Effective Writing Prof. Binod Mishra Department of Humanities and Social Sciences Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee

Lecture – 08 Types of Essays

Good morning friends and welcome back to NPTEL online lectures on Effective Writing. Presently you are listening to these lectures by Binod Mishra and we are in the section on essay writing, we are in the second part of the essay writing lecture. In the first part we talked about the origin of essay, how it started and what were the various requirements of writing an essay, who were these stalwarts namely Michel de Montaigne being the first among the essay writers followed by various essay writers and even in the modern days we have many essay writers.

In this lecture, we shall be talking about the types of essay writing and how and what are the different requirements of every type there shall be discussed. I hope you are enjoying the lectures on essay writing. When we talk about the types of essay writing, you remember while defining essays we had two definitions; the first was by Francis bacon who said they are just like the grains of salt which actually create a sort of appetite and so, the essays are just like appetizers and Johnson had said, Doctor Johnson had said that they are like lewd Sally's of our mind.

Naturally, how can something be a lewd sally, how can something be lively, how can something be witty that is why when we talk about the six types of essay we shall find how depending upon the nature of essay's the writer has to make a definite choice not only of words, but also of the strategy as to how to write such a sort of essay.

So, narrative essays then descriptive essays, reflective essays, expository essays, argumentative essays and then imaginative essays. You might be thinking about them by the sort of names that they denote, the very first type of essay is actually a narrative type of essay,

narrative essays. When we talk about narrative essays the word narration reminds us of narrating something, I mean here in this sort of essay the writer or the author will narrate.

Now what the author will narrate? The author will narrate something as if he is either telling you a story or he is telling you are something from history or he is telling you something about are the biography of somebody or he is telling you are something about a legend or a story or even about the current even sometimes.

But remember these narrative essays are based on facts. And what the writer does here? The writer narrates the authors point of view. Suppose, you are the writer you are going to write a narrative essay, imagine you are mentioning something about your friend, you are mentioning about some of your favorite authors or you are mentioning about some of the historical event say are the revolt of 1857 or the glorious revolution or you are also talking about are the discovery of something.

So, as a writer what you are doing is you are actually providing the authors point of view and these essays are written in the first person perspective, I mean narrative essays are written in the first person perspective. For example, we can begin I remember my old time friend mister X and then now, now you see you are actually going to narrate something about your friend, naturally you might be talking about his some of his important abilities, qualities, memorable habits, whatsoever or you are also talking about some experience at times is not it?

Now, in this sort of essay as a writer you are going to make use of present or past tense, but remember in the previous lecture we have talked about relevancy. So, when we talk about relevancy and we talk about say arrangements see to it that when you are making use of present or past tense see to it that the proper references are mentioned. In the previous lecture, we talked about how Jacy Hill in he just say how he was not only referring. So, when you are mentioning some person see to it the reference are proper.

I mean when I say reference what do I mean? If you are narrating something about an important person please, ensure that the pronounce are referred properly, fine. And again you also should see that there is a cohesion, there is a sequence of pencils in narrative essays.

Such essays can be in a chronological order suppose, you are talking about historical event naturally it will have events according to time.

So, chronological order is the order that you provide where you talk about time, it was in 1857 or you can say last year while I went to visit one of my friends I could find now what you are doing you are actually narrating it in a chronological order. You can also say a last September had been quite an awesome one for me, fine.

So, again you are talking about time. So, see to it that narrative essays are always written in a chronological order. Sometimes when you are narrating an experience or reflection say for example, if you write an essay on a topic like the day when everything went wrong naturally you are again going back, you are talking about a date or a day when everything went wrong.

Likewise, you can also talk about the day when everything went so smooth or you can talk about the happiest day in your life or you can also talk about the visit to a zoo to affair to a book fair to an exhibition. So, in such a way what you are going to do? You are going to provide a chronological order of events.

So, after narrative essays we move on to another category of essays which are called descriptive essays. In narrative essays, we follow a chronology. Now a chronology of events, but in descriptive essays as the name itself suggests descriptive essays what they will do they will actually describe.

Now what cell they describe, they will describe an object suppose you are going to tell somebody about microphone, you are going to tell somebody about a historical say monument or you have come from a foreign country and you have had a lot of good experience and you are trying to provide that is you are going to tell people about how that country was, how that place was.

Suppose, somebody goes to some famous building to visit some famous building when he comes back you know every human being as all of us when we know something we want to

share is not it? We want to share we want to describe and these description can also be in the form of essays that is why descriptive essays.

