

Mastering Essay & Answer Writing for UPSC Civil Services IAS IPS &



EBD_8165

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Preface

Many of us dream to become a civil servant and join the prestigious services like IAS, IPS, IFS, IRS and PCS to serve the country with honour. Every year, millions of students write the IAS (Civil Services Examination) and PCS

examinations to realize their dreams of joining the most coveted services in India. These services offer the best government career in India as these officers occupy almost all the top positions of Central and State Governments in India.

Selection in the Civil Services Examinations is, however, not easy. Millions of students appear in these competitions every year, but only a few succeed.

The examination is conducted in three stages—Prelims, Mains and Interview (Personality Test). While Prelims is only a qualifying examination, the selection and allocation of service in these examinations are done on the basis of the marks obtained by the aspirants in the Mains and Interview.

The most important feature of the IAS/PCS examination is that all the Mains papers (including essay paper) are descriptive and require great writing skills.

You must not only have an in-depth knowledge of the subjects, but you must also have the ability to write great answers and essay to succeed in the competition. It is important to understand that each mark matters in the civil services examination as you may miss your selection, choice of service or the cadre just by a single mark. Moreover, the difference of marks between the topper and the last candidate selected in the competition is quite small.

In order to get top marks, it is important for you to know not only how to improve your writing skills, but also to understand certain secrets of writing that can make the best impression on the mind of the examiner.

I was selected in the Indian Revenue Service (Customs & Indirect Taxes) in my first attempt in the year 1990. I worked in the revenue department for more than 25 years before I took Voluntary Retirement in the year 2016 to follow my passion for writing and teaching. I have already published five books and written over five thousand answers on **Quora**, where my answers get millions of views per month and I stand among the five most followed writers in the world. I have been teaching the course of 'Essay and Answer Writing' on **Unacademy** for more than a year and have been receiving top ratings from my students.

The book in your hand is not a typical book of essay and answer writing.

I have presented the insights gained over the years as a writer, teacher and a civil servant in this book. My attempt is to help you discover the writer in you by providing you the practical steps to develop your writing skills. It is possible to write an excellent answer or an essay only if you have the right knowledge and a great writing skill.

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This book, therefore, first explains the examiner's purpose of having descriptive papers of General Studies and essay. We then proceed to learn the steps to develop writing skills in simple steps. Thereafter, the book explains the structure of the essay— 'Introduction', 'Body' and 'Conclusion', for different types of essays. You then learn how to maintain flow in your essay so as to hold the attention of the examiner. Many students find it difficult to write an essay on the philosophical topics. Hence, a separate chapter is devoted to this purpose. I have also provided valuable tips to improve your writing skills and help you incorporate the best practices in answer writing to get the top marks. Finally, we discuss the common mistakes which the candidates make during the examination along with their resolution to help you write error free answers and essays.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the team of **Disha Publication**, for publishing my book. Their valuable help and guidance is highly appreciated. I would also like to convey my special gratitude to my team member 'Shreya Chaturvedi' for providing her valuable assistance in writing this book.

I am confident that the civil services aspirants will find this book extremely useful for the preparation of not only their essay paper, but for all papers for the IAS/PCS

examinations. Please make the best use of this book and provide me suggestions on aksinghirs@gmail.com **Awdhesh Singh**

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SECTION-I

THE BASICS

OF ESSAY WRITING



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Chapter-1

Introduction

“Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing.”

– Benjamin Franklin

We all know the importance of writing. We have been writing our examinations right since our childhood. Even when we get into a job or profession, we have to write letters, emails and many reports in our organisation. We may also have to write essays in many competitive examinations for the employment of the job. Essay writing is an important means to judge the suitability of a candidate for a particular job. It is widely used as a means of selecting the right candidate by the corporate, by the colleges and universities and by the government organisations.

Have you ever wondered why Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) tests your Essay-writing ability in Civil Services Examination (CSE), when they are already testing your knowledge and understanding on a plethora of subjects like History, Geography, Science, Maths, Economics, Law, Culture, Ethics and Integrity, etc.? After all, the contents of your essay would come from your knowledge and understanding of the other subjects, which have already been tested extensively in the Prelims and General Studies papers of Civil Services (Mains). So, there must be *something* else that can be tested in Essays, but not tested in others papers, which has led to the UPSC introducing essay paper in CSE in 1992.

Another question that comes to our mind is why the UPSC does not simply conduct an objective type test for selection of the civil servants like many other competitive examinations such as Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for selection in IITs and other Engineering Colleges, NEET for selection in Medical colleges or CAT for selection in the Management colleges in India? In order to understand the purpose of descriptive answers and essays in the competitive examination, we must know about the two types of tests that are used for judging the suitability of a candidate for the most prestigious jobs in Government in India.

Two type of tests

There are broadly two types of tests for selection of a candidate for a job or for higher studies.

1. Objective Type Tests

2. Subjective Type Tests

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1. Objective Type Tests

An objective type test is one which is free from any subjective bias either from the side of the candidate or from the side of the examiner. In this type of tests, the selection of the correct answer is made from the list of several alternatives; or you may have to supply one or a few words or a number as the answer.

The objective type tests assess your knowledge of the subject. It can be fact based (Delhi is the Capital of India) or rule based ($2+2=4$).

The questions are framed in such a way that there is only one right answer possible for every question. If you know the answer, you can get the full marks, else you get no marks. In order to discourage guesswork, most objective type tests have the provision of negative marking as well for incorrect answers.

Objective type tests measure your objective knowledge and they ensure perfect objectivity in assessment. The objectivity is so high in such tests that even a computer can check the answers.

Objective type tests are extremely useful to assess what you know.

The Civil Services Examination (Prelims) is an objective type test that evaluates your objective knowledge. However, it is used only as the screening test and its marks are not counted when the final merit list of the candidates is made. However, the objective type tests suffer from the following limitations:-

- Intelligent guessing is possible often by elimination method
- Cheating and copying can be done easily
- It can't test many traits of the civil servants like their ability to provide practical solution to difficult real life problems of life, or the ability to present complex ideas logically in a coherent manner.
- It can't test the linguistic skills which is quite important for civil servants
- It can't test the personality, character and beliefs of a person, which is extremely important for a civil servant occupying top positions in government.

The real world problems often don't have just one solution or one alternative.

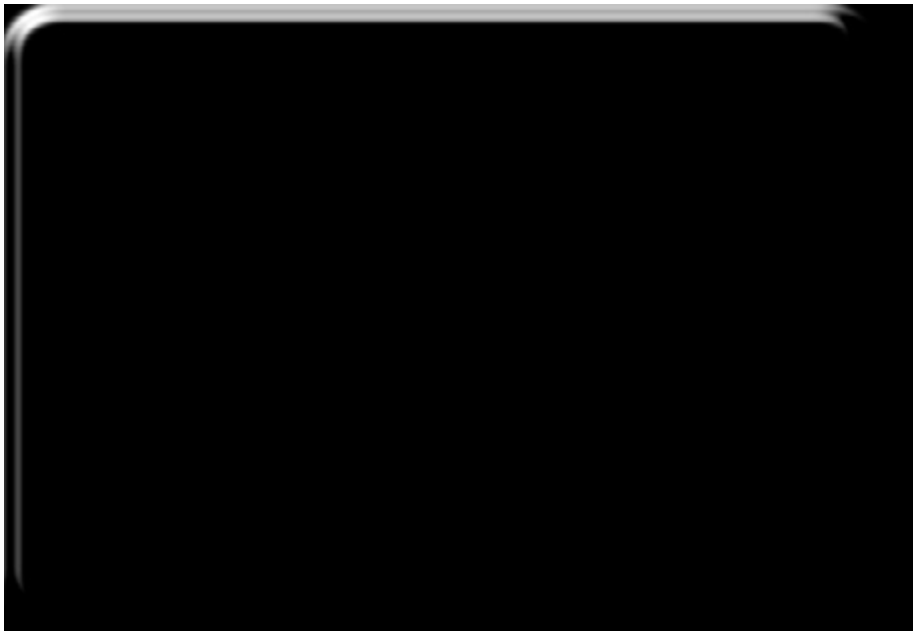
Objective type questions can't test an individual's ability to understand and solve such complex problems of life.

2. Subjective Type Tests

Gustave Flaubert, a highly influential French novelist, who is often considered to be the leading exponent of literary realism once said, "The art of writing is the art of discovering what you believe". We can know deeply about a person from his writing because our writing is the manifestation of our core thoughts and beliefs. It is no wonder, therefore, that the recruiter often use essays as the means to understand the deepest thoughts and beliefs of a candidate.

In order to understand how essays test the deepest thoughts or beliefs of a person, let us understand the concept of signature. We all know that a signature is used to identify a person. The bank teller hands over your cash





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or transfers huge amount of money from your account after verifying your signature on the cheque. He knows that the signature of each person is unique and can't be replicated easily by another human being.

Signature is called *gRrk{kj* in Hindi which means **a word written by hand.**

We all learn writing letters and words from the same book where these words are printed in identical manner like shown in the picture below.

However, when we write the same words by our hands, they are not the exact replica of the printed words, but get written in a unique manner by each one of us. This shows that every person in the world has a unique signature because every person in the world is unique. Some experts can actually make a lot of prediction about your personality from your signature or handwriting.

If one single word of your signature can tell so much about you, imagine how much a person will know about you if he reads a subjective answer written by you or an essay that runs into more than 1000 words.

When we read an essay or article by a person, we get to know a lot about the thoughts and beliefs of the person.

Hence, an essay tests not only what you know, but also who you are.

The descriptive answers of the questions asked in the civil services examination also test your knowledge, your deeper understanding of an issue besides your core thoughts.

The questions in the Civil Services (Mains) and essay paper are unusual and unpredictable. There is no standard or right answers to the complex problems of life. Hence, you can't prepare the right answers in advance. Time is so limited during examination that you can't plan or organize your thoughts. You can only pour your heart and mind out impromptu. Hence, when you write descriptive answers or essays during the examination, it helps an examiner know your knowledge, thoughts and beliefs at a much deeper level to judge your suitability for the job.

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Essays in Civil Services

Essay writing is not just the test of your knowledge, but also a test of your personality, aptitude, thoughts and beliefs. It tests your skills of presentation, organisation of ideas and the communication of the ideas in an effective and understandable language in order to measure your critical, analytical and argumentative skills. Contrary to popular belief, essays are more than just a test of your command over the language or the test of your vocabulary.

What's a good vocabulary without great ideas? And what good is the worth of an idea, if it is not presented well?

With respect to Civil Services, the primary objective of the subjective answers and long essays is to assess the skill of the aspirants to formulate and draft policies and

government papers. Imagine, an IAS officer drafting a policy full of grammatical errors and incoherence. Even if he has a great idea, unless he presents it well, he is likely to make himself, nay the government, a laughing stock before the public! Essays help assess this very aptitude of effective presentation which none of the other papers in the Civil Services Examinations can do. This is why the essay paper is unique and an intrinsic part of many assessment and admission process including the Civil Services.

In Civil Services Mains, the Essay Paper typically consists of two sections-Section A and Section B. Each section usually has 4 topic options. The aspirants must choose one topic from each section and write essays in about 1000-1200 wordseach. The maximum marks of this paper is 250 and the duration is 3 hours.

Despite having as much weightage as other papers, the paper of Essay remains the most underrated and neglected section by most aspirants. People tend to take essay writing lightly and it is no wonder why most civil services aspirants struggle to score well in their Mains examination, though they have excellent knowledge of the subjects.

In short, Essay writing is an art and an expression of your deepest thoughts and belief. It can be mastered partly by innate talent of imagination and creativity, but largely by practice and exposure to different ideas. We can improve our writing skills by reading quality literary work of the best writers of the world. We shall discuss in detail how to develop and hone the Essay-Writing skill later in this book.

How to use this book

If you are one of those aware people who understand the importance of the essay paper and want to do well in it, that's enough to take you forward. All that is expected from you is you **will** and the book shall show you the **way**. There is no prerequisite to using this book except having a basic knowledge of English and a deep desire to learn. Please follow the instructions that are provided in the book and practice as much writing as you can to develop the skill of writing.



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Chapter-2

Purpose of an Essay

“Writing is an exploration. You start from nothing and learn as you go.”

– E. L. Doctorow

One of the most important things when you are planning to write an essay is to know the purpose of the essay paper itself. That means you must know what the qualities are that the essay paper seeks to assess in the aspiring civil servants. Without the knowledge of the purpose, you can't achieve your goal.

You must have written essays or articles earlier in school or college or for a newspaper or a magazine. So you can understand that the most important quality of a writer is to know the purpose of writing and to develop the skill to understand the mind of the readers for whom he is writing. For example,

- If you writing an essay on a blog or a Quora like website, you often write to have more likes and page views.
- If you are writing an essay in school or college, you wish to impress the examiner with your writing skill and knowledge and get maximum marks.
- If you are writing an essay for a scholarly journal, you must undertake extensive studies and research to get the approval of the reviewer about the quality and content of your work.

In the same way, when you are writing an essay for a job (like in the Civil Services Examination), you must aim to impress the examiner that you are most suitable for the job.

Qualities of a Civil Servant

In order to write good essays, you must develop the ability to write in different ways depending on the purpose. Hence, our answers and essays in the Civil Services (Mains) Examinations must establish that we possess the qualities required in a good civil servant.

The qualities of a good civil servant are as following.

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1: Knowledge

A civil servant is an administrator who must have the knowledge of his job since he has to follow the rules and law in letter and spirit. If you don't have knowledge, you can't take the right decision in the government. Hence, a civil services aspirant must have the right and accurate knowledge of the various subject domain that are dealt with by the civil servants.

The UPSC does not prescribe any specific text book for any subject and expects the aspirants to have the ability of learn from various sources.

Since the syllabus and amplitude of the essay paper is virtually infinite, a civil services aspirant can't possess complete knowledge of all the topics.

However, he is expected to know something about everything as he may have to deal with any department in the Central or State Governments. The most important thing is that the candidate must not possess false knowledge.

George Bernard Shaw said wisely, "*Beware of false knowledge; it is more dangerous than ignorance*".

Hence, you must choose a topic of essay about which you have the right knowledge. Don't write anything from guesswork. Don't incorporate data, quotations or statements unless you are sure about them. If you have shortage of the material, it is better to elaborate on what you know rather than to write something which may be factually incorrect.

2: Integrity

The greatest quality of civil servants is to possess integrity and honesty. They must be driven by idealism to serve the nation rather than joining the civil service to enjoy power, perks and privileges. For example, the following essays were asked in 2018, which would help the examiner test the attitude of the aspirant towards integrity and ethical values of the aspirant.

- Customary morality cannot be a guide to modern life
- A people that values its privileges above its principles loses both
- Reality does not conform to the ideal, but confirms it The examiner tests your integrity through such essays. It is prudent to be idealistic while writing essays on such topics.

3: Foundational Values of Civil Services A civil servant is a public servant appointed to serve the citizens of the country, who are the real rulers in a democracy like

India. Civil servants must not have the attitude of a ruler or a master who treats ordinary citizens like subjects.

Instead they should have the attitude of a servant who is serving the citizens as a duty. Civil servants must possess the following foundational values.

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- Integrity,
- Impartiality,
- Political Neutrality,
- Objectivity,
- Dedication to public service,
- Empathy,
- Tolerance and
- Compassion towards the weaker sections.

The essay written by the candidates must reflect these values in them. For example, you must not show any bias towards a particular political ideology in your essay. You must demonstrate that you are joining the Civil Services to serve the society and not for any selfish motive like power, perks, prestige, etc. You must have love and compassion towards the weak and helpless sections of the society as you have to serve them most.

4: Loyalty towards the Constitution

A civil servant must be loyal to the Constitution and must strive to maintain constitutional sanctity by following the core values of the Constitution of India.

The Preamble to the Constitution states,

• *WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens*

- *JUSTICE, social, economic and political;*
- *LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;*
- *EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all*
- *FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;*
- *IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this 26th day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS*

CONSTITUTION.

You must, therefore, show due regard to the Constitutional values of secularism, socialism, democracy, justice, equality, liberty and fraternity to prove yourself as a good civil servant. If your essay hints that you possess the values that are contrary to these fundamental values, you may be deemed to be unsuitable for the job.

5: Clarity of Thought

Civil servants are the decision makers as they have to solve the real life problems of their country rather than merely discussing about the merits or

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demerits of any decision. Every decision in real life has pros and cons and one must weigh them appropriately to take the most practicable decision in the given situation. Hence, a civil servant must have the ability to understand the complex issues of public life and provide workable solutions of the same.

Clear writing is not possible without clear thoughts. If your thoughts are not clear, you would not be able to take right decisions quickly as a civil servant.

Hence, even in the controversial situations, you must learn to take a stand in favour of the nation and in the public interest.

You must ensure that there is no confusion or ambiguity in your answers.

Even if you are giving diverse points of view, your conclusion must be clear and unambiguous providing clear solution of the problem with justifiable reasons.

6: Writing Skill

Civil servants must have good writing skill because they have to take decisions through the written orders. Their orders are used by public as a legal document for various purposes. If civil servants can't write well or their writing is full of spelling and/or grammatical mistakes, it would spoil the reputation of not only the individual officer, but the government as a whole.

Hence, your answer should be free from errors and you must lace your writing with beautiful quotes and metaphors to make it interesting.

7: Presentation

The presentation of a written answer or essay is like packaging of a product.

It draws the attention of the examiner and creates the best impression.

In order to ensure that the examiner reads your answer fully, your writing must be clear and legible. You must use appropriate quotations to justify your point of view and also to make your essay more interesting. The anecdotes from the life of great leaders and thinkers embellish your write up and draw the attention of examiner towards your writing. If required, you must also provide the data to make your answer more fact based and convincing.

Sometimes, figures and diagrams can present complex ideas in the simplest manner which can be understood and appreciated by the reader.

You can improve your presentation only by knowledge and by practice. The more you practice, the better becomes the flow of your ideas and lesser are the mistakes in your writing. A well-written essay is assurance of additional marks as it makes the examiner read your essay with great interest and award you marks more liberally.



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Chapter-3

Developing the Writing Skill

“Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.”

– Abraham Lincoln

Writing is a means to express our thoughts clearly in words. Speaking is another method of doing so. When we speak in the ordinary discourse of life, we are spontaneous as we speak whatever thoughts come to our mind and the words flow automatically to transmit our thoughts into speech.

When we are writing something, our thoughts follow the same pattern to get crystallized into words written by us on paper.

It is for this reason that you can't write clearly till you think clearly. The greatest problem in writing a good essay is that most candidates appearing for civil services are not well conversant with the subject or with the language.

For example, English is the most popular language for writing Civil Services Examination, but many aspirants are not very comfortable in either spoken or written English. They first think in their native language and then they translate their thoughts into English before putting it down on paper. This slows down the flow of their thoughts, reduces their writing speed and leads to poor quality of answers.

We shall discuss in this chapter the methods for developing writing skills especially for the Civil Services Examination (CSE).

1. Learning from Multiple Sources

Good writers are always good readers. They learn from all sources and from all people. No one is untouchable to them as they find something to learn from everyone. There is a saying, attributed to Buddha: ‘When the student is ready, the teacher will appear’. Hence, if you wish to be a good writer, first learn to become a good reader.

You must develop the habit to learn from variety of sources, such as

- Books
- Newspapers

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- Experts

- Internet
- Blogs
- Social and Electronic Media
- Friends
- Experience of successful civil servants It is important to understand that the topics of essays are not decided on a random basis. If you have prepared your General Studies papers well, you already have the desired knowledge to write an essay. For example, consider the following essays which were asked in CSE 2019.
- South Asian societies are woven not around the state, but around their plural cultures and plural identities
- Neglect of primary health care and education in India are reasons for its backwardness
- Biased media is a real threat to Indian democracy
- Rise of Artificial Intelligence: the threat of jobless future or better job opportunities through reskilling and upskilling The content of these essays directly comes from the syllabus of General Studies. Hence, a student who has prepared his General Studies papers well would have enough material at hand to write a great essay on any of these topics.

Thus, when you are preparing for the Civil Services Examination, you are already acquiring knowledge on a wide range of subjects, which are useful for writing essays. However, mere bookish academic knowledge is not sufficient for writing good essays. You must develop the habit of reading widely from multiple sources. You may study the works of different philosophers and thinkers. Reading non-fiction books can help you widen your knowledge base and help you present your thoughts in a cogent way. You must also read the views of critics that can help you find the flipside of an opinion.

You must also develop the habit of collecting quotable quotes, anecdotes, stories and data, which can be effectively used at the appropriate places in your essays to make your writing more convincing, beautiful and interesting.

2. Width and Depth of Knowledge

It is difficult to predict the questions in the GS and subject papers. There is no prescribed book to cover the syllabus. Hence, anything pertaining to syllabus can be

asked. However, all topics are not equally important. It is common to find many questions from a few topics repeated year after year while questions pertaining to certain topics are rarely asked. You can get

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the idea of the important topics by skimming through the question papers of previous years. Moreover, the topics which were in news in the last one year are more important than other topics.

Hence, a civil services aspirant must develop the habit of reading *something of everything* and *everything of something*. In order to know something of everything, one must develop the habit of reading the newspaper to familiarize oneself to all current topics. Once you develop this habit, you can intuitively ascertain the topics that are more important from the point of view of the examination. You also get the benefit of knowing something about everything since anything of importance is usually reported in the newspapers and magazines. The study of the current affairs magazines (offline as well as online) further ensures that you don't miss out any important topic. However, there is no need to get into the depth of all topics. You must acquire in-depth knowledge of the subject only in respect of the topics which are important from the examination point of view.

Newspaper and magazine reading improve your linguistic skills and vocabulary naturally. You can also get in them many interesting stories, quotes and anecdotes to be used for your essay.

3. Analyzing

There are often different points of view available on the same issue. For example, on the issues like demonetization, GST, Triple Talaq, or Citizen Amendment Act (CAA), multiple views are available. Some people favour a policy, while others criticize them. Hence, a student often gets confused, not able to decide what is right and what, wrong. If you are yourself confused about an issue, there is no way you can write an essay with clarity in the examination.

You must, therefore, have the ability to analyze the complex issues of life and learn to develop your own perspective and opinion about the important national and international issues. You need to take a stand in favour of the administration since your aspiration is to join the government. For example, human rights may be quite important for a human rights activist, but for a police officer, maintenance of law and order and

prevention of crime is the top priority, since that is the primary job of a police officer. Hence, if you wish to join the civil services, your perspective should be inclined towards the administration rather than against it, though you must also give due importance to all points of view while discussing an issue.

Thus, you must analyze the important and controversial issues of the nation thoroughly and then develop an opinion of yourself which should be in accordance with the state policy and in the public interest.

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4. Thinking in English

English is not the mother tongue of the Indians. We mostly speak in our native language at our homes and with our friends. Therefore, when we think, it is naturally in our own language. Many of us have studied in the Hindi medium or any other regional language in our schools and colleges. Hence, writing answers in English does not come naturally to us. However, many of us choose to write competitive examinations in English, because we have acquired higher education in the English medium and also because the best educational resources are available in English.

Language is not so important in case of objective type tests because they are based on factual information and require the candidate only to choose from already written probable answers. However, in descriptive type of answers and in essay papers, expression is as important as the content. If you are in the habit of thinking in your own language and then translating that in English, the process would be slow and prone to error.

You will, therefore, have to train your mind to think in English. As soon as thoughts occur in your mind, consciously switch to thinking in English. Soon, you will develop the habit of thinking in English and the quality of your English writing as well as fluency in speaking shall improve dramatically.

5. Discussion of Important Topics

Thinking, speaking and writing are interconnected. Writing is nothing but speaking through words albeit on paper. If your spoken English is not good, writing good English would be difficult. You can improve your spoken English by intense discussion. When you discuss important issues with your friends, family or with your teacher your mind works with full alacrity and words flow with thoughts. Moreover, you get instant feedback about the content and presentation. Hence, you must develop the habit of speaking in English, particularly when discussing technical and important issues which

pertain to your chosen subjects. You also learn different points of view while discussing an issue passionately.

In case there is no one with whom you can speak in English, talk with yourself in your room or practice speaking in English before a mirror or a wall.

Developing fluency in any language takes a long time. Hence, you must not postpone this any further and must start practising it right away. Gradually, you shall develop the ability to express your thoughts in a cogent manner.

Once you develop command over your spoken language, you will also make considerable improvement in your written language.

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6. Practice Writing

There are many people who can speak quite well and also know a lot about a subject. However, when it comes to writing, they falter. They often don't know how to start writing an answer or an essay.

You know that practice makes man perfect. Hence, you must develop the habit of writing regularly to develop proficiency in writing. Writing is a skill and you can't acquire a skill in days or even in a few months. You must develop the habit of writing something on some important topic every single day. One good way to develop writing skill is to read articles in newspapers and magazines, blogs, answers posted on platforms like *Quora*, etc., and then try to write the content in your own words.

It is a good idea to frame hypothetical questions similar to the questions asked in General Studies or, essay topics similar to those asked in the Essay paper, for practice. For example, you can write an article on the topic, "Is GST a boon or a bane for Indian Economy?" or, "The Impact of amendments of Article 370 in India." Once you frame a question or choose a topic, it becomes easier to consolidate your thoughts and write a good answer or an essay.

You may practice essay writing by first imitating a well written essay. After you have read the essay, put it away and write down the content in your own words adding some of your own original ideas, concepts and perspective.

In addition, you must also practice the questions from previous year papers of the UPSC and complete them within time and word limit. Review your answers after a couple of days to find out the shortcomings.

You should also practise writing on controversial topics. You must read multiple articles on the issues which present different points of view. Thereafter, develop your own view and then write your own essay justifying your stand.

Only by practice can the quality of your writing improve. Unfortunately, most students focus more on learning the content and neglect the writing practice because it seems boring, non-productive and even painful. You must force yourself to write something every day (even just one page) so as to develop the habit of writing and acquire skills to present your thoughts in creative and cogent manner. Ernest Miller Hemingway, American novelist, short story writer, and journalist summed it aptly, “There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed”.

7. Review

It is important to know your likely mistakes when you are writing an answer or an essay. A good guide or teacher can help you improve the quality

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of your writing by pointing out your mistakes and providing suggestions to improve your writing. However, most students don't have such guides available and hence they don't know how to improve their writing.

Even if we are not good writers, we surely are good readers. We read the books authored by the best writers and most knowledgeable people, though we may not be able to write our own essays to present our own thoughts.

When we write something, it looks perfect to us at the time of writing as it is difficult to notice our own mistakes in writings. However, after couple of days when we read our own answer or essay, we read it as a reader and then we can easily find out the errors as we intuitively compare our writing with the writings of other authors and immediately recognize our spelling mistakes, grammatical mistakes and other faults. Hence, you must develop the habit of reading and reviewing your essays after a few days so that you can yourself find out the shortcomings, which would help you improve your writing without any external help.

You may also collaborate with your friends who are also preparing for CSE.

You may check one another's answers and point out the strengths and weaknesses therein. You can also write on blogs, Quora, etc., and get the feedback on your writing from the readers. You may also join an online or offline coaching that provides feedback on your answers and essays. Don't get disheartened if you face criticism. Learn to accept criticism and keep improving the quality of our writing by minimizing the errors and maximizing the content.

Octavia E. Butler, an African-American science fiction author said wisely,

“You don't start out writing good stuff. You start out writing crap and thinking it's good stuff, and then gradually you get better at it. That's why I say one of the most valuable traits is persistence.”

Don't waste any more time thinking and planning.

Pick up your pen and write one page on any interesting topic right now before you move to the next chapter.

The right time for forming a good habit is here and NOW.



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Chapter-4

Steps of Essay Writing

“I'm not a very good writer, but I'm an excellent rewriter.”

– James Michener

Execution is always the most important step in any mission. Sportsmen prepare for several years before they display their skill in a game of only a few minutes. A race may be over within a few seconds, but its preparation is done by the athletes for years. In the same way, an examination is the place where you display the results of all your preparations to outperform others and achieve success and glory.

In this chapter, we shall learn the steps for writing essays with an objective to score the best marks in the competitive examination.

1. Selection of Essay

You are oftengiven a multiple choice of topics for essay writing. For example, the essay paper of the Civil Services Examination is divided into two sections having four essays each and you have to write one essay from each section.

The selection of the right topic is thus the first most important step for writing the essay.

When you have to select one topic from among four topicsin each section, it means you have the liberty to eliminate three difficult topics from each section. Hence, the selection of the right essay from the choices is one of the most important means to maximize your score in the paper. The following rules can help you select the right essays.

Rules for selection of an Essay

(i) Proper Understanding of the Topic

Don't choose a topic which you don't understand properly. For example, the topics like 'Reality does not conform to the ideal, but confirms it' (CSE

2018) and 'Wisdom finds truth' (CSE 2019) are too philosophical and it is not easy to write on such topics.

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(ii) Knowledge of the Topic

There are some essays which can't be written unless you have accurate knowledge of the subject. For example, writing an essay on the topic 'Rise of Artificial Intelligence: the threat of jobless future or better job opportunities through reskilling and upskilling' (CSE 2019) is not possible unless you not only possess adequate knowledge on Artificial Intelligence (AI), but also know how AI is affecting jobs all over the world and how we can reskill and upskill to create jobs in this area. Only if you are a domain expert or you have studied the subject area well, should you attempt an essay on this topic. On the other hand, if it happens to be your area of expertise and you possess good knowledge on the subject, this topic must be given top priority by you as you stand a good chance of outscoring others.

(iii) Availability of Material

Most essay topics in CSE come from the syllabus of General Studies (GS) paper. Hence, you usually have the requisite knowledge of the subject, which can be used to write answers in 150-250 words. However, you often don't have sufficient material like data, anecdotes, quotes, stories, information to write an essay of 1000-1200 words.

Hence, while choosing a topic for essay, assess how much ready material you have on the given topic. You must choose an essay where you possess enough material due to your special interest in the subject, or being a domain expert.

2. Dissecting the topic

Often, an essay or a question covers multiple areas. It is important to dissect the topic into different parts to plan the essay.

For example, the essay on the topic '**A good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge**' has three components

- What is good life?
- How love inspires people to have a good life?
- How knowledge guides people to have a good life?

You must include all the three dimensions in your essay. The scheme of the essay should be clear in your mind, before you write your first word on the paper.

You should be flexible with the structure as you go writing the essay. You may keep generating new thoughts dynamically as you progress with the essay. If you get some valuable and important insight during the essay writing, try to incorporate it in the proper manner by adjusting the other important ideas

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that were captured in the pre-writing brainstorming session. You must present your ideas logically and concisely covering all sub-topics of the essay.

3. Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a common method in management and administration to generate new ideas and solutions. It is often done in groups wherein the participants are encouraged to think aloud and give their suggestions based on whatever ideas come into their minds.

Brainstorming is an important step of essay writing, too. However, the difference here is that all the ideas come from the mind of a single individual, the writer, who jots them down on paper and then finally uses those for writing answers or essays. Considering the importance of Brainstorming for essay writing, we shall discuss this topic in detail in the next chapter.

4. Structure of the Essay

An essay is divided into three broad parts, i.e. 'Introduction', 'Body' and

'Conclusion', which are further sub-divided into paragraphs. There is no hard and fast rule about the length of a paragraph. Each paragraph must have at least one cohesive idea. It should neither be too short, nor, too long. Don't present the entire thought in a single or 2-3 long paragraphs nor go for 15-20

shorter ones. You must make your paragraphs of optimum length so that it is easier for the examiner to navigate through the entire text. It is reasonable to use 8-10 paragraphs in an essay of the size of 1000-1200 words.

We shall discuss about all the three parts of the structure of the essay in the forthcoming chapters.

5. Originality and Creativity

There is no 'best' way to write an essay or an answer. The style of each writer is different and each style may be good in its own way. You must not be swayed by the writing style of great writers, or get awed by their use of difficult words. Most of those writings is done at home in leisure, after lots of research and edited several times before being published. That is why, they appear to be flawless. Moreover, the writers usually have expertise in their chosen area and also possess years of experience in writing.

You must, therefore, not try to imitate the great writers. Instead you must try to develop your own style of writing. Your writing must carry the imprint of your life experiences and your perception of the world. The examiners don't expect you to be as experienced, mature or opinionated as famous authors.

They want to see in you the idealism, energy and optimism of a youth who

is passionate to serve the country. Hence, be creative and develop your own style of writing with right knowledge, skill and practice.

Creativity does not mean reinventing a wheel or throwing bizarre ideas that are untested and unworkable. You are not expected to write something one hundred per cent original to be appreciated by the examiner. You should rather present workable and practical ideas with your own individual perspective.

You may consider yourself an architect who is constructing a new building. All the materials like bricks, cement or steel used by every builder for construction, are same. The difference is that of using them to create something unique and beautiful.

You can develop creativity by following these steps—

- Read articles and essays and note key ideas in bulleted points
- Come up with a different hypothesis or introduce new evidence
- Assimilate various points of view harmoniously to create your own
- Make the answer interesting and unpredictable till the last
- Don't be too innovative or revolutionary
- Don't use too many quotations and references
- Use personal experiences of self and others
- Discuss issues with friends and learn new ideas
- Learn from the discussions and debates on TV, newspapers
- Write blogs, or answers on *Quora*
- Practice writing extempore answers and essays It is important to understand that in order to score top marks in the paper, your essay must stand apart. There has to be something unique in your essay that should force the examiners to devote more time reading your essay.

Therefore, your essay must be structured in such a way that you are able to grab their attention from the very first sentence of the essay.



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Chapter-5

Brainstorming

“If at first the idea is not absurd, then there is no hope for it.”

– *Albert Einstein*

The greatest challenge in writing an essay of the size 1000-1200 words is to generate enough ideas to write an interesting, informative and useful essay. Suppose you have to write something on the topic ‘Honesty is the best policy’, you can easily write 100-200 words. However, to expand this topic to over a thousand words needs many interrelated ideas to be generated quickly. The process of producing a host of ideas in quick succession is often called ‘brainstorming’.

Brainstorming is an activity designed to generate lots of ideas for solution of a problem. It involves coming up with many, often radical, ideas.

Brainstorming helps us think out of box and break the traditional patterns we are programmed with to generate newer ideas. No idea is judged at this stage and they are merely noted down. Some ideas may appear absurd, bizarre, impractical, idealistic or even outright stupid. However, at this stage the mind is allowed to freely manufacture the ideas. The evaluation of ideas begins only after the brainstorming session is over.

Once all the ideas are written down, select the good ones and reject the bad ones. Since you have a word limit for writing your answer, you must select the ideas based on the time at your disposal and the word limit allowed.

Once you have selected the ideas, you must then sequence them in the order of priority as well as in the order of presentation. It should be ensured that the priority ideas are not left out due to the limitation of the words or time and that they are presented in the right order at the right place in such a way that one idea appears to flow from the previous one.

Conventional and Lateral Thinking

We are trained since our school days to think and work in the conventional style. The practice in most educational institutions is to award more marks to those who write the standard answers rather than, creative ones. So, as

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we grow older, we develop the conventional style which is a structured or logical framework to create a product, system or service or solve a problem.

Conventional thinking is useful in solving routine problems, answering prepared questions and analysing a well-known issue. One can also use the conventional thinking for the design of a product, service or system whose needs and functions have already been identified. Conventional thinking also helps us in root cause analysis by following a standard protocol to identify the causes that lead to the problem.

However, almost all real life problems have some novelty in them. Hence, they can't be solved by using conventional thinking. We thus need to be creative and follow *lateral thinking*, which involves an out-of-the-box innovative approach. Lateral thinking is useful in solving new and unconventional problems and writing the answers of unprepared questions like the essays asked in the civil services examination. Lateral thinking is highly useful in the fields of arts, music, poetry and writing which need high level of creativity and originality. Lateral thinking helps when breakthrough discoveries and innovation are needed since the problem can't be solved by conventional method; or, when the incremental innovation or methods are not working.

Brainstorming facilitates lateral thinking.

