

# Chapter - 1 : Composition Writing

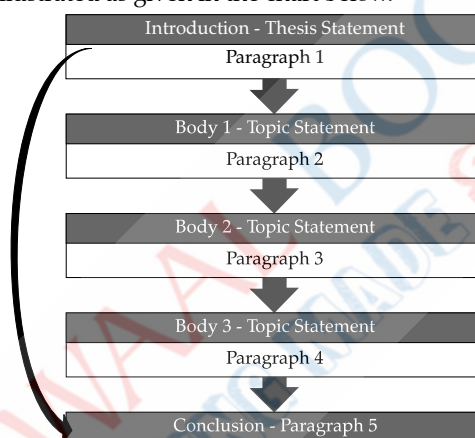
## i Introduction

Writing an effective essay can be daunting but not impossible if one follows certain guidelines. Essay writing is a matter of practice and cannot be learnt overnight. Moreover, an effective essay reflects the writer's personality and competence. In this section, we will discuss the basic structure of essay writing, tips of writing a good and effective composition and different types of compositions.

## Basic Structure of an Essay

According to Harvard University guidelines, essays follow a set structure—they are continuous, connected pieces of writing, written for a specific audience, *e.g.*, your teacher/examiner. Basic high school/college essays follow five paragraphs structure. In ISC, you are required to write a composition in approximately 450 – 500 words, therefore five paragraphs structure is a reasonable format.

A typical structure of an essay can be illustrated as given in the chart below.



The introduction of the essay tells the audience/reader what the essay is about. You introduce the broad context of your topic, build the content around the context and narrow it to the main points of the topic. You must decide the thesis statement of the topic in order to build your essay around.

The body of the essay is a series of paragraphs that contains the content. Each paragraph has a topic sentence and supporting sentences. Topic sentence is the main idea in the paragraph. It tells the reader what the paragraph is going to be about. It is usually the first sentence. The supporting sentences are the other sentences in the paragraph.

**These sentences either :**

- Expand the main point
- Define key terms
- Offer explanations
- Give examples
- Give additional details

The conclusion of the essay sums up the ideas that are covered in the essay. You restate the main idea covering the details and relate it to a broad context or 'big picture'.

This structure applies to almost all types of essays or compositions covered in ISC syllabus, however story writing does not follow any stipulated structure.

## Tips for Writing an Effective Composition

According to Kathy Livingston's Guide to Write a Basic Essay, there are eight steps to write an effective essay. Let's discuss a few general tips to enhance your writing skills.

- **Read a lot of essays and articles :** In order to improve your essay writing, first thing you need to do is read good essays written by other people. It can help you develop and build your own essay-writing style. Try to read a range of other essays, including those of your peers and of teachers. Another good source of essays

is newspapers' columns. Read the opinion pieces and analyse how the writer has supported his points with evidence. While reading other people's essays, be critical and analyse the essays with respect to their language, style and techniques.

- **Enhance your vocabulary :** A wide range of vocabulary helps you to write in exact and precise words. No one likes to read a composition with long, rambling points which could have been written in half the number of words used. Using a thesaurus and dictionary while reading or writing; learning prefixes, suffixes, root words; and making your own vocabulary book can help you build vocabulary. However, you must remember that while writing an essay, do not use big words for the sake of it. Instead of using obscure words, use words that convey the precise meaning of what you want to say.
- **Select a topic :** Be it writing in examination or for assignment in the classroom or in a competition, you may have an opportunity to choose from variety of topics. The choice of the subject is very important because it depends upon your mastery of the knowledge of the topic, your experiences and your interest in the particular topic. Also define your purpose for writing; are you writing to inform, persuade or share your experience? If your goal is to inform and educate, choose a topic you have knowledge about; but if you want to persuade, choose a topic you are passionate about. If your goal is to entertain, choose to share a personal experience or a fictional account. In short, be wise in selecting the topic of your composition.
- **Prepare an outline or diagram of your ideas :** Planning your composition before actual writing can help you to organize your thoughts. Creating a diagram is one of the best ways to organize your ideas. Write the topic in the middle and draw three to five lines branching off from this topic and write down your main ideas at the ends of these lines. Draw more lines off these main ideas and include any thoughts you may have on these ideas. Alternatively, you can prepare an outline by writing the topic at the top of the page. From there, you can begin listing the ideas. Keep space in between to add related ideas. Make sure that all your ideas are relevant to the topic. If your point is irrelevant, the reader will not be able to understand what you want to say. It is a good idea to identify the thesis statement or theme sentence and build your other ideas around it. Also, frame topic sentence for each subsequent paragraph to organize the essay.
- **Structure the paragraph properly :** For expository, discursive and argumentative essays, well-structured paragraphs are important because if the information is well organized it is easier to read.  
The TEEL strategy is very helpful for knowing what should be included in a paragraph.
  - Topic sentence (contains the main idea and is usually first in the paragraph)
  - Explain
  - Evidence and example (use references)
  - Link (refer back or sum up the main idea)
 Also, it is advisable to write at least 85 to 105 words in each paragraph though not necessary.
- **Make your composition coherent and cohesive :** Be it a fictional account or an informative essay, it is very important to make it logical and interconnected. To make your essay coherent and cohesive, use relevant quotations and reporting words such as 'according to', 'suggests', 'states' and so on and use linking words such as 'firstly', 'in contrast', 'consequently', 'similarly' or 'however'. Also, make sure that a chronology or an order is followed throughout the composition. You should convey your thoughts using simple, lucid and comprehensible English. Avoid unnecessary adjectives, ambiguous words and flowery language. However, keep your tone and style interesting and absorbing.
- **Take care of grammar, punctuation and spelling :** It is very easy to get carried away while writing on the topic of your choice and therefore, it is very important to use correct sentence structure, spellings and punctuation. Incorrect sentences, wrong spellings and lack of punctuation mar the very idea that you want to convey to the reader. Employ a variety of sentence structures, long and short, but don't let your sentences become too long and rambling, or they become difficult to read. Also, effective punctuation is vital in conveying your arguments persuasively; the last thing a teacher wants to read is an essay riddled with poor grammar. Writing in the active rather than the passive voice is another well-known trick that writers use to give their writing a sense of closeness and make it more convincing. Write using legible hand-writing and do not scribble. If you must cancel a word, just strike through the word with single or double lines.
- **Practice makes perfect :** Lastly, practise, practise and practise! You should practice a good number of essays throughout the year to master the art of writing an effective composition. The best way to get really good at making sure you always 'answer the question' is to write essay plans rather than whole pieces. Set aside a few hours, choose a couple of essay questions from past papers, and for each, write thesis statement, draw outline of each paragraph and write first and last sentence of each paragraph.