These descriptive essays are based on observation and description. Whatever you observed now you are going to give it words give it in the form of sentences. So, the description will be there and the way you provide the description, because you are sharing this description to somebody who either might not have gone there or would like to know more. So, how you are going to mention say for example, somebody is going to describe the Taj you know.

So, what he will do if for he looks at it from an architects point of view they will talk about the architectonic quality, he will talk about how the structure was built, how there is a dome shaped structure and how it has been spread how it lies in the middle. So, all these what he or she will do he will actually describe in a very special order by special order we mean space, you know we will talk about the space.

And while doing that as a writer of essays what you should do is you should actually adopt the language which can orient the readers, which can enable the readers to imagine. Now those who have not been able to see the Minaret, who have not been able to see the Red Fort, who have not been able to see the Taj Mahal in India and other structures also in some other parts of the world.

What they will do is? When you are describing they actually will formulate a sort of picture on their mind such should actually be the quality of the person who is going to describe. So, by describing you are actually providing a sort of visual or a graphic description, you are providing them a sort of visual and suddenly on their mind it is imprinted. So, when they go to watch that famous monument or watch that famous place what will happen they will try to relate it.

So, my dear friends when you are going to write a descriptive essay see to it that the language and language always has to be simple. Please, do remember even though an essay is an

irregular piece in digestible as Doctor Johnson says, but say to it that the language has to be very simple otherwise there is no point writing an essay.

Through essay you are going to make others realize your grasp over things your understanding, your knowledge, your knowledge the way you have learnt it the way you have understood it. So, anyway we can say it is actually a comprehensive analysis of all of your observations and the experiences that you are going to provide are through descriptive essays.

Sometimes, we do not write essays every now and then just for examinations, we also write sometimes essays to have a point of view, sometimes to share an experience. Suppose, somebody went to watch the football match or the cricket match fine sometimes we can also think of describing the rainbow in our own words, somebody who has not been able to know about the titanic or somebody who does not know naturally they would like to know, because people are knowledge hungry, we are in an age where even though everything is available, but then we want to know more and more we and all is thirsty people.

So, we want to know more and more and that is possible only through written records and these written records are also available in the form of essays. So, when somebody is going to write a descriptive essay, he should see that he maintains the special order and he provides a language which can enable readers to imagine and understand the subject very lucidly, very clearly.

Next is reflective essays now, this essay is a bit different both from narrative as well as from descriptive here you are not describing is not it? Here you are not describing here actually is a reflection of your own thoughts, but when you are reflecting your own thoughts what are you doing and what can be the subject. Reflective essays are those essays which actually touch upon subjects of general or abstract nature such subjects of general or abstract nature. In such an essay what the writer does?.

The writer expresses his thoughts, the writer expresses his thoughts. It may not be based you know it may not be based on facts every now and then it may be actually his views maybe he

is going to write something on politics. So, maybe it is his political views, but then while writing this sort of essay say to it that you do not become biased otherwise people will level you with different names.

Sometimes you will also come across some, some topics of moral issues when, when a person can and you know this at times becomes didactic as well when you know in Times of India or in some other newspapers, journals every now and then you come across some corners, some pages where the essays are there. So, it may be based on some social issues. Sometimes also on literary criticism all sorts of pieces on literary criticism are reflective essays.

So, in such an essay the writer expresses his thoughts all the literary theories that you might becoming cross as a prospective reader you might find that it is actually it might have been given by somebody and then some other person also goes on either to contradict or to counter or to provide his or her own input. So, what the writer does in such an essay, the writer expresses his thoughts.

And then since these essays are written on abstract nature abstract nature say people may write an essay on friendship, people also may write an essay on punctuality. Now, on punctuality when you write or on discipline you write of course, there are facts, but you are actually providing facts in such a manner where your own views are also taken into consideration, contentment, no contentment is already an abstract thing no people may be content people may not be content.

But as a writer what you are going to provide. For example, sometimes you can also write on peoples habits, sometimes you can also write on peoples nature is not it? Sometimes you can also write on good manners as you have already seen in the previous lecture, fine.

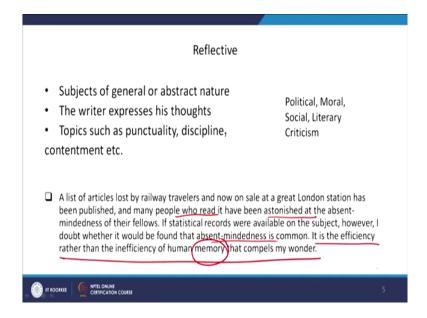
There is a famous essay know there is a famous essay by AG Gardiner and the name of the essays all saying please where Gardiner also tries to reflect his own views and while reflecting his own views what Gardiner does is Gardiner actually provides several examples of a polite bus conductor as to how the bus conductor was very polite.