An Example of Lateral thinking

There are 63 players in a tennis tournament. The tournament follows the 'knock out' method. If you lose a game you are out of tournament. Top 8 players play the quarter-finals; their 4 winners play the semi-finals; their 2 winners play the finals; and the winner takes the trophy.

Question: How many total matches are to be played in this tournament?

Answer: If we follow the conventional thinking, we have to find the number of games to be played in Final (1), Semi-final (2), Quarter-final (4) and so on. This is a long process and takes time with good chance of miscalculation.

However, if we think laterally (out-of-box), we can easily see that in every single match, one player is knocked out. Only one player, the winner, is not knocked in the tournament. Hence, the total number of games in the tournament has to be ‘total number of players less one’. Hence, the answer in this case is 62.

How Brainstorming Generates New Ideas

Our brains are ‘pattern recognition systems’ and we are rarely used to think out of the box. In all our examinations, we are discouraged to suggest creative solutions of the problems. We have well defined problems in our text books

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and we also have the well-defined ‘right’ answers for each problem. We score highest marks when we are able to reproduce the already known solutions.

As a child, we are quite creative and we always like to experiment and explore. However, as we grow in our lives, we lose our power to be creative as we usually get ‘stuck’ with patterns and think within them rather than coming up with creative ideas.

In the real world, the same problem is rarely repeated. Just like we can’t dip our hands in the same water in a river, we can’t encounter exactly the same problem ever again in life. Hence, while solving the real world problems or writing an answer of an unprepared topic, we need to get out of the conventional thinking mode and be creative. The process of brainstorming helps us think out of the box and generate new ideas.

Brainstorming the Topic

The process of brainstorming involves rigorous thinking on the topic of the essay, rather than trying to come up with immediate answers. We explore a number of questions to understand the issue at a deeper level so that the best solutions can be found in an orderly way. Hence, we pose questions like,

- Who?
- Why?
- How?
- What?

- When?

- ???

Let us see an example of brainstorming.

Essay Topic: 'Customary morality cannot be a guide to modern life.'

Brainstorming questions:-

- *What is morality?*
- *What is customary morality?*
- *What is modern life?*
- *How is modern life different from the traditional or old life?*
- *Why are people guided by customary morality?*
- *Why should people not be guided by customary morality?*
- *What should be the right thing to guide a modern life?*
- *How can that right thing guide people to lead a modern life?*

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When we attempt to answer these questions, we end up pooling enough ideas and resources to write a good essay on this topic.

Rules of Brainstorming

Brainstorming releases the hidden energy of our creativity. We must learn to manage this energy well, else it may become counterproductive. Often, people generate so many ideas during brainstorming that they get confused and fail to take decisions. In order to make the best use of the brainstorming, we must follow the following rules:

- **Set a time limit:** It is important to allocate an upper time limit for brainstorming as the flow of ideas, once started, never stops. The limit must be decided depending on the level of complexity of the problem and the time available. The total time available for the Essay paper in the Civil Services Examination is 180 minutes. It would be

reasonable to allocate 10% of the time for brainstorming, i.e. around 10 minutes for each essay.

- **Begin with a target problem:** It is common to lose track of the problem when new ideas start flowing in. We soon start getting ideas that are irrelevant to the given issue. It is important to define problems precisely, plan our goal and stay on the topic.

- **Refrain from judgment/criticism:** As we are trained to solve a problem in a conventional way, we are often unprepared to accept an idea which is too radical. However, when you allow your mind to think freely, flow of such ideas is inevitable. If you start judging each idea using your conventional thinking, the flow of ideas may stop and the purpose of brainstorming may get defeated. Hence, you should not be negative about any idea.

- **Encourage radical ideas:** If a radical idea emerges, you must appreciate it, because it would encourage many more such ideas to flow freely. You must, therefore, allow free flow of all types of ideas as long as they are on the topic.

- **Aim for quantity:** The purpose of brainstorming is to generate as many ideas as possible in limited time. Quite often, the quantity breeds quality as you have more ideas to choose from. You can later do the job of sorting the bad ideas out and picking the good ones.

- **Combine and improve ideas:** It is common to get many repetitive or similar ideas during brainstorming. It would be better to combine similar ideas into one new and improve upon it. We can also expand on others'

ideas that we may recall to create another idea and get new insights.

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- **Note down points, make diagrams:** Ideas during brainstorming are spontaneous like bubbles. They go as fast as they come. You must keep noting down the points and make suitable diagrams to remember and use the ideas during your essay writing. When you are noting the ideas with pen and paper, your mind is also better focused and helps you bring ideas to life as soon as the brainstorming is over.

- **Allow one conversation at a time:** When the brainstorming session is done in a group, often the outspoken people force their ideas on others and the silent but creative

people keep quiet. It is, therefore, important that people must not be allowed to interrupt when others are speaking.

This will ensure that every good idea is given due respect. Similarly, when we are brainstorming ‘within our mind’ for the purpose of essay writing, we must not abruptly jump from one idea to another. We must rather keep focused on one idea at a time and explore all connected ideas or all related aspects of an idea together, before moving to a new idea.

Challenges of Brainstorming

While brainstorming is an excellent method of generating new ideas, it also poses some challenges in its execution. If you lack the clarity of goals and purpose; or if you have too many goals, it may diffuse your focus and waste lots of your energy as well as time in aimless wandering. When the brainstorming is done in groups in an organisation, often the introverts stay quiet while the extroverts dominate. So, it must be ensured that every member of the group gets an equal opportunity to contribute. Sometimes, brainstorming may create a large number of ideas and throw multiple alternative solutions, which instead of giving more clarity, confuse the decision maker since it becomes difficult to decide which one is the best.

The generation of new ideas using brainstorming is a skill that can be mastered only with practice. You must practice brainstorming on a large number of essays and descriptive-type answers to internalise the process so that you can use it effortlessly at the time of need.



Chapter-6

Introduction: The Face of an Essay

“I really love that idea of the essay as an investigation. That’s all anyone’s life is.”

– David Shields

The first paragraph of an essay must introduce the topic and set the tone of what to expect next in the subsequent paragraphs. The purpose of introduction is to explain the

issue in brief and create curiosity in the reader to read the essay in full. Your introduction must therefore be creative and interesting.

Don't start writing the introduction immediately with the first spontaneous thought that comes to your mind. You must spend a few minutes thinking different types of introductions and then choose the best one. Introduction is like the foundation that sustains the building. Don't compromise on it. A good introduction is not only interesting and creative, but also unpredictable and different.

You can improve your introduction by using the following techniques: **1. Avoid Clichés**

The first sentence should be an attention grabber. A quote or anecdote, some interesting facts or figures, recent news or even a small fictitious story provides a good start. It is common for students to start their essays by defining terms of the topic or using a very popular quote related to the topic. This makes your introduction predictable and commonplace. Introduction is a place where the need of creativity is highest because it is going to make your first impression.

For example, it is common to start your essay with the famous quote of Mahatma Gandhi, "*An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind*" for any topic concerning tolerance, peace or non-violence. However, this makes your essay quite predictable because many students would be using this quote.

Do not make your writing so predictable. It is a good idea to start your essay with a quote, but you must choose your quote wisely. The examiner will

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have to check many answer sheets of essays in a day and reading the same quote puts him to sleep. You have to wake him up. Start with a blast. That doesn't mean you give false or fake facts or quotes, but research deeply and reserve enough material in your mind to make yourself stand out in the crowd.

2. Make It Interesting

It is not easy to motivate the examiner or reader to read the complete essay because he may have to read a large number of essays on the given day. You must find a way to generate curiosity in the mind of the examiner with the introduction so that he starts wondering what you would have written next and what arguments you would have given to advance or prove your point.

A good essay is like a thriller which is unpredictable till the last; it does not follow a straight path, rather, takes interesting twists and turns till the climax is reached.

3. Use Quotations

Quotations contain deep wisdom in a few words. An interesting and relevant quotation can give you a head start. You must research and keep note of all the quotes you encounter and find worthy of quoting. Keep a repository of the famous quotations on popular topics like peace, democracy, equality, secularity, politics, youth, society, history, wars, science and technology, internet, life, success, honesty, corruption, feminism and womanhood, freedom, sports, hunger and food, economy, India, World, religion, etc. Your quote must match the original substantially. Since it is easier to memorize shorter quotes, choose your quotes wisely.

You must also remember by-heart a good number of popular quotes by eminent personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Abraham Lincoln, Warren Buffett, Steve Jobs, etc. You can also use current leaders' words or slogans like “*Beti Bachao, beti padhao*”, etc., as needed in your essays.

Quotes from religious texts like the Bhagwad Gita, Ramayana, Quran, Bible, etc., also lend weight to your writing and create a great impression. But be careful to use them appropriately without giving your essay a religious or communal flavour.

Let us see an example.

Essay Topic: Has RTI Act Outlived its Utility?

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Introduction

“Knowledge is power; Information is power,” said Robin Morgan, American poet, author, political theorist; “The secreting or hoarding of knowledge or information may be an act of tyranny camouflaged as humility”. India prides itself to be the largest democracy of the world. However, the Indian government system was always shrouded in secrecy and red-tapism. Despite being the rulers in a democracy, the citizens in India were totally powerless as they had no access to information in government offices which were protected by the pre-colonial ‘Official Secret Act’ and many other laws.

4. Provide Facts and Figures

It is easy to impress an examiner by presenting the relevant facts and figures in the introduction. If you present the right data, the examiner is likely to be convinced that you know the subject well. You must, therefore, have a list of facts and figures handy. You must, however, make sure they are latest or updated. For example, you must not cite the population by Census 1991 or 2001 in today's context. When talking about the economy or market or when analyzing a policy, it is always better to cite some facts and figures rather than quotes because market and economics work more with numbers. However, domain experts' quotes on current economic or market situation can impress.

Here's an example.

Essay Topic: If development is not engendered, it is endangered Introduction

We Indians pride ourselves as the largest democracy of the world. We are also one of the fastest developing economies of the world. However, so far the development has not been fair between the man and woman in India.

India stands 20th from the bottom in terms of representation of women in the Parliament according to 'The Global Gender Gap Report 2012' by World Economic Forum. Even in 2019, only 15 % women were represented in the Parliament. India ranks 120th among 131 countries in female labour force participation rates in 2017, according to a report by International Labour Organization. The enrolment of girls in higher education increased from 39%

to 46% from 2007 to 2014, but female participation in India's labour force declined to a low of 27% in 2014 from 34% in 1999 according to the IMF

Study 2015. Moreover, only 28.5% of adult women in India were found to have a job or be looking for one while 82% of the adult Indian men were working. Moreover, women get nearly one third less wages than men, according to a report by Oxfam India.

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How can a nation grow when half of the population is not getting equal opportunity to contribute for the development of the nation?

The above is only an illustration of writing the introduction of an essay with data. You may not remember all these data, but even if you have some useful data, you can use them similarly to make an impact.

So, you must develop a repository of useful facts and figure. For example, you can keep a note of the richest people of the country and the world, founders and CEOs of top companies, numbers related to literacy rates, sex ratio, population, HDI, etc; winners of recent sporting competitions and records of celebrated sportspersons like Sachin Tendulkar, Michael Jordan, Dhyanachand, etc.; It is also advisable to remember the useful data relating to census, GDP, GDP growth, fuel prices and contribution of various sectors of the economy.

But remember, all these data must be noted and quoted carefully.

5. Start with a Story or Anecdote

We are all fascinated by stories from real life as well as fiction. Stories have been used from time immemorial to pass on valuable message to the world.

You can use popular moral stories taken from Panchatantra or Aesop's Fables to start your essay. You can also refer to stories from Indian scriptures like Ramayana, Mahabharata as in the following example.

Essay Topic: Words are sharper than the two-edged sword Introduction

The Pandavas had built a beautiful crystal palace in Hastinapur; and, the Kaurava prince Duryodhana along with Sakuni was taking a round of the palace. As they came across a crystal surface, Duryodhana, out of ignorance, mistook it for a pool of water, and drew up his clothes. Sometime after, he mistook a lake of crystal water, adorned with lotuses of crystal petals, for crystal surface and fell into it with all his clothes on. The Pandava queen Draupadi ridiculed Duryodhana quipping, 'Blind son of a Blind Father'.

Duryodhana felt humiliated and decided to take revenge. He sought it later by trying to strip Draupadi after having won her in a game of dice. This enraged the Pandavas and soon the Mahabharatha war started between the Kauravas and Pandavas.

This story from Mahabharata reminds us of the power of words. If we don't use our words carefully, we may hurt people and make them our enemies. However, if we use the words appropriately, we can reap rich dividend from it....

You must, however, take care to avoid writing lengthy stories. Popular stories may just be named and not narrated, for example, 'the boy who cried wolf'

is a popular tale and can just be referred to without detailing the entire story.

You can also use the real life stories that are published in the newspapers regarding a crime (like Nirbhaya case), a suicide case (Café Coffee Day founder V.G.

Siddhartha), moral action by a random person or a courageous action of the police or army personals in discharge of their duty.

You may also form your own story based on your own life experience or from the experience of someone you know well. However, these stories should be short, relevant, simple and interesting.

6. Ask a question

You can generate the interest of the reader by posing certain thought provoking questions which can generate interest in the mind of the reader.

Posing uncomfortable questions in the introduction part may challenge the preconceived notion of the readers. Once they find your premise challenging, they may be inclined to read the full essay till the conclusion.

Essay Topic: A people that values its privileges above its principles loses both
Introduction

How do you feel when you are going to your office and you find the traffic halted because some VIP or minister is passing on the road? How do you feel when you visit your cousin who is a senior civil servant and find him living in a big bungalow with beaoned cars and a posse of orderlies? What do you feel when you see a senior police officer escorted by a host of police officers when travelling on the road; or, big businessmen living in their palatial bungalows with personal jets, fleets of cars and dozens of servants?

We often get impressed with the privileges enjoyed by ministers, civil servants and top honchos of firms. We wish to occupy those positions and to enjoy those privileges as well. But, have we ever realized that such great privileges are actually associated with huge responsibilities

7. Make it Contextual

One of the best methods to attract the attention of the reader to your essay is to make the essay relevant in the present context. For example, if you are writing an essay about gender equality, it may be a good idea to incorporate the recent Supreme Court

Judgements in the case of Triple Talaq or Sabarimala. If the topic pertains to privacy, you may quote the Supreme Court judgement of Aadhaar. If the topic is related to border security, you can start your essay with The Balakot surgical Strike or Pulwama offensive.

If we are talking about environment and health related issues, we can give the context of the Coronavirus pandemic. See the following example.

Essay Topic: Universal Basic Income— an Idea whose Time has Come

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Introduction

In the Parliamentary general elections of India in 2019, the Indian National Congress included in its manifesto one extremely populist scheme called The Nyuntam Aay Yojana (The Minimum Income Scheme) or NYAY. Congress party promised that if voted to power, it will enact a law under which it will distribute cash to 20 percent of India's poorest families as a minimum guarantee programme. All the households will receive up to ` 72,000 a year. Around 50 million families, or nearly 250 million people would have been benefitted by this scheme. This scheme was applicable if the average household income were less than ` 12,000 per month. It would have costed India Rs 3-4 trillion a year, or about 2% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

This scheme was to replace various social welfare schemes presently being run by the governments.

India is not the only country in the world to consider a minimum income for its citizens. The concept of Universal Basic Income (UBI) is a hotly debated topic around the world.

An essay with a contextual introduction give essay relevance and invoke the interest of the readers. You can also present the latest reports from different organisations to give your essay an edge. It may be a good idea to refer to the latest report of Transparency International, UN, WHO or other international organizations in the introduction to give your essay the latest context.

8. Postpone Introduction for Later

Many people find it difficult to write an introduction due to writer's block.

You may not remember the quotations, stories or context to make a great start. Also, if you put too much pressure on your mind, you are likely to come up with a clichéd introduction that would fail to make an impact on the examiner. If you are writing an essay on your computer, you can always edit the intro. However, when you are writing it on paper like in CSE, you can't change your introduction even after you suddenly get a brilliant idea of it.

In such a case, it may be better to leave some space for the introduction and go straight to the body of the essay, if you already have ready material for it. You can meanwhile jot down the ideas for the introduction as you proceed with writing the body of the essay and even after making up your mind for the conclusion of the essay. Once you have gathered a brilliant idea for introduction, you can come back and finish your introduction before proceeding to write the remaining essay(s).

While a great introduction grabs the attention of the examiner and gives you an edge over others, you must also take care of the body of the essay equally well, if you wish to keep the reader glued to your writing till the end of the essay.



Chapter-7

Body: The Soul of an Essay

“A good writer possesses not only his own spirit but also the spirit of his friends.”

– Friedrich Nietzsche

The body of an essay is the largest part of an essay and there are chances of losing track in the process. Sometimes, you end up writing many things that are not really relevant to the topic. This may exhaust your time and word limit and you may not have enough time to do justice to the important ideas of the topic. Hence, you should keep going back to the topic and the ideas produced so that you don't skip anything important.

There should be at least 4-6 paragraphs making up the body of an essay.

However, you can have more paragraphs depending on the topic and the number of ideas that you pour in the essay. The essays can be of different types and can be written accordingly using different methods, namely

- Philosophical
- Compare and contrast
- Temporal focus (Past, Present and Future)
- Social segmentation (Individual, Family, Society, Country, World)
- Sectoral break-up (Social, Political, Economical, Legal, Historical, Environmental)
- Debatable

1: Philosophical

The essays asked in Civil Services Examination are usually divided into two sections of which one has only philosophical topics. Hence, you have no option, but to write at least one essay on a philosophical topic. Most students find writing an essay on a philosophical topic difficult. However, if you practice and develop the skill of writing essays on philosophical topics, the Essay paper becomes almost a cakewalk since such essays can be written without much preparation. In view of their importance in civil services paper, we shall discuss the writing of philosophical essays in a separate chapter.

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2. Compare and Contrast

There are some essays which require comparison of two entities, which are quite distinctive, yet interconnected. One good topic for such essay is

“Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.”

In this topic, one has to compare science and religion and also discuss how they differ from each other. In such types of essays, you may have one paragraph on positives and one on negatives of both science and religion resulting in at least four paragraphs in the body. It is also important to link the paragraphs well so that the transition from one

paragraph to another is smooth. More on the concept of linking to provide flow in an essay is discussed later in another chapter.

The following essays can be written using the compare and contrast technique:

- Science and Mysticism: Are they compatible?
 - ‘Globalisation’ vs. ‘Nationalism’
 - Crisis faced in India-moral or economic
- ### 3. Temporal Focus

Temporal focus is characteristic thought about the past, present, and future.

In this method, we go through the evolutionary cycle of the issue from the past to its status at present; and then present a vision and road map for the future by offering a solution.

There are many essays which can be best written using this technique. Some examples of essays, asked in the Civil Services Examination, falling in this category are the following:

- Innovation is the key determinant of economic growth and social welfare
 - Biased media is a real threat to Indian democracy
 - Customary morality cannot be a guide to modern life
- For all the above topics, you can discuss their evolution, state their present problems, provide solutions to the problems and give vision for the future.

In the first essay, for example, you can talk about how innovations like fire, metals, farming, etc., have transformed the human civilization and have led to development of the nations; or, can discuss about the modern world where innovation has led to the development of human civilization. You can then discuss about the present status of innovation in India and then propose steps that can promote innovation. In the same way, you can discuss the evolution of media, or morality, its issues in the present and your solution to tackle the problems in the present with a vision to create a better future.

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4. Social Segmentation

Man is a social animal and can't live in isolation. The success of mankind can be largely attributed to human ability to live in society and share the work and responsibilities with one another. Individuals are connected with one another in the world just as cells of the body are connected with other cells. Hence, what happens to an individual affects the world and what happens to the world affects the individuals. So, a very impressive method of dealing with social topics is to discuss the effects and implications on various segments of the society. Human society can be divided into the following social segments.

- Individual
- Family
- Society
- Country
- World

We as individuals get numerous benefits from our family, society, country and the world. We are brought up by our parents, and protected by the society and the country. We also get education, job, and social security due to the government of our country. We are also benefited by the innovation, guidance and knowledge of the experts, leaders and philosophers from around the world. However, there's no such thing as a free lunch. We have also to fulfill our obligations towards our family members, society, country and the world to get these benefits. All these aspects should be incorporated in your essay.

There are many essays which can be written best in this pattern. Let's take an example.

Topic: Discipline means success, anarchy means ruin In this topic, we can discuss discipline at the various levels and the importance of discipline for different segments. This essay hinges around the key words like discipline, success, anarchy and ruin which are applicable at the level of individual, family, society, nation and the world.

5. Sectoral break-up

One of the best ways to write an essay is to discuss the different dimensions of an issue. This becomes important, since no issue can be solved unless all areas are tackled simultaneously. Moreover, whenever any action is taken by the government or an individual it has implication for various sectors. The different sectors of an issue can be listed as

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- Social
- Political
- Economical
- Legal
- Historical
- Environmental

Let us take one example for illustration.

Topic: The challenges to reduce corruption in India In this topic, we must analyze the different dimensions as follows.

Social: Corruption is accepted by the society and the corrupt people are not condemned by society. Often the honest people are ridiculed. This leads to more corruption. Social awareness can help reduce corruption.

Political: Contesting an election is extremely expensive and honest people can't afford it. Politicians have to take money from unscrupulous businessmen and then they are obliged to provide illegal benefits and protection to them. We can make strict laws to reduce election expenses and provide state funding to political parties to reduce their dependence on the money acquired through unscrupulous sources.

Economical: Poverty leads to corruption and corruption is responsible for poverty. Developed countries usually have lesser corruption and poor countries have greater. We must explain how corruption is hampering growth and prosperity.

Legal: The laws against corruption in India are complex and have many loopholes. It takes decades for the judiciary to punish a person charged under corruption. The corruption in police and judiciary often leads to acquittal of the guilty. Further, the job security in government makes it difficult for government to sack corrupt employees quickly. We have to make stringent laws to deal with corruption.

Thus, to write an essay on the issue of corruption, you can discuss various sectors and then put forth the improvement needed in each sector to reduce corruption in India.

Some other topics on which one can use this approach to write an essay are

- Is sting operation an invasion on privacy?
- Water disputes between states in federal India
- Is the Colonial Mentality hindering India's success?

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6: Debatable topics

There are certain topics which are controversial in nature. It means that a significant number of people are either in favour or against the issue. For example, if a topic is related to reservation (e.g., 'Reservation is a bane or boon for India'), you have to debate the issue highlighting both sides. In the same way, many contemporary issues like demonetization, electoral bonds, GST, CAA, NRC or Abolition of Article 370 are controversial issues and a large number of people have an opinion in favour or against these issues.

In such types of essays, one must first introduce the historical perspective of the issue and then discuss the pros and cons of the issue. Finally, one must provide one's own point of view in the concluding paragraphs.

The following essays can be written using this methodology.

- Cooperative Federalism: Myth or Reality
- Was it the policy paralysis or the paralysis of implementation which slowed the growth of our country?
- Is sting operation an invasion of privacy?

The body of an essay is its soul. It must be exhaustive, analytical, logical and interesting. This is the largest segment of the essay and you must have enough material to keep your essay moving without losing its charm. The concluding paragraphs of the body must be the precursor of the conclusion that is to follow.



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Chapter-8

Conclusion: Leave a Lasting

Impression

“I went for years not finishing anything. Because, of course, when you finish something you can be judged.”

– Erica Jong

If the introduction provides the first impression motivating the reader to read through the body, the conclusion leaves a lasting impression. A good conclusion gives the reader a sense of fulfillment of having gained something worthwhile. Conclusion is just the opposite of introduction. The introduction begins with a general statement and ends in specific points which are further elaborated in the body of the essay. On the contrary, a conclusion begins with specifics of the concluding paragraph of the body and moves to a general statement summing it all up.

A good conclusion leaves a lasting impression on the reader. In case the essay is for the purpose of a test or an examination, its conclusion plays the most important role of fetching good marks from the examiner. A good conclusion accomplishes the following goals:

- Provides a concise summary of the essay
- Displays the mindset of the writer
- Leaves a lasting impression on the reader In order to achieve the above goals, the conclusion must consist of three important paragraphs:
 - Summary
 - Decision
 - Climax

1: Summary Paragraph

A competent civil service officer ensures that all his/her decisions reach the logical conclusion. So, a good essay must also reach its logical conclusion.

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You must first wrap up your arguments or provide the summary of the arguments which you have put forth in the body of the essay. The idea is to recapitulate the points discussed before announcing your decision or judgment on the given issue. So, this summary paragraph should be quite balanced, highlighting both sides of the story like an independent judge so that the reader is not sure which way you are going to decide the issue. The unpredictability of your conclusion heightens the curiosity and interest of the reader till the end.

2: Decision Paragraph

After wrapping up the arguments, it is the time to take a stand and pass your judgment. Any decision in the real life always has its pros and cons. However, a civil servant does not waver in taking the final decision or to decide an issue conclusively and convincingly. So, your decision must be unambiguous and justifiable which must convince the reader that in the given situation this is the best decision possible.

A good conclusion must provide solution of a problem instead of leaving the problem unsolved. A civil servant is there to solve problems, however complex they may be. A civil servant gives hope to the citizens. Hence, your essay should end with optimistic notes however dark the situation may be.

For example, you may personally believe that corruption is not likely to be eliminated easily in India or the politics in India is never going to get moral.

Yet, you must always end your essay on a positive note that gives hope to the reader that there is a way to eliminate corruption and reform politics in India.

The conclusion must reflect the foundational values of the civil servant like integrity, impartiality, secularism, non-partisanship, compassion towards the weaker sections, etc., as already discussed earlier in this book. Your decision must demonstrate that if you are given an opportunity to work as a civil servant, you would prove to be the best civil servant.

If there is any problem discussed in the essay, you must give some constructive suggestions here. If it's some social issue, take an idealistic stand on the issue.

You must write each word in your essay like a responsible civil servant. It is better to be diplomatic and not to take an extreme stand. This is the part where your own opinion is expressed. This is the part to create and cement your impression.

So, the decision paragraph must demonstrate to the reader that you accomplished the goals that you set out in the introduction. It must also include the reasons that helped you prove your thesis.

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3: Climax Paragraph

Your essay must end on a high note. It must provide the reader with a sense of closure on the topic. You can provide a punchline or make a rhetorical statement to leave a lasting impression.

For example, when writing an essay on inclusive growth, globalization or universal health care, you can write the following quote in the climax.

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सिखनः ।

सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।

सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु ।

मा कश्चित् दुःखं भाग्भवेत् ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Meaning:

Om, May All be Happy,

May All be Free from Illness.

May All See what is Auspicious,

May no one Suffer.

Om Peace, Peace, Peace.

In the same way, if you writing an essay on the topic of ‘Nationalism vs.

Globalisation’, you can close the essay with a rhetorical statement as following: It is wise to heed the words of the former American President Bill Clinton,

“No generation has had the opportunity, as we now have, to build a global economy that leaves no-one behind. It is a wonderful opportunity, but also a profound responsibility”.

The time has come to integrate the best of nationalism and globalisation to create a new world where the interests of all sections of the society are protected and sustainable development for all is ensured.

It is not easy to write an essay of more than thousand words maintaining its rhythm and continuity all along. We often come up with random ideas during our brainstorming session. Hence, when we use them in our essay, it is a real challenge to make them cogent and converge into one thought.

In the next chapter, we shall learn about the importance of flow in an essay which connects diverse ideas into one like the string that seamlessly connects many flowers into a beautiful garland.



Chapter-9

Flow in an Essay

“I love the written word so much, I know it’s gonna flow naturally.”

– *Alicia Keys*

Flow in an essay means the uninterrupted point to point movement of an essay from beginning to end. One often puts together all the facts, data and information in an essay but loses sight of their cohesion and synergy with one another. As a result, the reader finds it difficult to connect these pieces of information and struggles to get sense out of it. When you write a jumbled up essay in your examination, you put off the examiner and fail to achieve your goals.

There are two important factors for developing flow in an essay.

- Coherence
- Transition

A. Coherence

Coherence is the quality of being logical and consistent to form a unified whole. In the context of an essay, it means the delivery of connected points, ideas and sentences in a smooth flow. If the essay lacks coherence, the reader may not be able to understand the ideas easily. Coherence allows the reader to move easily throughout the essay from one idea to the next, from one sentence to the next, and from one paragraph to the next. If coherence is lacking, it may lead to confusion.

- Example: Indians like Americans because **they** like democracy.

In this sentence, it is not clear whether **they** refers to Indians or Americans.

This must be made clear by writing either Indians or Americans so that there is no ambiguity in the mind of the readers. Hence, a better sentence would be,

- Indians like Americans because **Americans** like democracy.

There are several methods to achieve coherence in an essay.

- Repetition of Key Words
- Using Pronouns

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- Using Transitional Expressions
- Using Synonyms
- Using Parallel Structures

1. Repetition of Key Words

Instead of using pronouns in their place, we repeat the noun words to link ideas, sentences and paragraphs. This brings clarity to the reader and thereby retains his focus on the essay.

*Example: It is not easy to understand the culture of India. **Indian culture** has evolved over thousands of years due to the synthesis of various cultures and traditions.*

2. Using Pronouns

It is not a good idea to repeat the noun in the same sentence. It is better to use pronouns to connect with the previous nouns and avoid repetition unless repetition is necessary for clarity.

*Example: Mahatma Gandhi is widely recognized as one of the twentieth century's greatest political and spiritual leaders. **He** used the weapons of truth and nonviolence to give independence to India from the British rule. **He** had a simple lifestyle and accumulated no wealth in his life.*

3. Using Transitional Expressions

The transitional expressions like 'however', 'moreover', 'therefore' are quite useful to link ideas and sentences.

*Example: The Civil Services Examination is one of the toughest examinations of the world. **However**, if you follow the right strategy, get the right guidance and work hard, you can get a top rank in the examination.*

4: Using Synonyms

A write up looks boring and monotonous, if the same words are used again and again in a paragraph. It is advisable to use synonyms to avoid repetition, break monotony and make the writing interesting and beautiful.

*Example: The life of the teenagers is not easy in the modern times. These **young adults** may have more freedom as compared to their previous generations, but they also have much stiffer competition today than ever before.*

5. Using Parallel Structure

In order to express similar ideas, you must use parallel structures for words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. Parallel structures allow the smooth flow from one idea to another in a paragraph.

*Example 1: As the lock-down has been announced by the Government of India for three weeks due to Covid-19, most people are **spending** their time at home **playing** cards, **talking** to each other on phone, **watching***

*television and **surfing** the internet aimlessly.*

*Example 2: However, the cops **attended** their work as usual, **took** round of the city, **apprehended** the criminals and **kept** surveillance on the anti-social elements of the city.*

B. Transition

The essay must flow smoothly within each paragraph as well as between different paragraphs.

1. Flow within Paragraph

We often collect a number of facts, data, and other relevant information before we start writing an essay. We then pour all that material as they come into our mind without giving due attention to their continuity and connectedness.

While in our own mind, these pieces of information are connected with one another, the same may not be true when they are written down.

We have to develop the various points in an integrated manner so that they look like one set of ideas woven around one common theme. They must not look random, but must appear as parts of one whole thought just like our body parts are connected to make us one unique personality.

Let us take the following paragraph for example.

We are often careful in avoiding foods that are bad for our health. We read the labels of packaged food to know about the ingredients and calories and then decide whether we wish to eat that food or not. The packs of cigarettes and other tobacco products come with health warnings printed on them to help us take a judicious decision. No such information is available in respect of the harmful thoughts, which are fed to us from all sides by the people who are interested in making profit at the cost of our mental and emotional health. We often absorb a host of thoughts without even realizing their effect on our mind and body. The effects of the thoughts are not visible immediately but gradually they transform our mind. The negative thoughts invariably damage our body, mind and soul.

This paragraph looks unorganized and jumpy because it lacks flow. If we add only a few connecting words (also known as ‘ *signposts* ’), the same would become smooth.

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We are often careful in avoiding foods that are bad for our health.

Sometimes, we read the labels of packaged food to know about the ingredients and calories and then decide whether we wish to eat that food or not. **Usually**, the packs of cigarettes and other tobacco products come with health warnings printed on them to help us take a judicious decision. **However**, no such information is available in respect of the harmful thoughts, which are fed to us from all sides by the people who are interested in making profit at the cost of our mental and emotional health. **Hence**, we often absorb a host of thoughts without even realizing their effect on our mind and body. The effects of the thoughts are not visible immediately but gradually they transform the mind. **It is a fact that** the negative thoughts invariably damage our body, mind and soul.

These connecting words or signposts make our writing smooth by providing the flow. Connectors help the readers know what has been said or what is likely to be said. They must be incorporated in such a way that each idea gets connected with the other ideas. Some of the signposts listed are,

- **Highlighting a point:** Importantly,...; Indeed,...; As a matter of fact,...; Moreover,...; Further,...; In particular, ...; More specifically,...
- **Showing Comparison or contrast:** However,...; On the other side,...; On the other hand,...; In contrast,...; Conversely,...; Comparatively,...; In relation to,...; With respect to,...; In terms of....;
- **Showing similarity:** Similarly,..; In the same way,..; Likewise,..; Again,..; Also,..;
- **Summarising a thesis:** Accordingly,..; Finally,..; Lastly,..; In conclusion,..; To summarise the discussion,...; In summary,..; Overall,..; The main points are..;
- **Giving an example:** For example,..; For instance,..; This can be illustrated by,..., namely,such as;
- **Illustrating a different point of view:** Although ...; Even though ...; Despite this ...; Notwithstanding this....;

• **Proving the point of view:** Therefore, ...; Hence ...; Thus..; Accordingly, ...; It is thus evident..; It is thus clear..; As a result, ...; As a consequence, ...; Evidently..;

2. Flow between Paragraphs

When you are writing an essay or an answer, each paragraph must discuss only one idea or point. You must start a new paragraph to discuss another point of view or another idea. This has to be decided at the stage of planning itself after you have got various points for the essay ready after the brainstorming. However, you must ensure that the ideas are not disjointed from each other and look random to the reader.

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The flow between different paragraphs of an essay is like shifting gears of a car. The transition should be smooth and not abrupt. An author must apprehend and plan the shift of track preemptively to avoid sudden hitches and hiccups. Every paragraph you write must be linked to the next paragraph in some way or the other.

In order to ensure a smooth flow of ideas in an essay, you must learn to link the sentences by using the connectors/signposts discussed earlier. Linking of paragraphs can be done either at the end or at the start of the paragraphs.

(a) Link sentence at the end of the paragraph You can end the paragraph with a question to be answered in the following paragraph; or make a remark that indicates what's coming next.

For example, in an essay on nuclear families, if you just wrote about the advantages of having a nuclear family and are going to write about its negative side in the next paragraph, you can phrase your link sentence as follows:

- *“That’s how beneficial having a nuclear family is, but like any system, it has some disadvantages too.”; or*
- *“That’s how beneficial having a nuclear family is, but is it the perfect arrangement?”*

(b) Link sentence at the start of the paragraph You can place your link sentence at the beginning of the next paragraph as well. For instance, in case of the same essay on nuclear families, you can start your paragraph on the disadvantages of nuclear families as,

- “The concept of Joint Families has prevailed since forever. There must be something about them which the nuclear families lack..”; o r
- “But nuclearity of families isn’t a perfect arrangement.”

In this way, you make the reader mentally prepared to look for the different point of view in the subsequent paragraph.

A model essay must look like the expansion of one concept or one central theme. Each paragraph of the essay must be connected with each other in such a way that there is no jerk, randomness or breaking of thought anywhere in the essay. It is like making a sculpture using a piece of stone. You have to chip out all the redundant parts to give it a shape of one single entity. This skill can be developed gradually by writing more essays and identifying your short comings by reading your own writings after some time as a reader. If you are a good reader, it is not at all difficult to find the lack of flow in your own essay and get the right ideas to make your essay flow smoothly like a river.