By following these general tips, you can easily score better in the composition question.

## Board guidelines

The quality of language employed, the range of appropriateness of vocabulary and syntax, correctness of grammatical constructions, punctuation and spellings (mentioned in the scope of syllabus), decide the overall grade of the essay. Marks are deducted for gross errors like – errors of agreement and number, serious tense errors, wrong verb form, elementary errors of sentence construction, misuse of vocabulary, errors in spelling, punctuation or lack of it. Marks are also deducted for use of incorrect or irrelevant idioms, misuse of pronouns, articles and prepositions.

## Types of Composition

Based on ISC syllabus, we can classify the types of composition into following categories :

- |                           |                 |                            |                    |
|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| (i) Descriptive           | (ii) Narrative  | (iii) Expository /one word | (iv) Argumentative |
| (v) Discursive/Discussion | (vi) Reflective | (vii) Short stories        |                    |

These types are only broad classification and it happens that many a times, a given topic demands to overlap the categories discussed.

### 1. DESCRIPTIVE COMPOSITION

In this type, the purpose of the writer is to describe a person, a place, a thing or an event with such vivid details that the reader can easily form a mental picture or image of what is being written about. You describe something how it looks, sounds, smells, feels or tastes. Good description demands sensory details, figurative language, dominant impression, precise sentences, and careful organization. In order to create a mental picture, you have to employ specific adjectives, figurative language and words related to senses. *For example*, instead of writing : “The lioness ate her prey and went to sleep under the tree”, you can write : “After devouring on her prey, the lioness retreated under the tree and lazed with her eyes half-closed.”

### 2. NARRATIVE COMPOSITION

A personal narrative essay is simply a personal story, and we all have at least a few of these to tell. Sometimes plays and movies have a narrator, a person who stands to the side and tells his or her story. The narrator describes actions as well as thoughts and feelings. The story you choose to write will be your narrative essay.

Unlike some other essay forms, the personal narrative essay is written in the first person viewpoint. Because this is your story, you can pepper it with the words “I,” “me,” “my,” and “mine.” This is a personal experience piece. Like an opinion, argumentative essay would also be written in first person, it would dwell more on thoughts and ideas than on events. Your narrative essay will be event-driven. As you are narrating an event of your life, you must organize it chronologically. Thus, narrative essays are time-bound. Also, narrative essays are generally written in simple past or simple present with suitable switches as the event demands.

### 3. DISCURSIVE COMPOSITION

The discursive essay is a genre of essay that requires the student to investigate an idea, evaluate evidence, expound on the idea, and set forth an argument concerning that idea in a clear and concise manner. This can be accomplished through comparison and contrast, definition, example, the analysis of cause and effect, etc. The purpose of the discursive essay is to explain a topic in a logical and straightforward manner. In ISC, these types of essays are termed as “One Word” essays that can be handled in any manner whatsoever. Therefore, you have a fair opportunity to become creative instead of just being informative in this type of essays.

### 4. ARGUMENTATIVE COMPOSITION

The leading tone in an argumentative essay is the position of proving that the presented point of view is the correct one and possesses more truthful arguments than any other opinions. Thus, to take A STAND IS MUST in argumentative essay. Students cannot sit on the fence. They, through proper reasoning, inducting and by concluding, must prove the assertions or the theories of the argumentative essay.

A common method for writing an argumentative essay is the five-paragraph approach. If it sounds straightforward, that is because it is; in fact, the method consists of (a) an introductory paragraph (b) three evidentiary body paragraphs that may include discussion of opposing views and (c) a conclusion. To build your arguments, support them with historical evidences and factual data. Conclude it by summing up your arguments and restate your stand.

### 5. REFLECTIVE COMPOSITION

Reflective Essays describe an event or experience, and then analyze the meaning of that experience and what can be learned from it. They are personal in nature as they are drawn from personal experiences or opinions. A reflective essay:

- Explores some aspect of the world.
- Presents your thoughts and feelings on it.
- Discusses how you think, it has affected the person you are today.
- Describes the person you are/your opinions of yourself.

This category is often an overlap of personal narrative, descriptive and discursive. However, in reflective essay, you are required to express your views on a general/given statement/universal truth and reflect how it has affected you as a person.

## 6. SHORT STORIES

A fictional narrative essay uses all the story elements - beginning and ending, plot, characters, setting and climax - all coming together to complete the story.