And even though the writer not having a quine in his pocket the writer was provided with a sort of politeness when the conductor said I will book you through. Now, what the writer Gardiner does here is Gardiner actually tries to talk about this event, but he actually generalizes it and then makes an essay on saying please where he talks about manners and then he says.

But then the way he begins as I had said in the previous lecture that it can begin on a very abrupt note where he begins he talks about the lift man and then he sides the examples and through that he comes to talking about on saying please on saying, on talking about good manners. Now here I have taken one paragraph I mean some sentences of a paragraph from Robert Lind's essay which is entitled forgetting.

Now, look at it how the author begins how the essays begins and not only does he begin in a very abrupt manner, abrupt manner why? Because the writer wants to captivate the writer wants to attract he actually goes for a sort of attention gated sort of thing and he says a list of articles lost by railway travelers.

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And now on sale at a London station has been published and many people now, now see the cohesion and many people who read it have been astonished at the absent mindedness of their fellows. Now, when the writer begins though the title of the essay is forgetting, the title of the essay is forgetting the writer begins, because he will create a sort of thesis statement, he will create a sort of background and he says absent mindedness of their fellows.

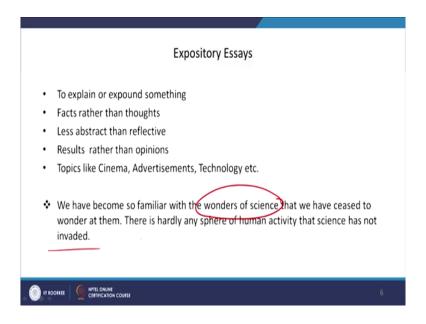
If a statistical records were available on the subject; however, I doubt whether it would be found that absent mindedness is common, it is and then you see the, the last sentence of this paragraph, it is the efficiency the rather than the inefficiency of human memory that compels my wonder. So, the writer has been able to build the thesis statement, because he is going to talk about forgetting.

And the last sentence you see, because I had said that the last sentence of any paragraph should be such that not only gives a vivid statement, but rather validates the writers point of discussing his topic. Now as readers what we are doing we are actually waiting as to what the writer is going to say, because the writer has already said it is the efficiency rather than the inefficiency.

Look at the sentence construction rather than the efficiency of human memory. And now he will talk about forgetting. So, he has already a created a sort of background and then the as readers we are waiting what will come next. So, this is one way of starting a reflective essay my dear friend.

So, when we talk about reflective essays, it can be mostly on abstract nature even on human nature and sometimes subjects of general interest. For example, now forgetting where he will talk about how people at times are commit the crime of forgetting even to post their own letters and they carry the letters throughout, but then they forget. So, what the writer does is writer is actually trying to talk about something of human nature, but in a way by giving examples and by keeping the interest of the reader intact.

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Next comes expository essays. The title itself, if you look at the title of this essay expository essays. It is actually by nature these essays expound or explain. So, these essays so, by the very term expository what exactly we mean to say is to explain or expound something and in such essays what the writer of these essays have to do is they have to state facts rather than the thoughts in reflective in reflective essays we used to say about thoughts here in expository we will talk about facts.

So, factual things and it is not abstract, it is less abstract than reflective. So, we shall not be talking of abstract things fine as we talked of a talked when we were discussing reflective here people will talk about results rather than opinions is not it? In expository essays, they will talk about results rather than opinions the boons of electricity the triumphs of science no.

And then you can at times talk about pollution water pollution noise pollution, fine so, all sorts of things. So, through expository essays the writers provide results rather than opinions. At times people can also talk about cinema advertisements, again in cinema also in order to become specific they will talk about academic movies at movies parallel movies like that commercial movies, fine.

So, there is so many things there, there is a long list of things to be discussed then people can also talk about advertisements if there is an essay to be written on advertisements it will again come under expository essays. People can talk about the other face of technology. Again here, they will be talking about the facts as to how all these electronic gadgets they are in a way they are adding to they are adding to the electronic wests.

