GP June Intensive Revision

**Essay Writing Skills 1**

1. **Elements of a Good Essay**

**Introduction**

A good essay is a pleasurable reading material that provides clear and meaningful information, provoking the thoughts of the readers to analyze, evaluate and criticize. To achieve this aim of writing a good essay, it is important for the writer to take note of the characteristics of a good essay.

**Characteristics of a good essay**

Focus

It is imperative to ensure that the whole essay is written with the focus of the essay in mind. Your various points in your essay must be directed to the requirements of the essay. (- Focus on the understanding of the question)

Relevancy

All your ideas should be related to the topic and these are to be built to establish your points of view that will enable you to answer the question. The points must be linked the requirements of the question, satisfying the demand of the focus of the question. (Developing perspective that is linked to the discussion)

Balance

Your essay needs to create a sense of balance to make sure that it provides a fair and well-developed argument. This essay should cover a wide spectrum of areas, which cover the points that will provide more perspectives of discussion. There is also a need to take note of the length of coverage for the essay in respect to the introduction, main body and conclusion. Ensure that the introduction is not too lengthy that your main points are left with little time and space for expression. (provide counter-arguments / opposing views or rebuttals)

(This is an important part of your paragraph development)

Example:

People today enjoy a better life than people in the past. Do you agree?

Brainstorming for ideas

1. Focus of the question
2. Relevancy
3. Balance

Unity

The points you have stated must be developed with a sense of unity that will answer the question Focusing on unity will enable you to direct your discussion on developing lines of perspectives that will create a logical argument, making your essay logical, persuasive and analytical.

Coherence

The essay should follow a clear order and move steadily towards the building of your argument. Your main ideas should be arranged in a definite manner such that the important ones stand out prominently, and the relation between ideas is clearly seen.

Coherence is seen into two main areas, mainly in the flow of argument and secondly, in the respective paragraph. In the essay, the various points in the essay must be connected and support the line of argument. As for the respective sub-points, they must support the main point in the respective paragraphs. To ensure that your paragraph is well elaborated to support the main point, the sentences must be arranged and linked in a very cohesive manner, drawing out a persuasive and systematic argument.

(linking paragraphs – linking sentence / linking of sentences – connectors and contrast)

1. **Is censorship becoming increasingly necessary in today's world? (CJC Prelim 2008)**

One such complication that demands the imposition of censorship is the commonality of vices and morally degrading behaviours seen in our society made prevalent with the use of internet. Pornography and internet gaming has intoxicated the minds of many, especially the youths who are immature and are easily susceptible to temptations of undesirable values. Without censorship to regulate the accessibility of this information, the youths are likely to get addicted to the vices and fall preys to syndicate crimes as internet gaming are appealing to the young people. In a recent article in the Strait Times, there are reports of syndicate criminals in China using internet to get youngsters to get addicted to gambling and made them indebted to loan-sharking activities subsequently. Thus, the need to stamp out rampant rise of syndicate crime and its adverse impact on youth would make censorship increasingly necessary.

The imposition of censorship is also deemed necessary when we consider the negative impact on social harmony and stability if freedom of speech is not made accountable. Deleterious and offensive remarks are often made through new media technology like Facebook, tweeters and blogs as they have made it very accessible and convenient for individuals to voice out their opinions. On a bright side, this technological development in the media industry empowers the individuals but on a dark side, the technological empowerment is abused as individuals are not held accountable for biased and defaming remarks. Consequently, we can observe the rise of many cyber bullies among the young users of the internet whose behavoiurs are considered anti-social. From a wider observation, we can see how these remarks can incite racial tensions as seen by a recent Youtube upload of the racist remark made by a student in Berkley. The charges brought against three youngsters for their racist remarks over the internet under the Sedition Act by the courts in Singapore show how serious the government in regulation of freedom of speech as there is disastrous impact on the social fabrics of the nation, given its vulnerability as a multicultural society.

Length of the essay

Adhering to the prescribed length will help you not to be loose or rambling. There is also a need to appropriate adequate length for the introduction, the main points and conclusion.

1. **Stages in Writing a Good Essay**

To write a good essay, there are three principal stages to take note:

* 1. Selection of a question
  2. Structural development of the essay
  3. Development of effective writing skills

1. Selection a question (simple structure – with topic sentences (must have conceptualized ideas which are based on perspectives)

You are given 12 questions in the General Paper and asked to answer one of these in a length ranging between 500 and 800 words. While choosing a particular question and attempting to answer it, **students should go through a pondering process to decide whether it is an easy question to do or something they can manage**. In this pondering process, it must be done in a few minutes and students must ensure that **lines of perspectives are developed, and they have adequate information to support the argument**. There is a need to **understand the type of question and the link between the subjects to understand the requirement of the question.**

1. Structural Development of the essay

In this stage, students need to develop a line of discussion on how the introduction is to be written. This introduction must provide an overview of the subject and has the perspectives of discussion that will guide the development of the essay.

1. Development of effective writing skills

Students need to be able to express their ideas in a clear, logic and systematic order. They also need to have a strong command of their grammatical power and vocabulary capacity to develop your ideas in a grammatical flawless and dynamic manner.

Question for Practice

The life of modern society is difficult for the youth. Do you agree?

Brain storming:

1. Focus
2. Relevancy
3. Balance