Essential Elements of Narrative Essays

The focus of a narrative essay is the plot, which is told using enough details build to a climax. Here's how :

- It is usually told chronologically.
- It usually has a purpose, which is usually stated in the opening sentence.
- It may use dialogue.
- It is written with sensory details and vivid descriptions to involve the reader. All these details relate in some way to the main point the writer is making.

All of these elements need to seamlessly combine.

Your story should be written in the storytelling style complete with setting, characters, plot, climax, and ending.

As an example of the story of adoption, it can be like this:

- **Setting:** the quiet home of a childless couple, the social services office,
- **Main Characters:** a white couple and two black orphans
- **Plot:** Will this couple ever have children? Will the babies ever have parents?
- **Climax:** the birth parents choose to give up the babies for adoption
- **Ending:** the couple joyfully adopts both babies and completes their family

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## Chapter - 2 : Directed Writing

### i Introduction

Directed Writing in ISC is basically a guided composition as points are already enumerated with the question. As skills such as selection, amplification, description, presentation of ideas, rearrangement and restatement are evaluated, you need to be objective, precise and brief in your writing. You are also required to present the appropriate writing to given situation. In certain cases, prescribed format needs to be followed. Following types of questions can be asked in directed writing.

1. **Article Writing** : written work, propagating news
2. (a) **Newspaper Reports** : robbery, calamity, disasters, accidents, events, surveys/statistical reports  
(b) **School Reports** : cultural activity, sports/annual functions, literary activity
3. **Book and Movie Reviews**: Review of books, novels, short stories, review of theatre/concert/TV programmes
4. **Review of Cultural Programme** : Review of events, celebrations, competition etc.
5. **Speeches** : assembly speech, farewell speech, annual/other function speech
6. Curriculum Vitae/Personal Profile/Resume/Personal Fact-file and Letter for Job Application
7. Statement of Purpose

## Board Guidelines

This was an exercise in amplification. There had to be effective linking of points. Candidates could use the points in any order they choose; however, all points had to be used. If there was no development of points, marks were deducted.



## 1. ARTICLE WRITING

**Article** : An article is a written work, published in printed/electronic form for the purpose of propagating news, analysis of result or academics. It is related to one topic, subject or theme.

**While writing an article, students are advised to keep the following points in mind :**

- (i) First of all, concentrate on the given topic and also read intensively the given verbal input. Some new ideas will strike you. Arrange all those ideas in the sequence in which you want them to appear in your piece.
- (ii) Now start writing your composition. Develop your ideas one by one.
- (iii) Your composition must be precise, to the point and lucid. Every sentence and idea should be linked to the previous one and lead to the next.
- (iv) Your write up should be meaningful and compact. There should be no loose end. Don't exceed the word limit.
- (v) The first sentence should be striking. It should be the essence of the whole composition. Likewise, the last sentence should state your conclusion on the topic. It should leave a permanent impression on the mind of the Reader.
- (vi) Write your composition in simple words. There should be no grammatical, spelling or structural mistake. Rules of syntax and punctuation marks should not be violated.
- (vii) Your paragraph should follow a clear-cut order and move steadily towards its desired goal. Arrange your ideas into a set pattern in order to give a concrete shape to your paragraph.
- (viii) In a descriptive or argumentative piece of composition, the style is usually formal. Always write complete sentence, leaving nothing to the guess work. Your language should be graphic, words selective and your approach objective. It is therefore necessary to give emphasis to the main and central points of the topic. The beginning as well as the end should be striking and appealing.
- (ix) Colloquialism and too formal expressions and slangs should not be used.

## Format of an Article

|                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Heading / Title (must be catchy)</b>                                                        |
|                                                                                                |
| <b>Writer's Name</b>                                                                           |
|                                                                                                |
| <b>Introduction</b><br>(Start with a slogan, a question, an amazing fact, figure or statement) |
|                                                                                                |
| <b>Content</b><br>(Problem, Causes, Opinion)                                                   |
|                                                                                                |
| <b>Conclusion</b><br>(Draw Solutions)                                                          |
|                                                                                                |

## 2. (A) NEWSPAPER REPORT

A news story written or found in newspaper with an aim of providing the readers with information about a certain topic, event, accident or crime.

The main components of a Newspaper Report are:

- **Headline:** It should catch reader's attention. It must sum up the story.
- **Byline :** It reads as "By a Staff Reporter/Correspondent" or "By Our Staff Reporter"

- **Place line and Date line:** It includes when and where the story begins.
- **Lead :** The lead is the first few sentences of the story. It needs to be strong, so it will grab the Reader's attention and make them want to read more.
- **Body :** It supplies details. Important details come first followed by simple true statements.

## Tips for Writing a Compelling News Report

- **Facts :** The facts will answer the : who, what, when, where, why, and how of the news event. For examination purpose, write imaginary details that are believable.
- **Style :** When writing a news report, use both the voices. Although the passive voice is the ruling voice in Report Writing, yet the active voice is more understandable and has more impact. Make short, concise sentences with action verbs. Your language needs to be simple and not have extra words that don't really contribute to the focus of the story.

## Format of Report Writing

|                |
|----------------|
| <b>Heading</b> |
| <b>By ABC</b>  |
| .....          |
| .....          |
| <b>Content</b> |
| .....          |
| .....          |

## 2. (B) SCHOOL REPORTS

They are generally written for School Magazines. In ISC, mostly narrative accounts of some important events are asked with enumerated points given. Therefore, these Reports become easy to write. However, you must be concise and objective in your narration. Also, you need to follow prescribed format which is similar to Newspaper Reports. In School Reports, sometimes, by line comes at the end of the Report.

