Writing Skills

Note-making
Summarising
Sub-titling
Essay-writing
Letter-writing
Creative Writing

© NCERT not to be republished

I know what I want to say, but I don't know how to say it.

– a student

© NCERT not to be republished

To be able to write effectively the student needs to

- *understand the significance and purpose of writing*
- *develop coherence in writing*
- *understand and employ cohesive devices*
- *have relative command of grammar, spelling and punctuation.*

11072CH09

1 Note-making

NOTE-MAKING is an important study skill. It also helps us at work. We need to draw the main points of the material we read as it is difficult to remember large chunks of information. Let us begin with an example.

Study the following passage carefully

Pheasants are shy, charming birds known for their brilliant plumage. These beautiful birds occupy an important niche in nature's scheme of things. Of the 900 bird species and 155 families, the pheasants belong to the order *Galliformes* and family *Phasinidae.* The *Galliformes* are known as game birds and this includes, pheasants, partridges, quails, grouse, francolins, turkeys and megapodes.

There are 51 species of pheasants in the world and these are shown in the identification chart brought out by the Environment Society of India (ESI). The purpose of this chart is to create awareness among members of the school eco-clubs under the National Green Corps (NGC) of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India.

Except for the Congo Peafowl, all the other pheasants are from Asia. Scientists believe that all pheasants originated from the Himalayas, and then scattered into Tibet, China, Myanmar, South and South East Asian countries as well as the Caucasus Mountains. The jungle fowl and the peafowl spread to South India and Sri Lanka long before the early settlers established themselves in the Indo-Gangetic plain.

About a third of all the pheasants in the world are found in India. The male blue peafowl (the peacock) is the best known member of the pheasant family and is India's national bird. It occupies a prominent place in India's art, culture and folklore.

© NCERT not to be republished

STEP 1

Notice that the important information has been underlined.

Pheasants are shy, charming birds known for their brilliant plumage. These beautiful birds occupy an important niche in nature's scheme of things. Of the 900 bird species and 155 families, the pheasants belong to the order *Galliformes* and family *Phasinidae.* The *Galliformes* are known as game birds and this includes, pheasants, partridges, quails, grouse, francolins, turkeys and megapodes.

There are 51 species of pheasants in the world and these are shown in the identification chart brought out by the Environment Society of India (ESI). The purpose of this chart is to create awareness among members of the school eco-clubs under the National Green Corps (NGC) of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India.

Except for the Congo Peafowl, all the other pheasants are from Asia. Scientists believe that all pheasants originated from the Himalayas, and then scattered into Tibet, China, Myanmar, South and South East Asian countries as well as the Caucasus Mountains. The jungle fowl and the peafowl spread to South India and Sri Lanka long before the early settlers established themselves in the Indo-Gangetic plain.

About a third of all the pheasants in the world are found in India. The male blue peafowl (the peacock) is the best known member of the pheasant family and is India's national bird. It occupies a prominent place in India's art, culture and folklore.

STEP 2

Read the passage again asking yourself questions and answering them as you read.

- What is the passage about? — Pheasants
- Where found? — Asia; particularly India (1/3 of total population)
- Origin? — Himalayas
- Time? — Long before Indo-Gangetic plain settlements.
- Which group of birds? — Order: *Galliformes* (game birds); Family — *Phasinidae*

© NCERT not to be republished

- How many species? — 51
- What is the source of information? — ESI chart
- What is the purpose of the ESI chart? — Create awareness among school eco-clubs under NGC
- Which is the best known member? — Peacock, India's national bird

STEP 3

With the help of the answers note down the main points. Write the points without full forms of the verbs.

- Pheasants — shy birds with bright plumage found largely in Asia, especially India
- Origin in the Himalayas and spread in China, Myanmar, South and SE Asia.
- Order: *Galliformes* — game birds; Family: *Phasinidae*
- No. of species: 51 (ESI chart)
- Purpose of ESI chart — Creating awareness among school eco-clubs under NGC.
- Peacock — India's national bird, member of this family, represented in Indian art, culture and folklore.

Notice

- Two or three related ideas can be combined into one point.
- Use of colons
- Use of the long dash

STEP 4

Now go over the facts and number them.

- This is only to analyse the process of note-making. With practice you will be able to reach Step 4 immediately, going through Steps 2 and 3 mentally.

© NCERT not to be republished

STEP 5

Finally we go over the facts and number them again.

Read carefully the characteristics of good notes which are given below.

1. (i) Notes should be short. They should identify the main point.
   (ii) They list information in what is called 'note form'.
   (iii) They are written only in phrases; not sentences.
2. (i) Information is logically divided and subdivided by the use of figures/letters.
   (ii) The divisions are made like this:

Main sections	:	1, 2, 3, etc.
Sub-sections	:	(i), (ii), (iii), etc.
Sub-sub-sections	:	(a), (b), (c), etc.

3. Another common method is the 'decimal' system.

Main sections	:	1, 2, 3, etc.
Sub-sections	:	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, etc.
Sub-sub-sections	:	1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, etc.

4. Abbreviations and symbols are freely used. Articles, prepositions and conjunctions are omitted.
5. Notes must make sense when they are read again otherwise they will be of no use.

Now read the following text.

> The energy stored in coal and petroleum originally came to the earth from the sun. The bulk of the present-day supplies was laid down some 200 to 600 million years ago, when tropical conditions were widespread. Lush, swampy forests produced huge trees; warm coastal seas swarmed with microscopic forms of life. When these organisms died, much of their tissue was recycled as it is today — through scavenging and decay. But a significant amount of dead plant and animal material was covered with mud, which prevented complete decomposition.
>
> With the passage of time, layer upon layer of the fine sediment was deposited over the once-living material; the sheer weight turned the sediments to rock. Sandwiched between the layers,

© NCERT not to be republished

both coal and petroleum were produced and preserved under pressure. Coal was formed mostly of giant fern-like plants that have only small counterparts today. Coal may still be forming here and there on earth, but conditions are not right for the production of significant quantities.

1. Underline the important words and phrases.
2. Write down points without fully expanded verbs, numbering them as you do.
3. Combine related points.
4. Group related points.
5. Change the verbs to nouns and begin points with them.
6. Number the points.

After you have finished check with the notes given below.

- Storage of energy from sun in coal and petroleum
- Deposit of bulk of supplies 200 – 600 million years ago
- Teeming life in tropical conditions
- Death of life forms, leading to recycling through decay
- Prevention of total decomposition by considerable dead plants, animals being covered with mud
- Solidification of sediment leading to rock-formation over time
- Production of coal, petroleum by compression of organic matter between rocks
- Unsuitability of present-day conditions for coal-formation

© NCERT not to be republished