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Chapter-10

Writing an Essay on a Philosophical

Topic

“What is rational is actual and what is actual is rational”

– G. W. F. Hegel

Philosophy is a difficult subject. Philosophers are often portrayed as absentminded people living in a world of their own having little connection with the reality. We fail to understand philosophy because it is not a subject we have been learning in school or college. In other subjects, there is some certainty and there exists a right answer to every question. However, in philosophy, there are no right answers. Philosophers don’t agree on a single solution of a problem. It is no wonder that most people find philosophy as absurd and incomprehensible. The British philosopher Bertrand Russell

summed up philosophy aptly, “This is patently absurd; but whoever wishes to become a philosopher must learn not to be frightened by absurdities.”

However, philosophy is not disconnected with life. It rather explains the complexity of life. Hence, one who understands philosophy understands life.

When one is asked to express one’s views on a philosophical topic, one’s true thoughts and understanding of the world are revealed. Hence, UPSC has found a good way to get into the mind of the civil services aspirants by asking them to write at least one essay on a philosophical topic. Accordingly, in one part of the Essay paper in the Civil Services Examination (CSE), all four topics are philosophical, particularly dealing with ethical issues. For example, the essays asked in 2018 and 2019 CSE are as following:-

CSE-2018

Section-A

1. Alternative technologies for a climate change resilient India 2. **A good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge** 3. **Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere** 4. Management of Indian border disputes – a complex task

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Section-B

1. **Customary morality cannot be a guide to modern life** 2. **‘The past’ is a permanent dimension of human consciousness and values**
3. **A people that values its privileges above its principles loses both** 4. **Reality does not conform to the ideal, but confirms it** **CSE-2019**

Section-A

1. **Wisdom finds truth**
2. **Values are not what humanity is, but what humanity ought to be** 3. **Best for an individual is not necessarily best for the society** 4. **Courage to accept and dedication to improve are two keys to success**

Section-B

1. South Asian societies are woven not around the state, but around their plural cultures and plural identities
 2. Neglect of primary health care and education in India are reasons for its backwardness
 3. Biased media is a real threat to Indian democracy
 4. Rise of Artificial Intelligence: the threat of jobless future or better job opportunities through reskilling and upskilling
- The philosophical topics are shown in bold letters above. It is easy to see that there is no escape from writing an essay on a philosophical topic, since one section exclusively consists of such topics. Sometimes, you can find philosophical topics in the other section as well as in CSE 2018. Hence, it is important to learn how to write essays on philosophical topics.

In some ways, philosophical essays are the easiest to write since you don't need any specific knowledge, data, facts or information to write such essays.

These essays can be written spontaneously if you understand life. Many of the topics are quotations of great thinkers; so, if you have proper understanding of the thoughts of the philosophers, you can easily write such essays.

The philosophical essays can be very well answered if you have a thorough preparation of the 'Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude' (GS-4) paper.

The preparation of the following topics in GS-4 will help you acquire the knowledge that can be useful in writing essays on the philosophical topics.

- Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions

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- Dimensions of ethics; ethics in private and public relationships
- Human Values – lessons from the lives and teachings of great leaders, reformers and administrators; Role of family, society and educational institutions in inculcating values
- Aptitude and foundational values for Civil Service

- Emotional intelligence-concepts, and their utilities and application in administration and governance
- Contributions of moral thinkers and philosophers from India and world
- Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration
- Ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions
- Philosophical basis of governance and probity
- Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct

How to Write Philosophical Essays

Most of the topics of philosophical essays are in the form of quotations from great thinkers. You may easily write a few lines on these topics. However, the greatest challenge is to expand the essay to 1000-1200 words in a cogent manner.

You should understand and use the following concepts to write essays on such topics:

- The Thesis
- The Antithesis
- Brainstorming
- Synthesis
- Quotes and Anecdotes
- Conclusion

1. The Thesis

The topics of the philosophical essays mostly come from the quotations of great thinkers and they appear like self-evident truths. They may be in the form of dogma, i.e., the principles or rules that cannot be questioned, or articles of faith in different religions. An example of dogma is the Ten Commandments in the Christian faith or the principle of Karma and rebirth in Hinduism.

Many topics of essays are quoted or directly lifted from the writings of great leaders and philosophers followed by a large number of people. For example, the quote of

Mahatma Gandhi: “The world has enough for everyone’s need, but not enough for everyone’s greed” is often taken as self-evident truth.

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Some topics can also be in the form of ‘axiom’, i.e. a statement or principle that is generally accepted to be true, but need not be so. For example,

“Honesty is the best policy.”

Sometimes, you may get topics which are not quotes or axioms, yet are philosophical in nature; and it becomes difficult to understand them. For example, understanding the topics like ‘Wisdom finds truth’ or ‘Reality does not conform to the ideal, but confirms it’ is difficult to most people.

We may call the truth evident from the topic of the essay as the thesis. A writer may be tempted to accept the statement of the topic as a universal truth and may try to justify the thesis in the essay. However, it would not be a good idea, since almost all great ideas and thoughts are hardly practised in the real world. For example, not many people actually believe or follow the principle, ‘Honesty is the best policy’. We can easily see that many people in the world use dishonest means to further their ends. Hence, it is evident that contrary to the truth contained in the thesis, there is another truth existing in the world simultaneously, though it may not be as ethical. Hence, a thesis always has an anti-thesis which is as powerful as the thesis though not as much appreciated or known.

2. The Antithesis

The antithesis is like the devil, who is considered to be the enemy of God.

However, the power of the devil can’t be wished away for the very fact that there is so much evil present in the world. Just like devil seems to exist along with God since the beginning of the universe, the anti-thesis too gets formed as soon as a thesis is created. A good philosopher, therefore, does not accept anything to be true without questioning. The famous writer Will Durand said it wisely, “Philosophy begins when one learns to doubt—particularly to doubt one’s cherished beliefs, one’s dogmas and one’s axioms”. There is no real philosophy until the mind turns round and examines itself.

Hence, you must explain the counter thesis of the essay topic to provide the complete picture of the reality. This balance of forces makes an essay interesting, complete and true to life.

3. Brainstorming

It may be a good idea to brainstorm the topic with questions that can generate enough ideas to write an essay both in favour and against a statement. Let us take one example.

Topic: *Best for an individual is not necessarily best for the society* You can brainstorm this topic to generate a number of questions, which can help you write this essay. This topic revolves around three important hinges,

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- Individualism,
- Society
- Ethics (since it deals with values of the society) When you brainstorm the topics keeping in view these three words, you may get the following questions:
 - What is an individual good?
 - What is a social good?
 - What are the ethical concepts regarding individual and social good?
 - What is the relationship between social and individual good?
 - When do social and individual goods conflict with each other?
 - When do social and individual goods assist each other?
 - How is individual good contained in social good?
 - How is social good contained in individual good?
 - How can we balance individual and social goods?

4. Synthesis

Once you have generated a large number of ideas, you must now blend the opposite ideas in to a synthesis and create a new idea out of it. The synthesis would have the features of both the thesis and the anti-thesis, but it would be a newer and a more complex idea. For example, in order to write a good essay on the above mentioned topic, you must not only know the philosophical concepts of egoism and altruism, which

are antithetical to each other, but also know how to find a common ground to create the synthesis of the seemingly opposite ideas.

Hence, in the above essay you can write that usually the best of the individual is also the best for the society because an individual is part of the society.

However, when the person thinks only about his own interest ignoring the interest of the society (egoism), it becomes harmful. Nonetheless, we all need to take care of ourselves before we can help others and follow altruism.

Hence, one has to learn to balance egoism and altruism rather than following one of the two.

5. Quotes and Anecdotes

It is not easy to confront the well laid down idea of a great thinker unless you have the opposite idea coming from an equally powerful thinker. It would also be a good idea to use some quotes of famous personalities to prove your points. You can also provide anecdotes from the lives of great people to establish the truth of your statement, particularly when you are proving

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the antithesis. For example, in order to counter the thesis ‘Honesty is the best policy’, you may use the statement of Chanakya: “A person should not be too honest. Straight trees are cut first and honest people are ruined first.”

Similarly, if the topic is “Birds of a feather flock together” which suggests that people of similar ideologies and principles work well together, you can use the famous saying “familiarity breeds contempt” which suggests that holding similar views may not after all be good for society.

You should always try to use suitable quotes to support the thesis as well as the anti-thesis. They are far more convincing than the reason or logic that can be presented in the essay.

Good quotes will also help you generate many new ideas to make the essay interesting. You should remember quotes for all occasions, situations and contexts. Following are some examples of good and useful quotes, which can be used in this essay.

Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country. (John F. Kennedy)

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. (Thomas Jefferson) For too long in this society, we have celebrated unrestrained individualism over common community. (Joe Biden)

You can also use the anecdotes of great leaders and philosophers to give strength to your arguments. For example, the story of Gandhi ji picking up the broom and cleaning the toilet can be a good one to illustrate ‘be the change you wish to see in the world’. You can similarly use the anecdote of the Buddha discarding the luxury of a prince to become a monk as an apt example to prove that high thinking can come only by simple living.

6. Conclusion

It is important to understand that the Civil Services Examination is a test for the selection of a potential civil servant, who must possess the right foundational values like integrity, empathy, justice, compassion, impartiality, etc. Hence, you must be ethical in your approach of solving problems of life.

You may discuss the flip side of honesty, but ultimately, you have to take a firm stand in favour of honesty, integrity and truthfulness. Your conclusion must never portray unethical or immoral thinking on your part. Similarly, civil servants are responsible for implementing the rule of law and are expected to be a role model for observing the law, rules and procedures. You must, therefore, always take a stand that is ethical, moral and legal to conclude your essay.



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Chapter-11

Answer Writing for Mains

Examination

“Everybody walks past a thousand story ideas every day. The good writers are the ones who see five or six of them. Most people don’t see any.”

The Civil Services Examination (CSE) is designed to test not only your knowledge of the subject, but also your opinion, your analytical skills, your presence of mind and your deepest thoughts. In order to score the best marks in the examination, do not write what you know, but answer exactly what you are asked. It means, read and understand the questions well before attempting it.

Candidates are quite tense when they receive their question papers. They are worried about limited time in their hands. So, they rush through the questions and often misunderstand what is asked. As a result, they often end up writing a different answer than what is required. Reading the questions very carefully is imperative to understand what the examiner exactly wants.

Only if you understand a question properly, can you write the right answer.

In this lesson, we shall learn how to answer different types of questions asked in the General Studies Papers.

Types of Questions

1. Knowledge Based Question

There are some questions which seek to test the knowledge of the candidates.

The examples of such questions are:

- Enumerate the indirect taxes which have been subsumed in the goods and services tax (GST) in India. Also, comment on the revenue implications of the GST introduced in India since July 2017. (GS3, 2019)
- How was India benefitted from the contributions of Sir M. Visvesvaraya and Dr. M. S. Swaminathan in the fields of water engineering and agricultural science respectively? (GS3, 2019)

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- On what grounds a people's representative can be disqualified under the Representation of People Act, 1951? Also mention the remedies available to such a person against his disqualification. (GS2, 2019) While answering such questions, you require accurate knowledge of the topic. If you know the facts, you can easily write the answer. The important point to be kept in mind is that you must be able to present all the

facts and information in your answer. Hence, you must jot down the points before you write your answer and ensure that you cover all points. If the content is more that crosses the word limit, use bulleted points to write the answer. If the content is less, follow the explanation method and expand whatever you know. You must never write anything which is factually incorrect.

2. Opinion Based Question

There are some questions which seek your opinion on a subject of national or international importance. Examples of such questions are:

- Individual parliamentarian's role as the national law maker is on a decline, which in turn, has adversely impacted the quality of debates and their outcome. Discuss. (GS2, 2019)
- Performance of welfare schemes that are implemented for vulnerable sections is not so effective due to absence of their awareness and active involvement at all stages of policy process. Discuss (GS2, 2019) The questions of this type are controversial in nature, since a good number of people may be in favour or against the statement. You have to state your opinion For example, in the first question, you can agree with the statement because a parliamentarian, as such, has to take the stand of his party. If he decides to give a contrary opinion or vote against the 'whip', he may lose membership. Such action by the party 'whip' is justified in order to ensure that there is no defection and the flock, whether in power or in opposition, stays together. However, it is important to present both sides of the picture irrespective of your stand on the matter. In the same way, while discussing the welfare scheme, you may agree with the statement, but must not criticise welfare schemes outright since they may be beneficial to a large number of people. However, you can suggest ways to improve them, even if this is not specifically asked in the question.

3. Ingenuity Based Questions

Many questions in CSE Mains test the power of your imagination and presence of mind. Such questions can be answered well if your fundamental knowledge of the topic is clear and you can use your imagination and presence of mind to find the solution of a related problem spontaneously.

The examples of such questions are:

- How will you apply emotional intelligence in administrative practices?

(GS4, 2017)

- What can France learn from the Indian Constitution's approach to secularism? (GS2, 2019)

You can hardly prepare such questions in advance; so, you must be creative enough to write these answers in your own original way. For example, you know what emotional intelligence is, though it is difficult to fathom its use in various fields of life. But, if you know what the requirement of administration is, then you can write how emotional intelligence can help an administrator.

In the same way, you must know how France is facing problems with its religious minorities since its secularism excludes religion from the State, while Indian secularism is inclusive. This question can be answered only with a broader understanding of the concept of 'secularism' and the ingenuity to find the solution of France's problem.

4. Context Based Questions

One of the tricks to test the fundamentals of the candidate is to ask him to apply a general truth to a specific context. For example, electricity may be a single entity, but it can lead to different outcomes depending upon its varied uses. It can make the room hot, if it is used in a heater, but it can make the room cool, if it is used in an air-conditioner. It can be used to charge your mobile phone and also to show you the soap opera on your television. In the same way, the quotes which contain universal wisdom are manifested in different ways depending upon the use. Let us take some questions asked in the CSE:

- Given below are three quotations of great moral thinkers/philosophers.

For each of these quotations, bring out what it means to you in the present context:
(GS4, 2013)

—

“There is enough on this earth for every one's need but for no one's greed.” – Mahatma Gandhi

—

“Nearly all men can withstand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power”. – Abraham Lincoln

—

“I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who overcomes his enemies”.
— Aristotle

- “In looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence and energy. And if they do not have the first, the other two will kill you.” – Warren Buffett. What do you understand by this statement in the present-day scenario? Explain. (GS4, 2018) We can see the quotes mentioned in these questions are universally applicable.

However, some of these were stated thousands of years ago in a different

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time and in a different context. For the first question, you need to provide some examples from the present times to make the quotes contextual. In the same way, the second question desires your understanding as a leader about the role of integrity in building or spoiling an organisation. This answer too can be supported by some examples to illustrate your point.

Writing a Precise Answer

In the CSE Mains, you are required to answer different questions in different ways. Sometimes, you have to explain a statement, while some other time, you may be expected to investigate the matter and reach a conclusion.

Sometimes, you have to justify an explicit statement, whether or not you agree with it. And sometimes, you may be asked to speak your mind. You must read each question carefully to know the intent of the examiner and then answer it accordingly.

As you are required to answer in different ways, you need to follow different processes to do so. The examples of different types of answer writing are as follows:

1. Investigation

Some answers require investigation, examination or analysis to arrive at the truth. Analysis is the process of breaking a complex topic or substance into smaller parts in order to gain a better understanding of how the parts make up the whole. Some sample questions of this type are listed below:

- Examine how the decline of traditional artisanal industry in colonial India crippled the rural economy. (GS1, 2017)

- In the context of the diversity of India, can it be said that the regions rather than the states form the cultural units? Give reasons with examples for your view point. (GS-1, 2017)
- Can the strategy of regional resource-based manufacturing help in promoting employment in India? (GS1, 2019) You can easily see that the questions do not provide any conclusion, but ask you to ascertain the truth yourself. In all such matters, we already have our own opinion. However, while writing such answers, we must critically examine both sides of the story and then logically conclude with what our own stand. The more facts, reasons, reports you can provide in support of your point of view, the better shall be the assessment of your answer.

2. Explanation

You are often asked to explain a given statement. Here, you need to be like a teacher or a leader who explains a complex idea in simple words to

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the students or the followers. The question may use words like ‘explain’,

‘elucidate’, ‘elaborate’, which are quite similar in their intent. The word

‘elucidate’ commonly used in questions means to make a concept lucid or clear by explanation or analysis or to give a clarifying explanation. Here is a list of such questions:

- ‘Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, but knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful.’ What do you understand by this statement? **Explain** your stand with illustrations from a modern context.

(GS-4, 2014)

- The spirit of tolerance and love is not only an interesting feature of Indian society from very early times, but it is also playing an important part at the present. **Elaborate**. (GS1, 2017)
- The 1857 uprising was the culmination of the recurrent, big and small local rebellions that had occurred in the preceding hundred years of British rule. **Elucidate**. (GS1, 2019)

- There is a growing divergence in the relationship between poverty and hunger in India. The shrinking of social expenditure by the government is forcing the poor to spend more on non-food essential items squeezing their food-budget. **Elucidate.** (GS2, 2019) To answer such questions, you don't have the option of investigating to reach your own conclusion, unlike the first category of answers discussed earlier. You must rather explain what has already been stated. For example,

‘The 1857 uprising was the culmination of the recurrent, big and small local rebellions that had occurred in the preceding hundred years of British rule’

is a conclusion which you must establish through your explanation.

3. Discussion

One of the frequently asked questions in the examination requires the answer in the form of a discussion. Discussion is similar to investigation albeit, less formal and requires not much evidence to support your facts. It is more like an examination fortified by reasoning and argument. Some such questions are:

- Are we losing our local identity for the global identity? **Discuss.** (GS1, 2019)
- “In spite of adverse environmental impact, coal mining is still inevitable for development.” **Discuss.** (GS-I, 2017)
- “Corruption causes misuse of government treasury, administrative inefficiency and obstruction in the path of national development.”

Discuss Kautilya's views. (GS4, 2016)

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To answer these questions, you must discuss the multiple dimensions of the issue with or without taking a final stand on the issue. For example, you don't have to take a stand on ‘whether or not we are losing our local identity for the global identity’. You can partially agree with the statement and partially disagree. The idea here is to create a synthesis of ideas where there is a place for multiple points of view. The purpose of discussion is to expand the horizon of knowledge rather than narrowing down to the conclusion. You must try to strike a balance between two extremes and try to achieve unity in diversity in your answer.

4. Justification

A civil servant is an employee of the government. He has to not only obey the orders passed by higher authorities, but also to justify the decisions of the government. So, in some questions, you are asked to justify a statement.

Justification means to prove or show that the statement is just, right and reasonable. You may not personally agree with the premise of the statement, but being a loyal servant of the government, you must be able to justify the decision. Some examples of such questions are:

- It is often said that ‘politics’ and ‘ethics’ do not go together. What is your opinion in this regard? **Justify your answer with illustrations.** (150

words) (GS4, 2013)

- Increased national wealth did not result in equitable distribution of its benefits. It has created only some ‘enclaves of modernity and prosperity for a small minority at the cost of the majority’. **Justify.** (150 words) (GS4, 2017)

In case of the first question, you may or may not agree with the statement that

‘politics and ethics do not go together’. You are given the option to agree or disagree with the statement. However, once you have taken a view, you will have to justify it using all resources at your disposal. It is, however, advisable that you disagree with the statement, since agreeing with it may go directly against the spirit of democracy; it would hint that politicians contesting elections and people electing them are unethical in practice. However, you can suggest measures that could ensure that politics and ethics go hand in hand and honest people enter politics to build the nation. The second question’s premise is also disputable since liberalization has benefited the majority of the poor though the major benefit might have been accrued to a minority that is rich. However, you must prove the statement right in your answer like a lawyer rather than finding errors or loopholes in it.

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5. Assessment

Sometimes, you are asked to evaluate or assess a particular instance, issue or phenomenon like an examiner evaluating students’ answer sheets. Some sample questions are as follows:

- Assess the impact of global warming on the coral life system with examples. (GS1, 2019)
- Assess the role of British imperial power in complicating the process of transfer of power during the 1940s. (GS1, 2019) When making an assessment, you have to keep the various factors of the given issue in mind. Your assessment shall be in proportion with the achievement of the goals and objectives. It will be a subjective answer, yet it should be supported by reports or assessments of an expert group whose conclusions you can corroborate; or, findings of historians, scientists, etc., as acknowledged by the government. Once you make your assessment, present your arguments accordingly.

Writing the Best Answers

The best answers of the Mains examination are those which are precise, i.e., to the point yet compact; and, in accordance with the objectives of the nation as well as in conformity with the foundational values of the civil servants. You must answer exactly what and how the question asks you to. If you keep the points mentioned in this chapter in mind and practice answer writing accordingly, you should be able to score the best marks in the Mains examination and fulfill your dream of becoming a civil services officer.



Chapter-12

Best Practices for Answer Writing

“A professional writer is an amateur who didn’t quit.”

– *Richard Bach*

Civil Services Examination is designed to select the best civil servants for top government positions in India at Central and state levels. A civil service aspirant is expected to display the aptitude of a civil servant in his writings. It is advisable for the civil services aspirants to follow certain practices which can help them write better answers from the perspective of civil services.

In this chapter, we shall discuss the best practices that are useful not only for the essay paper, but also for the GS papers as well as for personality test (interview).

1. Avoidance of Extreme Views

Many of us have extreme views about most political, religious, social and economic issues. For example, we may either support reservation passionately or we may strongly oppose it. Once we form a view, we tend to gather more material to support our views and ignore all other alternative views and opinions. Hence, over a period of time, we become biased as our views get hardened. We often fail to realize that on the same issue, people may have just the opposite view, which may also be valid. Hence, while writing your answers or essays, you must avoid taking extreme views either in favour or against controversial issues.

However, certain issues like honesty and integrity, truthfulness, faithfulness are not negotiable. In such matters, you must not show any compromise and take extreme position in favour of the ethics and principles.

2. Diplomacy in Controversy

We learn diplomacy quite early in life. For example, when we are asked during our childhood whom we love more, father or mother, we try to avoid answering this question directly since we know that irrespective of our

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answer, one of them is bound to feel hurt. When forced to give a reply, we often say that we love both equally, though in reality we may love one parent more than the other. In the same way, parents also say that they love their children equally, though they do have a favourite one. It is natural that we all like some people more than others.

Hence, in writing answers on the controversial topics, it is better to be diplomatic and not write your strong view. Diplomacy is sometime the best way to answer or avoid answering a question. The author Bo Bennett summed it beautifully, “Diplomacy is more than saying or doing the right things at the right time, it is avoiding saying or doing the wrong things at any time”.

Let us understand how to give diplomatic answers in a real life situation.

For this purpose, we take an examples of a candidate who is appearing for a job interview.

Question: Do you use Facebook at work?

If you have and it's against organisation's policy then don't add to the problem.

If it's allowed then say you restrict your use of social media to breaks.

Question: Don't you feel you might be over-qualified or too experienced?

Discuss how your experience will benefit the organisation. Let them know that you have a sincere interest in the role and will find the work fulfilling.

Question: What are your limitations?

Respond with a strength which if over-done, can get in your way and become a weakness. For example, you may say that you are quite compassionate and sometime people misuse your kindness.

Question: Tell me something about yourself.

This question is not to really describe yourself, but it wishes to know your suitability in relation to the job you have applied for. Hence, you must let the interviewer know what qualities you have in relation to their job you are applying for.

Question: What are your strengths and weaknesses?

You must avoid being honest about your weaknesses. The key is to focus on your strengths and describe briefly a weakness not very relevant to the job you are applying for or one that can be viewed as a strength.

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3. Political Correctness

It is important for civil services aspirants to be politically correct while writing their answers. Being politically correct means avoiding language or behavior that any particular person or group of people might find unkind or offensive.

For example, many people may believe that certain professions like the police or army may not be suitable for the women. They may have their own reasons for it. However, making such statement would be politically incorrect since it is against gender equality. In the same way, many people believe that poor or African American may be more inclined to commit blue collar crimes. They may even have data to support their claims. However, such politically incorrect statements must be avoided.

4. Government Perspective

The job of the government is not easy since it has to take decisions knowing fully well that it can't please everyone and a certain section of people are bound to oppose it. Abraham Lincoln said once, "The true rule, in determining to embrace, or reject anything, is not whether it has any evil in it; but whether it has more evil than good. There are few things wholly evil or wholly good. Almost everything, especially of governmental policy, is an inseparable compound of the two; so that our best judgement of the preponderance between them is continually demanded."

Every social, political or economic issue has multiple perspectives and every person or group views an issue from his own perspective. It is, therefore, not surprising that almost every decision of government is questioned by a section of the citizens while supported by another group of people. For example, a large number of Indians oppose legislations like Citizen Amendment Act (CAA), but many vehemently support it. When you read different opinions of experts in newspapers or watch TV debates on these

issues, you will find sufficient reasons on both sides. So, you may have your own perspective on such controversial issues, but you must be extremely careful in taking a side during the civil services examination.

Since you are aspiring to be a civil servant and become part of the government, it is important to understand and appreciate the perspective of the government. You may discuss both pros and cons of a policy, but must finally support the view of the government giving due justifications. These justifications can be found out from the Press notes of the government or by visiting the government websites.

It is important to understand that the government is not equivalent to the political party that is in power. For example, you may disagree with the view of the BJP (the party in power in Centre), but if a law is made by the

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Parliament or State Legislature or an order is issued by the Government, you must show respect to it and abide by it.

You must not be anti-establishment when you are planning to join the establishment. Therefore, as a civil service aspirant, you must never criticize a government policy which has been passed by the Parliament or issued by the duly elected government in Centre or state. You may, however, discuss the pros and cons of any policy and also give our own suggestions to improve upon them without being critical of them.

5. Foundational Values of Civil Servants Civil servants must possess certain values to perform their jobs in the righteous manner. These values are often called the foundational values of the civil servants and include values like integrity, impartiality, politically neutrality, objectivity, dedication to public service, empathy, tolerance, compassion towards the weaker sections and courage of conviction. You learn about these values in the Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude (GS-4) paper.

Your writings must display these qualities of an aspiring civil servant. For example, you may have your own political views, but must not reveal any political bias in your answers and must maintain neutrality. You must never give the impression that you are joining the civil services for the sake of power, perks and prestige. You must rather show your dedication to public service and display empathy and compassion towards the weaker sections of the society.

6. Multidimensional Outlook

CSE is truly multi-dimensional. Unlike other competitions like JEE, NEET

or CAT, where you have to prepare only a few subjects, here you have to prepare a wide variety of subjects like science & technology, geography, history, polity, economics, current affairs, etc. The reason why CSE syllabus is so exhaustive is that selected aspirants would be appointed for various types of services like IAS, IPS, IFS, IRS, IRTS, IRAS, etc., which need different types of aptitudes. Even after the appointment, a civil servant might have to work in various ministries and departments, which may require different skills and application of a wide variety of knowledge.

Hence, civil servants must possess a multi-dimensional outlook of life. They must know the social, economic, political or psychological impact of an issue.

For example, the issues like CAA or NRC can be viewed from different perspectives and a good candidate must be able to provide multi-dimensional analysis of the issue.

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7. Optimism and Positivity

No society is ideal and it is easy to get cynical in a diverse society like India where people may have a wide range of different aspirations. We as citizens of India usually criticize the government and its policies. It is always easy to criticize as Dale Carnegie said, “Any fool can criticize, complain, and condemn—and most fools do. But it takes character and self-control to be understanding and forgiving.”

An aspiring civil servant does not have the luxury to criticize the government since he may soon be a part of it. A civil servant is there to solve problems and get the work done. It is for this reason that a civil servant aspirant must display optimism and positivity in all his answers and essays. Instead of talking about the failures of the government, he must talk more about the achievements of government and hope for the best. Instead of talking about the weaknesses in the government, he must talk about the strengths, instead of talking about the problems, he must provide solutions to the problems.

It is important to remember that a civil servant is a problem solver and not a critic. He is the man on the spot who must give hope to the citizens rather than disappointing them with his pessimistic views. A positive attitude is extremely important to demonstrate that you have the right aptitude for the job. Let's take an example.

Two salesmen were sent to an African country by a shoe manufacturing company to discover new markets where they could sell their company shoes.

The salesmen spent a couple of weeks there, then came back to report their findings to their manager.

The first salesman said, ‘ *There is no market in that country.* I did not see anyone wearing shoes there.’

The second salesman said, ‘ *There is a huge market in that country.* I did not see anyone wearing shoes there.’

We can easily see in this story that both the salesmen observed the same facts (They did not see anyone wearing shoes there). However, the conclusions they have drawn are exactly opposite depending upon their attitude. It should not be difficult for you to understand which one would be chosen for the job and get faster promotion in his career.

8. Logical Analysis

An aspiring civil servant must be rational and his decisions must be based on logic and reasons rather than based on intuition or emotions. You must, therefore, discuss all sides of the issues in your answers and choose the right

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option based on sound logic. You must present compelling arguments in your essay in favour of your point of view to convince the reader to accept the same point of view.

It may be a good idea to provide reference of some reports or data from national or international agency to strengthen your case. In legal issues, the reference of specific provisions of laws and the case laws of Higher Courts can be helpful. In ethical and moral issues, the quotes of great philosophers and thinkers can make your point of view more convincing. In economic issues, the latest data and relevant statistics can differentiate your answers from the rest and fetch you better marks.

You must be clear headed while taking the final call on any issue. You must display your convincing power in your essay to impress the examiner.

9. Simple Language

Some candidates try to impress the examiner by using complex words and ideas. This may often lead to spelling mistakes, long sentences with convoluted sense, and

grammatical mistakes. It is better to frame smaller sentences, use simpler words of English and present your ideas in the simplest manner. The examiner is impressed by good arguments presented in simple language, which displays a forthright attitude expected of a civil servant, rather than an unsubstantial discourse packaged in flowery or complex language.

10. Befitting Conclusion

The conclusion is the last, but not the least part of an answer or essay. Your conclusion must be impressive and befitting. It must provide solution to the problem and give hope to the reader that you have a clear vision to solve complex problems of life. You must try to conclude your answer with a weighty statement that summarizes your arguments and point of view and leaves a lasting impression on the reader. In case of an essay, concluding with some quote, poem or saying is the best practice.



Chapter-13

Tips to Improve Writing Skills

“What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure.”

– Samuel Johnson

No one is born a writer. Writing is a skill that is developed with hard work and practice. The American novelist and short-story writer Louis L'Amour once said, “Start writing, no matter what. The water does not flow until the faucet is turned on.” You may expect your writing to be disjointed, incoherent and even confusing in the beginning. However, if you identify your flaws and weaknesses; and, keep working on them, your writing will improve and so will your thinking.

In this chapter, we learn some tips that are useful for developing the skill of writing.

1. Learn by Doing

There is no shortcut to developing writing skill. Like any other skill, you can learn to write only by writing. Even if you memorise the entire book ‘How to drive a car’, you still can’t drive a car unless you practice doing so. Only when you take the driver’s seat

and drive your car on a busy road, can you perfect the skill of driving. If you wish to swim, you have to jump into the water and learn swimming yourself. To learn how not to drown, you have to experience the fear of sinking under the water and suffer the pain of breathlessness, as well as practise the skill of keeping your head above the water while paddling your hands and legs. Someone has wisely said, ‘No pain, no gain.’

Good writers are never slaves to their mood or inspiration. Sometimes, they write due to inspiration and at other times, their inspiration comes while writing. You may create an excellent piece of writing in either way. Ernest Hemingway, American novelist, short story writer, and journalist said this bluntly, “There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed.”

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2. Acquire Accurate Knowledge

Lisa See, an American writer and novelist once explained the secret of great writing, “Read a thousand books, and your words will flow like a river.”

When you read books, you not only acquire knowledge of the subject, but learn the art of writing. You can’t write good essays unless you know the subject well. You must, therefore, acquire from reliable sources the desired knowledge of the subjects that may be relevant for essay writing.

Nowadays, lots of unverified and fake information is shared on social media.

Much of the content is false and motivated, but interesting and sensational enough to get viral and reach millions of people. So, don’t collect your information from the ‘University’ of WhatsApp or Facebook, if you wish to acquire right knowledge. Instead, read books authored by good writers who possess high qualification and have accumulated years of experience in their subject domain.

You must develop the habit of acquiring knowledge from reliable sources like the government websites and must refer to original reports for accurate and factual information. Sometimes, it is better to read important issues from the books or articles written by acclaimed authors because they have the ability to analyse and simplify complex matters and present them in an interesting manner, which makes learning faster and easier. Reading articles and reviews in newspapers, magazines & books gives you varied opinions and keeps you well informed about all the dimensions of the issues.

You can also watch debates on electronic media like NDTV, Rajya Sabha or Lok Sabha TV to get various perspectives directly from the experts.

3. Research

It is often said that if two people think alike, one of them is redundant. The best writing is one which does not present an issue in black and white, i.e., as either right or wrong. A beautiful writing is rather a spectrum of varying shades of opinions. So, you must learn the art of assimilating diverse thoughts and presenting a variety of opinions to write beautiful and interesting essays. For this, you need to develop the skill of research since seldom do you find all the shades of opinion in the same article. Robert J. Sawyer, a Canadian science fiction writer aptly said, “The heart and soul of good writing is research; you should write not what you know but what you can find out about”.

You must research every important issue to find out what other people think about a particular topic. Thereafter, you should form your own opinion after analyzing through logical reasoning all the pros and cons of the various opinions; and weighing all the evidences comprehensively. You must be able to explain logically why you agree or disagree with a particular point of

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view. You can then present the spectrum of thoughts through your writing like a garland made of flowers of numerous varieties and colours. While writing an analytical essay, try to give both sides of an argument and present information impartially. It is important to consider multiple points of view for any issue.

You should avoid giving personal opinion based on intuition and without basis. You must rather use references and quotes to back up your points.

Try to strengthen your argument by providing as many documents, data, references and evidences as you can. Your answer must demonstrate that you are a well-read person and know the subject quite well. However, you must avoid excessive use of other people’s opinions as it may suggest that you don’t have the confidence or knowledge to understand and explain things in your own way.

4. Plan Your Answer

You should always provide an exact answer to the question which has been asked rather than writing all that you know or would like to write. If your answer is out of context, you will not be able to score good marks no matter how brilliantly you may have written.

You must, therefore, visualise the full picture of the answer in your mind before you pen the first word on paper. Don't move back and forth. You must format the answer first, jot down the salient points in bulleted form and then start your writing. Learn to prioritize the points and write your answer in such a way that you don't miss any important point.

You must come to a specific conclusion based on your own analysis after weighing up the evidence. Your opinion and interpretation matter most to the examiner for judging your suitability to the job.

5: Know your Reader

It is always important to know the audience, before you deliver your message. For example, your *Facebook* posts are read mostly by your friends and relatives; and your *Quora* answers are read mostly by young people under the age of 30. However, your answers in UPSC examination are for the examiner who is likely to be in the age group of 40-65 years and possess a wide experience of life and an in-depth knowledge of the subject. Write your answers keeping this in mind.

Don't write your answers to become popular, get more likes or upvotes, but to impress the examiner for the suitability of the job. Your purpose should be to leave an impression on the mind of the examiner about your knowledge, sincerity and commitment to serve the nation so that he sees an ideal civil servant in you by reading your answer

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6. Develop Your Own Style

Examiners get bored reading the same type of answers since most students use the same sources for preparation. The examiner must find something refreshing and new in your answer to award you extra marks. You must not copy or replicate essays written by others. Break the answers of experts in parts and then restate them in your own style adding some points of your own. Thereafter, you must synthesize all points to create answers or essays in your own unique style.

You should not hide behind what other people say about the topic. You must display that you have an independent mind and you have an intelligent opinion about everything. You may use quotations and short stories to make your writing interesting and convincing. You may also add pictures and sketches for more effective and persuasive

communication, if required. You can also captivate the reader by the power of reasoning and the beauty of presentation.

You must develop a style of your own by practising answer and essay writing so that your writing flows naturally and flawlessly during the examination.