## Tips for writing a School Report

- Practice in writing a variety of Reports is a MUST in Class.
- Students must read Newspapers for the correct usage and style of language.
- Refer instructions on how to write a proper report.
- Special care must be given to the vocabulary; technical terms and event-related words must be dealt with.
- Always remember the importance of the word-limit.

## Format of Report Writing

|                |
|----------------|
| <b>Heading</b> |
| <b>By ABC</b>  |
| .....          |
| .....          |
| <b>Content</b> |
| .....          |
| .....          |

## 4. BOOK REVIEW

Writing a Fiction Book Review :

### Points to Ponder on

- What was the Story about?
- Who were the Main Characters?
- Were the Characters credible?
- What did the Main characters do in the Story?
- Did the Main Characters run into any Problems or Adventures?
- Who was your Favourite Character? Why?

### Your personal experiences

- Could you relate to any of the Characters in the Story?
- Have you ever done or felt some of the things, the Characters did?

### Your opinion

- Did you like the Book?
- What was your Favourite part of the Book?
- Do you have a Least Favourite part of the Book?
- If you could change something, what would it be?

### Your recommendation

- Would you recommend this Book to another Person?
- What type of Person would like this Book?
- **Note:** You don't have to answer every question -- they're suggestions!

## 5. FILM REVIEW

You can use the following format to write all your Film Reviews.

### Format of Film Review

#### Headings

**Your Name**

**Name of Film**

**Director**

**Genre (use your judgement)**

#### Introduction

**Introduce the Film you saw. Be sure to include any background information about the Film that may be interesting to the Reader. Also, introduce the Director and Stars. At the end of the Introduction have a Thesis stating your opinion of the Film; was the Film worth seeing? Be creative in your Wording of the Thesis.**

#### Photo Synopsis

**Provide a BRIEF Plot Summary of the Film. Is the Plot original or cliché? Is the plot predictable? Please do not give away endings, but you still must show competent knowledge of the Film.**

#### Themes

**What was the main Theme of the Movie? Does the Movie teach the Viewer anything about life, love, etc.? Include what these Themes are as well as how they are conveyed to the Reader.**

**Visual Elements**

How was the Film's visual appearance? Is there anything interesting about the Camera work (angles, shots, etc.) or the Set designs (Costumes, Locations) or the Lighting (light/dark).

**Conclusion**

Conclude the Review with your opinion of the Film. Be creative and try to persuade the Reader to either see or not see the Film based on your Review. Also, Rate the Film.

## 6. REVIEW OF CULTURAL PROGRAMME

Theatre/Concert/TV Programme Reviews also follow the format of Book or Movie Reviews.

### Format of Theatre Review (Play)

1. **Begin by writing a Headline and Byline.** Give your Review a Title - that's your Headline. The Byline is your name.
2. **Introduction** - This should include the Name of the Production, Type of Play - Comedy, Drama, Musical, etc. and the Performing Group .
3. **Theme** - Describe the main subject matter or Message of the play. What is the Playwright's Purpose? Does it succeed? Does the Play add something to your understanding and experience of life?
4. **Technical Aspects** - Write about the Lighting, the Set, the Costumes and the Sound. How does each one effect the atmosphere of the play? Do they work together, or do they work against each other?
5. **Acting** - Are the actors convincing? Are there any outstanding performances? Do the Actors make their relationships clear?
6. **Directing** - Is the blocking - The Movement of the Actors - appropriate to the play? Is the Stage Picture balanced? Are any aspects of the Production confusing?
7. **Your Opinion** - Discuss how you feel about any aspects of the play, but give reasons to back up your opinions and beliefs.

### Format of Concert Review

**1. Introduction**

Your Introduction should include the Title, Venue and Date of the Concert, and Names of Musicians/ Ensembles/Conductors.

**2. Description**

The main body of the Concert Review should include brief discussions of each piece played during the concert you attended. You should write your own Observations on the performance.

**3. Evaluation**

Based on your notes, be sure to mention what made attending the Concert worthwhile. Be honest about whether you individually enjoyed the Concert and how, in your opinion, the Audience as a whole responded.

**4. Conclusion**

Your conclusion should summarize your overall impression of the concert.



## 7. SPEECH

Drafting a speech for a formal occasion can be developed through constant practice. Speeches, generally, demand in-formal language so that it becomes easy, however a certain format is necessary to follow.

### Important points to remember to draft a Speech

**Step 1.** Decide the purpose of the Speech and begin with the most important idea/point on your outline. Also, keep Audience in your mind in order to determine the language to be used in the Speech.

**Step 2.** Speech drafting requires you to write as you speak. Write down what you'd say as if you were talking directly to them.

**Step 3.** A formal speech needs to be introduced with greetings to audience using "Good Morning", "Good Evening" and other such phrases. You also need to address the important people present in the audience.

Once you finish the Greetings, open your Speech with "Hooks" to catch your audience's attention. You can use famous quotes, idioms or personal anecdotes as hooks depending on the occasion. "Hooks" can be humorous, shocking, philosophical or sometimes very direct to the point. Most importantly, keep the purpose in mind while opening your Speech.

**Step 4.** While moving from one idea to another, use linking words to allow smooth transition. Between each of your main ideas you need to provide a pathway. This links them for your listeners. The clearer the path, the easier it is to make the transition from one idea to the next. Go back through your main ideas checking the links. Write them down when they are clear and concise.

