

Lesson's Structure:

- Paper Three Scope
- Reading Comprehension

You are expected to write this paper under exam conditions.

Aspects to be tested are as follows:

A: Creative writing - as a candidate you will be required to write ONE creative essay of up 250-300 words. Essay topics will be given, they could be in a form of statements or/ and pictures. Carefully choose an essay topic that you understand fully / the most interesting to you. Quickly jot down the points you will discuss i.e. brainstorm the chosen topic before you start writing. Refer to the lesson on essay writing for details. This part will carry 50 marks.

B: Longer Transactional text - you will also be expected to write ONE longer transactional text of 120-150. This will carry 30 marks.

C: Shorter Transactional - One shorter transactional text will have to be produced. This must be between 80-100 words, and will be out of 20 marks.

READING COMPREHENSION

In this lesson you will learn about the following:

- **How to respond to comprehension questions. Comprehension exercises' tips.**
- **Types of comprehension questions: levels of questioning.**
- **Instruction / action words.**

YOUR TIPS AND TOOLS!

- Read and understand the passage given and the questions that have been set. You must become an active reader, that is, a reader who engages all his/her senses as s/he reads and more importantly analyzes the passage read. Try to work out what the passage is all about. Identify the characters, the events and the story line/message.
- Read the comprehension passage first; establish the general/ rough idea of what the passage is about. The above is known as skim-reading.
- Read the passage and the questions carefully.
- Start responding to questions-write your answers.
- Write down your answers-read the question and identify the relevant part of the passage with the relevant response i.e. 3rd paragraph line 5.
- Your answers should be derived from the passage / extract, never give what you already know about the topic unless it is an opinion question. This means that you interpret the questions and words in relation to the context (extract). Don't make unnecessary additions.
- Keep your answers as brief as possible.
- Use simple language and short sentences to avoid making unnecessary grammatical mistakes.
- Marks regulate the number of points or the length of each response, so be guided by mark allocation. Don't give too many points for fewer marks and vice versa.

The Following Comprehension Skills Are Tested

- Understanding the central idea and specifics about the passage. What is the passage about?
- A sound judgment and a critical interpretation of events. Can you analyze the passage?
- Recognizing and differentiating fact from opinion. How to distinguish a FACT from an OPINION?
- Identifying and explaining figures of speech. State their significance in the passage when asked, don't describe them.
- Distinguish denotative from connotative meanings or literal from figurative language usage.
- Explaining the significance of the use of italics, bold print, punctuation marks etc in the text.
- Ability to quote and/ or provide evidence from the extract to agree or disagree with an interpretation/ opinion.
- "Word-power"/ direct vocabulary testing (contextual meaning of words used in the passage)

TYPES OF READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

▪ **Quote:** Take answers directly from the extract. Use the quotation marks. Note the length or number of words that you are expected to quote is often prescribed. Adhere to the prescription. The "quote-type" questions can take the following forms: quote one/two words that mean **X**, quote three consecutive words that mean or that show **Y**, quote a phrase which suggests that **Z**, quote a sentence from the passage to prove that the given statement / interpretation is true or false. USE QUOTATION MARKS PLEASE!!! E.g "They play the cards close to their chests".

▪ **Opinion / interpretation questions (using your own words):** Explain why the storyteller (narrator) said---, explain the rationale behind the argument which says **X**, in your own words state the purpose of the **Y** in the passage, etc.

Please use insight and understanding of the text. Express yourself logically and persuasively. Convince the marker that you read and understood the extract given.

▪ **Full sentences:** In such questions you must write complete sentences (with all the components of a full sentence), i.e. with the subject (who / what / which?), the verb (action / what is done?) and the object (respondent to action/ recipient of / victim). Construct simply and complete sentences.

▪ **One-word questions:** Write one word as required. These are recall-type questions and you must extract the answer from the passage. These could take such forms: who did what? When and where did a particular event happen? Spell words exactly as they appear in the text. Give the word required ONLY!

▪ **Multiple-choice questions:** you are expected to choose the most relevant / correct answer from the list of alternatives / options that are given. Read all options carefully and make an informed choice in relation to what the passage provides. Where you are expected to write the letter of the chosen option, write the letter only. Do just this. There is only ONE relevant or required answer in such questions, so never write two answers even when you are convinced that your interpretation is the most relevant. Choose and write the letter / the word/ statement that is required ONLY!

Lastly check the meaning of these **ACTION WORDS** in your dictionary. These tell you what is expected in each question. If you do not know these actions words will find it difficult to respond appropriately to the questions asked.

Examples: list, give, name, identify, describe, compare, contrast, discuss, distinguish between, explain, illustrate, suggest, summarize, paraphrase, etc.

Let's look at :

(i) **Paraphrase** means restating what has been said in your own words, while ensuring that the meaning does change or get distorted.

(ii) **Quote** means copying required number of words from the passage/text given. Ensure that you use the relevant quotation marks.

(iii) **Distinguish** means showing the difference between two given views / statements /factors / things / aspects of the story, etc

LET'S RECAP!