Remember the words of writer Franz Kafka, “Don’t bend; don’t water it down; don’t try to make it logical; don’t edit your own soul according to the fashion.

Rather, follow your most intense obsessions mercilessly.”

7. Spelling and Grammar

Nothing turns off the examiner more than spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. Regular reading of newspapers, magazines and books will expose you to correct language and minimize your mistakes. It would be a good idea to practise writing on word document on computer which underlines the errors of spelling and grammar. You would thus know where you are weak and then you can work upon it. If you write blogs or answers on *Quora*, your mistakes may be pointed out by the readers and that can help you correct your errors and make your writing better.

8. Edit & Proofread

You must always edit and proofread your answer. You are bound to make mistakes even if you are extremely careful and good at writing. The books authored by even the best authors undergo several rounds of editing and proofreading before they are published. Once you have written your answer, you must revise it to correct your apparent mistakes.

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9. Stick to the time and word limit

When you are practising writing an essay or an answer at home, you must always keep in mind the time and word limit. Many candidates’ write essays which are too short and write answers which are too long as compared to the word limit. They also don’t pay any attention to the time consumed in writing an answer. They often use books or use internet to collect data and quotes rather than using their memory to write their answer. As a result, they are quite happy with their answer writing at home, but fail to perform well during examination.

You must learn to write your answers and essays within the time and word limits permitted in the examination. Count the words after you have written your answer to develop an intuition of the size of your writing. Never use any outside reference while practicing answers at home since you can't do the same during the examination.

10. Presentation

Presentation of an answer or an essay is like the packaging of a product that creates the first impression. The following points may be kept in mind for improving the presentation.

- Neat and legible handwriting
 - No striking down or erasing
 - No spelling or grammatical mistake
 - Equal size words on all pages
 - Use of simple words and sentences to express your thoughts
 - Sentences understandable in single reading
 - No random jumping from one topic or paragraph to the next
- If you follow the above suggestions, you can gradually improve your writing skills, the benefits of which would be aptly reaped in your examination.



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Chapter-14

Common Mistakes and Resolution

“The proactive approach to a mistake is to acknowledge it instantly, correct (it) and learn from it.”

– *Stephen Covey*

Civil services aspirants generally possess adequate knowledge of the subjects to succeed in the examination. However, they often commit some avoidable mistakes in the examination and lose marks. In this chapter, we shall discuss some such common mistakes and learn how to avoid them.

1: Not reading the questions properly

Candidates are quite tense when they receive their questions papers in the examination hall. They skim through all the questions so fast that they often don't read the questions properly. As a result, they end up writing a different answer than what they have been asked for. When they realize their mistake after the examination, they feel depressed and angry with themselves for committing silly mistakes.

You must read the question paper calmly and underline the important points simultaneously. The time taken for reading the questions does not go waste as it only helps you write better and to-the-point answers.

2: Panicking

The syllabus of CSE is vast and questions of previous years are rarely repeated.

When you see a large number of unfamiliar and unprepared questions, you panic and lose confidence. In such a situation, you often forget even what you knew well.

It is almost impossible to predict what questions may be asked in CSE papers.

While some questions may be as expected and prepared, most questions are new and you have to solve them using your general knowledge, imagination and creativity. The more answer writing you practice, the more mock tests you solve before the examination, easier it would be to tackle unexpected questions using your knowledge and presence of mind. If you get depressed

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or panicky, you can't be creative. Hence, you must maintain your cool and answer all questions one by one. You should start with the answers of the questions you know well and you will soon get your confidence back and be able to manage the answers of even unprepared topics.

3: Failing to Plan Time

All papers of CSE are long and time consuming. It is easy to lose track of time while writing your answers and to spend more time on some questions leaving little time to answer other questions.

It is advisable to divide your time fairly for all questions in proportion of their marks. For example, in GS-IV, the total time is 3 hours (180 minutes) while the maximum marks are 250. You must aim to finish your paper within 160

minutes giving your 20 minutes of time for revision and editing. This will also act as a buffer to absorb extra time spent in a few questions. It means that you have around 6-7 minutes for the questions of 10 marks and 13-14

minutes for the 20 marks questions, i.e. case studies. Keep a close watch on the time and check your progress every half an hour during the first two hours and every 15 minutes in the last hour.

4. Over-generalizing

Many candidates start writing general answers even though the question is very specific. Let us take the following question from GS-4 asked in CSE

2014.

Question: All human beings aspire for happiness. Do you agree? What does happiness mean to you? Explain with examples. (150 words) This question has three parts

- Do you agree that all human beings aspire for happiness?
- What does happiness mean to you?
- Explain with examples.

In this question, the second part is the fulcrum of the question. The answer to the question would depend on what happiness means to you. If happiness means serving the nation, your answer would be different than if it means acquiring wealth, power or fame; or achieving excellence. Hence, you first decide the answer for the second part and then the rest should follow. You are not expected here to give formal definition of happiness, but you have to provide your own interpretation of happiness. You can even choose not to agree with the statement and say that service to nation or people is more important than happiness and you would be willing to sacrifice your happiness for it.

5. Criticism of Government

It is common for us to criticize the government all the time. Most of us find politicians the best scapegoats to blame for our problems. The following anecdote of the former American President Ronald Reagan explains how criticism of government is so common all over the world.

I [Reagan] was on the way to the office one morning when things were particularly tough. There was a lot of criticism going on, and I tuned in a disc jockey. I don't know who he was, but I learned to love him. He interrupted the music to say that everybody, every man, should take unto himself a wife because eventually something is bound to happen you can't blame on the governor.

While writing any answer or essay in CSE, criticism of government, government policies, politicians, judiciary must be avoided.

6. Getting Personal

You must never get personal while writing an answer or an essay. You must be politically neutral and impartial as a civil servant. You must always maintain dignity, stay apolitical and write balanced answers. You must not indulge in worshipping someone and denouncing someone. For example, you must never use a language like 'Modi is the best', or 'Rahul Gandhi is worst.'

You are not participating in a TV debate to excite the audience and increase the TRP of the TV channels by scoring points over your rivals. You are also not a journalist or an opposition leader whose job is to criticize the government to keep them on toes. You must write your essay as a responsible government officer, who is there to solve problems in a legal and proper way. You must, therefore, never get personal against anyone and maintain the dignity of the office you are aspiring to hold after you get selected in the civil services.

7. Linguistic Errors

It is important to use formal language in your essays. You must never use the language of chat text such as BRBs, TTYLs, etc., or slangs or colloquial words, like 'Yeah', 'sorta', 'kinda' in place of 'Yes', 'sort of' and 'kind of'

respectively. Slang and colloquialism may be acceptable in informal writing or to some extent even in formal speeches and meetings but never in formal writings.

You must be careful about choosing your words. You must also ensure that your sentences are simple and small. This would reduce the chances of making mistakes. Revise your answers before you submit your answer sheet so that you are able to reduce such mistakes to the minimum.

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8. Not Sticking to the Word Limit

Many candidates fail to adhere to the word limit while writing their answers.

Sometimes their answers are too small and sometimes too lengthy. You lose marks either way.

It would be prudent to stick to the word limit prescribed; and exceed or be short of it only by 5 to 10 per cent. While practising your answers at home, develop the habit of minding the words count of your answers. This will help you develop the intuition to know the number of words written in an answer, which should be quite close to the prescribed word limit. You can make a good approximation of the words of your answers during the examination by counting the number of lines and the average words in each line.

9. Answers Lacking Flow

It is common for a candidate to present a large number of disjointed and random ideas. If you keep getting new ideas while writing your answers, your writing will lack flow and the examiner will likely be put off by the randomness of thought.

A good answer must have flow. Each sentence follows from the previous sentence. This is possible only when you are able to capture the whole thought in one go and then write your answers in a systematic manner. You must rather make a map of the answer in your mind before writing it out.

The answer should be a coherent whole and not broken into different parts.

10. Lack of practice

There is no shortcut to developing a skill except by regular practice. In his bestselling book 'Outliers: The Story of Success', the writer Malcolm Gladwell repeatedly

mentions the “10,000-Hour Rule”, claiming that the key to achieving world-class expertise in any skill, is, to a large extent, a matter of practising the correct way, for a total of around 10,000 hours.

CSE syllabus is so vast that one may never have ‘enough’ time for its preparation. However, you have to devote considerable time for improving your writing skill. There is no time to be wasted. You have to start implementing the suggestions in this book right now to perform your best in this examination.



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SECTION-II

ESSAY PRACTICE

Part A: Sample Essays with Mind-map Instructions

There are 10 essays with their respective mind-maps in this part of the book.

You can make the best use of this part in the following way:

- Go through the mind-map and essay carefully.
- Add new quotes, facts, definitions, etc., in the mind-map.
- Write your own essay using this new mind-map you have prepared.

Mind Map 1

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Brainstorming topic

Quotes

- What is the meaning of good life?

- The good life is a process, not a

- How do we try to achieve good life?

state of being. It is a direction not

- Why do people fail to get good life they desire?

a destination.— Carl Rogers

- What is love?

- An unexamined life is not worth

- How love inspires good life?

living. – Socrates

- What is knowledge?

- The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be

- How knowledge guides good life?

honorable, to be compassionate, to

have it make some difference that

you have lived and lived well. Ralph

Waldo Emerson

- Love will find a way through paths

where wolves fear to prey. –Lord

Byron

- A flower cannot blossom without sunshine, and man cannot live without love. Max Muller

Definitions

- A heart is not judged by how much you love, but by how much you are loved by others.-- Frank Morgan
- Good life means living in comfort and luxury

Topic

with few problems or

- Ignorance is the curse of God; worries.

knowledge is the wing wherewith

A good life is

we fly to heaven. - William

- Good life also means a

Shakespeare

life lived according to

one inspired

the moral and religious

- Beware of false knowledge; it is

by love and

laws of one's culture.

more dangerous than ignorance.

George Bernard Shaw

guided by

knowledge

Introduction

- What is good life?
- Why people fail to live good

Body

life? Define the different

- The popular perception of good life.

meanings of good life

(Comfort, wealth, power, fame is not

- Definition of good life.

good life as it is external, transient and

- What good life should be.

comparative)

- True method to achieve good life. (Good life must provide long term benefits to

Conclusion

body, mind, emotions and soul.)

- Narrow perception of good life gives short

- How love inspires good life (Purpose of term pleasure, long term pain, damages life, joy of service and sacrifice, making health

oneself useful, selflessness, empathy, self-

- True good life is by following the path motivation, ethical and morality)

of righteousness, spreading happiness,

- How knowledge guides good life (Perils helping others etc.

of blind love, false knowledge, ignorance,

- Love provides self-motivation, energy to guidance of knowledge to create

do right deeds

happiness, avoid pain, know long term

- Live good life which is inspired by love and perspective of things

guided by knowledge

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SAMPLE ESSAY-1

A good life is one inspired

by love and guided by knowledge

The American philosopher and author Ralph Waldo Emerson once said,

“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.”

While we appreciate such words of wisdom, we rarely understand the true meaning of such words since we rarely try to follow them in our lives. How many of us ever try to find purpose in our life? How many of us ever try to be useful to the world and work hard to make the world better?

How many of us are willing to suffer for the millions of poor and helpless people in our world and lead a life with a purpose?

Most of us prefer to live a good life ourselves ignoring our duties and responsibilities for the world. A good life for us means a life of comfort and luxury with few problems or worries. It means having lots of money, big house, expensive cars and modern gadget. In order to achieve such a life, we work hard all through our lives and even sacrifice our ideals, principles and relationships. Most people remain unhappy because they never achieve the desired success. A few lucky ones who become successful also fail to live their life well due to failing health, broken relationships and often their guilty conscience.

What then is the secret of good life? “The good life is a process, not a state of being. It is a direction not a destination,” said American psychologist Carl Rogers. If we wish to be happy, we have to move in the right direction and follow the right principles. We have to earn good life by first making the world good. It means that we must try to make a difference in the world by contributing to the betterment of the society using all our abilities. In this process, we may have to sometime suffer and sacrifice our happiness for the sake of others. When we see the impact of our good work on the world, we give meaning to our life and earn lasting joy and happiness.

In order to know how we can contribute to the world, we must know ourselves inside out. Socrates advised us long time ago, “An unexamined life is not worth living.” It is only when we examine ourselves deeply, that we know how we can contribute to the world and thus discover the purpose of life and work accordingly to make the world a better place. The real challenge is to keep doing the good work, avoid instant gratification and accept sufferings in the present to create a better tomorrow.

The first important requirement for good life is love. A mother sacrifices all her comfort to take care of her child because she loves her. In the same way,

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a person can sacrifice everything for the beloved. The people who love their country are always willing to lay down their life for their country. Love is the magic that can make everything possible. The British poet Lord Byron said very aptly, “Love will find a way through paths where wolves fear to prey.”

When we don't have love in our life, we find it difficult to do good things unto others. When we do certain right things merely as a duty, we find our act so burdensome that we burn out quite fast. However, when we do that same act out of love, we not only enjoy what we do, but we also do it in a much better manner, because love is the food for

human soul. The German philosopher Max Muller said this beautifully, “A flower cannot blossom without sunshine, and man cannot live without love”.

When we have love in our heart, we are always motivated to help others because by making the life of our loved one better, we feel good and happy ourselves. We enjoy serving those we love without any expectation in return because their happiness is the very source of our own happiness. When a work is done with love, it becomes effortless rather than laboured; and a source of joy rather than merely a duty or obligation. We become selfless, empathetic and ethical naturally when we are inspired by love.

However, love alone is not sufficient to lead a good life. Love is an emotion and it often blinds us to the reality. As a result, even if our intentions are good, we are unable to achieve good results for our loved ones. In order to do good to others, we need accurate knowledge of the practical world so that our actions lead to the desired outcome. Nothing is more dangerous than false knowledge. George Bernard Shaw said this aptly, “Beware of false knowledge; it is more dangerous than ignorance”.

If love is the engine of a car, knowledge is the steering wheel. If the engine lacks power, a car can't move. However, if the driver does not have control over the steering, a car with even the most powerful engine can crash. If we have love but we lack knowledge to guide us to the right path, the consequences can be disastrous. William Shakespeare said this rightly, “Ignorance is the curse of God; knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven”. We can lead a good life only when we have the right knowledge in our mind and we are full of love in our heart.

The narrow perception of good life based on ‘eat, drink and be merry’

may provide short term benefits, but is sure to lead to long term harm and suffering. A good life based on comfort and sensual gratification soon leads to more pain because we spoil our health due to lack of physical activities, poor eating habits and our constant desire to seek comfort. We may also spoil our character by following the immoral path in our quest of seek sensual pleasure.

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A truly good life is thus achieved when we have love in our heart and we are guided by the right knowledge because when we lead such a life, we don't seek goodness for the self, but strive to make the world better by doing good to others. When we do well to others, we get back love from others as well. When we are loved, we feel blessed and deeply satisfied. The American actor Frank Morgan said rightly, “A heart is not judged by how much you love, but by how much you are loved by others”.

When we allow our life to be inspired by love, we are self-motivated to make our world a better place by self-discipline and by helping each other. We get love, honour, and respect from our fellow human beings that gives us lasting joy and happiness.

Mind Map 2

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Brainstorming topic

Quotes

- What is privilege?
- Expedients are for the hour, but
- How many types of privilege are there?

principles are for the ages. An old

- How do people achieve privilege?

proverb

- How are privilege and principles connected?
- A principle that can't bear being laughed at, frowned on, and cold-
- What are the benefits of following principles?

shouldered, isn't worthy of the

- What are the consequences of not following name. (Louisa May Alcott)

principles?

- Rank does not confer privilege
- How do people lose privilege without principles?
- or give power. It imposes

- How to manage privileges and principles?

responsibility. (Peter Drucker)

- Inherently, having privilege isn't

Definitions

bad, but it's how you use it, and you

have to use it in the service of other

- People: human beings

people.(Tarana Burke)

in general or considered

collectively. It may refer

- Leadership is a privilege to better to individual or society or

the lives of others. It is not an

nation

opportunity to satisfy personal

greed. (Mwai Kibaki)

- Value:

the

important

standards of behavior;

- I learned that public service is a **Topic**

the importance, worth, or

privilege that must be based on

usefulness of something.

moral foundations. (Shimon Peres)

A people

- Principles: a fundamental

that values

truth or proposition that

its privileges

serves as the foundation

for a system of belief or

above its

Introduction

behaviour or for a chain

- What is privilege?

principles

of reasoning.

- Examples of privilege

- Privilege: a special right,

loses both

- Why people seek privilege?

advantage, or immunity

- Price of Privilege

granted or available only

to a particular person or

group.

Body

Conclusion

- Meaning of Privilege
- Consequences of not using principles (loss
- Types of privilege (Inheritance of wealth, of power/prestige, imprisonment, penalty

Immunity, Gender)

for tax evasion, loss of voter's trust)

- What people do to get more privileges
- Privilege comes with responsibility to use
- Responsibility and Privilege

it for the public good

- Role of principle in discharge of power and
- Misuse of privilege harms the society and responsibility

you lose privilege

- Perils of using privilege without principles
- Proper use of principles benefits society
- Examples of people losing privileges due and you gain privilege

to lack of principles

- You gain trust of people if you follow
- Examples of people gaining respect for principles

using principles

- Principle over privilege provides long term
- Why people don't follow principles, but want benefits, internal satisfaction and honour privileges (selfishness, instant gratification) in the society.

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SAMPLE ESSAY-2

A people that values its privileges above its principles loses both

How do you feel when you are going to your office and you find the traffic halted because some VIP or minister is passing on the road? How do you feel when you visit your cousin who is a senior civil servant and find him living in a big bungalow with beaoned cars and a posse of orderlies? What do you feel when you see a senior police officer escorted by a host of police officers when travelling on the road; or, big businessmen living in their palatial bungalows with personal jets, fleets of cars and dozens of servants?

We often get impressed with the privileges enjoyed by ministers, civil servants and top honchos of firms. We wish to occupy those positions and to enjoy those privileges as well. But, have we ever realized that such great privileges are actually associated with huge responsibilities that have to be carried out by the so called privileged class?

It is important to understand that there is no such thing as a free lunch in the world. You have to pay the price for everything that you get in this world. When you get a privilege, it always comes with responsibility which comes with the position. Mwai Kibaki, the former president of Kenya rightly explained, "Leadership is a privilege to better the lives of others. It is not an opportunity to satisfy personal greed." However, most people focus only on position and privileges which are enjoyable and shun the responsibilities that come with power and position.

Privilege can be defined as a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group. We get many privileges due to our birth itself. When we are born in the family of rich, intelligent and caring parents, we are already privileged as we do not have to face the hardship faced by millions of children across the world. As we grow in our lives, we want to get more and more privileges since they make us special.

We work hard in our schools so that we get top rank and get a privileged position in the school. When we become adults, we wish to occupy top positions in government or corporate to get the highest levels of privilege.

However, once we have privileges, we realize that they are also accompanied by responsibilities, which may not be so pleasurable. The world famous management Guru Peter Drucker explained, “Rank does not confer privilege or give power. It imposes responsibility”.

The higher the privileges, the greater are the responsibilities. We have to use our power in a responsible manner using the right principles so that our actions are for the benefit of the organisation and the society. If we don't

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follow the principles in life and use power only for our personal benefits, we may soon lose them forever.

There are many examples in history of great people and great nations who lost their privileges when they lost their principles. Hitler got the mandate of the people to lead Germany. However, he misused his position for personal glory and started the World War. The result was the death of several million people including millions of Jews who were killed in the concentration camp on his orders. In the end, Hitler committed suicide, but not before his country and the world was devastated due his lack of principles and misuse of power.

When we use power to better the life of others by following high principles, we are remembered forever. Abraham Lincoln used his position as the President of America to get his country rid of slavery and even sacrificed his life for it. So, he is remembered today as one of the greatest Presidents of the US who contributed immensely to make the country a more equitable and just society. An old proverb rightly says, “Expedients are for the hour, but principles are for the ages”.

Why don't people follow principles, but love to enjoy their privileges? It is so because following principles does not provide instant benefits. When you take a principled position like speaking the truth, doing your duty according to the law and taking action against the powerful people, it may cause you harm in the short term; whereas following the opposite path may benefit you at least materially. Many people misuse their position and engage in corrupt or criminal acts and make huge money to reach the top of the social hierarchy. For example, many businessmen often acquire wealth by resorting to tax evasion and following many unethical practices.

It is not easy to follow principles since the honest people often have to face opposition from the unprincipled people who are willing to do anything to keep their privileges.

People laugh at the principled people and ridicule them as impractical since they themselves are, in general, unprincipled. Louisa May Alcott, an American novelist and poet explains, “A principle that can’t bear being laughed at, frowned on, and cold-shouldered, isn’t worthy of the name”.

However, the people who misuse their privileges fail to produce the results for their organisation and pay a price for it. A corrupt officer, when caught, has to go to jail and lose all privileges. A tax evader may face a tax raid and end up paying huge fines and penalties besides suffering imprisonment. A corrupt minister may eventually lose the trust of the people and may be voted out in the next election losing power and privilege both.

It is thus important to understand that power and privilege comes with responsibilities that must be discharged according to the high principles. We

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have to value principles more than privileges because privileges can’t be preserved for long without principles. Former Israeli President Shimon Peres advised us, “I learned that public service is a privilege that must be based on moral foundations.”

We may get short term benefits by the misuse of our privileges, but we suffer in the long run. The misuse of privilege can harm the society immediately and sooner or later, us too. On the other hand, when we use power in adherence to principles, we gain the trust of the stakeholders who would then be willing to give us even more privileges, assured that we would use them only in their interest. We must therefore learn to value principles over privileges; it brings long term benefits, true satisfaction and honour not only to us, but also the society and the nation. The American civil activist Tarana Burke once said, “Inherently, having privilege isn’t bad, but it’s how you use it, and you have to use it in service of other people”.

Mind Map 3

EBD_8165

Brainstorming topic

Quotes

- What is morality?
- Morality is the basis of things

- What is customary morality?

and truth is the substance of all

- What is modern life?

morality. – Mahatma Gandhi

- What are modern values?

- “Compassion is the basis of

- How morality changes with place and time?

morality.” – Arthur Schopenhauer

- Why people are guided by customary morality?

- “Tradition becomes our security,

and when the mind is secure, it is

- Why should one follow modern values?

in decay.” – Jiddu Krishnamurti

- How can we best balance modern values and

- “When men are oppressed, it’s

traditions?

a tragedy. When women are

oppressed, it’s tradition.” – Letty

Definitions

Cottin Pogrebin

- Morality consists in the

- “Tradition is a guide and not a

principles concerning the
jailer.” – W. Somerset Maugham
distinction between right
and wrong; proper and
improper; or good and
bad behaviour.

Topic

- Morality can be a body
of standards or principles

Customary

derived from a code of

Introduction

conduct from a particular
morality

- What is morality?
philosophy, religion or
cannot be

- Benefits of morality for
culture, or it can derive
people and society
from a standard that a
a guide to

- How does morality change

person believes should

modern life

with time and place?

be universal.

- Meaning of customary

- Customary Morality is

morality?

the morality related to

customs, tradition, religion,

society, state or nation.

Body

- Examples of customary morality which have become outdated (caste based profession, sacredness of marriages, role of women)
- Role of parents, elders, traditions, cultures to develop moral values
- Why people are still guided by customary morality?

Conclusion

- The reasons for emergence of modern
- Customs and Traditions are important for values (globalisation, internet, social media, continuity, peace and stability)
- Modern morality (freedom, democracy,
- Moral values change with time and place individuality, gender equality, love

- Discard obsolete customary values

marriage, divorce, live-in, LGBT)

- Adopt modern values with care and
- Recent issues of morality (Triple Talaq, caution

Sabrimala verdict, Article 377)

- Synergize modern with traditional values

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SAMPLE ESSAY-3

Customary morality cannot be a guide to modern life The progress of a society depends on harmonious living of the members of the society. When people follow the moral principles, they take care of one another and create a loving, peaceful and progressive society. These moral principles make clear distinction between right and wrong; proper and improper; or good and bad behaviour. Mahatma Gandhi once said,

“Morality is the basis of things and truth is the substance of all morality”.

No society can stand together without morality and no morality can stand for long unless it stands on the edifice of truth.

Morality represents a body of standards or principles derived from a code of conduct prescribed by a particular philosophy, religion or culture, or it can derive from a standard that a person believes should be universal. However, morality is not static but evolves with time and space. Some people find it difficult to change with time and they stick to the old standards of morality imbibed by them from their ancestors. Such moral values can be called customary morality which comes from the old customs, tradition, and religion of the society, state or nation.

Customary morality flows from ancient culture and traditions. For example, ancient Indians followed the professions based on their caste and married within their own castes. The roles of women were limited to taking care of the family and be a homemaker. Women were expected to be confined to their homes and cover their face whenever they had to go out. Such traditions may appear to be oppressive to the modern women. The American author Letty Cottin Pogrebin wisely depicted this condition of

women in a traditional society, “When men are oppressed, it’s a tragedy. When women are oppressed, it’s tradition.”

In traditional Hindu society, marriage is considered sacred and irrevocable, while divorce finds no mention in any scripture. One has to keep the marriage intact till death even if one finds no compatibility in the relationship.

Similarly, children must unconditionally obey their parents. Parents often marry their sons off in exchange for a good dowry while love marriages are considered inappropriate. Much of customary morality comes from religion.

For example, it is considered a sin to drink alcohol in Islam and a sin to eat meat in Jainism while these are permissible in other religions.

While traditions are important to give continuity in the society, they should not be static and rigid. The Indian philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti warned,

“Tradition becomes our security, and when the mind is secure it is in decay.”

The concept of morality must also change with time in a progressive society.

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If an individual does not adopt the modern values of morality, he is unlikely to achieve success in terms of the present world.

It is, however, not easy to reform the concepts of customary morality since we learn our moral values at an early age from our parents and elders.

Moreover, when a large number of people in a society are following the same old values, it is not easy to follow a path less travelled. We feel secure following the moral values which people around us follow so that we are comfortable and acceptable in our society.

The modern world is getting fast globalised and people of different cultures and traditions are coming closer to learn from one another. They often work in the same organisation and live in the same society. In the era of globalization, internet, social media, consumerism and modern science, we are witnessing emergence of many new moral values, some of which would have been considered immoral by our ancestors.

The fusion of various cultures, emphasis on freedom, and development of scientific tempers have given rise to modern moral values that are quite global.

Today, democracy is the most popular form of governance in the world which treats all people as equal possessing the same power to elect their leaders or to occupy any position of power. In the modern times, individuality and freedom are considered non-negotiable values and it is not acceptable to discriminate people on the basis of caste, religion, race or gender. You need not even follow the religion of your parents; you can always choose your religion and faith. In the same way, people are not bound to follow the profession of their parents or their caste, and they can pursue the profession of their choice. A modern society considers it illegal for parents to force their children to marry against their wish as each adult person has been given the right to choose their life partner. If a marriage is not found to be compatible, the couple is allowed to choose divorce and even remarry. In most of the Western societies, marriage itself is getting outdated and couples are opting for live-in relationship before marriage. Many societies are even accepting same sex marriages and giving them legal rights comparable with traditional heterosexual marriage.

The German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer once said, “Compassion is the basis of morality.” The modern world is indeed more accommodative and inclusive than ever before. We can’t use the old yardstick to measure the moral standards of today’s generation. In recent years, Supreme Court of India has redefined many concepts of customary morality; a step that had become necessary due to the evolution of a modern society. It has rightly granted women of all ages the right to enter Sabarimala Temple, where traditionally only the women of non-menstruating age were allowed. The age old practice of Triple Talaq has been declared not only illegal, but also

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a criminal offence giving long-desired justice to the Muslim women. The Supreme Court has also decriminalised Section 377 dealing with unnatural sex and thus accepted the right of LGBTQXI community to live a dignified life.

Morality based on customs and traditions is important for continuity, peace and stability of the society. However, it is also important that moral values change with time. Those who remain shackled in traditions and fail to adapt to changing moral values fail to fit into the evolving world. One has to follow the values that are useful in current times and discard those which have become outdated to be able to match pace with time. In the words of W.

Somerset Maugham “Tradition is a guide and not a jailer.”

However, it is wise to remember that all that glitters is not gold. Everything that is modern is not necessarily good and everything that is ancient may not be bad. We must, therefore, make the right choices with due care and caution and adopt the best values. It is not advisable to blindly ape the West and adopt their values like live-in relationship, extramarital and premarital relationships, or resort to divorce without giving much time and consideration to reconciliation, and due thought to its adverse consequences. Divorce affects not only a couple, but also their children and hence must be the last resort after every effort to save the marriage has been exhausted. As for dressing styles, there is a certain beauty in dressing modestly which flashy fashionable attire can seldom match. And come what may, the high ideals of faithfulness, honesty, love and compassion will never get outdated. Therefore, we ought to learn to strike a balance between modern values and traditions to lead the best life and create a better world.

Mind Map 4

EBD_8165

Brainstorming topic

Quotes

- Why is change required?
- “Everyone thinks of changing
- How to deal with change?

the world, but no one thinks of

- Why do people want change?

changing himself.” – Leo Tolstoy

- Why don't people want to change themselves?
- “Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted
- Why should you be the change to change others?

to change the world. Today I am wise,

so I am changing myself.” –Rumi

- Why walking the talk is so important?
- “Change will not come if we wait
- How do leaders inspire people to change?

for some other person, or if we
wait for some other time. We are

Introduction

the ones we’ve been waiting for.

We are the change that we seek.” –

- Story of Mahatma

Barack Obama

Gandhi cleaning filth

during

Congress

- A leader is one who knows the way,

Session

goes the way, and shows the way.

–John C. Maxwell

- How Gandhi inspired

others to change by

- ‘Par Updesh Kushal Bahutere’

changing himself first

(Tulsidas)

- All

societies

are

- Whatever action is performed by

imperfect and change

a great man, common men follow

Topic

is needed

in his footsteps. And whatever

standards he sets by exemplary

- We want others to

Be the

acts, all the world pursues. [Gita]

change, but don't wish

change you

to change ourselves

want to see

Body 1 (Need for change)

in others

- Things that must be eliminated

Corruption, Crime, Tax evasion

Crime against women, dowry,

female infanticide, preference to

Body 2 (Why change is difficult)

male child

- People want others to be honest, law Superstition, casteism, communal

abiding while they themselves break the feelings

law and remain corrupt.

- Things that must be encouraged

- Examples

Honesty, equality, justice

Government officers driving on the wrong

Education,

development

of

lane

scientific temper

Public servants practising corruption and Punctuality, professionalism

preaching others to be honest

Rule of law, compliance of rules

Corrupt officers and tax evaders asking and procedures, payment of taxes

people to follow law

- It is easy to change yourself than to force others to change.

Conclusion

- Walk the talk and be the change you want
- We must change to make the world better.

to see in the world

- We must change first before we expect
- People get inspired by the words only others to change.

when it comes from a person who is

- Words have no power unless they come following them.
- from a genuine person.

- Story of the boy who ate too much of
- Inspire the people with action and not words.

sugar

- Be a role model for the world.

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SAMPLE ESSAY-4

Be the change you want to see in others On his second trip to India from South Africa, Gandhi attended the Congress session in Calcutta. The sanitary condition of the Congress camp was horrible. Some delegates used the verandah in front of their room as latrines, others did not object to it. Gandhi reacted immediately. When he spoke to the volunteers, they said; “This is not our job, this is a sweeper’s job.”

Gandhi asked for a broom and started cleaning the filth. The volunteers were astonished but none came forward to assist him. Years later, when Gandhi became the guiding star of the Indian National Congress, volunteers formed a bhangi (sweeper) squad in the Congress camps where, once, even the Brahmins worked as bhangis.

This is one of the many examples, where Gandhi ji took the lead in doing what he asked others to do. He always believed in transforming himself first before asking others to change themselves. It is not thus surprising that Mahatma Gandhi is considered one of the greatest leaders of the world and given the honour of the Father of India. People of

India trusted him since they knew that he really meant what he said; because he did what he said.

American writer John C. Maxwell says, “A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”

We all want change, since no society is perfect. We all have many ideas on how we can create a good society only if people change. We all are good at advising others, but rarely implement the change in ourselves. Indian poet and the writer of ‘Ramcharitmanas’ Tulsidas said very wisely, ‘Par Updesh Kushal Bahutere’ (Most people are experts in advising others). People want others to change, but do not change themselves, when it does not benefit them.

We have many problems in our society and we want it to change for better.

But we as individuals need to change first. For example, India is one of the most corrupt countries in the world and all Indians want to get rid of corruption. However, the same people when they are in government don’t hesitate in taking bribe to do even the legitimate work of the citizens. The common people, also, instead of reporting the acts of corruption, prefer to pay the bribe. It is not uncommon to see the traffic violators offering bribe to the traffic police when they are caught violating traffic rules; or the passengers without tickets paying bribe to the Travelling Ticket Examiner (TTE) to board and travel in the reserved compartment. The businessmen instead of paying their taxes honestly, often prefer to evade it and yet remain protected by paying bribe to the tax officers. Policemen often close investigations relating to the serious cases of crime after taking bribe from the offender. Even the ordinary man often votes for the candidates who give them money, gifts or liquor during elections.

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Indian society is inherently patriarchal. It gives rise to many bad practices in society which will change only when individuals change. Women are treated as inferior to men and are limited to the boundaries of their homes for taking care of their husbands and rearing their children. While the birth of a boy is celebrated, a girl child is still unwelcome in many families. Female feticide as well as infanticide are still committed, violating all laws. It is common to pay a huge dowry at the time of a girl’s marriage, which is resented by the girl’s parents. However, the same parents often demand dowry themselves for their son’s marriage.

While India is proud of its old culture and traditions, it needs to change many obsolete ones among those. Casteism is a social evil which India must get rid of as soon as possible. Caste and nationality are incompatible with each other. Caste divides the society and militates against the national ideals of equality and justice. It is unfortunate that caste is still an important factor in the elections and politicians often misuse caste and religion to create their vote banks. Without an awakening at the individual level, this social ill will not go.

Every Indian must also develop scientific temper and rational thinking if they are to see a developing society. There are numerous superstitions and rituals prevailing in Indian society which retard the growth of the nation. It is common to see people worshipping trees and animals to fulfill their aspirations rather than working hard. The self-styled spiritual gurus often exploit people by suggesting weird solutions to their problems and promising them a better life. People still spend huge money on marriage ceremonies and numerous other rituals connected with birth and death.

We must not only seek to overcome our personal weaknesses but also work to cultivate human values, honesty, equality and justice in our fellow citizens.

We must strive to make people educated and develop scientific temper. We must ensure punctuality, professionalism and honesty not only in government departments but also in every other organisation. We must implement the rule of law to ensure that everyone complies with the rules and procedures and pays their taxes honestly.

However, it is not easy to change people. Most people don't want to change themselves, but want others to change to create a better society. The famous Russian author Leo Tolstoy said, "Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself." Our leaders give impressive speeches guiding others to become honest, patriotic, selfless and law abiding; but, they themselves follow none of it. It is common to see senior politicians and government officers violating the traffic rules and find them engaged in corruption and crime. It is not surprising, thus, that their words have no effect on the people. The following story illustrates that we must change first if we want others to change.

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A mother was extremely worried about her child's habit of eating sugar.

She went to a saint and asked him to counsel the child. The saint asked her to come after a week. When the mother visited him after a week, the saint asked her to come after another week. When she visited him the third time, the saint advised the child, "Don't eat sugar." The mother was surprised and she wanted to know, why the saint had not

said this on the first day itself. The saint replied that he himself used to eat lots of sweet then; so, he could not preach to the child what he himself was not practicing. He first changed himself and gave up his own bad habit, only then did he feel he was morally qualified to advise the child to do the same.

If we wish to change the society, we have to change ourselves first. Whom are we waiting for? Former American President Barack Obama advised, “Change will not come if we wait for some other person, or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

It is difficult to change others, but easiest to change ourselves, if we make up our mind. We can take the pledge that we shall be honest, truthful and law abiding from this moment itself. When we change, everything around us starts changing. When we become good to others, people become good to us and we create a better world soon. The famous Sufi poet Rumi said,

“Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.”

