

ESSAY, COMPREHENSION AND PRÉCIS WRITING

Time Allowed : Three Hours

Maximum Marks : 200

INSTRUCTIONS

Candidates should attempt ALL questions unless otherwise directed.

The number of marks carried by each question is indicated at the end of the question.

Answers must be written only in ENGLISH.

Candidates are requested to write clear, legible and concise answers and to adhere to word limits wherever indicated. Failure to adhere to word limits will be penalized.

Précis question must be attempted only on the special précis sheet(s) provided. These précis sheets must be attached securely to the answer book by the candidate.

Whenever a question is being attempted, all its parts/sub-parts must be completed before moving on to the next question.

1. Write an essay in about 300 words on any *one* of the following : 100
- (a) What we need today is not communication but social networking skills.
 - (b) Social mobility and work ethics.
 - (c) India Shining : Myth or Reality ?
 - (d) 'Reality Shows' and their relevance.
 - (e) Human trafficking.

2. (Write your answers on the précis-sheets given to you.)

Make a précis of each of the following passages. Your précis will be in your words, and will not exceed $\frac{1}{3}$ the length of the passage given to you. $2 \times 25 = 50$

- (a) The use of machines has made the world a small place. Distance has been conquered by modern means of transport. We can travel over the oceans of the world in a few hours. One of the most remarkable features of modern civilization is the electronic media for communication. The world, according to some people, is now an 'electronic village'. One of the benefits of machine civilization is that our standard of life has improved. There is certainly more variety in our lives. We have a wide choice of everything from wrist-watches to ice-creams, from fountain pens to flash lights. Food from any part of the world can be obtained in any season of the year. On our table we can have fruit from the Mediterranean, wine from France and cheese from Australia.

Mass production of goods leads to abundance everywhere. Articles can be produced in hundreds or thousands in modern automated factories. Bicycles, radios, and other articles that add to our varied comforts and convenience are available to anyone who wants them. Mass production helps to keep their prices within the reach of the common man.

From the time of the Industrial Revolution, man's life has been changing in many ways. At first, the change was slow but later, there was an increase in the rate of mechanization. As a result, life began to change more rapidly. During the last hundred years, machines of all kinds, sizes, and application have become part of our daily lives. The way machines have transformed human beings is incredible.

(255 words)

- (b) The fireworks industry is passing through a turbulent period with repeated fatal accidents. Proper employee training, and adherence to safety norms such as avoiding stock-piling of crackers and overcrowding of workers in a factory must be implemented. The following issues however are yet unidentified.

Fireworks factories are licensed and controlled both by the Petroleum Explosives Safety Organization (PESO) and the District Collectors. The factories licensed by the latter are small, comprising a handful of working sheds and are authorized to manufacture any one of the few common fireworks items in a day, involving only 15 kg of explosives (as against 2000 to 3000 kg permitted to large units

licensed by the Chief Controller of Explosives) at any one point of time and can employ only less than 20 workers.

District officials are ill-equipped in terms of staff strength and lack technical knowledge to exert sufficient control over the manufacture of fireworks in these units. Not only are the man-limit norms violated, a wide variety of items that are beyond their infrastructure and expertise are also manufactured. A fairly recent accident in a unit licensed by a District Collector killed 17 persons, and injured more than 25 others.

The Explosives Rules 2008 should be amended so that all licensing and control of fireworks manufacturing fall clearly within the ambit of PESO. This authority will be better equipped to oversee the range of items manufactured, the chemicals used, and the process sequence and methods adopted by an industry which demands specialist understanding of pyrotechnic chemistry and compliance with fire-safety regulations of the government. (260 words)

3. Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow : 5×10=50

Warnings about global warming have plunged environmentalists in gloom, for unusually warm temperatures have been recorded worldwide. This gloom has been reinforced by a recent environmental setback wherein billions of tons of ice shelves have broken off in the Atlantic. India, too, is at the receiving end of an environmental catastrophe with increasing population growth, scarce water resources, shrinking forests, food security, and climate change.

This year, as the sizzling heat becomes unbearable, one cannot lightly dismiss these reports. Although the summer temperatures are unbearable, meteorologists tell us that it is quite normal for this time of the year. If the discomfort level has increased, the reasons lie elsewhere. For a long time, we have disregarded the age-old norms in town and city planning. Added to this is an uncontrollable population and greed. High-rise concrete jungles have replaced the old spacious houses, and traditionally eco-friendly materials for construction have been changed.

It is true that many more people can reside in high-rise structures as living space has become scarce. However, these are neither aesthetically appealing nor do they reflect climatic concerns. Since concrete absorbs heat and there is no cross-ventilation, people opt for air-conditioners which, in turn, spew more heat into the atmosphere. When power-cuts are frequent, generators raise levels of temperature. Concrete and tar on the roads absorb and retain heat throughout the day resulting in warmer and sultrier nights.

Everyone knows that trees act as natural air-conditioners, keeping temperatures at a bearable level. Unfortunately, builders and developers have no qualms in sacrificing 300-year-old trees to erect concrete structures. The few trees that are allowed to stand do not thrive as concrete prevents water from seeping into the soil. As the ground water cannot be recharged, no moisture reaches the trees that remain, and fresh trees do not take root. As housing is unaffordable for the poor, their shanties cover the hill-sides and every available space which, in turn,

means the destruction of a large number of trees. The poor settlements too have done away with the traditional building materials. Wherever one goes, one sees that thatch or clay tiles on roofs have been replaced by tin sheets, plastic or asbestos.

Technology has added to the increase of temperature in more ways than one. People are reluctant to walk short distances because of an increase in privately-owned vehicles which add to the toxic pollutants in the air. According to reliable surveys, India is the fifth largest producer of global warming gas. Disastrous though it may sound, this can be overcome if we provide shaded pavements for pedestrians to walk on, freeing them from hawkers and clutter, and ensure that our public transport is affordable and efficient.

There is a complex relationship between population, technology, and greed. Technological advancements have certainly made life more comfortable for us. It is very difficult to give up the comforts that we are long used to. The entire world is aware of the problem of pollution and global warming. But until newer technology steps in to bridge the gap, our planners and developers can contribute their mite to alleviate the problem.

Environmentalists have been raising such issues for a long time, but to no avail. Even courts have been forced to step in to prevent trees from being chopped down in order to swell commercial gain, or to persuade us to switch over to more eco-friendly fuels. In Delhi public vehicles have been forced to switch to compressed natural gas. In Mumbai similar efforts are on to implement it in a phased manner.

In the entire scenario, the biggest defaulters are the land sharks who hack trees with impunity in the name of development. Although the government wants to give impetus to public housing, it goes against the very grain of environmental preservation to condone the indiscriminate destruction of our Earth's green cover.

Since special obligations cannot be ignored, options that balance both environmental and social issues need to be seriously addressed. Housing for all is a vital social need and high-rises cannot be wished away. What must be ensured however is that buildings have adequate provision for cross-ventilation so as to minimize the use of air-conditioners. Such buildings must also have plenty of open space surrounding them. Greenery around them must be properly maintained by the residents. If modern buildings can boast of swimming pools, club houses and such amenities, trees in open space surrounding them may not cost that much to maintain. (742 words)

- (a) Why has the discomfort level increased in our towns and cities ?
- (b) How do trees help environmentally safe civic life ?
- (c) What is the relationship between population, technology and greed ? Why does the author see this relationship as "complex" ?
- (d) Who all, according to the author, are the 'defaulters' in this enterprise of saving the environment ?
- (e) What suggestions does the passage offer in balancing environmental and social interests ?

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