- Read the passage given thoroughly, it might be accompanied by a photo/picture/graph or just any other additional text.
- Letters X, Y and Z have been used as variables in place of the unknown.
- Proof-reading your work is not optional, please do it so that you can correct mistakes.
- Do not copy sections of the passage verbatim; use your own words as possible as you can.
- Questions vary from lower-order to higher order forms. Lower-order questions require one word answers, facts and test your ability to recall information. The higher order questions in the contrary require detailed responses that show high order thinking skills. You show an ability to analyze and critique information given in a passage.

CREATIVE WRITING

Lesson Focus:

- Forms of creative writing:
 1. Supervised and unsupervised piece.
 2. Long and short piece.
- Mark allocation: The long pieces weigh 30 marks, whilst the short pieces weigh 20 marks.

1. Extended writing / Long piece of writing e.g. ESSAYS

The essays take the following forms as: narrative, descriptive, discursive, comparative, definitive, reflective, argumentative, etc.

- **Descriptive:** describes a place, system, circumstances, people, sequence of events, etc
- **Narrative:** tells a story or outlines how events unfolded in place and time.
- **Discursive:** put forth evidence and examples as a particular scenario is being unpacked.
- **Definitive :** explain something in details.
- **Comparative :** compares different situations.
- **Argumentative:** presents a case for or against a particular point of view.
- **Reflective:** revisit personal experiences with an intention of rectifying the wrongs.

The length of your extended piece of writing **MUST** be 250 350 words, and it carries along 30 marks.

EXAMPLE: "All political leaders should reveal their HIV/AIDS status before occupying public office; otherwise we shall be led by people who are at the brink of death". Anonymous. Argue the case for or against anonymous' opinion.

YOUR PERSONAL GUIDE TO ESSAY WRITING

ESSAY STRUCTURE

The essay must have the following components: the introduction, the body / contents and the conclusion.

Introduction/ exposition: The introduction has two parts, that is, the thesis statement (which tells your reader about the gist of your essay). It defines the key concept (s). The second component is the plan of development (which enlists the main points to be discussed in their logical order). The plan of development has a restrictive function, as it regulates what the writer can or cannot say. You can't have something that was never mentioned in the plan of development in your body.

The Body: explains, unpacks, describes, analyzes, illustrates, compares, gives examples of, highlights adequately, etc the points that are enlisted in the plan of development. The number of paragraphs that make up the body is determined by the number of key points enlisted in the plan of development. Each paragraph must focus on one point, and paragraphs have to be linked by the logical connectors. A few examples of logical connectors are: secondly, thirdly, however, another point, in the contrary, moreover, as result of, due to, the above means, to add on, in addition to etc. The connectors ensure that the essay flows smoothly and logically. They also help the reader of your essay to graduate from one point to the next. Using statistics, examples and research and other findings make paragraphs to be more convincing and effective. This means that you must research your topic thoroughly and adequately.

Conclusion: this is the last paragraph of an essay, in which your final summative points must be given. Emphasize the key ideas brought or raised in the body. Revisit those key issues and draw them together. Lastly, round off and give a general conclusion that you have drawn about the topic as a writer. Persuade the reader to understand your background and understanding of the topic.

Your essay must be preceded by the search for the relevant information, which depends upon understanding what is expected of you before you put pen to paper. Once you have identified the relevant points that you would like to put forth, you must draw a draft i.e. could be in a form of a mind-map.

Points to Ponder When Writing Essays:

Follow the steps highlighted below:

- Brainstorm the topics. Ask yourself these questions: What am I expected to talk about here? Do I have to narrate a story, describe something, make an argument for or against something? What is this essay about?
- Choose the topic you like the most and that sounds more familiar to your background.
- Enlist relevant points and decide on the most appropriate to include in relation to space limitations.
- Write your points in a mind-map (mental map outlining the order the points will take). The above ensures coherence and gives structure to an essay. The number of paragraphs will be determined by the points mentioned in the mind map (rough sketch).
- Write the first draft. Stick to the subject at hand (topic).
- Proofread your first draft. This is editorial work where mistakes are corrected. The review process entails checking whether ideas move logically and convincingly. Check the spelling and some grammatical errors as well. The key issue here is whether the message is being transferred accordingly or not.
- Now, pen down the corrected version of your essay. This is your final document. In all these steps you work hand in glove with your educator and/or your peers.

Let's sum up our work on an extended piece:

- * **Keep the essay simple, use simple language and do proper planning.**
- * **Think about your audience (marker/assessor of your essay) each time you write.**
- * **Stick to the topic, give examples, use various words, punctuate your work, use descriptors, use emotive language Where appropriate etc.**

2. Shorter pieces of writing:

Examples of shorter pieces of writing:

- Letters (formal and informal)
- other transactional writing such as :

reports,	memoranda,	agendas,
minutes,	obituaries,	reviews,
e-mail messages,	facsimiles,	dialogues,
speeches,	telegram,	dairy entries

The shorter pieces of writing are not complicated; your teacher will give the format for each type enlisted above. Adhere to the prescribed format e.g. a formal letter has two addresses (the addressor's and the addressee's); the register in a formal letter is different from the informal letter's.

Note that working with your peers, in pairs and in groups could help you improve your writing skills. SUBMIT your work to your teacher timely.

NOTE:

Full time candidates do not write this paper at the end of the year. (ONLY PRIVATE CANDIDATES DO) under formal exam conditions. You will write and get assessed during the course of the year i.e. portfolio assessment.

Till next time ENJOY!