When we change, we inspire many others to change and this way, a better world takes shape. By becoming good ourselves, we become the role model for others. Lord Krishna explained the power of transformation that can be brought by us by doing the right things, “Whatever action is performed by a great man, common men follow in his footsteps. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues.” Let us walk the talk and be the change we want to see in the world.

Mind Map 5

EBD_8165

Brainstorming topic

Quotes

- What is innovation?
- Innovation distinguishes between
- What are the benefits of innovation?

a leader and a follower. – Steve Jobs

- How innovation is the key determinant of

- Business has only two functions -

economic growth?

marketing and innovation. – Milan

- How innovation is the key determinant of social Kundera

welfare?

- We can't solve problems by using

- What are the examples of innovations that led to the same kind of thinking we used

economic growth and social welfare?

when we created them. – Albert

- Why India lacks in Innovation?

Einstein

- How can we improve innovation in India

- In the long run, competition makes

us better... it drives innovation.

– Dennis Muilenburg

Body 1 (Need for change)

- Innovation is important to solves

Introduction

problems

- What is innovation?

- How Innovation transformed world

Definition.

Topic

– Invention of fire, cultivation of crops

• Purpose of innovation

Innovation

– Invention of irons, bricks, housings

• Importance

of

– Invention of steam engines,

innovation for the

is the key

society

airplanes, cars for better mobility

determinant

• Need for innovation in

– Invention of electricity,

every field

of economic

machinery to improve productivity

– Invention of computer, internet,

growth and

social media, etc., to connect

social welfare

people

- Innovation in business
- Concept of company, enterprise
- Public Sector companies, IITs, IIMs
- Public Private Partnership, GST
- Start-ups, Angel Investors and

Body 2 (Why change is difficult)

Venture Capital

- Innovation in Governance

Conclusion

- From dynasties to communism, socialism and democracy
- Need to promote innovation since early age
- Rule of law, Courts, separation of powers,
- Need for reforming education system to merit based selection for civil services
- focus on innovation and creativity rather than on rote learning
- Liberalism, freedom of thought, freedom to choose religion
- Need to promote innovation in universities and college in all fields like arts, music,
- Women empowerment, education to all,

writing

pension to weaker sections

- More expenditure on education to

– Reservations, positive discrimination

improve quality

- Innovation in society

- Indian Universities low on global ranking

– Concept of family, society, tradition, on research publication. Need to focus on culture and nation

R&D

– Religion, mythologies, nationalism to

- Online learning to improve quality of unite people and build society

education to all

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SAMPLE ESSAY-5

Innovation is the key determinant of economic growth and social welfare

Innovation is the introduction of something new; a new idea, method, or device.

Innovation is not same as invention, which means discovery of a new thing altogether.

Innovation is rather the application of better solutions that meet new requirements, unarticulated needs, or existing market needs.

In the business parlance, innovation means the process of translating an idea or invention into a good or service that creates value or for which customers will pay.

Steve Jobs, the Founder of Apple Corporation summed up the importance of innovation, “Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower”.

Our world is constantly changing. On one side, many age old problems are solved, while on the other, many new problems are created in the world. As these problems never existed before and they can't be solved by using any of the techniques used earlier, we have to constantly innovate to solve complex problems of life and move with time. It is due to the innovations that human beings have become the most evolved species on Earth.

Albert Einstein once said, “We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them”. Hence, we must constantly innovate to overcome our challenges and create a better world. The present level of development and prosperity is the result of numerous innovations that were done by our ancestors.

Human body is designed to consume limited types of food only. However, with the invention of fire, we could cook various types of products and make it digestible for us. We could also use fire for keeping us warm in winters. At that stage, our ancestors had to work daily to hunt animals as they could not preserve the meat for long. All that changed once we invented the cultivation of crops, which could be preserved not only for months but even for years. The cultivation of crops provided food security to the human race in all seasons. Gradually, human beings discovered metals like iron and brass which helped them build tools for agriculture and equipment for protection from wild animals. Invention of bricks helped men build houses that provided them security and protection from weather.

The invention of steam engines provided human beings faster mobility and facilitated development of trade and industries. With the invention of cars and airplanes, people could travel from one place to another and even across continents. The invention of electricity, electric-bulbs, fans, air-conditioners, refrigerators increased the productivity of men and made their lives much

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more comfortable. Innovation of modern machines enhanced productivity, and reduced the cost that made even luxurious items within the reach of ordinary citizens. In the modern age, the invention of computer, internet, social media etc., has enabled us to connect with people across the world and perform numerous operations online at our place and time of convenience.

There have been many innovations in the field of business as well. The concept of a company itself was a great innovation which led to the growth of enterprise across the world; and so was the concept of corporation where the ownership and the management of a business entity were separated by creating a ‘legal person’. The concept of Public Sector Enterprise (PSE) was another innovation in the socialist countries that helped building of huge infrastructure and creation of large production capacities even in developing nations like India. India, after independence, set up many world class institutions like IITs, IIMs and AIIMs which produced world class engineers, managers and doctors in India. In recent years, governments across the world have

innovated on the method of infrastructure building and created the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model that has led to building of roads, airports, power plants and numerous other facilities across the world.

Government of India has recently introduced Goods and Services Tax (GST) which has subsumed almost two dozen taxes across India ensuring better compliance. In the field of business, the idea of Start-ups, Angel Investors and Venture Capital are transforming the world. Moreover, competition among businesses is itself an innovation to ensure that businesses never get complacent, but constantly innovate. Dennis Muilenburg, an American businessman, CEO of Boeing Company stated aptly, “In the long run, competition makes us better... it drives innovation”.

There has been constant innovation in the methods of governance. We have moved from the era of dynasties of kings and emperors to systems based on communism, socialism and democracy. Democracy is today the most popular form of government across the world. It has given power to the people to elect their own government and occupy any position of power irrespective of their birth. Democracy is the government of the people, by the people, for the people. The modern world is not governed today by the kings and queens, but by the rule of law, government institutions and independent courts. The concept of separation of powers ensured justice and balance of power. Selection in the government is not by birth, nor is done on recommendation, but on individual merit, thus giving every citizen an opportunity to occupy any post in government.

Innovations are not limited only to the techno-economic domains. There has been constant innovation in social structures as well. The concept of family itself is a great innovation that introduces stability in the society and ensures

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that children are taken care of till they are able to stand on their own feet.

The concepts of tradition, culture, ethics and value in a society ensure that people work together to create a better society rather than working for their selfish interest. In order to cultivate common values, mankind has created mythologies and founded religion. The concepts of nation, nationalism and patriotism united millions of people as one and created cohesive societies.

In the modern world, people enjoy rights and liberties, including freedom of thought and the freedom to choose their own religion and follow their culture and tradition. An important innovative push in social structure has been to create an egalitarian society by empowering the weaker sections including women. Today, the right to education is not limited only to a few, but it is available to all as a fundamental right. Weaker sections of

the society are often provided reservation or given the benefit of positive discrimination to get social justice.

Innovation thus plays a key role in the economic and social growth of nation.

All developed as well as developing countries must be innovative. The spirit of innovation is required to be cultivated in the children at an early age for the benefit of the society as a whole. Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, former President of India, and one of the most creative persons of our times, emphasized the need for innovation repeatedly, “My message, especially to young people is to have courage to think differently, courage to invent, to travel the unexplored path, courage to discover the impossible and to conquer the problems and succeed”.

Our education system must focus on innovation and creativity rather than on rote learning. We need to promote innovation in universities and colleges in all fields like science, arts, music and writing. The government must increase expenditure on education to improve the quality of education.

Indian Universities including IITs are today low on global ranking on research publication. They need to focus on R&D (research and development) and innovate more. Online learning is another innovation that has the potential to redefine education and make it available to all citizens in India. There is also a need for innovations in digital infrastructure to connect our rural population with the rest of the world so that they too can benefit from the outsourcing of work to and from India and become partners in the development of the nation. It is only through innovation that we can create a prosperous and cohesive society.

Mind Map 6

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Brainstorming topic

Quotes

- What do discipline, success and anarchy mean?
- To enjoy good health, to bring true
- How does discipline transform people?

happiness to one's family, to bring

- How can discipline be cultivated in people?

peace to all, one must first discipline

- How does discipline bring success and happiness?

and control one's own mind. If a

man can control his mind, he can

- What causes anarchy?

find the way to Enlightenment, and

- How does anarchy lead to ruin?

all wisdom and virtue will naturally

- How does one balance discipline and freedom?

come to him. (Buddha)

- Discipline is the bridge between

goals and accomplishment. (Jim

Rohn)

Body 1 (Discipline)

- We must all suffer one of two

- Definition of success

things: the pain of discipline or the

- Everyone seeks success

pain of regret or disappointment.

in life, few get it

(Jim Rohn)

- Success is the result of
- There is no greater evil than
long term hard work
anarchy. (Sophocles)
with focus
- Tyranny and anarchy are never far
- Success
needs

Topic

apart. (Jeremy Bentham).
discipline to carry on
hard work and focus

Discipline

for long time
means

- Importance
of
success,
discipline in army,

Introduction

government,
sports,

anarchy

- Aesop's Fable of "The Young Thief

students, etc.

and His Mother"

means ruin

- Discipline of body,
- Need to inculcate discipline since

discipline of mind, self-

early age

discipline

- Definition of discipline
 - If a person is not self-
 - How discipline is connected to
- disciplined, discipline
- happiness and success
- is enforced

Body 2 (Anarchy)

Conclusion

- Discipline is painful and people want
 - Discipline is an important determinant for freedom.
- success.
- If discipline is not enforced, indiscipline

- Discipline leads to self-discipline which becomes the order of the day.

transforms one's nature.

- Indiscipline leads to chaos, conflict and

- Self-discipline makes a person moral, anarchy.

ethical and law abiding.

- When there is anarchy, there is no security,

- Too much discipline is undesirable as it no rules.

chains our thoughts.

- Law of the jungle or of survival of the

- Lack of discipline leads to anarchy.

fittest prevails in such societies.

- Anarchy leads to ruin due to collapse of

- Everyone has to fend for oneself

state machinery.

- Our energies are spent in survival rather

- Be disciplined to achieve success and than doing anything fruitful.

avoid failures and unhappiness.

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SAMPLE ESSAY-6

Discipline means success, anarchy means ruin A young man had been caught in a daring act of theft and had been condemned to death by execution. When he was asked about his last wish, he expressed his desire to see his mother, and to speak with her before he was taken for execution. When his mother came to him, he said: "I want to whisper to you," and when she brought her ear near him, he nearly bit it off. All the

bystanders were horrified, and asked him what he could mean by such brutal and inhuman conduct. “It is to punish her,” the man said. “When I was young, I began with stealing little things, and brought them home to mother. Instead of rebuking and punishing me, she laughed and said: ‘It will not be noticed.’ It is because of her that I am here today.”

This popular Aesop’s Fable highlights the importance of discipline in the world. If we fail to inculcate discipline in children since an early age, they are likely to lead a miserable life later. The importance of discipline was explained by Gautam Buddha more than two thousand years ago as: “To enjoy good health, to bring true happiness to one’s family, to bring peace to all, one must first discipline and control one’s own mind. If a man can control his mind, he can find the way to Enlightenment, and all wisdom and virtue will naturally come to him”.

Discipline means the practice or training to obey rules or code of behavior as required. Discipline can be achieved by using punishment to correct misbehavior and reward to appreciate good acts. This can be applied to self or to others, as the case may be. Hence, due to discipline, the conduct of people is transformed as they develop the habit of following the laws and rules of the society to avoid punishment and gradually develop good habits which earns them rewards and leads them to success and happiness.

It is no secret that we all wish to be successful in life and fulfill our dreams.

Why do only a few of us accomplish our goals? Jim Rohn, an American entrepreneur, author and motivational speaker explained, “Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment”. Success means the accomplishment of an aim or purpose. It means to achieve positive results that can make our life better. However, mere having a wish is not enough for success. For example, almost a million aspirants appear in Civil Services Examination, but less than a thousand finally succeed. In the same way, thousands of people want to play for their country, win medals, get fame and become wealthy, but only a few succeed.

It is not easy to achieve success in life because success is the result of long term hard work with focus; and, it is not easy to focus since an undisciplined

mind moves in Brownian motion and reaches nowhere. It is only with discipline, that we can keep our mind focused and avoid distraction. Students need to be disciplined to

study for long hours over several years to succeed in examinations and make their career. Good sportsmen train with great discipline for extensive hours every day over several years to give great performance on the field. It is only when the army is disciplined, that it can fight well in the battlefield and can defeat the enemy to protect the lives of the people. Only a disciplined professional can be punctual and focused on the job to produce the best results for the organization as well as the best prospects for the self.

Discipline is no doubt needed in all aspects of life. Discipline of body leads to discipline of mind, which in turn, leads to self-discipline and subsequently, change of personality for the better. Once we are self-disciplined, we can perform even the toughest of tasks with least external stimulus. However, if we fail to adopt self-discipline, we are made disciplined by social strictures and, at times, even punishment.

It is frankly not easy to discipline our mind which is as restless as a monkey.

Most people want freedom and dislike discipline. They want to live their life their own way without giving due consideration to their duties and responsibilities towards others. However, if everyone keeps doing what they want to do, it will certainly lead to anarchy, or absence of order. Anarchy represents a state of lawlessness or political disorder due to the absence of governmental authority. It is utopian society of individuals who enjoy complete freedom without any government. Such a society may appear to be wonderful in imagination and fiction, but it is the most undesirable form of society. Sophocles, an ancient Greek play writer said several thousand years ago, “There is no greater evil than anarchy”.

If discipline is not enforced, indiscipline becomes a social norm which leads to chaos, conflict and anarchy. When there is anarchy in the society, people have to fend for themselves and all their energies are spent in their struggle for survival rather than doing anything fruitful. This gradually leads to the law of the jungle and the survival of the fittest. No person feels secure in such a society where the brutes and tyrants take control. Jeremy Bentham, an English philosopher, regarded as the founder of modern utilitarianism, warned the people of the perils of anarchy when he said, “*Tyranny and anarchy are never far apart*”.

It is thus evident that discipline is the most important determinant for success. No society or individual can succeed without discipline. If discipline is enforced since early age, it transforms the nature of the children who grow up into self-disciplined, law-abiding and ethical people. However, we must

also avoid too much of discipline which may as bad as too much freedom.

We must learn to balance freedom and discipline.

When we are disciplined, we enjoy our freedom even more. However, the lack of discipline creates anarchy, which ultimately leads to the ruin of the society and snatches away all our freedom. In such a society, everyone is a loser. The American author Jim Rohn said rightly, “We must all suffer one of two things: the pain of discipline or the pain of regret or disappointment”.

Let us follow discipline in our life so that we can achieve success and happiness in our lives and avoid the pain of failure and unhappiness.

Mind Map 7

EBD_8165

Brainstorming topic

Quotes

- How are words powerful?
- “The pen is mightier than the sword” : An English proverb
- How can choosing the right words help?
- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (Bible)
- Why can choosing wrong words be dangerous?
- How do words affect people and society?
- Examples of benefits of choosing the rights words

- Aisi vani boliye, man ka aapa khoye,

Auran ko shital kare, aapahu sheetal

- Examples of harm done by choosing wrong words hoye. (Kabir)

- How should we choose words to create a better

- Be mindful when it comes to your

world?

words. A string of some that don't

Body 1 (Power of

mean much to you, may stick with

words)

someone else for a lifetime. (Rachel

Wolchin)

- How the words are divine

- One kind word can change

- Power of mantras and

someone's entire day. (Unknown)

hymns

in

invoking

- A broken bone can heal, but the

nature and Gods

wound a word opens can fester

- Importance of words for forever. (Jessamyn West)
- scriptures, mythology

Topic

and religion

- Power of the word ‘Om’

Words are

for meditation and

spiritual perspective

sharper than

Introduction

- Words create emotions

the two-

- Why are words important?

– Extreme words like

edged sword

- Story

of

Draupadi

and

hatred invoke strong

Duryodhan

emotion,

- Story of Alexander and King

– Milder words like

Porus

dislike invoke mild

- Meaning of two-edged sword

emotions

- Need to choose words carefully
- Choose the right words to

express desired emotions

- Use of positive words to

change your mood to

positive

Body 2 (Use of words)

- Politicians often use power of words to divide the people and rule over them
- Good leaders use the power of words to unite people
- Examples of the choice of words by Gandhi and Jinnah during freedom struggle

Conclusion

- Statements of caste and communal parties
- Words should be used carefully

divide societies

- Use right words to manage your emotions.

- False promises made by political parties
- Use positive words to motivate people

often lead to their defeat

- Don't lose temper nor utter harsh words
- Examples of using words inappropriately
- Use power of words to create better world in recent times

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SAMPLE ESSAY-7

Words are sharper than the two-edged sword The Pandavas had built a beautiful crystal palace in Hastinapur; and, the Kaurava prince Duryodhana along with Sakuni was taking a round of the palace. As they came across a crystal surface, Duryodhana, out of ignorance, mistook it for a pool of water, and drew up his clothes. Sometime after, he mistook a lake of crystal water, adorned with lotuses of crystal petals, for crystal surface and fell into it with all his clothes on. The Pandava queen Draupadi ridiculed Duryodhana quipping, ‘Blind son of a Blind Father’.

Duryodhana felt humiliated and decided to take revenge. He sought it later by trying to strip Draupadi after having won her in a game of dice. This enraged the Pandavas and soon the Mahabharata war started between the Kauravas and Pandavas.

This story from Mahabharata reminds us of the power of words. If we don't use our words carefully, we may hurt people and make them our enemies.

However, if we use the words appropriately, we can reap rich dividend from it. It is said that when Alexander attacked India more than two thousand years ago, the Indian king Porus fought until the end, but he was defeated and captured. When Porus was brought before Alexander, he asked, ‘How would you like to be treated?’ Porus was unafraid and said, ‘As a king treats another king.’ Alexander was so impressed with his brave words that he not only forgave him, but also he made him an ally.

Words are truly sharper than the two-edged sword. They can make or mar our life. Words are even compared with God. Bible says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”.

We human beings communicate with words. Words communicate not only knowledge from one person to another, but also, emotions. Right words can make us happy while wrong words can make us miserable. Sant Kabirdas advised people, “Aisi vani boliye, man ka aapa khoye, auran ko shital kare, apahu sheetal hoye”. (Speak in such words that connect hearts; and make others as well as you happy and calm.)

The power of words had been recognized by man in the very beginning of human civilization. In India, Vedic mantras and hymns have been used in all rituals for invoking Nature and Gods. According to Hindu scriptures, the single word ‘Om’ depicts the eternal sound of the universe. It signifies the essence of the ultimate reality, consciousness or Atman. ‘Om’ is used extensively for meditation and spiritual practices. It was the power of words that created religions, scriptures and mythologies in different parts of the world that connected millions of people in one thread due to their common beliefs and practices.

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All the scientific, philosophical and spiritual knowledge is conveyed using words. It is the power of words that develops the imagination of writers and poets and binds a reader to their works. Words also convey the writer or speaker's emotions and at the same time, generate or evoke emotions in others. Therefore, the choice of right words is necessary when dealing with people. For example, when we use strong emotive words like 'hatred' we tend to generate high degree of negative emotions. However, when we use a milder word 'dislike', the negativity is considerably reduced. We also have the choice of positive words more often like 'feeling great', 'thank you', 'obliged',

'delighted', etc. to create positivity in us as well as in other people. If we learn to choose the right words, we can create positive emotions in ourselves and the people around us which would create a better world.

Who knows the power of words better than the politicians? Good leaders use the power of words to unite people. During independence movement, Gandhi ji used the power of words to unite millions of people to fight against the British and give India freedom. However, the words of Mohammad Ali Jinnah created the Hindu-Muslim divide, which eventually led to the creation of Pakistan. In the modern times, many politicians use the power of words to play with the emotions of people and sway their loyalty and opinion. Extreme statements made by political leaders create distrust and communal divide among the people. It is also common for the political parties to make false promises to win an election. However, when they fail to fulfill their promises, they lose the trust of the people who then vote them out of power.

The inappropriate use of words by many political leaders of India in recent times has caused damage to their reputation and has spread hatred. For example, Rajeev Gandhi's statement: "When a big tree falls, the earth shakes"

during the 'Sikh riots' still haunts the Congress party during elections. During 2007, Sonia Gandhi used the word "Maut ke Saudagar" in an election rally for Narendra Modi, which still embarrasses her and her party. In the same way, Mr Narendra Modi's reputation was undermined when he inappropriately described Sunanda Pushkar, wife of Shashi Tharoor as '50 crore ki girlfriend'. A tweet by Meghalaya Governor Tathagata Royto "Boycott everything Kashmiri" hogged the limelight in the national and international media for its inappropriate reference to an integral part of India. We must follow the words of the author Rachel Wolchin "Be mindful when it comes to your

words. A string of some that don't mean much to you, may stick with someone else for a lifetime."

"The pen is mightier than the sword," says a famous English proverb. Like a sword, words also cut both ways. Words can have both favorable and unfavorable consequences. We must understand the power of words and learn to use words carefully. We can never heal the wounds inflicted on a

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person's soul by your hurtful words. The American author Jessamyn West rightly said, "A broken bone can heal, but the wound a word opens can fester forever." Let us develop the habit of thinking before speaking or writing. We must weigh all the pros and cons of using every word and choose the best word for the occasion to create positivity, love and compassion in the society.

We can manage our emotions and achieve success by using the right words at the right time. We must use positive words to motivate people and make them happy. We must never lose our temper nor should we utter words that can damage relationships with our loved ones and others. We must learn to use words to build relationships and not break them. Someone has wisely said, "One kind word can change someone's entire day." Let us learn to use the power of words to make someone's day.

Mind Map 8

EBD_8165

Brainstorming topic

Quotes

- What is Wisdom?
- "Where is the wisdom we have
- What is Truth?

lost in knowledge? Where is

- Who is wise?

the knowledge we have lost in

- Why wise people are interested in truth?

information?” (T.S. Eliot)

- What is the relationship between wisdom and

- “The Only Source of Knowledge is

truth?

Experience”. (Albert Einstein)

- How wisdom finds truth?

- “Beware of false knowledge; it is more dangerous than ignorance.”

(George Bernard Shaw)

Definitions

- Christ Jesus said, “Ye shall know the

- Truth

truth, and the truth shall make you

– Truth is the body of

free.” (Bible)

real things, events, and

- “True wisdom comes to each of

facts : ACTUALITY

us when we realize how little we

– Truth is a judgment,

understand about life, ourselves,

proposition, or idea

and the world around us”. (Socrates)

that is true or accepted

- “Believe nothing, no matter where

as true

you read it, or who said it, no matter

– Truth the body of

if I have said it, unless it agrees with

true statements and

your own reason and your own

propositions

Topic

common sense.” (Buddha)

- Wisdom

Wisdom finds

– Wisdom is the quality

of having experience,

truth

Introduction

knowledge, and good

- What is truth?

judgement; the quality

- Why do we need to know the

of being wise

truth?

– Wisdom is the ability

- How truth help discovery of

to use your knowledge

knowledge of various kinds?

and experience to

- Truth is often hidden in the

make good decisions

heap of untruth

and judgments. Use

- Power of truth (Satyamev

of positive words to

Jayate)

change your mood to

positive

- Sweet lies are popular than

bitter truth

- Need to know the truth

Body

- Define truth and wisdom

- Benefits of truth

Conclusion

- Consequences of lying
- Acquire knowledge from right sources.
- Truth is known by investigation and
- Don't believe easily and get fooled experimentation frequently.

• Wise person reaches the truth since he

• Experience

and

experiment

with

values truth

knowledge

- Truth is known by experience
- Wise people take pain to know truth
- Examples of people who discovered
- Truth is eternal and immutable.

different types truth (Buddha, Socrates,

• Truth leads to happiness, freedom and Galileo, Gandhi)

success

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SAMPLE ESSAY-8

Wisdom finds truth

We are all interested in knowing the truth since the knowledge of truth is quite valuable for us. All knowledge of science, philosophy, history, geography, psychology etc., is the attempt to find the truth. We also know that being truthful is important for happiness and success in life. Humanity has progressed rapidly in the last couple of centuries mainly because it has been able to discard the popular myths and discover the laws of nature to deeply understand the reality using scientific investigations. The Indian sages had discovered the power of truth several thousand years ago. The Indian emperor Asoka inscribed the message ‘Satyamev Jayate’ (Truth alone triumphs) on his Sarnath Lion Capital. This message was found to be so important for India that the Government of India adopted it as the national emblem.

It is, however, not easy to discover the truth when there are so many myths and fallacies created by some human beings that are believed by a large number of people as truth. It is not easy to convince such people of inconvenient truths as they are rather comfortable with the convenient fallacies. Truth is often bitter and many people choose to remain happy with their false knowledge. The Irish scholar George Bernard Shaw warned people about the perils of false knowledge, “Beware of false knowledge; it is more dangerous than ignorance.”

Let’s now understand what truth is. Truth is defined as the body of real things, events, and facts. It tells us what is actual and real. However, it is not easy to know the reality or actuality without great effort and before due investigation. Truth simply exists and it is not created for a purpose. Lie on the other hand is always created for some purpose, often, for the benefit of the creator. Salesmen may lie to sell their products while politicians may lie to get votes. Unfortunately, false information presented as truth has become so common in the modern world that people are not willing to accept the truth even when it is right before them. The American poet T.S. Eliot lamented,

“Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?”

Lies are beautiful in appearance while truth is bitter in reality. In the modern time, the electronic and print media often rely on half-truths or lies to increase their TRPs as people are more interested in listening to the sweet lies presented as truth rather than interested in knowing bitter truth. It is no wonder then that lies travel fast in the world. Mark Twain summed up this bitter truth as, “A lie can travel half way around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes.”

However, lies get exposed, sooner or later. Once a lie is exposed, the people or the organisations propagating the lie lose their credibility. Once you lose your credibility, it is virtually impossible to regain it. Who can forget the wise words of American evangelist Billy Graham, “When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost”. It is for this reason that many clever and cunning people instead of telling an outright lie, present the half-truth which can’t be proven false due to some content of the truth. However, such a half-truth is as harmful to the humanity as untruth.

It is, therefore, important for us to know the truth and differentiate it from untruth. However, the person who speaks the truth faces the wrath of the people who trust the myths and fallacies. More than five centuries ago, when Galileo gave the ‘heliocentric’ theory of the universe and told the world that the Earth revolves around the Sun, it infuriated the clergies who believed in the ‘geocentric’ theory of the universe of Bible that placed Earth in the centre of Universe. Galileo was punished for having an opinion contrary to the Holy Book and sentenced to lifetime house arrest and the publication of any of his works was forbidden. The Church in its attempt to suppress the truth seems to have forgotten the message of Christ Jesus, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”. However, truth can never be concealed for long. When Galileo was taken to prison he muttered the rebellious phrase “And yet it moves”. And today the whole world knows the truth that Earth revolves around Sun and not otherwise. Gautam Buddha also gave a similar message to humanity, “Believe nothing, no matter where you read it, or who said it, no matter if I have said it, unless it agrees with your own reason and your own common sense.”

It is, however, not easy to discover the truth which is usually buried deep in the heap of untruth. It needs wisdom to separate truth from untruth. A wise man has to conduct numerous experiments and analysis to know the truth. He is willing to accept the truth irrespective of whether it suits him or not. The desire of Mahatma Gandhi to know the truth led him to keep experimenting in his life and suffer all types of pains in the process. He aptly titled his autobiography ‘My Experiments with Truth’. Albert Einstein was not far when he stated, “The only source of knowledge is experience”.

Wisdom is the quality of possessing experience, knowledge, and good judgement. A wise man has not only knowledge, but the ability to use his knowledge and experience to make good decisions and judgments. Therefore, he is able to demonstrate to the world the power of truth so that people can discard their old beliefs. For example, Gandhi used the age old principle of nonviolence to unite Indians in their fight against the British rule and give India its due freedom.

Most people acquire knowledge from external sources and they believe them without testing them in the real world. They treat information on face value as knowledge and believe it as truth. They rarely take the pain to experience the knowledge and verify its truth. Since they tend to believe easily, they are also befooled frequently.

Wise people always test the veracity of anything that is believed to be true.

If the information is found to be right, they accept it, else they discard it.

Gradually, they are able to live with the truth and become free from the untruth. They keep discovering truth throughout their life because discovery of truth is their passion and love. They know so much and yet they consider themselves ignorant because they know that what they know is far less than what they don't know. Socrates, one of the greatest philosophers of the world, said so wisely, "True wisdom comes to each of us when we realize how little we understand about life, ourselves, and the world around us".

Let us not become the repository of information, but be wise to find truth because only truth can lead us to happiness, freedom and success.

Mind Map 9

EBD_8165

Brainstorming topic

Introduction

- What is Universal Basic Income (UBI)?
- Congress's

NYAY

scheme

- Why has UBI become more relevant in present times?

proposes for the poorest 20%

- What are the present social security schemes?

of India's households a basic

- How is UBI better than the existing schemes?

income of Rs 72,000 a year

- What are the pros and cons of UBI?

- Around 50 million families, or

nearly 250 million people, will

- What are the recent examples of UBI?

benefit

- How can it be implemented in India?

- Cost Rs 3-4 trillion a year, or

about 2% of the GDP

Body

- UBI has found supporters among

- Definition of UBI

people with diverse political

- UBI should be sufficient

views

to meet a person's basic

- Mark

Zuckerberg,

Stephen

needs

Hawking, Elon Musk and Bernie

- Unbecoming of civilized

Sanders endorsed it

society to let people

- Leftists believe that it will reduce

die of hunger and

poverty and inequality

malnutrition

simply

- Right-wingers hope it will be a

because they could not

Topic

more efficient welfare system

find a job

Universal

- Schemes for under-

privileged:

Basic Income:

- Subsidy, free ration,

An Idea

Experience of different

social security schemes,

countries

pension

whose Time

- Finland's project started in

- Reasons for UBI:

has Come

January 2017.

- Social justice, right to

- Canada's ongoing project,

live, inequality

\$16,989 per year is provided

- Automation, robotization,

- Experiments of Kenya , Iran and

artificial intelligence

other countries

(AI), and the future of

work.

- Experience of different

countries

Pros and Cons

- Pros

– Simple and efficient, Reduces corruption and delay, Best way to end poverty, Society can cope with coming era of automation-induced joblessness, Boosts

Conclusion

happiness, health, school attendance, and

- More efficient to eliminate poverty

trust in social institutions, Reduces crime

- Needs and priorities of different families

- Cons

are different

– Unaffordable , Raises taxes, Increases

- People spend the money to overcome monotony , Disincentivises work,

their Individual problems

Reduces productivity and contribution

to society, Fails to provide life a meaning

- Implement as a pilot first,

and job satisfaction

- An idea whose time has come

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SAMPLE ESSAY-9

Universal Basic Income: an Idea whose

Time has Come

In the Parliamentary general elections of India in 2019, the Indian National Congress included in its manifesto one extremely populist scheme called The Nyuntam Aay

Yojana (The Minimum Income Scheme) or NYAY. Congress party promised that if voted to power, it will enact a law under which it will distribute cash to 20 percent of India's poorest families as a minimum guarantee programme. All the households will receive up to ₹72,000 a year. Around 50 million families, or nearly 250 million people would have been benefitted by this scheme. This scheme was applicable if the average household income were less than ₹12,000 per month. It would have costed India ₹3-4 trillion a year, or about 2% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

This scheme was to replace various social welfare schemes presently being run by the governments.

India is not the only country in the world to consider a minimum income for its citizens. The concept of Universal Basic Income (UBI) is a hotly debated topic around the world. The idea of UBI is getting support by noted international business leaders like Mark Zuckerberg, Stephen Hawking, Elon Musk and Bernie Sanders. UBI is also getting support from the political parties of different ideologies. The leftist parties believe that it will reduce poverty and inequality while the right-wingers hope single payments will allow for more efficient welfare systems.

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "The world has enough for everyone's needs, but not everyone's greed." However, greed is natural to man. The more one gets, the more one desires in life. As soon as the need of a person is satisfied, it increases the greed and the person seeks for more. According to the Oxfam study conducted recently, the richest top one percent of the world owns more than half of the world's wealth. As a matter of fact, the 26 richest people on earth in 2018 had the same net worth as the poorest half of the world's population, some 3.8 billion people. Despite the development and prosperity of the human race in general, it also remains a fact that billions of people in the world still live below the poverty line and can't afford enough meals to fill their stomach.

It would be unbecoming of civilized society to let people die of hunger and malnutrition simply because they could not find a job. In order to ensure that the poorest section of the society gets the right to a dignified life, various social welfare schemes have been started by various governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) all around the world. In some schemes,

the poor are given free ration while in others, they are provided items of necessity at subsidized price. For example, in India, the farmers are given fertilizers at subsidized

rates and they are also provided subsidy on loans. In addition, there are various social security schemes to take care of the poor.

For example, the poor in India are provided free gas connections under PM

Ujwala Scheme and provided funds to build their own houses under PM

Awas Yojana. They are also given free education and health benefits by the governments under various schemes.

There are hundreds of such social welfare schemes sponsored by the governments at the centre and state levels. However, despite all these schemes, the poor are still suffering and are unable to come out of their state of extreme poverty. India, which is one of the fastest growing economies of the world, can't ignore the plight of the poor in the country. Any democratically elected government has to provide every citizen a right to live and live with dignity.

UBI is a governmental public program for a periodic payment delivered to all on an individual basis without a means, test or work requirement. The UBI would be unconditional, automatic and given as a right; and would be sufficient to meet a person's basic needs. The need of universal income is now a hot topic of discussion across the globe since the growth of the economies is not leading to the growth of jobs for the growing population. As a matter of fact, the job opportunities are diminishing across the globe due to rapid automation in the factories and robotization. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), data mining, etc., in the service sector, is drastically reducing the need of manpower as machines are able to perform many functions with greater efficiency and lower costs as compared to human beings. These trends are likely to continue and the problem of job scarcity is likely to become only graver with time. Hence, even the developed countries are experimenting with the idea of universal income to ensure at least bare living condition to all the citizens of their nation.

One such universal income program was started in Finland in January 2017.

A random sample of 2,000 unemployed people aged 25 to 58 was paid €560

monthly without any condition to seek or accept work. Recipients who got jobs continued to receive the same amount. Their feedback was compared with unemployed people with similar demographics. The pilot ended in December 2018, without conclusive findings, though the official report is yet to be released. The recipients, however, said they felt less stressed. Similarly, in Canada's Ontario province, an ongoing project gives some 4,000 people basic income payments for up to three years. The scheme provides Canadian \$16,989 per year for a single person, less 50% of any

earned income, and Canadian \$24,027 a year for a couple, less 50% of any earned income.

The result of this experiment is also awaited. Even a developing country like

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Kenya is experimenting with universal basic income (UBI) of \$0.75 per adult per day and Iran has implemented a nationwide unconditional cash transfer program. There are many other countries in the world who are toying with the idea of providing universal income to their citizens.

The advocates of UBI argue that providing universal income is simple and efficient. In the present era, the government can transfer the money directly in the account of the beneficiary without any scope for corruption or delay.

Once poor people get a regular income sufficient enough to live above poverty line, poverty is immediately eliminated in the nation. Hence, it is considered to be the best way to end poverty. Moreover, it'll help society cope up with a coming era of automation-induced joblessness. Studies have shown that universal income boosts happiness, health and school attendance; and increases trust in social institutions. It has also been found that there is a considerable reduction of crime, if the people get guaranteed income to take care of their needs.