So, on most of the occasions through these essays people may also talk about bringing a sort of solution to the problem. So, in a way these expository essays can also provide solutions to some of the problems which we have been coming across, but then we can also talk off we can also glorify and sing about the tribes or the achievements that we have made. Let us have a look at the two sentences that we have culled from an essay on wonders of science.

We have become so, familiar with the wonders of science that we have ceased to wonder at them. Now in most of the examinations that you come across that you are going to appear at sometimes you may be asked to write expository essays. So, as readers you must focus more, you must concentrate more on writing expository as well as argumentative essays also will come to argumentative essays in the next section, fine.

So, now see the topic of this essay is the triumphs of science and the writing in the very first sentences we have become so familiar with the wonders of science that we have ceased to wonder at them ceased to wonder at them. There is hardly any sphere of human activity that science has not invaded.

So, through this expository essays you can also talk about some of the ills of the society also in addition to some of the achievements of our science society civilization that we have you can find (Refer Time: 24:41) of essays available both online and offline, you can really practice your hands and you can try writing some of them.

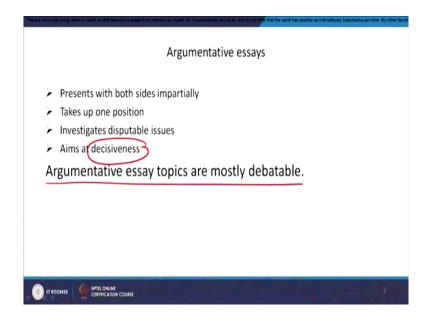
Next to that are argumentative essays. Here, now this essay is one of the most challenging and as the students who are going to appear at the competitive examinations they are often because you know your opinions, your opinions or your positions are going to be understood that is why you are given some essay topics which actually can from you take up or can exploit your argumentative ideas. It presents in such an essay when you are you have been given an essay to write see to it that your side, you do not take any side very blindly what you have to do?.

You are actually going to present both these sides in a very impartial manner meaning thereby in an unbiased manner, but while providing both these sides you also are to take up one position, but then the better is that you take a position that is not that does not make you become very controversial, because most of the argumentative essays are often debatable and here your line of thinking is going to be analyzed my dear friend.

So, when you are writing an argumentative essay what you are going to do? You are going to investigate, you are going to examine, you are also going to show your own viewpoints on some of the issues which may be considered controversial or at times debatable. So, a word of caution is that when you are going to write an argumentative essays you have to measure yourself well, because you will provide both the situations.

You are going to provide the situation as it is, but then when you take up one position say to it that your position when you are arguing is based on logic and not simply based on your ideologies which are times which may put you by giving yourself a sort of dubious distinction. So, my dear friends try to be very cautious but then a sort of decisiveness is also aimed.

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So, as a writer of argumentative essays whatever side you are going to take say to it that there is a decisive tone. Most of these essays as I have been saying will be based on some problems may be on social problems like dowry, like population, fine like unemployment several things are there. So, most of the argumentative essay topics are often debatable.

So, see to it that while maintaining your own side you do not cross the barrier, I think you can understand what I am hinting at. And next is sorry, after argumentative essays we have one more essay which I have not provided any slide here maybe, but then that is called imaginative essay.

Now such an essay what is an imaginative essay as the title goes and imaginative essay is an essay where the writer uses his own imagination. The writer has not been able to see the situation the writer simply imagines he simply provides he makes use of his own imagination

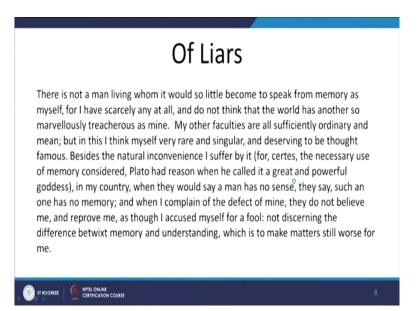
and why he writes such an essay? He writes such an essay to provide a sort of aesthetic pleasure.

For example, suppose somebody writes an essay on the pleasures of ignorance fine or somebody writes if I were a king, if I were a prince, if I were the prime minister of India, if I am sometimes caught in a lift. So, there are so many things maybe things are good, things are bad, but then in such essays while you are writing such essays see to it that you can at times make use of some figurative language also my dear friends.

And, then when you write such essays see to it that you have a grip and a grasp over words. Imagination it simply meant to provide how far you can imagine, how far you can imagine. By imagination you are not going to provide a sort of solution remember it, by imagination you are not going to provide a sort of solution rather you are simply going to provide them a sort of alternative way, but then your mind is completely active and you are at work.

