Michigan ECCE Essay Writing
Useful phrases for writing an essay expressing an opinion about how to solve a problem

Introduction

In the Michigan ECCE examination, candidates have to produce **one** piece of writing in thirty minutes, using a prompt (a short piece of writing which describes a situation or problem) which is given on the examination paper. The prompt is usually one or two paragraphs and is written in fairly easy English so that all candidates can understand it without much difficulty. Candidates read this prompt and then the two writing topics which follow it. One is a letter, often to a newspaper or magazine column, offering advice or giving an opinion, and the other is an essay, in which the candidate must express his or her ideas about the situation or problem described in the prompt. The candidate must choose **one** of the topics to write.

Both sorts of writing exercise (letter and essay) must follow a particular development, and the use of clear paragraphs is essential. Candidates must be sure about what ideas they are going to include in their writing before they start writing and how they are going to lay their ideas out. Candidates must also use examples to support their ideas.

It is an excellent idea to learn and use particular phrases which can be included in the writing exercise, such as how to offer advice to somebody, how to express and understanding of a problem, how to offer a personal opinion about a situation, and so on. Below is a list of such phrases which students should find useful when writing *an essay expressing an opinion about a problem or situation* in the Michigan ECCE examination. It is good practice to use phrases like these in your writing. However, it is equally important to avoid errors (grammatical, spelling, expressional) in the information you write between the phrases! In addition, it is very important that you do not try to fill your essay with lots of these phrases in the hope of getting a better mark – make sure that you offer enough of your own writing in presenting a solution to satisfy the examiners.

Useful phrases

A) Rephrasing the idea given by the subject of the essay, which is necessary in the first, <u>short</u> paragraph of the essay.

Basic idea: Everyone knows that unemployment is a serious problem in modern society.
It is common knowledge that unemployment is a serious problem in modern society.
No-one would disagree that unemployment is a serious problem in modern society.
It stands to reason that unemployment is a serious problem in modern society.
It goes without saying that unemployment is a serious problem in modern society.
Who would disagree with the statement that unemployment is a serious problem in modern society? (NOTE that this is a rhetorical question)
The fact that unemployment is a serious problem in modern society is well-known.

Basic idea: This is a difficult problem to solve.
Finding a solution to this problem is far from easy.
Solving a problem like this is problematical.
The solution to this problem presents various difficulties.
Knowing how to solve this problem means dealing with certain difficulties.
If we are to solve this problem, we must deal with various matters causing it.
This problem seems difficult at first, as there are other difficulties to be overcome.

Basic idea: However, I think I can offer some solutions to this problem/the problem of unemployment.
Yet solutions do exist to this problem, as will be seen below.
Nevertheless, it is possible to solve the problem (of unemployment), as I hope to show.
That said, solutions to the problem (of unemployment) are available, and I hope to prove this.
Nonetheless, it is not impossible to solve such a problem, as I hope to show.
The problem is, however, not without a solution, as the following ideas will demonstrate.

B) Explanation of the problem (Second paragraph)

Basic idea: "This is a problem because…"
The reason why this is a problem is that…
The reason why this problem occurs lies in the fact that…
This problem occurs as/because…
People see this as a problem because…
The basis of this problem is that…
This problem crops up because…
Individuals find themselves faced with this problem because…
NOTE: For all the above you can replace the words "this problem / "this" with the word defining the problem (e.g. "unemployment")

Basic idea: "When we know why this problem exists, it is easier to solve it".
Recognition of the reason for the existence of this problem makes it easier to solve it.
If we recognize the source of the problem, we are in a better position to solve it.
This problem is more easily solved when we acknowledge the reason for its existence.
It is (only) when we see why there is a problem that we can really start to solve it.
A solution to this problem is only possible/feasible when we have recognized why the problem exists.

Basic idea: "Many people face this problem/a problem like this."
This is a problem common to many people's experience.
Many face problems such as this.
Such problems crop up for many of us.
Problems such as this occur during many people's lives.
Each individual trying to deal with this problem is not alone, as it affects many individuals/people.