However, the critics of UBI argue that universal scheme is unaffordable to most countries, especially the developing countries. In order to raise money for UBI scheme, the government is bound to raise taxes on those who are creating wealth for the country. Those people are likely to resent government for taxing them more to give out UBI. Moreover, if people get income without doing anything anywhere, it is bound to increase monotony in their life as they have nothing productive to do. It may also disincentivise work and reduce productivity of the nation as many people would prefer not to work at all and live on taxpayers' money. It is also true that when we don't have work, we fail to contribute to the society and to give life a meaning. On the other hand, when we are engaged in productive work, we not only get income, but also job satisfaction that increases our happiness.

It is thus evident that the UBI scheme is promising if implemented with care and caution. It is a more efficient way to eliminate poverty than targeted subsidies, which are prone to corruption and misuse. Moreover, the needs and priorities of different families are different and the government must not decide what type of needs they may like to fulfill. It would be reasonable to assume that most people would spend their money in the

prudent way to overcome their poverty, get good education and make a better life for themselves.

It would, therefore, be a good idea to implement the idea of universal income first on a pilot basis to test its efficacy before implementing it on a pan India level. If implemented properly, it can remove poverty and ensure inclusive growth in the society.

Mind Map 10

EBD_8165

Brainstorming topic

Introduction

- What is the meaning of jobless growth?
- India is the fastest growing major
- Is jobless growth an anomaly?

economy of the world with over

- Is jobless growth an outcome of economic reforms?

7% growth rate of GDP

- What are the data showing jobless growth?
- Over 13 million Indians enter the
- What are the reasons for jobless growth?

job market every year

- How can we increase job opportunities in India?
- Over 5 million men lost their job

between 2016-2018 according to

Azim Premji University's Centre

Body 1 (data)

for Sustainable Employment

- Number of persons in

report

the workforce increased

- The rate of unemployment has

from 398 million in FY

doubled in last one decade

2000 to 458 million in

- Unemployment in India is all

FY 2005, an increase of

time high

nearly 60 million or 15%

in five years.

- Increase between FY 05-

Topic

FY 12 has been only 473

Body 3 (Reasons for

million, i.e., an increase

Near jobless

slow growth)

of 15 million or 3.3%

over a span of seven

- Construction sector is going

growth in

years.

through depression

India: An

- Decline in the workforce

- Industrial growth has come

in the agriculture and

anomaly or

down significantly

allied sector by over 36

- Increase in Imports

an outcome

million

- No significant increase in

of economic

- Non - a g r i c u l t u r e

the real export of goods and

sector jobs increased

services

reforms

by 51 million with

- Impact of demonetization on

industry and services

the informal sector

contributing nearly 31

- Impact of GST on small scale

million and 20 million

industries

respectively.

- Stagnation in the IT Sector

- Concept of Employment

- Protective measures by US and

Elasticity

other developed countries

- India is witnessing a

jobless growth

Body 2 (Anomaly or Reform)

Conclusion

- Reforms

- Steps taken by government

– Reforms led to liberal import policies.

- Suggestions to improve employment

– Imports led to the closure of many local scenario industries

- Increase spending by government for the

- Anomaly

development of infrastructure

– Fault in data collection process in India.

- Public provision of social facilities

– 90% of the jobs are in the unorganized

- Filling up the vacant posts in government sector

organizations

– Growth due to rise in prices and not due

- Increasing the number of posts in to actual growth of the supplies.

government departments

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SAMPLE ESSAY-10

Near jobless growth in India:

An anomaly or an outcome of economic reforms India is one of the fastest growing major economies of the world, registering an annual GDP growth rate of over 7% in the last couple of years. However, the growth of economy has not been able to keep pace with the requirement of jobs in India. Due to increased focus on education, there has been substantial increase in the number of people getting higher education and seeking jobs.

Over 13 million people are entering the job market every year. However, instead of additional jobs being created, there seems to be loss of jobs. The rate of unemployment in FY18 was at a 45-year high, doubling from 3% to 6% in a decade, and hit a 3-year-

high of 8.4 per cent in August 2019, despite India being among the fastest growing economies. The situation has become even worse due to corona-virus crisis.

It, therefore, appears that India is undergoing jobless growth, which is a situation where in the overall economy shows an expansion but the number of jobs created is very less or nil in comparison to the growth rate of the overall economy. The trend of jobless growth has been visible for quite some time.

As per National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data, the number of persons in the workforce increased from 398 million in FY 2000 to 458 million in FY

2005, an increase of nearly 60 million or 15% in five years. However, between FY-05 to FY12, there has been decline in the workforce in the agriculture and allied sector by over 36 million while the non-agriculture sector jobs increased by 51 million. Thus, the increase between FY 05-FY 12 has been only 473

million, i.e., an increase of 15 million or 3.3% over a span of seven years. The situation has become worse in recent years as over 5 million men lost their jobs between 2016 and 2018 according to a report by Azim Premji University Centre for Sustainable Employment published in 2019.

The problem of rising unemployment has baffled the government and economists alike. It is an irony that the number of job seekers is increasing every year due to better educational facilities in India, but the job opportunities are declining. Some experts believe that the jobless growth is the result of the economic reforms by which India opened its market to the foreign companies and adopted liberal import policies. This has led to the closure of many local industries causing huge unemployment. Some experts believe that the high rate of unemployment is due to some fault in data collection process in India.

Almost 90% of the jobs in India are in the unorganized sector and the data collection mechanism does not appropriately include jobs of unorganized sector in its surveys. The unemployment data thus can't be relied upon because the employment data of casual labourers, roadside vendors, contract

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labourers who are not shown on the rolls of firms are not properly accounted for in the jobs data. At least part of the growth may be a result of growth in commodity prices, productivity or a boom in the stock market evaluations, increase in the real estate

prices, etc., which is not leading to the actual growth in supplies. Some experts thus try to point out the phenomenon of jobless growth as an anomaly. However, most evidence suggest that the jobless growth is a reality supported by tangible facts and economic data.

It is a fact that the growth of economy automatically does not lead to the growth of employment in the same proportion due to employment elasticity, which is a measure of the percentage change in employment associated with a unit change in economic growth, i.e. GDP. It indicates the ability of an economy to generate employment opportunities for its population per cent of its growth process. Despite good growth, the employment elasticity in India declined from 0.44 in the first half of the decade 1999-2000 to 2004-05, to as low as 0.01 during second half of the decade 2004-05 to 2009-10.

Hence, high growth is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for increasing employment in a country.

There are many reasons for the jobless growth witnessed in India. The increased use of information technology and automation has led to increased productivity in businesses with fewer people being employed. Due to the stringent labour laws in India, companies avoid employing labour directly in their payroll and prefer to hire them from third parties, thus not reflecting their status in the job data. Growth of export has been slow in the last few years which has further reduced the employment opportunities in India.

On the other side, the rapid increase of imports has led to the closure of many domestic companies and a rise in unemployment. In recent years, the industrial growth has come down significantly impacting the new job creation. The construction sector which has high employment electricity and large potential to create jobs is reeling under depression for the last few years.

There is stagnation in the IT Sector due to the protective measures by US and other developed countries.

It is also largely believed that the demonetization carried out in November 2016 has caused negative impact on the informal sector. Since almost 90%

of the people in India are employed in the informal sector, there has been a huge loss of job there. It is also believed that the Goods and Service Sector Tax (GST) has adversely impacted the small and medium enterprises due to higher cost of compliance and the reduction of exemption limits provided to the manufacturers. Another reason for the lack of job creation in India is the poor quality of education and lack of skill among most of the educated youth. The protest and social movements against large industries

like TATA or POSCO have created negative sentiments in the businesses, which has slowed down investment in the manufacturing sector.

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The rapid growth of technology seems to be responsible for the increase of the productivity as well as loss of jobs. When technology is stagnant, the growth of income is usually in proportion to the growth in job opportunities. However, the modern world is witnessing an exponential growth of information and communication technologies which has helped the corporates to be more efficient. They are able to provide more output without adding any manpower and sometimes high growth is achieved with significant less number of employees. Automation and use of robotics in manufacturing sectors have also led to the loss of jobs despite improvement in the productivity. The emergence of Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Data Mining tools have helped the business to do many tasks using technological tools which were earlier done by the human beings. Hence, while productivity is increasing every year, the jobs are not increasing.

It would, however, not be appropriate to blame economic reforms for the jobless growth since a significant number of new jobs has been created in many sectors like IT and consultancy due to liberalization and globalisation.

India today is able to produce top quality products with the aid of latest technical know-how and the presence of numerous multi-national companies.

However, the nature of jobs has changed significantly. We can't hope to get low-skill jobs now due to rapid automation and use of AI.

India has to provide better education and training to people so that they can get new jobs. Significant reskilling and upskilling is required for the existing manpower to make them suitable for the new world. There is also a need for promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship to create many more jobs.

There has to be significant increase in the spending by government for the development of infrastructure like roads, power, education, healthcare, etc., to create the ecosystem for growth in economy and creation of new jobs.

Government has to further reform its policies to enhance economic growth and promote job creation. Increased expenditure for providing social facilities such as health and education may enhance job opportunities as well as help better development of social infrastructures. There are also a large number of vacancies in the government organizations, which can be filled expeditiously along with creation of more jobs.

It is high time that government takes the issue of jobless growth seriously as unemployed youths can become a great liability for the country in future.

India needs to create over 100 million jobs in a year to meet the demands of youths. This means India has to also significantly increase the gross domestic product (GDP) and bring specific schemes for job creation. It needs to improve the data collection process to identify the unemployment at every level, provide quality education and necessary skills to the youth besides integrating Indian economy with global markets with renewed confidence.

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Part B: Making your Own Mind-map

Instructions

In this section, there are 15 essays.

You can make the best use of this section in the following manner:

- Read the essay carefully.
- Create a mind-map of your own using the quotes, data, facts, etc. from the essay.
- Add your own points in the mind-map.
- Write your own essay based on your mind-map.

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SAMPLE ESSAY-1

Need brings greed; if greed increases, it spoils breed All human beings have some basic needs like food, water, clothing, shelter, love and security. If these needs are not fulfilled, it is difficult to enjoy happiness and satisfaction. The advancement in science and technology gave new dimensions to these needs and enhanced their productivity so that most of the people today are able to fulfill these needs to their happiness and satisfaction. If many people in the world are still not happy, it is because fulfillment of needs often leads to increase of greed, which is almost impossible to be satisfied. Mahatma Gandhi said wisely, “Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s needs, but not every man’s greed.”

Greed means intense and selfish desire for something, especially wealth or power. While needs are limited, there is no limit to greed. Unfortunately, most people can't differentiate between their needs and greed. They keep increasing their list of needs according to their achievements without realising that their needs have been satisfied long back and the new items are embodiments of their greed. As a result, they are never satisfied with their lives despite earning good income or occupying high position in the society.

Let us try to understand the difference between need and greed. Our needs are related to body, which has limits that can be fulfilled easily. For example, we have only limited capacity to eat food. The energy requirement of an average person can be fulfilled by consuming around 2400 calories per day.

Our body is designed to give us signals for craving as well as fulfillment of our needs. When we eat less, we feel hunger as our body craves for food. However, our hunger vanishes no sooner than our food requirement is satisfied. Once your stomach is filled, you can't consume any more food. Any excess consumption of food gives stomach ache or gets expelled in vomit; and habitual overeating tends to harm our bodies by making us obese and leading to several ailments. In the same way, we need only a few clothes to wear and one cot to sleep. These basic needs can be easily taken care of with limited income and resources.

However, most people are not happy with mere satisfaction of their needs.

They keep increasing their greed in the garb of their needs and keep pushing themselves to seek more and more. Greed is related to craving of the mind and is based on imagination. Hence, it has no limits. For example, you need only one room to live in, yet you may crave for a mansion in a posh locality to satisfy your greed. In the same way, people crave for expensive cars, Armani suits and five star luxuries when their needs are satisfied. They want to be better than others and they wish to show off their possessions and accomplishments to create envy in others. Their cravings never stop and

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they keep seeking more and more. Little do these people realize that in order to fulfill their greed, they are making their own life miserably dissatisfied and at the same time, are robbing the poor of their share of basic needs? James Castleton warned such people, "The less fortunate will never have what they need until we who are more fortunate realize how little we require to be happy."

A Swiss proverb says “A greedy person and a pauper are practically one and the same”. In fact, a greedy person is even worse than a pauper because the latter gets satisfied with little, but a greedy person knows no satisfaction.

Greedy people often follow illegal and immoral means to satisfy their wants.

In order to fulfill their greed for wealth, they don't mind engaging in corruption or crimes. To fulfill their greed for power, they shun all principles and cheat others. Some people fail to control their greed for food and eat far more than what is needed by their body. As a result, they become obese and suffer many physical and mental ailments. The German social psychologist Erich Fromm warned us the pitfalls of greed, “Greed is a bottomless pit which exhausts the person in an endless effort to satisfy the need without ever reaching satisfaction”.

Greed or the inability to control one's wants, cravings and urges can have other manifestations too. It is the greed of fame that makes a person be frivolous and pretentious and speak many lies to impress the people. Some people fail to control their sexual desires and in their quest to achieve sensual gratification, they commit numerous immoral deeds and lose respect and honour in the society. It is human greed that has caused over-exploitation of Earth's natural reserves and played havoc with the environment and climate.

It is thus evident that an individual is destroyed physically, mentally and spiritually if he fails to control his greed. If a society fails to inculcate right values in its people, the entire breed is destroyed in their quest to satisfy their greed. People need to be educated about the evil effects of greed so that they can understand their need and take measures to contain their greed. We must listen to the counsel of the author Linda Berdoll, “You cannot always have what you want. Sometimes you get what you need.”

The secret of happy life is to clearly identify our needs, which are indeed very limited. We must learn to be contented once our basic needs are satisfied and turn to seek joy in non-material things. For example, we must learn to cherish music, arts and literature instead of seeking wealth or power. We may render social service to help the poor and needy people instead of accumulating wealth. Instead of competing with others to feel superior, we must develop the spirit of cooperation to develop trust, love and compassion for fellow humans. Instead of seeking happiness outside, we must seek happiness

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within by simplifying our lives. The practice of yoga and meditation can help us discover ourselves and bring peace and tranquility in our lives.

It is in human nature to seek more and achieve more in life. It is due to this desire of knowing and accomplishing more that human beings have been able to discover, invent and create all that the world has today. To some extent, desire for more may motivate people to give their best. Desire becomes harmful only if it is unrestrained and unmanaged.

It is, therefore, necessary for us to identify our needs and seek its fulfillment.

The lesser our needs, the easier it is to satisfy them. We must follow the philosophy of simple living high thinking. It is of no use to sacrifice our basic principles and human values to satisfy our greed. Jesus Christ warned us about the perils of chasing worldly pursuits, “What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?”

If we can overcome our greed, we can make our life beautiful, joyful and peaceful with whatever we have. A song from the Hindi movie ‘Khatta Meetha’ gives this message, “Thoda hai, thode ki zaroorat hai; zindagi, phir bhi yahan khoobsoorat hai” (We have little, we need little. The life here is still beautiful). Let us focus our mind inwards to find contentment and happiness in simple things of life and create a beautiful and sustainable world.

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SAMPLE ESSAY-2

‘The past’ is a permanent dimension of human consciousness and values

Human consciousness is an inward awareness of an external object, state, or fact. It is responsible for our state of being and behavior; and the activity we engage in. It is due to our consciousness that we are aware of the world at any time. It is due to our consciousness that we are able to understand the world and realize something in our life. All human beings have a different level of consciousness; hence, they also have a different perception of the same world. It is thus rightly said, ‘We don’t see the world as it is. We see the world as we are’. An evil person sees evil everywhere, while a good person sees goodness all around. Our perception is subjective which depends as much on the objective reality as it depends on our own values and consciousness.

The Buddhist monk and scholar Eckhart Tolle explained, “Remember that your perception of the world is a reflection of your state of consciousness.”

Human values represent important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and what is desirable or undesirable. For example, honesty is good and desirable, while corruption is bad and undesirable. In the same way, human values like truthfulness, faithfulness, kindness, love, compassion and justice are desirable as they help make a better society and a better human being. However, their relative importance varies for each person. Human values thus mean the act of cherishing something, holding it dear and also, the act of passing judgement upon the nature and amount of its value as compared with something else.

Human consciousness and values are subjective. When we achieve what we value more, we feel happy. The American author Ayn Rand described happiness to be the state of consciousness which proceeds from the achievement of one's values. Hence, our values play extremely important role in making our life more joyful and fulfilling.

Prof. R. K. Mukerjee defines human value as “socially approved desires and goals that are internalized through the process of conditioning, learning or socialization and aspirations.” These values are not created by us alone. They evolve over a period of time. We learn these values from our elders, parents, and teachers and from society since our childhood. We also acquire these values from our leaders. Culture, tradition and religion of an individual also plays an important role in the cultivation of these values. However, even our elders and teachers have learned these values from their elders and teachers.

Hence, these values are passed from one generation to another.

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Albert Einstein once said, “The only source of knowledge is experience”.

It is so because our true knowledge comes only from our experience. For example, unless you have tasted a mango, you can't know the taste of a mango even if you read numerous books on mango. In the same way, unless we have suffered pain in life, we won't be able to understand the true nature of pain. What we experience becomes part of our life and transforms our knowledge forever. As our consciousness and values come from the society, they bear the imprint of our past. Many core cultural and traditional values were created thousands of years ago and passed on to us from one generation to another. These values contain the wisdom acquired by our ancestors through their experiences from time immemorial. It is difficult to change that past for it has made a place in our collective consciousness and values over generations; it has become our culture.

Our consciousness is our state or activity that is characterized by sensation, emotion, volition, or thought. Our emotions are the result of our understanding of the world and our thoughts are derived from the beliefs acquired by us in our life. Even our sensation is a product of our own thoughts and beliefs. For example, a meat eater may be tempted by the sight of meat, but a vegetarian may be repulsed by it. A Christian or a Muslim may enjoy meat-eating as their religion permits it, but a Jain may consider eating meat a sin, since their religion prohibits it. However, both types of people would find their actions appropriate and justifiable since their action is right in accordance with their own consciousness and values.

We often believe that our volition or will is free, but it is actually shaped by the way we have been brought up and the society plays an important role in it. For example, Indians may strive for government jobs more as compared to the Western countries because government jobs are more valued in the Indian society. We acquire our thoughts from the people with whom we closely interact and thus are influenced by the social values and tradition which are passed down from generation to generation.

Our past thus plays an important role in the formation of our values. For example, Indians tend to respect their parents and obey them even when they are grown up and independent. Indian couples consider Ram and Sita as their ideals and follow their life. The Western world, on the other hand, is inspired by the Greek Mythology and follows a different set of values. Indians still find it difficult to get rid of caste affiliations, the value which originated in the Vedic age, several thousand years ago, in the form of the Varna system.

The marriage ceremonies of Indians are still conducted in the Vedic traditions and most Indians still consider marriage as sacred and irrevocable.

Our past is thus a permanent dimension of our consciousness and values because past cannot be obliterated. However, everything that was practised

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in the past was not good and many of these values require change now.

In recent years, the world has come closer across boundaries and we are exposed to different sets of values practised in different parts of the world.

We should learn good values from others and develop a higher level of consciousness so as to contribute to transforming our world for the better and solve the problems

plaguing all humanity. Albert Einstein said it aptly, “No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.”

We must take the advantage of the globalization of the human values.

Globalization is leading to the synthesis of different human values across the globe and leading to higher level of human consciousness and values.

We must use this opportunity to develop cosmopolitan human values that should include the values of different cultures, traditions and religions. For example, we must discard all discriminations made on the basis of caste, creed, race or gender and treat everyone equally giving maximum emphasis on freedom, justice and equality.

Sathya Sai Baba once said, “Conflicts and factions, violence and upheavals are caused by the neglect of human values in daily life”. We must learn good values from our past as well as develop new set of human values from the present world to develop a higher level of consciousness that can make our world more united, peaceful and joyful.

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SAMPLE ESSAY-3

Quick but steady wins the race

We have heard the Aesop’s Fable of the legendary race between the hare and the tortoise in which the tortoise won the race because he was slow and steady. Hence, came the famous saying that ‘slow and steady wins the race.’

If we investigate the story, we would realize that the tortoise won the race not because he was slow, but because he was steady. If the hare would have been even half as steady, the tortoise had no chance to win the race. Hence, running slowly was a serious handicap of the tortoise and he was saved only because he was steady. This fable thus highlights the role of steadiness or perseverance for getting success in life. It teaches us that even if we are less talented, we can still achieve success, if we are steady in our endeavour.

This story, however, assumes that there are only two players in the game; one is smart and lazy, while the other is slow but steady. In the real world, the competition is much harder and there are many competitors. The hare lost due to his arrogance and complacency; which is not true in real world.

Most people in the real world are highly competitive and in order to win the race, you must not only be steady, but also quick.

The modern world is a competitive world. Gone are the days when success and privileges were dependent upon your birth or talent alone. The modern society across the world is much more egalitarian today and privileges can be earned and achieved on merit. Democracy is the most favoured system of government where every citizen enjoys the same rights. This change in human society has led to competition everywhere. One has to perform to the best of one's abilities to achieve success in life be it in any field, whatsoever.

For example, lakhs of students appear in the Civil Services Examination for only a few hundred seats. If you wish to get education in a top Engineering or Management college, you have to be at the top level to succeed the competitive examination. You have to be the best if you wish to succeed as an entrepreneur, writer or a singer. There is no place for mediocrity in the modern world.

We all want success in this world because successful people are valued more in the society due to better income, higher position and power. They hog the limelight and occupy the leadership position in any organisation.

The losers and the less successful people have to be contented with lower positions. Success, however, does not come due to luck or chance. Pele, Legendary football player, summed up the secret of success thus, "Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do".

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The harsh reality of the world, however, is that despite the desire for success, most people fail in life because they are not willing to work hard constantly for extended periods to prepare themselves for success. They want to enjoy the fruit of success without willing to pay the price for it. Bobby Knight, an American basketball coach advised, "The key is not the will to win...

everybody has that. It is the will to prepare to win that is important."

You can't win in life unless you have prepared well in advance. While winning is a joy which most people want, preparation is found painful and most people avoid it. It is not easy to keep working hard not only for days and months, but often for years to achieve

success in life. And you can't spend all your life trying to win competitions. You have to be quick to accomplish your goal faster than others.

Speed matters in every field of life. If you are a student, it pays if you learn fast and are quick to make a career choice. If you are in a leadership position, you must take quick but accurate decisions to make your organisation more competitive and rise to higher echelons of power. A quick performer in any domain of work improves the productivity of the organisation and makes it more efficient and competitive.

While speed is extremely important for success, the role of perseverance cannot be underestimated. You must be willing to work hard continuously for a long time till you achieve success. Just like it takes time for a seed to become a tree and bear fruit, it takes time for your hard work to fetch you success in life. A student works for almost two decades from early school to higher education and beyond, before he gets a good job. A sportsperson has to toil for years to win a medal and make his country proud. People have to spend their life in public to achieve success in politics.

It is not only the lack of hard work or perseverance that keeps most people away from success. What often makes people give up their quest of success is the pain of failure. When we fail in our endeavor despite hard work, our heart is broken. We wish to leave our dreams and settle for something less.

It is in those moments we must keep our focus and not get distracted to other things. It may be worthwhile to remember that all great people suffered numerous failures before they achieved success. "I've missed more than 9000

shots in my career," Michael Jordan, the legendary Basketball player shared his mantra, "I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed".

There are many examples when people succeeded because they were quick and steady. Buddha chose his quest of knowledge to help the humanity of its suffering at a very early age and strived for several years before he got

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Enlightenment. Swami Vivekananda was hardly 30 years of age when he gave his groundbreaking speech to the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago. Steve Jobs and Bill Gates set up their companies when they were still in their colleges. They all achieved success because they were quick to decide and also steady on their chosen path.

It is thus evident that speed and perseverance are the most important ingredients for success. Technically, we need to develop efficiency by producing more output with least input to become more competitive. However, we must also remember that excess of everything is bad. We must not be too quick in decision making else we may commit more mistakes. At the same time, we should not work so hard that we burn ourselves out before we reach our goal. We have to find an optimum balance of quickness and steadiness to achieve lasting success in life.

Failure is part of the journey of success. We must not lose hope even if we fail in our attempts. We should learn from failures but must never quit until we reach our goal. While most people quit after their first failure, a winner keeps working hard courageously despite suffering the pain of failures in the process. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill said it aptly, “Success is never final and failure never fatal. It’s courage that counts.” Let’s develop courage and persistence to achieve success in life and realise our dreams.

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SAMPLE ESSAY-4

Values are not what humanity is, but what humanity ought to be

Two friends were walking through a jungle, when suddenly they saw a tiger coming towards them. One of them took out a pair of shoes from his bag and started wearing them. The other asked —“Do you think the shoes will help you run faster than the tiger?” The friend replied—‘I don’t have to run faster than the tiger. I only have to run faster than you.’

This anecdote speaks of a bitter truth of life. It presents the selfish nature of human beings. People often ditch their best friends to save their own lives.

Yet, we talk of creating a better world. We try to inculcate the human value of friendship through many stories like that of ‘Two Friends and a Bear’.

- Two friends were in a jungle when they suddenly spotted a bear. One friend who was slim and flexible immediately climbed a tree. The other friend was fat and could not climb the tree.
- Finding no way to escape, he threw himself upon the ground pretending to be dead. Soon the bear came and sniffed the friend lying on the ground; but took him for a corpse

and went away.

- The one who was on the tree came down and asked him, what the bear had whispered into his ear. He replied, “He was saying that you must never travel with a friend who deserts you at the first sign of danger.”

This story comes from Aesop’s Fables and is popular all over the world because it passes on a valuable message to humanity—‘A friend in need is friend indeed’. It teaches us that we must stand with our friends, particularly in their difficult times. Such human values are valuable for making a better society and creating love and trust among the people.

Human values are often defined as the lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. These values represent socially approved desires and goals that are internalized through the process of conditioning, learning, socialization and aspirations. We choose our actions based on what we value more.

In ethics, value denotes the degree of importance ascribed to a thing or action, with the aim of determining what actions are best to do or what way is best to live, or to describe the significance of different actions. Human values serve as guiding principles of human life. If human values were absent from the society, everyone would work only for one’s own selfish interests that would create conflict within the society and make everyone suffer. On the other hand, if the society has imbibed good values, each person works for the common good of humanity which leads to love, compassion and cooperation among all leading to the creation of a better society and happier human beings. Human values are thus not the representation of the reality, but the aspiration of human beings to rise above their selfish interests to create a better society. These values set up a high bar to challenge us to make ourselves better versions of our present selves.

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Human values are associated with the desirability of an action from the perspective of the society. The actions which are ‘good’ for the society have a high value, while the actions that are ‘bad’ for the society are of low value. For example, ‘truth’ is good and has a high value because it promotes trust and goodwill in the society; while ‘lying’ is bad and has a lower value because it promotes distrust and ill will in the society. Human values are thus connected with ethics because what is of higher human value is also highly ethical. It is important to remember that the ethics and morals are not natural to humanity, but actually cultivated by our ancestors, parents, elders, teachers and the society to make us better human beings; and, the society ideal.

The fundamental need of any living creature is its survival. Human beings are no exception. Nature also follows the law of the survival of the fittest. It is common in the jungle for a stronger animal species to kill a weaker one. Without human values, people would be no different from the beasts in the jungle which follow the law of the jungle that thrives on the survival of only the fittest.

Human beings using their higher intelligence and experience discovered long ago that they could create a better society if they followed mutual cooperation by sharing of resources, knowledge and skills. When cooperation takes place, society becomes better and eventually each individual benefits. In order to work together and create a better society, we need the cooperation of each other and that necessitates cultivation of many common values in people.

For example, when we teach the people the value of equality, we create an egalitarian society which gives dignity to each person. When people are honest with each other, people learn to trust each other. When there is trust, there is also love and when there is love there is progress and growth. In the same way, the value of tolerance helps people work with each other despite holding separate thoughts and beliefs. The sense of justice gives confidence to the people that they shall be treated fairly by the law and they don't have to be afraid of the more powerful people.

It is natural for human beings to be selfish like any other living creature. It is only through the cultivation of the higher values, that we can transform the human nature into selfless and divine. It is no wonder that the best human beings are often equated with Gods and worshipped. They become the role model for the society and inspire the rest of humanity to exalt themselves to their level. This is not possible unless we set high bars of morality and ethics for the human race to continually strive to become a superior being. The human values are thus not what humanity is, but what humanity ought to be. Great people inspire others towards greatness.

A great human being not only serves the world directly by doing good things himself, but also increases goodness in the society by instilling good values in millions of other human beings not only in his time, but also for all times to come. Lord Krishna teaches us to do great things in life because, "Whatever action is performed by a great man, common men follow in his footsteps.

And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues".

Once we set high standards by following higher values, we raise humanity to newer heights and create a better world.

SAMPLE ESSAY-5

Best for an individual is not necessarily best for the society

An individual is an integral part of the society. If society is an ocean, individuals are like drops in the ocean. Growth of society is not possible without the growth of individuals. Hence, it is the duty of the society to create an environment conducive for individuals to realize their full potential.

A modern society takes several measures like protection of individual rights, freedom of expression and rule of law to ensure that each human being is able to realize his or her full potential and contribute to the growth of the nation.

However, excessive individualism often leads to concentration of power and wealth. In a recent study conducted by Oxfam, the richest 1% people in the world have more than double the wealth of 6.9 billion people. Among that 1% are the world's 2,153 billionaires, who in 2019, had more wealth than 4.6

billion people in the rest of the world. While the number of billionaires has been increasing every year, almost half the world's population still lives on less than \$5.50 a day according to World Bank estimates. The income inequality is equally bad in India as well. The top 10% of the Indian population holds 77% of the total national wealth.

It is thus common for people to criticize the rich people who seem to have accumulated immense amount of wealth at the cost of the poor masses.

However, this is only a half-truth; since, over the last couple of decades, poverty has also declined drastically around the world. In the first Millennium Development Goal, it was aimed to cut the 1990 poverty rate by half by 2015. However, this goal was achieved five years ahead of schedule, in 2010

itself. As a result, in 2015, merely 10 percent of the world's population lived on less than US\$1.90 a day, down from nearly 36 percent in 1990. Today, nearly 1.1 billion fewer people are living in extreme poverty than in 1990.

The reduction of poverty would not have been possible unless there had been sufficient amount of wealth creation in the world.

It is largely believed that human beings are inherently selfish and they do everything to please themselves. Even when they are helping others, like doing some charity or social

work, the main purpose of it is to please their own selves. This philosophy is called 'egoism'. While there is nothing wrong in taking care of oneself to some extent, excessive selfishness creates conflicts and harms society.

It, however, is wrong to consider egoism as the main driving force of humanity.

Human beings are also known to be selfless or 'altruistic'. Many people have

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empathy for others and they often act out of concern for others' well-being.

It is common to see billionaires around the world contributing huge amounts of their hard earned money for the benefit of poor people, especially during the difficult times like the time of corona-virus pandemic. Human beings are, in fact, social creatures and not inherently selfish. A Swedish Proverb expresses the human nature of sharing, 'Shared joy is a double joy; shared sorrow is half sorrow.'

In order to make a good society, we need good individuals. The world reaps the benefits of a few people who are motivated to do extraordinarily good things in life. For example, a few entrepreneurs like Bill Gates and Steve Jobs revolutionized the use of information technology, computers and mobile phones benefiting the whole world. A few great scientists like Newton and Einstein discovered the deep secrets of nature and revolutionized the scientific knowledge of the world. In order to progress, the world needs people of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. These people are highly motivated to excel in life and work hard to their own satisfaction as well as to do good to the society. They must be given the liberty to do what they are best at besides incentives to keep them motivated to give their best.

When they create wealth or discover something new, the benefits goes to the entire society.

However, excessive individualism at the cost of the society is dangerous.

When people are driven only by self-interest, it leads to conflicts in the society among those who are seeking the same goals. When market forces are allowed to decide the value of a product, a few individuals make great fortunes by exploiting the needs of others to enrich themselves disproportionately. This leads to concentration of wealth in the hands of a few creating material as well as social inequality. This type of development is not sustainable as it destroys the moral fabric of the society. When people don't grow together, they grow apart. Extreme inequality destroys the values,

culture and tradition of the society. The former American Vice President Joe Biden warned us,

“For too long in this society, we have celebrated unrestrained individualism over common community”.

Thus the best of an individual is not always the best of the society; sometime, though, without having great individuals, the creation of a great society is also not conceivable. We need to optimize the individual interest with the interest of the society to create a more equitable and just society. This society shall be based on achieving the win-win proposition for individual as well as society as the best of individual shall be aligned with best of the society. No great nation can be built by sacrificing the individual. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, highlighted the importance of individuality when he said, “Unlike a drop of water which loses its identity when it joins the ocean, man does not lose his being in the society in which he lives. Man’s life is independent. He is

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born not for the development of the society alone, but for the development of his self”.

Hence, when individuals grow in legal and ethical manner, they also help the society and nation to grow. If excessive individualism is bad, excessive control of society or state is also not desirable. Society must create the environment for individuals to grow and realize their full potential to give their best to their country. John F. Kennedy, the former President of America has exhorted the citizen to contribute to the nation by his famous words, “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country”.

When citizens learn to take care of the self as well as the society, they create the most vibrant and happy society. The vision for such a society was conceived by Indian sages thousands of years ago when they taught the humanity to strive for the welfare of all.

सर्वे भवन्तु सिखनः सर्वे सन्तु िनरामयाः ।

सर्वे भद्राणपश्यन्तु, मा कश्चिद्दुःखभाग्भवेत् ।

Meaning:

May all become happy, May none fall ill |

May all see auspiciousness everywhere, May none ever feel sorrow |

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SAMPLE ESSAY-6

Courage to accept and dedication to improve are the two keys to success

We all want to succeed in life, because success brings us wealth, power and fame in the world. Successful people are widely respected and are honoured by people for their achievements. It is, therefore, no wonder that a large number of people strive to achieve success in their lives. For example, almost five lakh brilliant young people strive to become India's top civil servants by succeeding in the Civil Services Examination in India. The civil services in India not only provide people the best way to serve the country, but also provide them power, perks and prestige. However, it is also a fact that less than a thousand candidates eventually succeed in their endeavor and more than 99% of the candidates fail to realize their dream.

We achieve success in this competitive world only if we perform better than others in our chosen field in life. In order to perform better, we must have superior knowledge, skill and abilities. Unfortunately, most of us want success but are not willing to work hard to improve ourselves to become truly worthy of success. We often don't recognize our weaknesses and, hence, continue to commit the same mistakes over and over again. It is, thus, not surprising that most people fail to achieve the desired success in their lives.

We can't achieve success in life unless we become worthy of it. We can't improve ourselves unless we identify our weaknesses and overcome them.

However, most people prefer to see good things in themselves and bad things in others. When we see goodness within, we feel happy and satisfied. When we see evil within others, it feels good due to our false sense of superiority that we don't possess those evils. Thus, such an attitude of life makes us complacent and provides us instant gratification by doing nothing. People don't want to accept their mistakes to avoid working hard and improving upon them. They avoid looking for goodness in others which will force them to improve themselves. They prefer to follow the easy path of looking for goodness in self and weakness in others. However, such an attitude can never help us improve and become worthy of successes in life. The famous Indian poet Kabirdas, therefore, advised people to do just the opposite by the following verse.

Bura Jo Dekhan Main Chala, Bura Naa Milya Koye.

Jo Munn Khoja Apnaa, To Mujhse Bura Naa Koye English:

I searched for the crooked, met not a single one.

When I searched myself, I found the crooked one.

This verse teaches us that we must focus on finding the evil within rather than trying to search for it in others. When we find evil outside, we make others responsible for our own failures. We then try to change them and get

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frustrated when they don't change. However, when we find evil within, we can easily overcome it to become a better person. The Sufi mystic Rumi rightly pointed out, "Yesterday, I was clever, so I wanted to change the world.

Today I am wise, so I am changing myself."