**Step 5.** The ending of speech should be highly memorable. You want it to live on in the minds of your listeners long after your Speech is finished. Often it combines a call to action with a summary of major points. And, don't forget to thank the audience at the end of the Speech.

### Format of Speech Writing

|                                                                                                                                                          |            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
|                                                                                                                                                          | Heading    |
| First Paragraph                                                                                                                                          |            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greet the Audience</li> <li>Introduce yourself</li> <li>Introduce the Topic</li> <li>Purpose of Speech</li> </ul> |            |
| Paragraph (2, 3)                                                                                                                                         | Body       |
|                                                                                                                                                          |            |
| Last Paragraph                                                                                                                                           | Conclusion |
|                                                                                                                                                          |            |
| Thank you                                                                                                                                                |            |

## 8. CURRICULUM VITAE WITH PERSONAL PROFILE AND LETTER OF APPLICATION

### Job Application Letter Format

Letter for Job Application is also known as Covering Letter. Following is the suggested format for a Covering Letter.

#### Contact Information

- Name
- Address
- City, State, Zip Code
- Phone Number
- e-mail Address
- Date

#### Employer Contact Information

- Name (if you have it)
- Title
- Company
- Address
- City, State, Zip Code, Pin Code.

#### Salutation

- Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name, (leave out if you don't have a contact and write only Sir or Madam)

### Body of Application Letter

- The body of your Application Letter lets the Employer know what position you are applying for, why the Employer should select you for an Interview, and how you will follow up.
- See below for a paragraph-by-paragraph breakdown of the body of the letter.

#### First Paragraph

The first paragraph of your letter should include Information on why you are writing. Mention the Job you are applying for and where you found the job listing. Include the name of a mutual contact, if you have one. You might conclude by briefly and concisely saying why you think you are an ideal candidate for the job.

#### Middle Paragraph(s)

The next section of your application letter should describe what you have to offer the employer. It can be a single paragraph, or you can break it up into a couple of paragraphs. If the section gets lengthy, you may use bullet points to break up the text. Remember, you are interpreting your resume, not repeating it.

Mention specifically how your qualifications match the job you are applying for. In this portion of the letter, make your case for your candidacy. It can be helpful to spend some time researching the company — when you know a lot about the company, it helps you make an informed and persuasive argument for your candidacy.

Use specific examples whenever possible.

#### Final Paragraph

Conclude your application letter by thanking the employer for considering you for the position. Include information on how you will follow up.

Complimentary Close

Sincerely,

Signature (for a mailed letter)

Typed Signature

# Curriculum Vitae/ Resume with Personal Profile

A well written CV or resume is the key to get your Dream Job.

➤ **Suggested Format :**

**Personal Profile :**

**A Personal Profile is an introductory paragraph at the beginning of your CV containing a short summary of your background and career plans.**

Now-a-days, scholarship application, applying for higher studies also require you to give a snippet of your qualifications and aspirations. The profile is the written equivalent of an 'elevator pitch' designed to capture the admission committee member's/employer's interest quickly so that they will read your CV in full and hopefully, invite you for the interview.

The profile briefly summarizes your:

- **Credentials**—in terms of qualifications, experience and expertise relevant to your target job;
- **Track Record**—in terms of length and quality of experience and achievements and;
- **Aspirations**—in terms of the range of roles you are considering in particular types of organisation.

## Format of Curriculum Vitae

Your Name

Street Address, City, ST Zip Code, Pin Code

Telephone

E-mail

Hobbies

Objective & Career Goal

Skills and Abilities

Experience

Job Title—(Company Name)

Dates from ..... to .....

Education

Degree

School Name ..... Location ..... Year .....

Communication

[If you have delivered that big presentation to rave reviews]

## 9. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (SOP)

The Statement of Purpose (often called "Letter of Intent" or "Application Essay" by various Educational Institutions) is one of the most important components of your application process for Higher/University studies. The Statement of Purpose is your opportunity to help reviewers better understand your Academic Objectives and determine if you are a good match for the field to which you are applying. The length and format differs from University to University. However, you need to follow certain basics to draft your SOP:

## Tips on Writing a Statement of Purpose

- Be Yourself.
- Write a strong opening.
- Frame the points you wish to make in a positive light.
- Describe an important experience that is relevant to the program of interest.
- Be specific, concise, honest and unique.
- Describe why you are a good match for their program. Tell the Committee about your skills and interest in that particular program. Be specific and thoughtful.

- Talk about your goals. Explain how a Graduate Degree will help you accomplish those goals.
- Explain any shortcomings in your background.

## Format of Statement of Purpose (SOP)

1. Why you are interested in that particular Program/Course for which you are applying? This is the most important feature which should never be excluded from a SOP.
2. Explain in what way the selected program is going to help you in future in terms of your future career & goals.
3. Explain what you could contribute to the selected program as an Individual.
4. State your career goals.
5. You should definitely mention your academic strengths and in what way these strengths are related to your selected program.
6. Mention your extra-curricular interests (include sports activities) and in what manner they assisted in shaping your personality.  
  
Note : If you are applying for a post graduate program, such activities are considered less important and the SOP should focus more on your vocation.
7. Mention any internship which you did or any work experience you have had, including voluntary work.



## Chapter - 3 : Proposal Writing

### i Introduction

According to the dictionary, word 'Proposal' means a plan or suggestion, especially a formal or written one, put forward for consideration by others.

