

Transformation of the Czech Economy – Exam Essay

Instructions (extended version)

The goal of this text is to help you write a good essay and receive good grading. Your task is to create a coherent, structured text, in which you use as much knowledge from the course as possible while sticking strictly to the topic.

Essay's Introduction

The aim of the introduction is to briefly introduce the reader to the issue and outline the structure of the text that follows. The topic of the essay you choose serves as a goal of the essay, but in our experience it really helps if you reformulate this goal in your own words: "The aim of the essay is..." Follow the topic as closely as it is possible, every word in the topic matters and writing outside of it will not bring you any points. If it says, for example, that you are to write about 1990-1991, then you really only get points for events of this period. If you spend too much time with writing outside of the topic, it is likely you will not have enough time to accomplish the required work. Focus on what matters most.

Outlining the structure means explaining to the reader how you plan to grasp the topic. It is also advisable to justify your steps, to convince the reader of the logic of your approach ("I divide the text into four main chapters, because I distinguish four main reasons for observed development and I want to address them one by one"). Another way to outline the structure is to write down the questions that will be answered in each section.

The body of the essay

In an English essay, it is typical to firstly characterize the problem and important elements that come into consideration (and by doing so demonstrate your expertise in the topic). In the second part of the essay confrontational alternative is usually introduced. The confrontational part can be omitted in the exam essay, we primarily want you to prove your knowledge. Use the time to support your claims with as many facts as possible.

- One of the most common errors is that students write things that are not directly related to the topic. Every sentence must be clearly linked to the topic. A shorter essay on the topic is much better than a much longer, but unfocused one. It is obvious that everything is connected to everything, but if you write about things that do not relate to the topic, you will run out of time. Even correct facts will bring you no points unless you explain their role in the events. So, if the topic is privatization, you cannot write anything about the deficit, economic development, unemployment, agricultural production, or about anything else that is not directly and very specifically related to privatization unless you explain such relationship.
- Each part of the essay should have its own conclusion. It should leave you with something that you can use in the conclusion at the end of the essay.
- If you are asked to make a comparison, we do not want you to describe one element and then the other, but to divide the facts into reasonable areas (by time, subject, etc.) and then systematically compare them directly against each other. It is this direct comparison that shows that you are aware of what is connected and what is essential.

- Ask yourself questions, they can help you. If you are writing about the exchange rate, consider from when it was the way it was, why and under what circumstances it changed, what caused this change, who benefited from it and who lost, and so on.
- When you divide the essay into parts you should at least approximately follow the rule that the chapters on the same logical level should be of the same length (If your text is divided into three main chapters, all three should be approximately the same length. Alternatively, explain why something is so important, that it gets considerably more space).
- If your text is broken down into chapters, it is also important to stick to the topic within the chapter. If a chapter is named *Fiscal Policy*, then within this chapter you cannot write about anything other than fiscal policy (interest rates, banks and overall economic results are to be discussed elsewhere).

Summary and Conclusion

These two parts can be combined into one. Do not add new factual information there, it serves as a space where the main and already argued for partial results meet and enable you to formulate generalized final conclusion.

- Your own opinion is a required part of the conclusion ("I think that ..."). It will not be rated for content, but for the ability to take a position, which is at least partly based on the facts stated in the essay. The omission of any final opinion automatically means loss of points.

A few more tips:

- Make sure the reader can understand the logic of your essay structure. Every well-written text has a sophisticated structure, your essay also needs one and you get points for it. Use titles and subtitles, they are only formal tools, but experience shows that essays without them tend to divert from the topic significantly more.
- Give yourself time to think about what important facts and connections you might have missed. Read the text after you finish and correct the mistakes you might have left behind.
- Do not rely on the knowledge of the reader, your job is to state facts and explain connections. If you stick to the topic, do not be afraid to include details. Do not leave facts without explanation or context. Let the reader know you are aware of the time the given event took place (year, context).
- Remember that the points are primarily given for a number of facts used (25 points) and the quality of the structure (15 points).