I am going to provide one famous essay which has been written by none other then a great writer of essays. You will come to know later on and I will tell you who the writer is. Now see how the essay has begun.

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There is not a man leaving whom it would be so little become to speak from memory as myself, for I have scarcely any at all, and do not think that the world has another so marvelously treacherous as mine. My other faculties are all sufficiently ordinary and mean; but in this I think myself very rare and singular, and deserving to be thought famous.

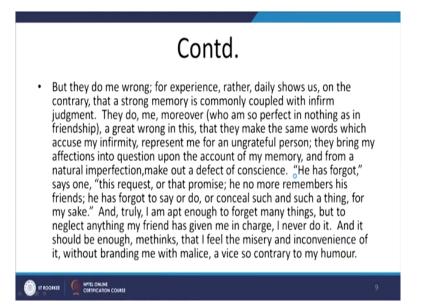
Besides the natural inconvenience I suffer by it, I suffer by it in my country, when they would say a man has no sense, they say, such an such one has no memory; and when I complain of the defect of mine, they do not believe me, and reprove me as though I accused myself for a fool: not discerning the difference betwixt memory and understanding, which is to make matters still worse for me.

Such a sort of issue and you know the essay is titled Off Liars. So, here the writer the essay writer which is none other than Montaigne, Montaigne again the you know one of the premier

essay writers. So, where he talks about liars of liars and he is providing a sort of perspective. So, here you will find all sorts of blends and blandishments are there, here you can find these sort of smoothness is there and the writer a puts himself in the position and then he imagines also and then he also provides justification and then he says, yeah.

There actually you can feel a sort of personal you know personal preferences as well, but then the writer is dilly dallying the writer is becoming very discursive that is why he is called Michel de Montaigne.

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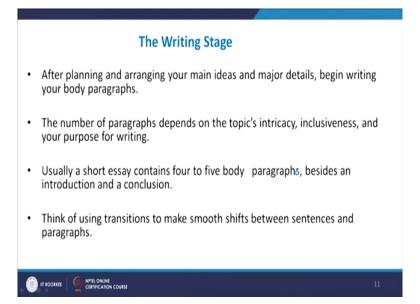


But they do me wrong; for experience, rather daily shows us, on the contrary, that a strong memory is commonly coupled with informed judgment. They do, me, moreover a great wrong in this. So, he is putting his own position and he is talking about what he wants. "He has forgot" say once, "this request, or that promise, he has no more.

So, he is what he, he is talking about liars, but then he is also giving you know instances he is for example, when he says, he has forgot naturally imperfection make out a defect of consigns, he has forgot to say or do or conceal such and such a thing for my sake." And, truly, I am apt enough to forget many things, but to neglect anything my friend has given me in charge. So, he is providing his own opinion through this essay. Imaginative essay, we have already talked about which is based on imagination.

And the writer of the imaginative essay does not have any previous experience, all he needs is to create a sort of aesthetic pleasure. And then when you come to know about all the types of essays then comes the writing stage, we have already talked about the principles and the requirements as to how you will write, but here some light should be thrown on how when you have planned and when you have the ideas how to go ahead.

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The number of paragraphs that you are going to put in your essays that depends upon the intricacy or the difficulty level of the topic. But then it is always better to write a short essay and most of the short essays consist of four to five body paragraphs maybe, sometimes three also. Especially at school and college level you used to write three paragraphs, but as you grow up your paragraphs will also increase.

And then in order to keep the interest of the readers intact all and essay writers should do is to provide the proper use of sentence connectives and linkers, because you have to ensure that your reading is going to smooth. And whenever there is a shift from one paragraph to another, this shift should appear to be very natural, the shift should appear to be very natural very smooth and it should not appear as if you are imposing this shift.

Now, some point of caution also to be exercised in writing an essay and that is possible when you know what style and diction are to be followed. The very first thing of all the essays is to be clear, I mean clarity is the hallmark of all essays. As a writer of essays please ensure that you are sincere, by sincerity I mean if you have started with a topic and you know your main theme you must not deviate, we, you must not stray from away from your topic.

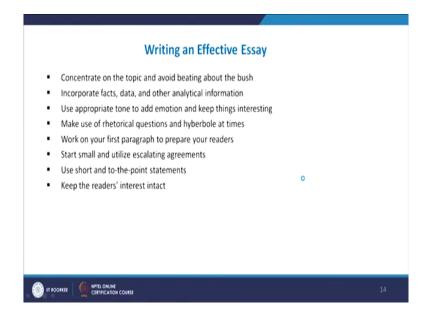
And then proper references as I have been saying, because that will connect your sentences properly and case will be taken, because you are not going to write literary essays or you are not a literary writer. So, preference would be given to short and familiar sentences, proper punctuations, because the more you punctuate your sentence you will create efficiency as a writer.