The thought of writing a Proposal overwhelms many people, but the task does not have to be daunting. Proposals are written when people need to ask permission to make a purchase, do a project or write a paper; the proposal is a formal way of putting forth an idea and asking for action to be taken on that idea. When writing a Proposal, consider who will read the Proposal and what that person may or may not already know about what you are proposing.

### HOW TO WRITE A PROPOSAL

Writing a good Proposal is a critical skill in many occupations, from school to business, management to geology. The goal of a Proposal is to gain support for your plan by informing the appropriate people. Your ideas or suggestions are more likely to be approved if you can communicate them in a clear, concise and in an engaging manner. Knowing how to write a persuasive, captivating Proposal is essential for success in many fields. There are several types of Proposals, such as Science Proposals and Book Proposals, Business Proposals, but the same basic guidelines apply for all of them.

#### Guidelines for Proposal Writing

(Word limit : approx. 150 words)

1. **Heading :** The candidates will be required to explain the overall context in not more than 10 to 15 words illustrating the specific task that the project is supposed to achieve.
2. **Statement of Objective :** The candidates will be required to explain the goals and objectives of the proposed project and the resolution to be arrived at.
3. **List of Measures :** The candidates will be required to explain the specifics and method of what is to be done, such as :
  - (a) Time that will be taken;
  - (b) Budgetary and non-financial needs, i.e., How much money will be spent on the project and what non-financial resources are required? (human capital, infrastructure, etc.)

## PLANNING YOUR PROPOSAL

1. **Define your Audience :** You need to make sure what you think about your audience and what they might already know or not know about your topic before you begin writing. That will help you focus your ideas and present them in the most effective way. It's a good idea to assume that your readers will be busy reading (or even skimming) in a rush, and not predisposed to grant your ideas any special consideration. Efficiency and persuasiveness will be the key.
  - (a) Who will be reading your proposal? What level of familiarity with your topic will they have ? What might you need to define or give extra background information about?
  - (b) What do you want your audience to get from your Proposal ? What do you need to give your readers so they can make the decision you want them to make.
  - (c) Reform your tone to meet your audience's expectations and desires, what do they want ? What would be the most effective way of getting through to them ? How can you help them understand what you are trying to say?
2. **Define your issue :** It is clear to you what the issue is, but is that also clear to your reader? Also, does your reader believe you really know what you are talking about? You can support your ethos, or writing persona, by using evidence and explanations throughout the Proposal to back your assertions. By setting your issue properly, you start convincing the reader that you are the right person to take care of it. Think about the following when you plan this part :
  - (a) What is the situation this issue applies to?
  - (b) What are the reasons behind this?
  - (c) Are we sure that those, and not others, are the real reasons? How are we sure of it?
  - (d) Has anyone tried to deal with this issue before?
  - (e) If yes; has it worked? Why?
  - (f) If not; Why not?

Don't write a summary obvious to anyone in the field. Do show that you have conducted in - depth research and evaluation to understand the issue.
3. **Define your Solution :** This should be straightforward and easy to understand. Once you set the issue you are addressing, how would you like to solve it? Get it as narrow (and double) as possible.
 

**Don't :** forget to comply with all requirements in the RFP (Request For Proposal) document.

**Do :** go above and beyond the minimum whenever budget allows.

  - (a) Your proposal needs to define a problem and offer a solution that will convince uninterested skeptical (not easily convinced) readers to support it. Your audience may not be the easiest crowd to win over. Is the solution you are offering logical and feasible? What is the timeline for your implementation?
  - (b) Consider thinking about your solution in terms of objectives. Your primary objective is the goal that you absolutely must achieve with your project. Secondary objectives are other goals that you hope your project achieves.
  - (c) Another helpful way of thinking about your solution is in terms of "Outcomes" and "Deliverable". Outcomes are the quantifiable results of your objectives.
 

For example : If Your Proposal is for a business project and your objective is "Increase Profit", an outcome might be "Increase Profit by 50%".

Deliverable are products or services that you will deliver with your project. For example, a Proposal for a Science project could 'deliver' a vaccine or a new drug. Readers of Proposals look for Outcomes or Deliverables, because they are the easy ways to determine what the worth of the project.
4. **Keep Elements of Style in Mind :** Depending on Your Proposal and who will be reading it, you need to cater your paper to fit a certain style. What do they expect? Are they interested in your problem?
 

**Don't :** overuse jargon (special words or expressions used by a Profession or Group that are difficult for others to understand), obscure abbreviations, or needlessly complex language.

**Do :** write in plain, direct language whenever possible.

  - (a) How are you going to be persuasive? Convincing proposals can use emotional appeals, but should always rely on facts as the bedrock of the argument. For example, a Proposal to start a Panda conservation Program could mention how sad it would be for the Children of Future Generations to never see a Panda again, but it should not stop there. It would need to base its argument on facts and solutions for the Proposal to be convincing.



5. **Make an outline :** This will not be a part of the final proposal, but it will help you organize your thoughts. Make sure you know all the relevant details before you start.

- (a) Your outline should consist of your problem, your solution, how you will solve it, why our solution is best, and a conclusion. If you are writing an Executive Proposal, you will need to include things like a Budget Analysis and Organisational Details.

## WRITING YOUR OWN PROPOSAL

### (1) Start with a Firm Introduction :

- This should start out with a hook. Ideally you want your readers to be enraptured from point one. Make your Proposal as purposeful and useful as possible. Use some background information to get your reader in the zone. Then state the purpose of your proposal.
- If you have any starting facts that shed some light on why the issue needs to be addressed immediately, it's safe that this is something you can start with. Whatever it is, make sure what you start out with is a fact and not an opinion.