Hence, the first requirement to achieve success in life is to accept the reality about ourselves including our weaknesses. Many people don't want to accept the reality, because the truth is bitter. They prefer to live in the comfort zone of their own make-believe world and be complacent with what they have.

They lack confidence in themselves and, hence, are scared of taking risks in life due to their fear of failure. These people bury their dreams under the security of their life. Benjamin Franklin rightly described these people in the following words - "Many people die at twenty-five and aren't buried until they are seventy-five".

In order to achieve success in life, it is extremely important to have the courage to accept our weaknesses, to eliminate them and improve ourselves to be worthy of success. If we don't know what we lack, how can we work upon it to develop it? We need a lot of dedication and hard work to improve ourselves. We have to come out of our comfort zone, face the risk by taking challenges and suffer the pain of failure to become better. We must learn from our failures and keep working for our success by improving ourselves.

No great person has succeeded in life without suffering failures. Henry Ford advised us not to be afraid of failure as, "Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently".

There is no shortcut to success. Calvin Coolidge explained, “Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not: nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not: the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.” It is only when we work hard to achieve good things in life that we realize our true potential and understand that man has infinite capacity to improve and grow by giving his best.

Hence, in order to achieve success in life we must have the courage to accept the reality, specially our weaknesses and then improve ourselves to deserve the success. Success does not come by chance or by aspiring or dreaming.

Even God helps those who help themselves. Only hard work can improve our chances of success, as the former American President Thomas Jefferson said, “I find that the harder I work, the more luck I seem to have.”

In order to achieve success, we need to become worthy of success. Once we deserve it, no one can deny us our due. Let us accept our weaknesses and work hard to improve ourselves to become a better version of ourselves. Let us accept the challenges of life and dedicate ourselves to improve to fulfill our dreams and achieve great success in our life. The former American General, Colin Powell, said this wisely, “Success is the result of perfection, hard work, learning from failure, loyalty, and persistence.”

Let's do it.

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SAMPLE ESSAY-7

Biased media is a real threat to Indian democracy Democracy is the most popular form of government today around the world and India prides itself being the largest democracy in the world. In a democracy, the people are the real rulers as they elect their own government from amongst themselves. Thus in a democracy, it is the government of the people, by the people and for the people. Media plays such an important role in democracy that it is often called the ‘Fourth pillar of democracy’, besides Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. A proactive media makes the elected representatives and the public servants accountable to public. It gives voice to people, forms public opinion and forces the government to heed the voice of the people. Media also plays an active role in exposing corruption and other malpractices in government.

It is therefore not surprising that powerful people wish to control the media to manipulate the thoughts of the people. Though, there are others methods to control the

minds of the people like religion, philosophy or literature, nothing can beat the power of media to influence the thoughts of people. American singer and poet Jim Morrison said this aptly, “Whoever controls the media, controls the mind.”

There is no doubt that a vibrant democracy needs a free press. When press is free, people trust the press to reveal the truth. Hence, when the journalists are doing their job honestly, they are widely respected in the society and enjoy tremendous power. However, when press is not free, it loses respect of the people. Tom Stoppard, the British playwright and screenwriter said, “A free press needs to be a respected press”. If the media becomes corrupt or biased, people are given wrong information and fed with false propaganda of the political parties which can misguide them to choose the wrong candidates in power leading to destruction of democracy.

Media has been undergoing its evolution for a long time. Only a few decades ago, press was the most powerful media and people relied upon the newspapers and magazine for authentic information. Their power was however, limited to educated people only. Once radio was invented, it reached every home and gradually became a powerful tool in the hands of the leaders to propagate their views. With the advent of electronic media and satellite television, the business houses that owned the private media became quite powerful. However, soon, the popularity of the social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, was to democratize the power of media as the common man became not only a recipient of the news, but also the creator of the news.

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Today, media has become extremely powerful all around the world. Its power is even more in democracies where it can freely influence the masses. In a vibrant democracy, people must have correct information about the public servants like the ministers and the civil servants. These public servants enjoy real powers in a democracy while the role of the citizens often remains limited to voting once in five years to elect their MP or MLA. These elected representatives once in power, often forget the people who voted them to power and use their stint to secure illegal benefits for themselves and their supporters. Instead of being transparent, public officials often tend to follow the culture of secrecy and red-tape. Instead of working for the welfare of the people, they often misuse the power to further self-interest. Media alone can make them accountable to the public by exposing their misdeeds to the public so that they can elect the right candidates in the next elections. The democratic process goes awry when the media fails to give people the right information, and people fail to elect the right candidate, as

George Bernard Shaw said, “Democracy substitutes election by the incompetent many for appointment by the corrupt few”.

In a democracy, it is the right of the people to know the performance of government. When the media is corrupt and biased, they, instead of exposing the misdeeds of public servants, often provide useless, divisive and sensational news, which suppress the truth and serve the same powerful and wealthy people. A biased media gradually corrupts the thoughts of the people. Instead of spreading the truth, it provides fake and paid news, which help political parties and serve other vested interest. Hence, when the media is biased, the power shifts from the people to the unscrupulous businessmen, criminals and politicians. Instead of uniting the people by using their power of communication, a biased media divides the society, creates hatred and leads to anarchy. The famous author Dan Brown wisely said, “The media is the right arm of anarchy.” When the media gets biased, it loses the trust of the people.

The India media over last couple of years is getting increasingly biased. It is common to get paid news presented as genuine news. Sometimes, fake news is circulated on behalf of people with vested interest to influence the opinion of people. In order to harness the power of social media, almost all Indian political parties have set up dedicated IT cells where thousands of paid employees work covertly to propagate the ideology of their masters and troll any other political opinion ruthlessly. The electronic media seems to be more interested in telecasting the sensational news to increase their TRPs (Target Rating Points) than to speak the truth. It is also common nowadays for many top business houses and political parties to directly control the media, which instead of being fair, provides only one sided view to the people.

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There are many reasons for the media to get biased in India. India is a land of diversity and the people are divided on the basis of caste, religion, language, culture and region. Instead of harnessing our power of unity in diversity to our advantage, politicians often exploit the diversities by dividing people to rule them. When businessmen run the media, their sole interest is to maximize their profits. They can't afford to annoy the government, which can harm their business interest. They may be threatened by the government, if they dare to go against them. Hence, instead of exposing the inefficiency and corruption of government, they find it more convenient to praise them to get government favours including lucrative advertisements from them. In order to maximize their revenue from corporate advertisements, they focus on increasing their TRPs by broadcasting sensational and even fake news. Some media houses and journalists misuse the power of media to even blackmail the corrupt and powerful politicians as

well as civil servants. They often extract heavy ransom for suppressing the truth about their misadventures.

A biased media is thus a great threat to democracy. India surely needs a free and fair media. There is an urgent need to regulate the media by framing stricter laws in order to make Indian media more transparent and accountable.

We need to develop stronger codes of conduct for the media, which can be enforced by an independent agency free from the government control. There has to be stricter and quicker punishments for fake and paid news.

India should also restrict the roles of political parties and business houses in running the media. The social media is losing its credibility because of the interference of the IT Cells of political parties and their incessant trolling of targeted politicians without any accountability. There has to be stricter punishment for trolling, spreading fake news and defamation on social media to restore its credibility and allow sanity to prevail. The IT cells and political parties should be made accountable if they misuse the power of the social media to spread hatred and divide in the society. It is important to realize that only an unbiased media can uphold true democracy in India.

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SAMPLE ESSAY-8

Farming has lost the ability to be a source of subsistence for majority of farmers in India Agriculture has traditionally been considered a prestigious and noble profession in India. There has been a famous saying in Hindi in rural India,

‘Uttam Kheti, Madhyam baan, Adham Chakri, Bhikh Nidan’, which means

‘Agricultural is the best, next is business. Still worse is service and prohibited is begging’. Former India Prime Minister Shri Lal bahadur Shastri gave the slogan, “Jai Jawaan, Jai Kisaan” meaning ‘Victory to Farmer and Victory to Soldier’. Our farmers used to be the main characters in movies and their contribution to the nation used to be highly appreciated. They were often called ‘Annadata’ or ‘Giver of foodgrain’ and honoured by citizens for fulfilling the most important need of our society viz. food. Thomas Jefferson, one of the founding fathers of the USA echoed the thought: “Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals & happiness.”

Agriculture continues to be an important sector of Indian economy. However, its relative importance has considerably declined. According to the census 2011, 54.6 per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture and allied activities and it contributes merely 17 per cent to the country's Gross Value Added. It is thus evident that their income is considerably less than the people who are employed in manufacturing and service sectors. In developed countries like the USA, 2% of the population is engaged in agriculture while the contribution of agriculture in GDP is around 1%. Hence, the situation is still better in these countries. In India, the condition of farmers has been constantly deteriorating over time due to reduction in farmer's income and the high risks involved. According to National Crime Records Bureau, around 40-50 farmers commit suicide in India every day.

Food is the most basic necessity of human beings. No person can work with an empty stomach. It is the farmer who takes the responsibility of meeting food and nutritional security of the society and toils in the hot sun, in the cold winters and even in the rainy season to produce food that can fill the stomach of their countrymen. When farmers are doing such an important duty for the society, it is important for the nation to ensure that agriculture generates gainful employment resulting in income gains to make the farmers economically secure. Moreover, agriculture generates raw materials that directly support agro-processing industries. Agricultural practices need to be upgraded so that farmers earn a good income and they can grow crops on a sustainable basis by earning a regular income from agriculture and allied activities.

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The condition of the Indian farmer, today, is quite pitiable. The Centre for Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), based in Delhi, found that given an option majority of farmers in the country would prefer to take up some other work. Poor income, bleak future and stress are the main reasons why farmers want to give up farming. A survey of 5,000 farm households across 18 states produced the following data:

- 76% farmers would prefer to do some work other than farming
 - 61% of these farmers would prefer to be employed in cities because of better education, health and employment avenues there
 - A high percentage of farmers complained of repeated losses
 - 70% of respondents said their crops were destroyed because of unseasonal rains, drought, floods and pest attack
- The reasons for the poor state of Indian farmers are not difficult to understand.

Over a period of time, the cost of farming has gone up due to increased input costs of seeds, fertilizers and labour. However, the prices of the farm produces have not increased in the same proportion. As a result, the profitability of agriculture has eroded considerably over a period of time. Agriculture is also quite vulnerable to weather, as a large number of farmers in India still depend on the season's rain for their water requirement. In the absence of well-developed insurance mechanism, farmers are prone to uncovered risk.

Minimum Support Price (MSP) today is restricted to a few crops only. Even for those crops, most farmers fail to get the due MSP because of corruption and inefficiency. Farmers are often forced to sell their produce in the open market at much lower price. The shelf life of most crops is quite short. In the absence of granaries and agro-processing units, the prices fall drastically during season and farmers are often forced to burn their crops as good price is not available. Moreover, there are numerous intermediaries between the farmer and the consumers who corner most of the income from the agricultural produce. As a result, the farmers earn a very small proportion of the retail price to consumers. Most of the farmers are not aware of crop insurance, whose coverage is also quite limited. Hence, if there is any draught or flood or any other natural calamity, the farmers suffer badly.

In recent years, many farmers have been forced to commit suicide unable to pay back their loans. Banks often push loans to farmers without analyzing their needs, in order to fulfill their own targets. However, when farmers default in loan payment, it impacts the credit history of the farmer; and, they lose access to new loans from institutional bankers. So, the borrowers are pushed to high-cost unorganized channels, like moneylenders, where the rates of interest are extremely high. This makes the situation of the farmers even worse and they fail to repay the new loans as well. Often, in such desperate situations, farmers commit suicide.

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It is high time that the government understood the importance of agriculture in India and took proactive measures to improve the conditions of its farmers.

In 2014, Shri Narendra Modi, the honourable PM of India, promised to double the income of the farmers by 2022. However, we are yet to achieve this objective.

The government must address agrarian distress, farmer's welfare and in-equitability as top priority. It has to provide better irrigation facilities and easy loans to the farmers to purchase seeds and fertilizers. It must also provide quality education in rural areas so

that farmers not only get opportunity to work in other sectors, but also learn to use the modern technology in farming to increase productivity. The government must also create additional avenues of income generation to farmers by fishing, dairy, etc.

The first President of America George Washington highlighted the importance of agriculture, “Agriculture is the most healthful, most useful and most noble employment of man.” Let us all work together to give our farmers their due for taking care of our most important need of food and nutrition.

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SAMPLE ESSAY-9

Globalisation vs Nationalism

Globalisation is the process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments worldwide. It means integration of the economy of the country with the world economy. Globalisation creates opportunities for the individual as well as the nation to become internationally competitive.

It involves an increased level of interaction and interdependence among various peoples as well as countries. In the era of globalisation, there is free exchange of the products, ideas, culture, manpower and other resources. It brings people together and helps them make the best use of one another's strengths. It presents immense opportunities to mankind.

Nationalism is often thought to be the opposite of globalization. It means identification with one's own nation and support for its interests, particularly to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations. It means protection of the interest of the local people and local industries by reducing the engagement of the individuals and businesses with the rest of the world.

Nationalism often leads to protectionist measures by the government by imposing high tariff on the foreign goods and services.

Nationalism is a highly emotional and subjective issue. When nationalism is promoted, people are judged by their obedience to the ruler or the government. In a democracy, people are judged by their patriotism for the country. It has been an important tool for leaders to unite people of their nation by invoking nationalism. Earlier, colonies or empires promoted nationalism to justify their empiricism. India's freedom fighters started the nationalist movement to unite Indians against the British rule that led to the freedom of India.

Nationalism appeals to people because it provides direct benefits to the local population. The government carries out many social welfare programme for the poor people of the country and ensures inclusive growth. It leads to the uplift and empowerment of women, and the improvement of the status of the socially and financially backward class. For a nationalist leader, his nation always comes first and gets priority over other players of the world. Thus, the small industries and farmers are protected by higher tariff and by imposing other non-tariff barriers for foreign players.

However, nationalism has negative sides as well. The world today is highly integrated and international trade plays an extremely important role in the growth of an economy. If there is excessive focus on nationalism, the growth of GDP may suffer. If there is over emphasis on nationalism, it might lead to jingoism and conflict with neighbouring countries. Moreover, excessive protectionism reduces competition which leads to inefficiency. This makes

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the local produce more expensive to the consumer leading to inflation and lack of good quality products within the country.

The concept of globalisation is not new to the world. The voyages of Vasco da Gama and Columbus centuries ago, led to the discovery of new countries by the western world which began trade with them and thus started globalisation. It was due to globalisation that the religions like Christianity and Islam spread in the world. International trade flourished in India through the Silk Route, Grand Trunk Road, Incense Route, etc. In the modern age, the Internet has played an extremely important role in the integration of the world into a global village.

Globalisation involves creation of networks and activities, economic as well as social, transcending geographical boundaries. It turns the world into one whole or creates a borderless world. It provides many benefits to the nation like import of goods and services at the cheapest rates, giving the consumers more options and cheaper goods due to competition and innovation. Globalisation has been found useful to improve the standard of living of the citizens.

India has come a long way in its journey of globalisation. Prior to 1991, India was almost a closed economy which led to the economic crisis of the same year. This forced India to open its economy and follow the path of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalisation (LPG). Dr Manmohan Singh, the then Finance Minister of India said on the 1991 reforms, “No power on earth can stop an idea whose time has come.” The

reforms set forth by him truly transformed India in the following three decades. Since 1991, Indian economy has been growing, gradually but quite well, and has come to be recognized as one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

However, for the past few years, India has been witnessing the flip side of globalisation. It has discovered that due to globalisation,

- Domestic market suffered, especially small and medium businesses
- E-commerce multinationals like Amazon ruined Indian companies Flipkart, Snapdeal, etc.
- Migration of the top professionals to developed countries caused Brain Drain
- People lost own culture and imitated foreign culture blindly
- Fast foods, video games, etc. created health issues
- Foreign control over Indian companies increased
- The West dominated the entire world through its MNCs
- India Incorporation's job creation dropped and unemployment soared high

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There seems to be a surge of sentiments everywhere against globalisation.

Even the USA, which was on the forefront of globalization, is following

‘America First’ policy closing its borders to the migrants. India too is witnessing the rise of nationalism. Indian government is promoting Indian industries in its ‘Make in India’ programme for the development of more local industries.

There is more pressure on the government to promote local businesses to create more jobs.

However, it would be shortsighted to deviate from the path of globalisation because India, as of today, is already deeply integrated with the world economy. A large number of Indians are employed in the service sectors working for the global companies. Most of the top manufacturers of cars, mobile phones and other consumer products are multinational companies.

We can't wish them away without sacrificing national interest. So, we must make the best use of globalisation.

Nationalism and globalisation must exist together as they are like two wheels of a bicycle. Both have to move together in perfect balance. We need to promote local businesses by providing them tax and procedural relaxation.

We must also provide funds for innovation and research by the students from IIMs and IITs to avoid brain drain. It is also important to make the people aware of the negative values of foreign culture and accept only the good things from it. We must strive to preserve local culture and traditions and also promote it worldwide.

It is wise to heed the words of the former American President Bill Clinton,

“No generation has had the opportunity, as we now have, to build a global economy that leaves no-one behind. It is a wonderful opportunity, but also a profound responsibility”.

The time has come to integrate the best of nationalism and globalisation to create a new world where the interests of all sections of the society are protected and sustainable development for all is ensured.

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SAMPLE ESSAY-10

The highest result of education is tolerance A group of blind men heard that a strange animal, called an elephant, had been brought to the town. None of them was aware of its shape and form.

Curious, they said: ‘Let us inspect and know what it is’. Reaching the animal, they groped for it in order to know about it. The first person, whose hand landed on the trunk, said “This being is like a thick snake”. To the one whose hand reached its ear, it seemed like a kind of fan. The third, whose hand was upon its leg, said the animal was like a pillar or a tree-trunk. The fourth blind man who placed his hand upon the animal’s side said it was a “wall”.

The fifth who felt its tail described it as a rope. The last one felt its tusk and said that the elephant was hard, smooth and like a spear.

This famous story has been used since ages to explain the limitation of our knowledge of the reality. We, like the blind men, can perceive only part of the reality, but we are convinced that we know the complete reality and start disputing the perception of reality as conceived by other people. Most people are either unaware or refuse to acknowledge the limitation of their knowledge. The English philosopher Bertrand Russell said this aptly, “The fundamental cause of the trouble in the modern world today is that the stupid are cocksure while the intelligent are full of doubt.”

The oldest Hindu scripture Rig Veda says, “Truth is One; the wise call it by many names” (ekam sat vipraha bahuda vadanti). A wise person, therefore, tries to see the world from different perspectives to know the reality rather than dismissing all perspectives other than his own. He knows the limitation of his knowledge and strives to learn more so that he can understand the truth better. For example, Issac Newton is considered to be one of the greatest scientists and mathematicians the world has ever seen. However, he was always aware of his limitation and admitted, “I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.”

Education is the process of teaching or learning in a school, or the knowledge that you get from this. Education helps us acquire knowledge from the greatest minds of the world. Education is like a ray of light that removes the darkness of our ignorance. For example, for thousands of years many Indians believed that the Solar or Lunar eclipse occurred due to the demons Rahu-Ketu gobbling up the Sun or the Moon; and the resulting dark phase was considered to be quite inauspicious. Thanks to education, scientists gained knowledge of the movements of the celestial bodies and were able to

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ascertain the real cause of the phenomena. They are even able to accurately predict their occurrence several centuries in advance. In the same way, for thousands of years, men believed that diseases like the plagues were sent by Gods to punish the men for their evil deeds. However, scientists were able to identify the actual cause of plagues and eliminate them from the world.

Good education expands our ability to think as we learn many ideas and concepts during our education that can be used in our life to better understand the reality. The American physician and poet Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr.

explained the power of education, “One’s mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions”. We are transformed due to power of our knowledge and the society gets transformed if it is full of educated people. Once people acquire true knowledge, they forgo superstitions and false knowledge that is readily accepted by the ignorant. Education also helps us develop better understanding of people, culture and traditions. We develop the ability to overcome prejudice and dismiss irrational fears. When we understand the world, we can predict the behaviour of people accurately.

Instead of insisting that we alone know the truth, we also wish to know the perspectives of other people. This process automatically leads to tolerance.

A French proverb beautifully says, “To understand all is to forgive all”.

Tolerance is the ability or willingness to allow or not interfere with the existence of opinions or behaviour that one dislikes or disagrees with. An educated person knows that the same thing may appear different to different people.

For example, the policy of reservation based on caste is viewed differently by the people who belong to the reserved castes and those who are from the unreserved castes. Hence, instead of sticking to his own perspective, he also tries to understand other people’s point of view and thus develops tolerance.

The ignorant people lack tolerance of other religions as they consider only their religion to be true religion. It is common in India to notice intolerance between the people of different states on the issue of language. There had been strong anti-Hindi movement in states like Tamil Nadu. Sometimes, different food choices of people from different regions also sow the seeds of intolerance between them. Even within the family, people stereotype the roles of women and become intolerant when women wish to play other roles in the society. In recent years, there have been demonstrations in favour and against certain legislations like Citizenship Amendment Act, each side openly criticizing and ridiculing the other without trying to understand each other’s perspective. Even movies are not spared and there were protests and violence by some intolerant groups when the Hindi movie *Padmavat* was released.

Intolerance is often a result of limited or false knowledge. When people believe a fallacy to be a fact, intolerance is born. It is important, therefore, for the people to develop scientific temper since results obtained by scientific

investigations are universal. Children must be provided moral education and encouraged to learn the diverse cultures and traditions of the nation.

It is important that media plays a positive role in the society and does not provoke distrust and intolerance by sensationalizing an issue. Government must make stricter laws for trolling, mob lynching, hate speeches and enforce them strictly so that people desist from creating hatred against one another.

There must be dialogue between different groups to understand and respect each other. Author William Ury advised, “Tolerance is not just agreeing with one another or remaining indifferent in the face of injustice, but rather showing respect for the essential humanity in every person.”

Dr A. P. J. Abdul Kalam once said, “The purpose of education is to make good human beings with skill and expertise... Enlightened human beings can be created by teachers”. When people are educated, they develop the ability of understand different dimensions of truth and develop tolerance.

Education can develop rational thinking and scientific temper which can help overcome prejudices and superstition. Educated people accept multiple points of view and appreciate diversity. India is a country with immense diversity and tolerance is necessary to maintain its unity.

The French philosopher Voltaire once said, “I do not agree with what you say but I will defend to the death for your right to say.” Only education can help us developing such spirit of tolerance.

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SAMPLE ESSAY-11

If development is not engendered, it is endangered We Indians pride ourselves as the largest democracy of the world. We are also one of the fastest developing economies of the world. However, so far the development has not been fair between the man and woman in India.

India stands 20th from the bottom in terms of representation of women in the Parliament according to ‘The Global Gender Gap Report 2012’ by World Economic Forum. Even in 2019, only 15 % women were represented in the Parliament. India ranks 120th among 131 countries in female labour force participation rates in 2017, according to a report by International Labour Organization. The enrolment of girls in higher education increased from 39%

to 46% from 2007 to 2014, but female participation in India's labour force declined to a low of 27% in 2014 from 34% in 1999 according to the IMF

Study 2015. Moreover, only 28.5% of adult women in India were found to have a job or be looking for one while 82% of the adult Indian men were working. Moreover, women get nearly one third less wages than men, according to a report by Oxfam India.

How can a nation grow when half of the population is not getting equal opportunity to contribute for the development of the nation? In January 2018, IMF Chief Christine Lagarde had demonstrated how raising women's participation in the labour force to the same level as men can boost India's GDP by 27%. It is evident that if the developmental process of a nation does not include woman, it can't sustain for long. Swami Vivekananda explained the importance of woman in development a hundred years ago when he said, "There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing".

Women have long been considered inferior to men. They were considered to be subjects rather than human beings with independent will. In India according to the laws of Manu, "In childhood, a female must be subject to her father, in youth, to her husband, when her lord is dead, to her sons; a woman must never be independent". The English philosopher Mary Astell rightly questioned, "If all men are born free, how is it that all women are born slaves?"

The woman has been subjected to numerous acts of oppression and even violence and outraging her dignity as a human, for ages. Even today, most parents in India prefer a male child that is considered to be an asset that will be a breadwinner and receive a wholesome dowry in marriage; while a female child is considered to be a liability that has to be given off in marriage with a huge dowry. Many parents resort to female foeticide and infanticide to avoid their liability. Girls are often not given the same level of education as

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boys because they are stereotyped as housewife with the duty to serve their husbands and children rather than seeking their own independent career.

Despite sacrificing their career and life for the family, it is common for many women to suffer domestic violence. Even when they go out to work, they often get lower salaries and limited types of jobs. All over the world, the representation of the woman in government jobs, legislature and corporate is extremely low, particularly at the top

positions. They are not considered to be fit to work in certain positions in many organisations, like the Army.

The Human Development Report 1995 of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) realized the importance of participation of women in the development of the world and accordingly raised the slogan, "Development, if not engendered is endangered". The Report analyses the progress made in reducing gender disparities in the past few decades, highlighting the wide and persistent gap between women's expanding capabilities and limited opportunities. It introduces two new measures for ranking countries on a global scale by their performance in gender equality and analyses the under-valuation and non-recognition of women's work besides offering suitable strategy for equalizing gender opportunities in the decade ahead.

It suggests that the key programmes should embrace universal female education, improved reproductive health and more credit to women. It also advocates national and international efforts to target programmes that enable people, particularly women, to gain greater access to economic and political opportunities.

The world is gradually realizing the importance of including women in the development process. The best way to empower women is through education.

Only an educated woman can be aware of her rights and contribute in the development of society. In recent years, activism in this direction has led to increased women's participation in all activities. There has been substantial increase in the enrollment of girls in schools, colleges and universities.

They are now better represented in work places. In order to protect them from sexual harassment, strong laws like "Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2013" have been promulgated. The need is to enforce them strictly.

There have been many initiatives by the Central and state governments in India to improve the condition of women in India. The most notable are

"Beti bachao, beti padhao" by the Central Government, "Kanyashree" by West Bengal Government, and "Ladli Laxmi Yojana" by MP Government.

Paid maternity leave of the women has also been increased by passing of the 'Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017'.

While some progress has definitely been made to empower women, a lot is still desired. For example, in order to remove the stereotype that childcare

is the sole responsibility of women, men must also be given paternity leave to take care of the children. Countries like the UK have legislation to this effect. In order to increase the overall representation of women, reservation in educational institutions and legislature must be enforced. Poor women may be provided education free or at affordable cost. Awareness campaigns must be launched for the health and sanitation of women. They must be encouraged to go for appropriate family planning. They may be provided self-defense training in schools, colleges to protect themselves. We must carry out celebrity campaigns and awareness drives to awaken women of their rights. Most importantly, women themselves must stand for their rights and support one another, too.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar once said, “I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved.” No nation can grow if its half population is not contributing in its development. Any form of discrimination or inequality is never good for society. There is an urgent need to provide equal opportunity of education and career to both men and women. Our new generation must overcome the stereotyped roles for male and female in society and learn to share responsibilities not only at the workplace, but also at home. Women must be encouraged to take care of finances while men should not fight shy of taking care of the home front.

The question of man vs. woman should never arise as they are the same species and originate in a manner alike. So, men must play proactive roles for gender equality. Jill Briscoe, a British American author, editor, and speaker, said this wisely, “A man of quality is never threatened by a woman of equality”.

Let us all work together to create a truly equal and just world by giving women their due.

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SAMPLE ESSAY-12

Citizens’ Right to Privacy and the Government’s Right to surveillance

In 2013, Edward Snowden, a computer expert and former CIA administrator, released confidential Government documents to the press about the existence of Government surveillance programmes. According to many legal experts and the US Government, his action violated the Espionage Act of 1971, which identified the leak of State secret as an act of treason. Yet, despite the fact that he broke the law, Snowden argued that he had

a moral obligation to act. He gave a justification for his “whistle blowing” by stating that he had a duty “to inform the public as to that which is done in their name and that which is done against them.” According to Snowden, the Government’s violation of privacy had to be exposed regardless of legality since more substantive issues of social action and public morality were involved here.

The Attorney General of the United States did not find Snowden’s rationale convincing. According to him, Snowden caused harm to the national security and had to be held accountable for his actions.

Snowden is since living in exile in Russia. This incident deeply divided American people. Polls taken in the US in 2013 and the years immediately after showed an almost equal split between those who viewed him as a traitor and those who saw him as a hero. However, over a period of time, many people who disliked him personally are prepared to accept that they are now living in a better, freer and safer world because of the revelations of mass surveillance.

The issue of the right to privacy of the citizen and the right of the government to carry out surveillance on the citizens for various reasons has always been seen differently by the citizens and government all over the world. While government justifies the surveillance on the ground of public interest like prevention of terrorism, drug-trafficking, smuggling, corruption, tax-evasion etc., the citizens consider it a breach of privacy. It is often argued by the law enforcement authorities that government surveillance programs do not threaten privacy unless they uncover illegal activities, and that if they do uncover illegal activities, the person committing these activities does not have the right to keep them private. Many citizens also support surveillance using

“I’ve got nothing to hide” argument that say that a person should not worry about government or surveillance if they’ve got “nothing to hide.” The motto

“If you’ve got nothing to hide, you’ve got nothing to fear” has been used by government across the world to morally justify their power of surveillance.

However, citizens want their right of privacy to be respected since they may at

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times engage into intimate and personal communication, which must never be known to any other person.

The battle between a citizen’s right to privacy and the right of the government to snoop on their privacy has been going on around the world for a long time.

India too has been battling the issue for decades. In 1990, the former Prime Minister of India, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, alleged that the Government was illegally tapping telephones of 27 politicians, including his own. Subsequently, a CBI investigation revealed widespread wiretapping undertaken by the Government. The matter reached the Supreme Court through a public interest petition filed by the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL). In 1997, the Supreme Court of India pronounced its judgment in this case. The Supreme Court, while rejecting the argument that the government action was ultra-vires as per the Constitution of India, held that the two statutory pre-conditions, namely, the occurrence of any 'public emergency' or in the

'interest of public safety', have to be satisfied. It also stated that the right to privacy "is a part of the right to 'life' and 'personal liberty' enshrined under Article 21 of the Constitution". Further, in August 2017, a nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court in the Puttaswamy Case gave legitimacy to the right to privacy under the Constitution of India. However, the government continues to carry out surveillance not only in the name of national interest or on the ground of public emergency and public safety, but often for political reasons targeting the leaders of political parties in the opposition.

It is true that government has the right to surveillance in the national interest since it is due to the surveillance done by the government over terrorist organisations and sleeper cells that they get to know about the plans of the terrorists and prevent the acts of terrorism. Surveillance has also been found to be extremely effective in tracking down the criminals after they have committed a crime. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) uses surveillance to collect evidence and arrest the corrupt public servants. The Income Tax department is able to detect many cases of tax evasion using surveillance. A country is arguably much safer when surveillance is done, rather than not.

However, the government cannot assume the absolute power of surveillance in view of vested interest of the leaders in power or political reasons. Recently in October 30 2019, Facebook, the parent company of WhatsApp, confirmed that Pegasus, sophisticated snooping software developed by Israel's NSO

Group, was being used to target Indian journalists, activists, lawyers and senior government officials. The journalists and activists are believed to have been targets of surveillance for a two-week period until May 2019, when the Indian national election was held. The Indian National Congress party alleged that it was the Narendra Modi-led government that had been

snooping on journalists, activists, lawyers and senior government officials.

It was also alleged that their leaders, including Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi, were also targeted.

It is thus evident that the government often misuses its power of surveillance.

They must not be allowed to breach the privacy of the citizens unless they have violated law or committed a heinous crime. The surveillance of the opposition leaders, civil right activists and the people who dissent with the government in the matter of national interest can't be justified.

It is, therefore, required that if any government agency violates the procedures and commits breach of privacy, they must be punished in accordance with the law. The Honourable Supreme Court guidelines in respect of right to privacy must be strictly followed in this regard. Unless the violators of privacy with no justifiable reasons are punished, their political masters would continue to misuse their power to take advantage of their position with impunity. Let us not forget that right to privacy is equal to life of liberty as already declared by the Supreme Court. We must follow the Constitution and respect the dignity of the citizens who are the true masters in a democracy.

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SAMPLE ESSAY-13

Is it right to curb dissent in the name of nationalism In February 2020, an event 'Democracy and Dissent' was organized by Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) in India. While delivering his lecture, the Supreme Court Judge Justice Deepak Gupta said that the right to dissent is essential for democracy and the criticism of the executive, judiciary, bureaucracy and the Armed Forces cannot be termed "anti-national". He further said, that the right to dissent is the "biggest" and "most important right" granted by the Constitution and it includes the right to criticize; and, that there can be no democracy without dissent. As long as a person does not break the law or encourage strife, he has a right to differ from every other citizen as also those in power, and propagate his belief. The American author George Orwell also highlighted the power of dissent when he said,

"If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear."

Justice Gupta was not the first to speak about the need of freedom and speech, and the right to dissent in a democracy. Only sometime back, a group of 49 citizens protested against the growing incidents of mob lynching in India. Among them were prominent voices like Ramchandra Guha, Mani Ratnam, Aparna Sen and Anurag Kashyap. However, these people were dubbed as “Urban Maoists”. Even the Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen was not spared for speaking against the policies of the government; he too was labelled “Urban Naxal”. It is a common feature nowadays to brand a dissenter of the government policies as a Pakistan sympathiser, “tukde tukde gang”,

“award wapsi gang” or “Khan Market gang”. However, the worst label often given for dissenting with the view of the government is “anti-national”.

It is important to understand the true meaning of nationalism. Nationalism consists in the identification with one’s own nation and support for its interests, especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations. It means loyalty and devotion to one’s motherland. However, many confuse nationalism with loyalty to the government in power. While it is true that in a democracy, a government is elected by the votes of the citizens and represents the view of the majority, it is wrong to assume that whatever government does is good for the nation or must be acceptable to all. There have been numerous instances all over the world when a duly elected government has led to the ruin of the nation. For example, Adolf Hitler was duly elected by the people of Germany, but he caused huge destruction not only to his nation, but also to the world. It is, therefore, imperative that when the educated and enlightened citizens find their government on the wrong foot, they dissent to let the government and people know the aberration in

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a government policy so that timely action can be taken to correct it and put the country on the right track.

Dissent is the essence of democracy. The American broadcast journalist and war correspondent Edward R. Murrow explains, “We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty. When the loyal opposition dies, I think the soul of America dies with it”. For example, when the Citizen Amendment Act was passed by the Indian Parliament allowing preferential citizenship to the immigrant minorities of select religions, protests erupted everywhere in the country. The protesters included not only the community directly affected by this, but also people from other religious affiliations who considered it against the spirit of the Constitution which declares secularism as one of

its core values, in the Preamble. In the same way, there was an outpour of dissent when the government amended Article 370 dealing with the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. Again, the dissenters were promptly branded ‘urban naxals’

and ‘anti-nationals’.

It is important to understand that every action, idea or polity has its pros and cons. While it is possible in theory to take a decision which benefits all, it is almost impossible in reality. All government policies are liked by some people and disliked by others because they benefit some, while may harm others.

Abraham Lincoln, one of the finest Presidents ever of the USA had said this rightly, ‘The true rule, in determining to embrace, or reject anything, is not whether it has any evil in it; but whether it has more evil than good. There are few things wholly evil or wholly good. Almost everything, especially of governmental policy, is an inseparable compound of the two; so that our best judgement of the preponderance between them is continually demanded.’

It is, therefore, important for the citizens adversely affected by the policy, to express their dissent or to criticize a policy so that review its policy in view of the dissenting opinion, if needed.

It is evident thus that the freedom of speech includes freedom to dissent as well as the freedom to support. In fact, it is inclusive of all shades of opinion, which must be respected by people even if they don’t stand in agreement.

No one said this more beautifully than the French philosopher Voltaire, “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to death your right to say it”.

