards people/service may make something efficient but it will not stay in the memory of the customer/people for a long time. Human beings are social animals and sincerity and integrity are the virtues that people appreciate the most. Gaining customer trust is vital for most service industries. In the essay an example can also be drawn from the life of Mother Teresa who selflessly devoted her life to the people and it can be pointed out that what really makes her Mother is the commitment she showed in caring for the poor, her sincerity and integrity. These values are not tangible but these values go a long way toward making her the Saint she is.

The following points can be used to write the essay.

- Definition of service
- Sincerity and integrity: not incompatible with business
- The service industry - customer is king
- Service and philanthropy - Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives

**Essay Topic: Asked at the age of 83, as to which of his projects would he choose as his master piece, Frank Lloyd Wright, the architect answered, "The next one"  
(XAT essay 2004)**

**Analysis:**

The greatness of the human spirit is defined by its ability to learn and to improve continuously. The above statement highlights the same thing. While writing this essay one has to explain that perfection is a continuous process and that complacency stalls progress in any field. One can take the examples of Sachin Tendulkar, Steve Jobs and others who have set new benchmarks through

their achievements and performances. Essay writers can also highlight the necessity of taking up every challenge with great passion and zeal. A point can also be made for incremental improvement (giving the example of the Kaizen philosophy).

Following points can be used to explain the topic

- Learning and improvement are never-ending processes.
- The importance of passion and zeal while taking up a challenge
- The importance of delivering one's best in whatever one takes up.

### **Essay Topic: "More than one billion Indians: A gigantic problem or a sea of opportunities."**

**(XAT essay 2005)**

#### **Analysis:**

The author tries to draw the attention of the reader to the great dilemma of whether 'the glass is half full or half empty'. India's population can be seen in either as a boon or as a bane. It is a problem for the following reasons:

- It puts more pressure on resources like land, water etc.
- A major chunk of the population is still languishing below the poverty line.
- It is difficult for any government to ensure health, education and employment etc for the entire population
- It adversely impacts people in underprivileged groups It is a boon in the following ways:
  - Our economy is growing and it requires human capital to sustain that growth.
  - India can emerge as the human resource capital of the world by providing trained manpower to ageing societies.
  - The manufacturing sector is still underdeveloped in India and it requires huge inputs of human capital While discussing the topic, the essay writer should:
    - discuss both aspects of the issue mentioned

### **Essay Topic: "India has one of the largest pools of talented manpower, but few innovations and patented products."**

**(XAT essay 2006)**

#### **Analysis:**

India has emerged as the human capital of the world and this is reflected in the growth of its knowledge economy. However, India is merely a service provider and its contribution in fields of innovations and patents is miniscule. This highlights a few problems that hinder India's growth and limit the opportunities available to its people.

The following points can be discussed to explain the idea further:

- problems in the higher education infrastructure in India
- lack of Research and Development facilities available in India
- participation of private bodies in research and development
- lack of vision on the part of the government to ensure innovations and improvements

An essay writer should highlight that this emphasis on innovation and patents is required to ensure India continues to chart higher economic growth and development. Also, bodies like Knowledge Commission can be mentioned to support the ideas.

**Essay Topic: "Economic Growth without environmental damage - a mirage or a reality"****(XAT essay 2007)****Analysis:**

It has been observed that the cost of economic growth is paid by the environmental damage it causes. However, this has been realized by the world and now debates are on to make development sustainable. In this case, the Green Revolution of India can be mentioned. During the decades of the 80s and 90s, the agricultural production of India did go up considerable but it has also caused a lot of damage to soil fertility. But this is not closed ended and India is now targeting ever-green revolution to ensure that agricultural produce do not cause environmental damage.

Following points can be used to further explain the idea:

- Importance of technological innovations to ensure economic growth without environmental damage.
- Cost of technology is prohibitive for developing countries like India.
- Developed countries should transfer technology to developing countries so that environmental damage is minimized.
- There is enough to satisfy every man's need but not every man's greed.
- An essay writer should emphasize that economic growth without environmental damage is an achievable target.

**Essay Topic: "Gender imbalance will lead to Third world war."****(XAT essay 2008)****Analysis:**

The major point here is gender imbalance—the origins, development and continuance of such imbalance needs to be analyzed thoroughly. Despite the evolution of a technological society where rationality, efficiency and justice are supposedly favored, gender stereotypes still persist in all their ugliness. Technology leads to the murder of the female fetus and the girl child being considered a burden to her parents. The continuing struggle of women's movements to iron out gender inequalities persisting in education, justice and work opportunities needs to be examined in detail.

Following topics need to be addressed

- Gender imbalance continues at present.
- The impact of gender inequality on development.
- Male-dominated industries like construction and manufacturing
- The glass ceiling—then and now
- Development indices

**Essay Topic: "The Inherent vice of Capitalism is unequal sharing of blessings and the inherent virtue of Socialism is equal sharing of misery."****(XAT essay 2009)****Analysis:**

Capitalism is an economic system in which the means of production are privately owned and operated by an individual or by a group of individuals for profit motive. It also implies that the benefits are enjoyed by individual(s) only. 'Unequal sharing of blessings' implies that the lion's share of profit goes to privileged individuals and this type of a distribution is unjustified.

Socialism is an economic system in which the means of production are commonly owned and controlled cooperatively. The author has called 'equal sharing of misery' as an inherent virtue of

socialism because it undermines personal or individual profits and aims for inclusive and collective social growth. However, it also highlights that it is difficult to motivate an individual to achieve collective goals. So the efforts are halfhearted and the results dismal.

Following points can be used to elaborate the topic:

- Success of Chinese model in bridging the gap between Capitalist and Socialist systems.
- Success of mixed economy for countries like India (Post independence) to achieve the target of welfare state.

**Essay Topic: "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need but not every man's greed."**

**(XAT essay 2010)**

**Analysis:**

The above line is a famous quote of Mahatma Gandhi, which indicates the problem of overexploitation of resources. It underlines the importance of sustainable growth and development and how to balance demand and supply. The statement suggests the solution for the problem-it lies in striking a balance between human beings' 'demands ' and 'nature's supply'. Gandhiji's idea of trusteeship can also be mentioned to lend strength to the essay.

Following topics are helpful to make the topic more elaborative

- Human and Nature: A symbiotic relationship
- Sustainable development, evergreen revolution etc.
- Unplanned, exploitative development is nothing but self-destructive.

**Essay Topic: "The statesman who should attempt to direct private people in what manner they ought to employ their capitals would not only load himself with most unnecessary attention but assume an authority which could safely be trusted to no council and senate whatever, and which would nowhere be so dangerous as in the hands of man who have folly and presumption enough to fancy himself fit to exercise it."**

**(XAT essay 2011)**

**Analysis:**

The statement draws the reader's attention to the extent a ruler or an institution can invade the freedom and liberty of an individual. While writing an answer for this mention of communist governments and their efforts to control individual's discretion should be highlighted. This has been the reason for change for many erstwhile communist governments. At the same, Gandhiji's idea of Trusteeship, which makes every individual a custodian of public wealth, could be mentioned in this essay as a possible solution.

Following points can be used to further explore the topic

- The limits of authority
- Freedom in a Capitalist society
- Laissez faire
- The importance of regulation (Examples: SEBI etc.)

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