### (2) State the Problem :

- After the Introduction, you will get into the body. Here is where you should state your problem. If your readers don't know much about the circumstances, fill them in. Think of this as the section of your proposal. What is the problem? What is causing the problem? What effects does this problem have?
- Emphasize why your problem needs to be solved and needs to be solved now. How will it affect your audience if left alone? Make sure to answer all questions and cover them with research and facts. Use credible sources liberally.

**Don't :** rely solely on generic appeals to emotions or values.

**Do :** tie the issue to the audience's interest or mission statement, as directly as possible.

(3) **Propose Solution :** This is arguably the most important part of your proposal. The solutions section is where you get into how you will address the problem, why you will do it in this way and what the outcome will be. To make sure you have got a persuasive proposal, think about the following :

- Discuss the larger impact of your ideas. Ideas that are sum of limited applicability are not as likely to spark enthusiasm in readers as ideas that could have widespread effects.
- Addressing why you will do something is as important, as stating what you will do. Presume that your readers are skeptical and will not accept your ideas at face value. Why is that Proposal better than something else?  
If it is more expensive than another option? Why can't you use the cheaper option? Anticipating and addressing these questions will show that you have considered your ideas from all angles.
- Your readers should leave your paper assured that you can solve the problem effectively. Literally, everything you write should either address the problem or the method to solve it.
- Research your proposal extensively. The more examples and facts you can give to Your Audience, the better - it will be and much more convincing. Avoid your own opinions and rules on the hard research of others.
- If your proposal doesn't prove that your solution works, it is not an adequate solution. If your solution is not feasible, mix it. Think about the results of your solution, too. Pretest it if possible and revise your solution if need be.

(4) **Include a Schedule and Budget :** Your Proposal represents an investment. In order to convince your readers that it is a good investment, provide as much detailed concrete information about your timeline and budget as possible.

**Don't :** include objectives that are vague, impossible to measure, or don't relate to the stated problem.

**Do :** detail responsibilities and time commitments on the level of Departments or Individual Staff.

- When do you visualize project starting? At what place will it progress? How does each step build on other? Can certain things be done simultaneously? Being as meticulous (extremely careful about details) as possible will give your readers the confidence that you have done your homework and would not waste their money.
- Make sure your proposal makes sense financially. If you are proposing an idea to a company or a person, consider their budget. If they can't afford your proposal, it's not an adequate one. If it does fit their budget, be sure to include why it's worth their time and money.

(5) **Wrap up with a Conclusion :** This should mirror your Introduction, succinctly (in a brief and clearly expressed manner) wrapping up your general message. If there are consequences to your proposal not being undertaken, address them. Summarize the benefits of your proposal and drive home that the benefits outweigh the costs. Leave your audience thinking ahead. And, as always, thank them for their consideration and time.

- (a) If you have extra content that doesn't exactly fit into your proposal, you may want to add an appendix. But know that if your paper is too bulky, it may scare people off, if you're in doubt, leave it out.
- (b) If you have two or more appendices attached to your proposal, letter them A, B, etc. This can be used if you have data sheets, reprints of articles, or letters of endorsement and the like.
- (6) **Edit your work** : Be meticulous in writing, editing and designing the proposal. Revise as it is necessary to make it clear and concise, ask others to critique and edit it, and make sure the presentation is attractive and engaging as well as well-organized and helpful.
- (a) Have another set of eyes (or two) read over your work. They will be able to highlight issues your mind has been blind to. There may be issues that you haven't completely addressed or questions you have left open-ended.
- (b) Eliminate jargon and clichés! These make you look lazy and can get in the way of understanding. Don't use a long word when a short word will do just as well.
- (c) Avoid the passive voice whenever possible. Passive voice uses forms of "to be" verbs and can make your meaning unclear.
- Don't** : Muddle Your Proposal with I believe that ....., this solution may aid ..... or other qualifiers.
- Do** : Use strong, direct language. The proposed plan will significantly reduce rates.
- (7) **Proof-read your work** : Editing focuses on getting the content as clear and concise as you can make it. Proof-reading makes sure that your content is free of mistakes. Go over your proposal carefully to catch any spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors.
- (a) Any mistakes on your end will make you look less educated and less credible, reducing your likelihood of getting approved.
- (b) Make sure that your formatting is in line with whatever the guidelines require.

### Format of Proposal Letter

|                                               |                        |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| _____                                         | Sender's address       |
| _____                                         |                        |
| <u>20th June, 20XX</u> → current date         |                        |
| To,                                           |                        |
| _____                                         | Recipient's address    |
| Subject                                       |                        |
| _____                                         |                        |
| <u>Dear Sir/Madam,</u> Appropriate Salutation |                        |
| _____                                         |                        |
| Body of letter                                |                        |
| _____                                         | Body of the letter     |
| _____                                         |                        |
| Yours Sincerely/Truly — Closing               |                        |
| Karan Singh                                   |                        |
| (Sales Manager)                               |                        |
| Enclosures :                                  |                        |
| (1) <u>Copy of Case statement</u>             |                        |
| (2) <u>Board of Directors list, etc.</u>      | Mention any enclosures |
| _____                                         |                        |
| AB (Initials of typist when applicable)       |                        |
| (Example Arjun Bhatt)                         |                        |

## Format of Proposal Writing

Subject :  
 Heading :  
 Objectives :  
 Measures :  
 :

## Example

### A Sample of Informal Proposal.

Below you will find a sample proposal asking for new pencil sharpeners for a small private grade school. After each section, we'll provide a commentary to explain how the written works are part of a Proposal.