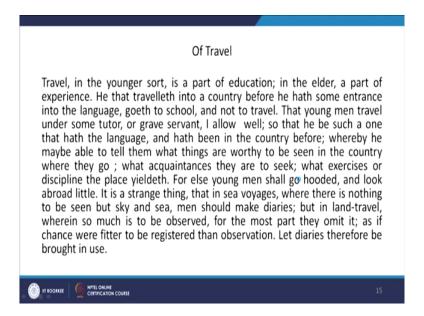
And one of the most ingredients and one of the important features of a good writing is to revise. When you have done everything and when you have written your essay please, see to it when you please revise your essay and see. If an unnecessary sentence is there or an unnecessary paragraph has crept in it is up to you, utilize your own discretion and see to it that you can delete them very mercilessly without making a sacrifice of the meaning, without making a sacrifice of the text.

When you do that it is always better to remember certain things, because and an essay since an essay is to provide other people the knowledge that you have, it is always better to have a sort of restriction over the use of language which is colloquial and slangs.

And even though there are good writers to imitate, but then you cannot become that it is always better to go your own way and write in your own language to see, but then care has to be taken that ambiguous words and that I have been saying in all forms of writing please discard the use of difficult words use of ambiguous words, ambiguous references and it is only a lazy person who makes use of so many quotations even in his essays.

So, if you practice all these things, I think your essay is going to get the sort of effectiveness, because you have not only concentrated on the topic, but then you have provided facts, opinions, other analytical information. And then you have also been able to sustain the readers interest, because that is the main thing. As a writer when we write something our main aim is to make others convinced by what we are saying either through essay or through any other form of writing.



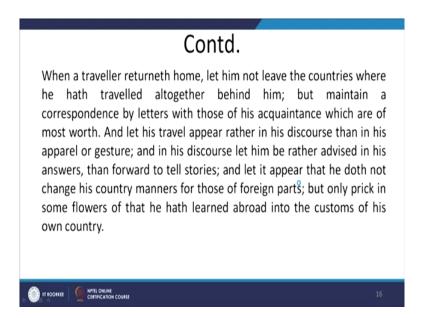


Having said all that please see to it that a good essay actually is just like a good travel, a good essay it just like a good travel. And here is for your own pleasure some lines from a famous essay by Bacon where he says Travel, in the younger sort, is a part of education; in the elder, a part of experience. My dear friends, you are also travelling through all these techniques of effective writing, but then your travel will be meaningful only when you have a sort of achievement, only when you have a sort of satisfaction.

And as Francis bacon says let diaries therefore, be brought in use, but diaries alone can not make you travel, a books only alone cannot make you travel they can provide some sort of information, but unless and until you have that physical experience sort of thing of traveling, you cannot enjoy traveling. And, as Francis bacon says and let his travel appear rather in his

discourse, then in his apparel or gesture and in this discourse let him be rather advised in his answers.

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Then forward to tell stories and let it appear that he doth not change his country manners for those of foreign parts, but only prick in some flowers of that he had learnt abroad into the customs of his own country. And I hope you might have learned the customs of writing essays having said, all this I think you are in a better frame of mind where you can get ready to write a significant and an important essay.

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And let me sum up once again with the words up Michel de Montaigne who says, because when you are writing you know many people have the habit when they write or when they speak they speak more about themselves then about what they are going to write. So, a word of caution let us take us from Michel de Montaigne and say do not discuss yourself for your bound to lose; if you speak too much, if you write too much about yourself you are bound to lose.

If you build it in yourself you are believed; meaning thereby how I correct it is if you actually write less, but then write specifically you are believed, if you praise yourself I mean if you beat about the bush you are disbelieved. And as I understand you do not want to be disbelieved rather you want to be believed and you can be believed only when you are sincere, only when you concentrate on what you had undertaken to.

Meaning thereby; if you have decided to write an essay look at the topic think of the thesis a statement and then start writing tailor your thoughts, view your paragraphs and finally, give it the shape that is actually required. And in giving the shape create beauty and not ugliness, because beauty is all that all of us believe the creation of god and god is beauty itself. Thank you very much I wish you all a good day and hope you will be writing better essays in the days to come.

Thank you.