Basic idea: This problem causes serious social problems.
Serious problems of a social nature arise from this problem.
Society suffers because of this problem.
The risks to the stability of society due to this problem are high.
How can society tolerate the dangers faced by this problem? (**Note** that this is a rhetorical question)
The inevitable result of this problem is difficulties in society.
Social difficulties are bound to crop up due to this problem.
NOTE: For all the above you can replace the words "this problem / "this" with the word defining the problem (e.g. "unemployment")

C) How to solve the problem (usually the third and/or fourth paragraph of the essay)

Basic idea: "The first thing we can do to solve this problem is to…"
In the first instance, society/the government/the State/people need to take steps to […] to solve this problem/to resolve this problem/to get over this problem.
Initially To begin with, To start with, Firstly, First of all, Before (doing) anything else, society/the government/the State/people should **OR** The first step (society/the government/the State/people should take is to…) […] to solve this problem/to resolve this problem/to get over this problem.

Basic idea: "Next we should…"
Following (on from) this, society/the government/the State/people should…/ society/the government/the State/people would be well-advised to…/my advice would be (for society/the government/the State/people) to…/why don't we…?/ why doesn't/don't society/the government/the State/people…?/it is recommended that society/the government/the State/people should…
Alternative expressions for "Following this," : *Subsequently, Subsequent to this/that, Once this has been done/achieved, Afterwards, The next step is (for society/the government/the State/people) to…, Secondly,*
NOTE: Remember that society does **not** have "the" in front of it when we are referring to human society (η κοινωνία).

Basic idea: "I advise this because…"
This is advisable because…
Society/The government/The State/People would be advised/well-advised to do this because…
It is recommendable that society/the government/the State/people **do** this because… (**NOTE** that "do" is subjunctive (υποτακτική), so it **doesn't** become "does" in the third person singular form)
Society/The government/The State/People would be wise to do this because…
There is wisdom in this advice because…
My advice is such because…
Such is my advice because…

Basic idea: "If this doesn't work, you should…"
Should this fail to work, society/the government/the State/people should…
Should this not bring the desired results, society/the government/the State/people should…
If this is not successful, society/the government/the State/people should…
Should this not be successful, society/the government/the State/people should…
Failing this, society/the government/the State/people should…
If this doesn't not help, society/the government/the State/people should…
If this doesn't help to resolve/solve the problem, society/the government/the State/people should…

Basic idea: "If we do this, the result will be that…"
The result of such an action/move will be that…
Such an action/move will result in (+noun/gerund)
Doing this will mean that…
By doing this society/the government/the State/people will…
By taking such measures society/the government/the State/people will…
This will mean that society/the government/the State/people will…
This will lead to (+ noun/gerund)

Basic idea: "This may be a difficult measure to take, but…"
Difficult as this measure may be to take, it will…
This might seem a difficult measure to implement, but…
Difficult a measure as this may seem, it will…
Such a measure is certainly a difficult one, but…
It is undoubtedly difficult to take such a measure, but…
Without doubt taking such a measure as this is difficult, but…

Basic idea: "If we don't do anything, the problem will become worse…"
Failing to do anything to solve the problem can only lead to worse problems in the future.
Failing to try to resolve the problem is no an option, as it can only lead to more difficulties further down the line.
We cannot shirk our responsibility to solve this problem, else it will worsen.
It is our responsibility to solve this problem, and we must accept that responsibility if the problem is not to get worse.
Failure to solve this problem will result in things getting worse/in worse difficulties later.

D) Concluding your advice

Basic idea: "I thinks this is the right advice to give (because it will solve the problem)."
This would seem to me to be the appropriate advice to give in order to resolve the problem of … / this problem.
It seems reasonable to me that if this advice is followed, the problem of … / this problem will be resolved satisfactorily.
The course of action suggested above seems to be the wisest one to take if we are to solve this problem. / the problem of …
I cannot but feel that what has been advised above will solve the problem of …

Basic idea: "If this problem is solved, our society will be a better place to live in."
By following this advice, we can make our society a better and happier place to live in.
This advice, if followed, will surely improve our society and the conditions in which we live.
I feel sure that if society/the government/the State/people take(s) this advice, we will have a better society in which to live.
Society can only become better if the above/afore-mentioned advice is followed.