(But writing commentary for each step is not required in proposal letters. Here it is written to tend you the purpose of writing the Proposal for the 1<sup>st</sup> time)

(You have to exclude commentary.)

Ans.

## Step 1 : The Header

To : Rev. Mark Smith

From : Nicole Johnson

Date : March 10, 2011

Subject : A Proposal to purchase New Pencil Sharpeners for the Classrooms of St. Mary's School

## Step 2 : Purpose

I write this letter to propose a solution to a recurring problem at St. Mary's School. The problem is that the pencil sharpeners in the classrooms are very old and do not work effectively anymore. Students and teachers continually become frustrated because it is difficult to sharpen a pencil with the current sharpeners, and pencils that are sharp are crucial for effective learning.

I suggest that we order new pencil sharpeners for each classroom so that the students will have Pencils that work well and will therefore, be able to write without the frustration of worn down-pencil-points.

- **Commentary On the Purpose :** Because the audience is the pastor of a church that has a grade school, and because the pastor is not using the classrooms in the school every day, he may not know how bad the pencil sharpeners are. Thus, the problem is stated clearly at the beginning in the purpose section of the Proposal.

## Step 3 : Problem of Ineffective Pencil Sharpeners

There are 217 Students enrolled in Kindergarten through Eighth Grade at St. Mary's School. These students occupy 12 classrooms each day. None of these classrooms has a pencil sharpener that works well; it takes several minutes to sharpen just one pencil.

This means that if all of the students need to sharpen their pencils once a day (depending on how much writing is being done, a pencil may need sharpened more than once a day), it could take an average of thirty minutes to sharpen them all before the students can sit down to their desks and start learning the day's lessons. Thirty minutes of time spent sharpening pencils takes away a great deal from instructional time.

However, not all the students need to sharpen their pencils at the same time. This need arises at various times throughout the day, often at the beginning of a test or a new lesson.

Because of the length of time it takes to sharpen a pencil, the teachers have continuous interruptions in their lessons throughout the day. Almost everything done in a classroom requires a pencil, especially as students get older, and it is difficult to get anything done without this basic tool.

The current pencil sharpeners have been in the classrooms as long as Mrs. Morris has taught here, and that is over thirty years. They do not work well because they have been in use for so long. Even after sharpening for several minutes, the pencil points still are not as sharp as they should be, and the points break off easily, causing them to need to be sharpened yet again.

- **Commentary on the description of the problem :** In this section, the Proposal gives more details and background information about the kinds of problems caused by not having effective pencil sharpeners in hope that the pastor will realize the degree to which the poor sharpeners detract from student learning.

## Step 4 : Solution to the Problem

I propose that we purchase electric pencil sharpeners for each classroom. These work quickly and effectively, and take only a few seconds to sharpen a pencil.

Office World carries several pencil sharpeners designed specifically for schools and the high volume of use of sharpeners in Classrooms.

I propose we purchase 12 of the used-all-day pro student electric pencil sharpeners. These sharpeners have received strong reviews on the office world website. In addition, Central Elementary School purchased these for all their classrooms four years ago, and their Principal has told me how well they still work.

- **Commentary on the solution :** The goal of this section is to convince the Pastor that acting on the proposed solution will reap immediate benefits in the classroom. The Proposal is specific in the solution; it does not suggest purchasing just any other pencil sharpeners, but specific ones that have been researched. It also includes the recommendation of a friend who is a Principal at another school to show that other people say this solution works well for them.

## Step 5 : Costs

The used-all-day pro student electric pencil sharpeners cost \$42.29 each. However, office world gives a discount on the purchase of ten or more, reducing the cost to \$35.29 each. Because we are a member of the office world schools frequent shopper program, we will receive 2% of our purchase back at the end of the school year. This makes the total cost of the purchase \$35.01.

Several electric sharpeners exist that cost more and less than this one, but because of the recommendations of others, I believe that purchasing a middle-priced sharpener will be a wise choice for St. Mary's School. Because office world offers free shipping for purchases over \$50, we will not have any shipping costs.

- **Commentary on Costs :** In this section, the Proposal shows exactly how much the purchase will cost. It also shows how the writer has not chosen the most or least expensive sharpener, but one that is priced in the middle. The Writer also spells out any additional financial benefits the school will receive by making this purchase.

## Step 6 : Conclusion

In conclusion, I think purchasing new electric pencil sharpeners for each classroom would be of tremendous benefit to St. Mary's School. It would put an end to the constant frustration of students never being able to find sharp pencils and of losing instructional time because of the length of time it takes to use our current sharpeners.

Thank you for considering this purchase for our teachers and students!

- **Commentary on Conclusion :** The Conclusion restates the problem and the proposed solution and ends on a positive note encouraging the reader to act on the proposal.

As you can see, writing a Proposal does not have to be an overwhelming task. With a bit of thought and research, you will be able to write an effective proposal that has a good chance of being approved.

Formatting the letter:

- (1) Write the Sender's Address at the top of the letter.
- (2) Include the Current Date.
- (3) Type the Recipients Address.
- (4) Include an Appropriate Salutation.
- (5) Write the body of your letter.
- (6) Use an appropriate closing and signature.
- (7) Mention any enclosures.
- (8) Include typist initials, when applicable (If someone else types the letter, include those initials on the left side of the letter on the final line.
  - Do not include typist initials if the person signing the letter is the same person who wrote it.