Dissent also functions as a safety valve in a democracy. Dissent provides a counter opinion of the policy and action of the government, which can be used to make better decisions. If dissent is suppressed by use of force, it could explode unexpectedly with time. If non-violent protests are not allowed in the name of “nationalism”, they might take a violent turn.

It happened in the aftermath of National emergency, enforced by Indira Gandhi to shut down her adversaries; and in the USA when the government suppressed people’s movement against the Vietnam War. It happened in

Punjab, when the suppression of socio-political dissent by Sikh Akali Dal helped Bhindranwale stroke wounded emotions to create a violent extremist movement in Punjab.

Dissent is thus not only necessary for true democracy, but is also a form of patriotism. Linda Sarsour, an American political activist rightly said, “Dissent is the highest form of patriotism, and I intend to continue to push my country to respect the rights of all its citizens. I will not be silenced”. However, the protests and dissent must be done in legal and peaceful manner. The blocking of roads, burning of private and public property by the violent protesters or not allowing the supporters of the policy to function cannot be allowed.

Let the dissenters also understand that just as they have the right to dissent, others too have the right to support the government. While they have the right to express their opinion, they have no right to force their opinion on the government which is duly elected by the people. If the government is doing anything which is against the interest of the people of the nation, they can be voted out by them in the next election, the legitimate democratic process.

It is unrealistic to expect a government to take only such decisions which are beyond any dissent since there are always two sides to a coin and some people are bound to be against. However, dissent must be registered in a dignified manner and people must exercise tolerance for difference of opinion. At the same time, there must be severe punishment for those who troll dissenters inappropriately, spread false news or engage in character assassination. Citizens providing a counter opinion or criticizing government policies should be respected as nationalists, rather than branding them as ‘anti-nationals’, who do so in the best interest of the nation.

George Washington, the first president of the USA once said, “If freedom of speech is taken away, then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter.” Let us encourage people to express their opinion freely. However, let us also learn to be responsible in criticizing the government and respect its authority to govern the country according to the mandate of the people.

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SAMPLE ESSAY-14

Has the RTI Act outlived its utility

“Knowledge is power. Information is power,” said Robin Morgan, American poet, author and political theorist, “The secreting or hoarding of knowledge or information may be an act of tyranny camouflaged as humility”. India prides itself in being the largest democracy in the world. However, the Indian government system has always been shrouded in secrecy and red-tape.

Despite being the ruler in a democracy, the citizen of Indian was powerless having no access to government information which was protected by the pre-colonial ‘Official Secret Act’ and many other such laws. It has been a crime if any unauthorized person were to disclose or access any information pertaining to the government. However, all that changed after the promulgation of the Right to Information Act 2005.

The RTI Act is an Act of Parliament passed on 15 June 2005 and made applicable all over India on 12 October 2005. The Act mandates all ‘public authorities’ to provide information to the citizens of India by following a simple procedure. Each public authority must appoint a Public Information Officer (PIO) entrusted with the responsibility of providing information to the public. Any citizen of India can inspect work, documents, reports held by Public Authorities or even information relating to private authorities under the control of the Public Authorities by paying a nominal fee of just

10. The information has to be provided in a time bound manner and failure to provide information or providing incorrect information may lead to imposition of penalty on the Public Information Officer (PIO). In order to ensure compliance, the institution of Appellate Authority and Information Commissioner (IC) have been created for filing appeals against the decisions of the PIO. Thus the RTI Act empowers the citizens, promotes transparency and accountability in the working of the Government, contains corruption, and makes Indian democracy work for the people in real terms.

The RTI Act has transformed the functioning of the government in the 15

years of its implementation. It has empowered the citizens who can get any information from any government department by following a simple procedure and paying just a nominal fee. The stringent penalties have ensured that the government officers supply the right information to the public within the time frame. The fear of RTI has made the government officials more responsible and reduced arbitrariness in decision making. RTI has also played important role in checking corrupt practices in government due to increased transparency and accountability.

However, the RTI Act also suffers from many limitations in its present form.

While the RTI Act is useful for getting information, it does not have any

provision for the redressal of citizens' grievances, if a wrong action has been taken by the official concerned. There has been a rise of the so called RTI activists who use RTI to seek a large number of unnecessary information to harass and even blackmail the officers. Since the government offices are usually understaffed, the diversion of resources to provide information further reduces their efficiency. The RTI Act has created fear in the mind of even honest officers for taking difficult decisions as they can be harassed and blackmailed by RTI activists by seeking huge information from their offices and then sensationalizing some decisions to defame them. It is due to the RTI, that senior officers often find it difficult to take administrative action against their inefficient and corrupt juniors despite having information about their misconduct, in case they don't have any verifiable evidence against the officer. Thus RTI Act has demoralized many honest officers who have stopped taking tough decisions. It is, therefore, not a surprise that most public servants including politicians and civil servants resent the RTI Act, which has reduced their own powers and made them far more accountable to people.

The controversies around RTI reached their peak when the Parliament passed the Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2019, in August 2019.

The amendments give the union government power to fix the tenure, salaries, and terms & conditions of service of the Information Commissioners (ICs), including the Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) and the State Information Commissioners (SICs). Subsequently, the Central government used this power to reduce the term of the Information Commissioners at the Central as well as state levels from five years to three years. The CIC is now equated with a cabinet secretary while all ICs shall be equal to Secretary, as against their earlier status was equal to that of the Election Commission.

The Union Government has justified the amendment claiming that the functions of the Election Commission of India (ECI) are very different from those of the Central and State Information Commissions, and therefore the same needs to be "rationalized." However, the RTI activists and members of the opposition parties fear that this amendment poses an existential threat to the RTI Act. Two former CICs have argued that the bill may "kill" the RTI Act itself. M Sridhar Acharyulu, former Central Information Commissioner, categorically said, "The proposed amendments to RTI Act which reportedly seek to downgrade the status of the chief information commissioner and information commissioners, reduce the autonomy of this constitutional institution and are, consequently, an assault on the right to information and democracy." The RTI amendment appears to weaken the position of Information Commissioners. It will now

be much easy to remove them, in case Government is not happy with them. Moreover, their lower status now would attract less talented people.

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While RTI Act has undoubtedly provided many benefits to the people of India, its shortcoming also can't be ignored. We now have the experience of over fifteen years of the implementation of RTI Act and using this experience, we need to rationalize the Act. Provisions can be made in the Act so that the information sought pertains to the person asking the information. If information is asked in public interest, the reasons must be disclosed. There has to be strict penalty for frivolous RTI application just like costs imposed by the courts on frivolous litigations. Moreover, the realistic cost of providing information must be recovered from the applicant. Information may also be provided with the caveat that it can't be used for commercial or publicity purposes.

Hon'ble Supreme Court once stated, "The free flow of information about affairs of Government paves way for debate in public policy and fosters accountability in Government. It creates a condition for 'open governance'

which is the foundation of democracy." The RTI Act no doubt continues to be relevant for a truly democratic India. However, we must plug the loopholes in the law to make the Act more useful and effective for the citizens and make the public servants more accountable to the people of India.

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SAMPLE ESSAY-15

Should India have a Uniform Civil Code The BJP led government in its second avatar has displayed extreme urgency and courage to fulfill the promises made in its manifesto. Within days of coming to power, the government has decided to nullify Article 370 of the Indian Constitution which gave special status to the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Soon after, it enacted the Citizen Amendment Act to provide expeditious citizenship to the persecuted communities who have migrated from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh ignoring all national and international pressure.

It is now speculated that the BJP led government may also implement its Uniform Civil Code (UCC) promise soon.

BJP has been constantly advocating the UCC in India. BJP Manifesto of 2019 read – ‘Article 44 of the Constitution of India lists Uniform Civil Code as one of the Directive Principles of State Policy. BJP believes that there cannot be gender equality till such time as India adopts a Uniform Civil Code, which protects the rights of all women, and the BJP reiterates its stand to draft Uniform Civil Code, drawing upon the best traditions and harmonizing them with the modern times’. It thus appears that UCC may be the next big change that the present government may be envisaging.

A uniform civil code means a common set of laws governing personal matters of all citizens of the country irrespective of religion or culture. Uniform code was initially proposed by Dr B R Ambedkar during the debate on the Constitution. However, the implementation of uniform code was objected to by many leaders on the grounds of the diversity of the nation. They believed that UCC may infringe the rights of religious freedom of the citizens. Hence, the matter was left for future governments to decide by incorporating it in the Directive Principles of State Policy.

Article 44 of the Directive principles of the Constitution specifies, “The State shall endeavour to secure for citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.” However, no progress in this regard has been made since then despite several observations by the Courts and much advocacy by social activists. In Shah Bano case, the Supreme Court advised the Central Government to bring UCC. However, due to resistance from the Muslim community, the government instead enacted a separate law for women:

‘Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act 1986’. At present only the civil law in Goa, which is derived from the Portuguese Civil Procedure Code of 1939, provides for Common Family Code.

According to the Constitution, India is a secular country, which means it must not discriminate against people on the basis of their religion. Yet, there are

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several laws made by the Parliament and State Legislatures which provide for different practices based on religion and the local tradition and culture.

Uniform Civil Code, if implemented, will end all forms of discrimination, particularly gender bias, because the personal laws of some religions are discriminatory and deny women the right to equality. It is, therefore, argued that the UCC shall uphold the secular credentials of India in giving equal rights to women of all religions. Moreover, uniform

code shall also be in accordance with international practices of having laws without religious bias.

However, the implementation of Uniform Civil Code is really challenging.

Even though UCC is provided in the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP), the same is not binding on the State. Most people in India are deeply religious and the personal laws find their origin in their scriptures.

Hence, any change in the personal laws may draw the ire of the religious authorities. Moreover, the UCC also appears to infringe Articles 25 and 29 of Indian Constitution which provide freedom to all citizens to follow the religion and culture of their choice. Article 25 deals with the freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion and states that all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice and propagate religion. Article 29 provides protection of the interests of minorities, and states that any section of citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same. Hence, if a Uniform Civil Code is brought, its constitutional validity would also be questionable.

The supporters of UCC, however, argue that a country must not allow any form of discrimination based on religion. Hence, all attempts must be made to bring UCC in the country for the sake of justice and equality. At the same time, it is also important to assuage the fears of the minorities who may already be feeling alienated after some recent developments. The government must work hard to build trust and ensure that they act with the best interest of all communities in mind.

In order to create a congenial environment, it may be advisable to first prepare a Draft UCC law and place it in the public domain. The Common Family Code of Goa can be used as a starting point. Government must allow criticisms and suggestions on the draft law. The views of religious and cultural minorities must also be duly considered while drafting the UCC so that they don't feel discriminated, isolated or suppressed. We can also bring separate aspects of UCC such as marriage, adoption, succession and maintenance in stages so that the society gets time to absorb the changes. The personal law of the majority should not be forced under the UCC, but the personal laws of all religions must be given equal respect.

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Instead of the civil servants deciding the final draft of the UCC, government must consider forming a committee of eminent people of all religions to decide the provisions of UCC unanimously. This will create trust in all communities and reduce the

opposition to the proposed law. The government must move cautiously in this matter and must not hurry up through the legislation which is imperative to avoid social unrest in the society. The basic principle that needs to be followed is that any part of the personal law that conflicts the Constitution, must be discarded. We may take the positives of the different civil codes that have already been implemented in different countries and also give due consideration to the civil laws of Goa. With political will, India shall surely find the best provisions to be included in a Uniform Civil Code that protects the interests of all sections of the society.

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Part C: Writing Essay Using Mind-map

Instructions

In this section, there are five mind-maps.

You can make the best use of this section in the following manner:

- Read the mind-map carefully.
- Read couple of essays or article on this topic online.
- Add or delete points stated in the mind-map using your best judgement.
- Write an essay using the new mind-map in your own words.

Mind Map 1

Brainstorming topic

Quotes

- What is the meaning of criminalization of politics?
- The darkest places in hell are
- Why criminals enter into politics?

reserved for those who maintain

- What are the dangers if criminals entering in their neutrality in times of moral

politics?

crisis. (Dante Alighieri)

- What are the facts and figures of criminals' entry

- Politics have no relation to

in politics?

morals. (Niccolo Machiavelli)

- How can we stop criminals' entry in politics?

- Whenever a man has cast

a longing eye on offices, a

rottenness begins in his conduct.

Data of Criminals

(Thomas Jefferson)

in Politic

- One of the penalties for refusing

- Out of the 539 winners

to participate in politics is that

analysed in Lok Sabha

you end up being governed by

2019, 233 MPs have

your inferiors. (Plato)

declared criminal cases

against themselves

- It is an increase of 44 per cent in the number of MPs with declared criminal cases since 2009

Topic

- There are 10 who have The dangers of declared convicted cases against themselves. criminalization

Introduction

- Chances of a criminal of politics in
- Meaning of criminalization of winning a case in the politics
Lok Sabha 2019 is 15.5%,
India
- Data regarding criminals in while a candidate with a politics
clean background is 4.7

- Trend of criminalisation of politics

per cent.

in India

- Congress MP Dean

- Nexus between politics, police

Kuriakose from Idukki

and criminals

constituency in Kerala

has

declared

204

criminal cases against

himself.

Body

- The evil effect of criminalisation of politics

- Reasons for Criminalization of Politics **Conclusion**

– Use of black money in elections

- Steps to stop criminalization in politics

– Corruption in politics and civil services

– More power to Election Commission

– Focus on winnability

– Transparency in election funding

- Castiest and communal nature of politics
- Checking the election expenditure
- Failure of the policing and judiciary in within the limit punishing criminals
- Fast track courts for prosecution of
- Lack of political will politicians
- Lack of morality in citizens
- Public awareness campaign
- Poverty and illiteracy
- Facilitate honest people to join politics
- Use of muscle power to get work done
- State funding of elections

Mind Map 2

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Brainstorming topic

Quotes

- What is the role of technology in modern world?
 - Science and technology can
 - How technology is transforming the world?
- solve all the world's problems,
- What are the latest technologies replacing human and historically it has been

roles?

shown to make the world better

- What are the pros and cons of using advance and better. (Zoltan Istvan)

technology?

- One machine can do the
- What types of roles can be replaced by technology?

work of fifty ordinary men. No

machine can do the work of

- What types of roles can't be replaced by one extraordinary man. (Elbert technology?

Hubbard)

- How can we use technology for the welfare of
- It has become appallingly

humanity?

obvious that our technology has

exceeded our humanity. (Albert

Einstein)

Modern

- Humanity is acquiring all the

technologies

right technology for all the

replacing human

wrong reasons. (R. Buckminster

- Information Technology

Fuller)

Topic

- Artificial Intelligence
- Big Data Analytics

Introduction

Can Advance

- Edge Computing,
- What is technology?

Technology

- Virtual Reality

- Technology

means

the

systematic

application

of

- Cyber Security

replace

scientific or other organized

- Google Assistant

manpower?

knowledge to practical tasks.

- Self-driven cars

(John Kenneth Galbraith)

- Online education

- How

technology

benefits

humanity?

- How technology may harm

Body

humanity?

- How technology helps people
- Examples of latest technologies
 - Mechanical job done by machines-
that transformed life around
efficiency, time saving, drudgery
the world.
 - Online
transactions,
emails,
communication, Social media

Conclusion

- E-governance, mobile apps
- The nature of jobs change. IT sector gave
- Technologies that have replaced people employment to millions
 - Invention of fire and wheel, Industrial
 - Productivity of humans increased with Revolution,
healthcare,
transport,
technology
communication,

defense-satellites,

production and manufacturing

- Human teachers cannot be replaced by smart classes
 - Agriculture- tractors, tools, machines, Green revolution
- Technology complements man and work as facilitator
 - Artificial Intelligence, IT, robots
- Technology replaces mostly unskilled,
- What technology can't do

labour

- To drive machines we need humans
- Technology opens new doors for research,
 - Technology cannot upgrade itself

engineering

- Emotional support, Empathy
- Use technology to make human life better

Mind Map 3

Brainstorming topic

Quotes

- What is a Non-Governmental Organisation(NGO)?
- “The best way to find yourself is
- What are the functions of NGO?

to lose yourself in the service of

- What is the need of NGOs?

others.” (Mahatma Gandhi)

- What is the role of NGO in the social development?

- “We make a living by what we

- What is the role of NGO in economic development?

get, but we make a life by what

we give.”(Winston Churchill)

- How NGOs help national development?

- “Be the change you want to see

- How can we make NGOs more useful for the nation?

in the world.” (Mahatma Gandhi)

- What are the new areas for NGOs?

- “He who wished to secure the

good of others, has already

secured his own.” (Confucius)

Roles of NGOs

- “Where there is charity and

- Perform

a

variety

wisdom, there is neither fear nor

of

service

and

ignorance.” (St. Francis of Assisi)

humanitarian functions

- Bring citizen concerns to

Governments,

- Advocate and monitor

government policies

- Encourage

political

Topic

participation

Introduction

- Water

and

soil

Role of NGO

- Definition of NGO

management

- Need for NGOs

in National

- Education to poor and

- Give opportunity to serve

Development

weaker sections

people

without

joining

- Promotes human rights,

government

environment or health

- Freedom to do work in

- Women and child welfare

your own way with least

- Provide analysis and

government interference

expertise to government

- Following your passion and

- Help

monitor

and

serving your nation

implement international

agreements

- Disaster management

Body 1

- Different types of roles of NGOs
- Assisting governments in doing their jobs **Conclusion**

- Difficulties in running NGOs,
- Positive roles of NGO in national

– Funding,

development

– Corruption

- Steps to overcome difficulties

– Volunteering

- Stop the misuse of NGOs

– Harassment by government officers

- Proactive role to create social harmony,

– Complex procedure of compliance

healthcare, online education, public

– Public apathy

awareness, transparency

- Importance of NGOs in national

- Need for recognition to NGO by

development

government and public

Mind Map 4

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Brainstorming topic

Quotes

- What is farm loan waiver?
- Definition of loan waiver
- Why is farm loan waiver done in India?
- Economists regard loan waiver
- How the concept of loan waiver started in India?

to be a populist and fiscally risky

- What are the pros and cons of farm loan waiver?

measure

- What can be done instead of farm loan waiver?

- First nation-wide farm loan

waiver implemented in 1990 by

Janata Party government led by

then Prime Minister V.P. Singh

Body 1

and costed the government

- Waiving of farm loan has

`10,000 crores.

become a great political

- Agitations by farmers have been issue in India

held demanding loan waivers

- Congress recently won

- Political parties have announced elections in three states,

Loan waivers for farmers before

where farm loan waiver

election

was an important issue,

- The farmers of Madhya

Body 2

Pradesh,

Rajasthan

- Farmers are most disciplined in

Topic

and Chhattisgarh were

their repayment behaviour.

promised farm loan

The problem

- In September 2018, agricultural

waiver by Congress

NPAAs (about 8%) were far lower
of Farm Loan

- The total exposure of
than in industry (about 21%).

banks to farmers in the

Waiver in

- Repeated

loan

waiver

three states in the form

encourages loan defaults

India

of loans as of March

- Impact of Farm Loan Waiver

31, 2018 was `1,47,000

- Demands for loan waiver

crore.

across India by farmers

- Banks are unlikely to
- The farmers not under distress

get repayments for a

too would not pay up their

substantial part of the

loans

loan

- Honest farmers feels cheated

- The government failed

to fulfil its promise due

- Reduced availability of loan in

to lack of resources

future for farmers

- Mounting bank NPAs

Conclusion

Body 3

- Frequent farm loan waiver is bad for the

- Develop institutional mechanism for farm economy

loan waiver

- Reforms in dealing with bad debt needed

- Appoint a regulatory authority to

- The period of crop loan should be supervise the scheme of loan waiver.

extendable to longer period

- Waiver based on a scientific basis

- Treat farm loans in a similar way as loans for calculating stressed assets and

to industry.

restructuring them

- Allow restructuring and one-time settlement
- Waiver strictly based on commercial
- Avoid general loan waiver

considerations in more humane manner.

- Announce a specific, region and crop-
- Willful defaulters must be dealt with based scheme of loan concessions strictly
- Develop institutional measures

Mind Map 5

Brainstorming topic

Quotes

- What is meant by social media?
- “Privacy is dead, and social media hold
- How social media is affecting the society?
the smoking gun.”- Pete Cashmore,
- What are the pros and cons of social Mashable CEO
media?
- “The beauty of social media is that it
- How social media is a selfish medium?
will point out your company’s flaws;
- How can we make best use of social the key question is how quickly you media?

address these flaws.”- Erik Qualmann, author of “Socialnomics”

- “We all make mistakes. But social media can frame those mistakes and display them infinitely.”- Unknown

Body 1 (Facts)

- “Social media is an advertisement
- Three billion people,
for the superficial extroverted self”. –
approximately 40% of

Hozier

the world’s population

uses

social

media,

especially,

- Young

people

are

using it on average of

Topic

61 minutes per day,

impacting a huge swath

Introduction

Social Media

of humanity.

- Evolution of media in India and

- More people die taking

is inherently

world

selfies in India than

a selfish

- Purpose of media

anywhere else in the

- Social Media gives voice to

world = 159 out of 259

medium

general people.

in total

- Today even the traditional

- In

2017,

Global

media of newspapers, TV

Ransomware Damage

channels etc, use social media

Costs

Expected

To

to reach the masses.

Exceed \$5 Billion

Body 2 (Pros and cons)

- Benefits of social media

Conclusion

– Create awareness

- Excess of everything is bad

– Empower people

- Positives of social media are more than

– Affordable

negatives

– Online education

- Tighten cyber security laws and regulations

– Connects with loved ones

- Social media sites to be accountable of

- Harmful effects of social media

offensive content

– Loss of privacy

- Punishment for tarnishing images of

– Irrelevant and false information

people without evidence

– Trolling and hate messages

- Punishment for organised trolling

– Agitation and social unrest

- Education and awareness about the pros

– Dangerous online games

and cons

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Part D: Perfecting Your Essay Writing

Instructions

In this section, we have given essays relevant for civil services examination on different topics

You can make the best use of this section in the following way:

- Prepare a mind-map for the essay using your knowledge and practice.
- Use the mind-map to write your essay.
- Read your essay after a week to review and improve.

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Essay topics for practice

Economy

The causes and measures to manage the rising NPAs in banks
Cyberspace and Internet:
Blessing or curse to the human civilization in the long run

How India can win its battle against black money We may brave human laws but cannot resist natural laws.

The dangers of following socialism with capitalism The key issue is the shift of the centre of gravity from the West to the East, the rise of China and India.

Environment

He that plants trees loves others besides himself.

The challenges to develop renewable energies in India IT revolution and the perils of e-waste

Earth isn't a commodity, it's a heritage we share **Polity**

Cooperative federalism is a myth in India Is secularism in danger in India

Uniform Civil Code: A need or a mere rhetoric Political interference in administration: Reality or a Myth The need for minimum qualification for the elections in India Hyper nationalism is incompatible with true patriotism Humans are dependent on nature as much as the fate of nature depends on Humans.

Society

Is Google making us stupid?

Achieving gender equality requires the engagement of women and men, girls and boys. It is everyone's responsibility.

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Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all kinds of oppression.

There is only one caste, the caste of humanity. There is only one religion, the religion of love.

Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.

Communal conflicts in India are hurting the global image of India as a secular nation

Current Affairs

Lessons to be learned from Corona-virus pandemic Is China the new Superpower of the world

Who will win the standoff between America and China India and China: Are they adversely or friends **Ethics and Philosophy**

Relevance of Gandhi in modern times

Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere One has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws Happiness comes from gratitude

Anger and intolerance are the enemies of correct understanding.

The mind is a universe and can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

We gain the strength of the temptation we resist.

Nothing is more difficult, and therefore more precious, than to have the ability to decide.

Every positive value has its price in negative terms Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower

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ANNEXURES

Part I: Quotes

Anger

There are two things a person should never be angry at, what they can help, and what they cannot. (Plato)

‘Anybody can become angry-that is easy; but to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way-that is not within everybody's power and is not easy. (Aristotle)

Anger and intolerance are the enemies of correct understanding. (Mahatma Gandhi)

Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned. (Buddha) **Body-Mind-Soul**

You don't have a soul. You are a Soul. You have a body. (CS Lewis) To keep the body in good health is a duty...otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear. (Gautama Buddha) The mind is a universe and can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

(John Milton)

As is the human body, so is the cosmic body.

As is the human mind, so is the cosmic mind.

As is the microcosm, so is the macrocosm.

As is the atom, so is the universe. (Upanishads) **Character and Reputation**

It takes twenty years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. (Warren Buffet)

We gain the strength of the temptation we resist. (Ralph Waldo Emerson) When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost. (Billy Graham)

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Contentment

Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough. (Oprah Winfrey) The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed. (Mahatma Gandhi)

Courage

Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage, you can't practice any other virtue consistently. (Maya Angelou) He who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life. (Muhammad Ali)

Criticism

‘Any fool can criticize, complain, and condemn—and most fools do. But it takes character and self-control to be understanding and forgiving.’ (Dale Carnegie)

The final proof of greatness lies in being able to endure criticism without resentment. (Elbert Hubbard)

Decision making

Executives are not paid for doing things they like to do. They are paid for getting the right things done—most of all in their specific task, the making of effective decisions. (Peter Drucker, Management Guru) Nothing is more difficult, and therefore more precious, than to be able to decide. (Napoleon Bonaparte)

A wise man makes his own decisions, an ignorant man follows public opinion.

(Chinese proverb)

There is no inherent reason why medicines should taste horrible but effective ones usually do. Similarly, there is no inherent reason why decisions should be distasteful but most effective ones are. (Peter F Drucker) **Discipline**

Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment. (Jim Rohn) While discipline and freedom seem like they sit on opposite sides of the spectrum, they are actually very connected. (Jocko Willink)

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Emotions

Human behavior flows from three main sources: desire, emotion, and knowledge. (Plato)

There can be no knowledge without emotion. We may be aware of a truth, yet until we have felt its force, it is not ours. To the cognition of the brain must be added the experience of the soul. (Arnold Bennett, English writer and novelist)

Without the emotion of the beautiful, the sublime, the mysterious, there is no art, no religion, no literature. (John Burroughs) **End and Means**

A means can be justified only by its end. But the end, in its turn, needs to be justified. (Leon Trotsky)

Means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek.(Martin Luther King Junior)

Experience and Experiment

Every experiment proves something. If it doesn't prove what you wanted it to prove, it proves something else. (Unknown) Experience is not what happens to a man. It is what a man does with what happens to him. (Aldous Leonard Huxley, English writer and philosopher) **Faith and Trust**

If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain,

“Move from here to there,” and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you”
(Bible)

Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe. (Saint Augustine)

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes. (Marcel Proust)

Trust men and they will be true to you; treat them greatly and they will show themselves great. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Family and Friends

You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them. (Desmond Tutu)

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The only rock I know that stays steady. The only institution I know that works is the family. (Lee Iacocca)

Forgiveness

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.

(Mahatma Gandhi)

Forgive, forget. Bear with the faults of others as you would have them bear with yours. (Phillips Brooks, American clergyman and author) To forgive is to set a prisoner free

and discover that the prisoner was you.

(Lewis B. Smedes, author and theologian)

Good and evil

Every positive value has its price in negative terms... the genius of Einstein leads to Hiroshima. (Pablo Picasso)

Inside each of us, there is the seed of both good and evil. It's a constant struggle as to which one will win. And one cannot exist without the other.

(Eric Burdon)

Manage the work of detached actions (Tao Te Ching) **Happiness**

Happiness resides not in possessions, and not in gold, happiness dwells in the soul. (Democritus)

Happiness is a choice. You can choose to be happy. There's going to be stress in life, but it's your choice whether you let it affect you or not. (Valerie Bertinelli)

Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful. (Albert Schweitzer) Most enjoyable activities are not natural; they demand an effort that initially one is reluctant to make. But once the interaction starts to provide feedback to the person's skills, it usually begins to be intrinsically rewarding. (Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi)

Honour

In this world, those who desire only wealth are of the lowest order; those who desire wealth and respect are of the middle order; the people of the highest order are those who desire honour and respect. (Chanakya)

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If you would not be forgotten as soon as you are dead and rotten, either write things worth reading or do things worth writing. (Benjamin Franklin) A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold. (Bible)

Ideas

A man may die, nations may rise and fall, but an idea lives on. (John F Kennedy)

Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life—think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success.

(Swami Vivekananda)

Imagination and Mystery

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, he who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed. (Albert Einstein)

The most incomprehensible thing about our universe is that it can be comprehended. (Albert Einstein)

Imagination is more important than knowledge; for knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution. (Albert Einstein)

Innovation and Creativity

The principal goal of education is to create men who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done—men who are creative, inventive and discoverers. (Jean Piaget) Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower. (Steve Jobs) **Knowledge, Wisdom, Intelligence**

Never mistake knowledge for wisdom. One helps you make a living; the other helps you make a life. (Sandra Carey) Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength, mastering yourself is true power. (Lao-Tzu) If most of us remain ignorant of ourselves, it is because self-knowledge is painful and we prefer the pleasures of illusion. (Aldous Huxley)

I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills. All I have done is to try experiments in both on as vast a scale as I could. (Gandhi)

Intellectuals solve problems, geniuses prevent them. (Albert Einstein) **Law and Justice**

There is no crueller tyranny than that which is perpetuated under the shield of law and in the name of justice. (Charles de Montesquieu) At his best, man is the noblest of all animals; separated from law and justice he is the worst. (Aristotle)

The man equipped with 'yoga' looks at all with an impartial eye, seeing self in all beings and all beings in self. He who sees Me everywhere and everything in Me, never vanishes from me nor I from him. (Gita) One who breaks an unjust law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law. (Martin Luther King Junior) **Leadership and Initiative**

Leaders don't create more followers, they create more leaders. (Tom Peters) The task of leadership is not to put greatness into people, but to elicit it, for the greatness is there already. (John Buchan) To lead yourself, use your head. To lead others, use your heart. Always touch a person's heart before you ask him for a hand. (John Maxwell, Writer) A good leader takes a little more than his share of the blame, a little less than his share of the credit. (Arnold H Glasow) Effective leadership is not about making speeches or being liked; leadership is defined by results not attributes. (Peter F Drucker) Initiative is doing the right thing without being told. (Victor Hugo) One of the tests of leadership is the ability to recognise a problem before it becomes an emergency. (Arnold Glasow, Author) **Love and hatred**

I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear. —Martin Luther King, Jr.

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We love because He first loved us. Those who say 'I love God' and hate their brothers or sisters are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, can't love God whom they have not seen. (Bible) To love is to place our happiness in the happiness of another. (G. Wilhelm Leibniz, German Philosopher)

Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?(Abraham Lincoln)

Nonviolence

An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind. (Mahatma Gandhi)

I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent. (Mahatma Gandhi) Non-violence leads to the highest ethics, which is the goal of all evolution.

Until we stop harming all other living beings, we are still savages. (Thomas A. Edison)

Peace and Harmony

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सिखनः, सर्वे सन्ति न रामयाः।

सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु, मा कश्चिद्दुःखभाग् भवेत्।

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥ गरुड पुराण

Meaning:

Om, May All be Happy, May All be Free from Illness.

May All See what is Auspicious, May no one Suffer.

Om Peace, Peace, Peace. (Upanishads)

A wise man should control speech by mind, mind by intellect, intellect by the great atman and that by the peaceful One—God or *Paramatman*. (Katha Upanishad)

Perseverance

Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved. (Helen Keller)

It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer. (Albert Einstein)

It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop. (Confucius) It always seems impossible until it's done. (Nelson Mandela)

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Politics

In a country well governed, poverty is something to be ashamed of. In a country badly governed, wealth is something to be ashamed of. (Confucius) Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun. (Mao Zedong) Divide and rule, the politician cries; unite and lead, is watchword of the wise.

(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

Power and responsibility

Rank does not confer privilege or give power. It imposes responsibility. (Peter F Drucker)

To know the pains of power, we must go to those who have it; to know its pleasures, we must go to those who are seeking it: The pains of power are real, its pleasures imaginary. (Charles Caleb Colton) **Religion and Spirituality**

Just as a candle cannot burn without fire, men cannot live without a spiritual life. (Gautama Buddha)

ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय । तमसो मा ज्योत्र्गमय । मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ।

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥ (बृहदारण्यकोपनिषद् 1.3.28) *Meaning:*

Om, (O Lord) Take me from Unreality (Untruth) to Reality (Truth), Darkness (Ignorance) to Light (Knowledge), From the world of Morality (Material) to Immorality (Enlightenment) Om, Peace, Peace, Peace.

When the missionaries came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said 'Let us pray.' We closed our eyes. When we opened them we had the Bible and they had the land. (Desmond Tutu) Religion is the opium of the people. (Karl Marx)

Success

You cannot climb the ladder of success dressed in the costume of failure. (Zig Ziglar, American author and motivational speaker) I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody. (Bill Cosby, American actor and author) Never think there is anything impossible for the soul. It is the greatest heresy to think so. If there is sin, this is the only sin; to say that you are weak, or others are weak. (Swami Vivekananda)

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. (Bible) First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win. (Mahatma Gandhi)

Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid. (Albert Einstein) **Truth**

For every good reason there is to lie, there is a better reason to tell the truth.

(Bo Bennett, American author)

Morality is the basis of things and truth is the substance of all morality.

(Mahatma Gandhi)

Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. (Bible)

Teamwork and Cooperation

Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success. (Henry Ford)

He that does good to another does good also to himself. (Lucius Annaeus Seneca)

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much. (Helen Keller) Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships.

(Michael Jordan)

None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful. (Mother Teresa)

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Tolerance

Tolerance is the greatest gift of the mind; it requires the same effort of the brain that it takes to balance oneself on a bicycle. (Helen Keller) In the practice of tolerance, one's

enemy is the best teacher. (Dalai Lama) I may not agree with what you have to say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it. (Voltaire)

Unity in Diversity

We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their colour. (Maya Angelou, Author) Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization. (Mahatma Gandhi)

We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools. (Martin Luther King, Jr.)

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Part II: Anecdotes of the Greats

Abraham Lincoln

On the side of Lord

During the early period of the American Civil War, a minister exhorted Lincoln, ‘Let us have faith, Mr President, that the Lord is on our side in the great struggle.’

To this Lincoln quietly replied, ‘I am not at all concerned about that, for I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right; but it is my constant anxiety and prayer that as I am, this nation may be on the Lord’s side.’

How Lincoln destroyed his enemies

Civil War broke out in America in 1861 and Abraham Lincoln was the President of America. The war lasted for four years. American Civil War, was fought between the Norths (Union) and South of United States as 11

Southern states seceded from the Union and formed the Confederate States of America. The Confederate States in the South advocated for states’ rights to uphold slavery while North opposed it.

In a speech Abraham Lincoln delivered at the height of the Civil War, he referred to the Southerners as fellow human beings who were in error. An elderly lady chastised him for not calling them irreconcilable enemies who must be destroyed.

“Why, madam,” Lincoln replied, “do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?”

Abraham Lincoln’s failures

Here is a list of the failures of Lincoln

- Lost job, 1832
- Defeated for legislature, 1832
- Failed in business, 1833
- Elected to legislature, 1834
- Sweetheart (Ann Rutledge) died, 1835
- Had nervous breakdown, 1836
- Defeated for Speaker, 1838
- Defeated for nomination for Congress, 1843
- Elected to Congress, 1846

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- Lost re-nomination, 1848
- Rejected for Land Officer, 1849
- Defeated for Senate, 1854
- Defeated for nomination for Vice-President, 1856
- Again defeated for Senate, 1858
- Elected President, 1860

Alexander, the Great

Alexander and Diomedes

Diomedes was a notorious pirate who had finally been captured and brought before the emperor for sentencing. Because of the pirate's many criminal deeds, everyone expected that Alexander would sentence the pirate to death.

Before he passed judgment, however, Alexander decided to interview the pirate.

‘What could possibly give you the right to sail the seas, taking by force things that do not belong to you?’ Alexander asked the pirate.

Diomedes boldly replied with some questions of his own.

‘O emperor,’ he said, ‘what could possibly give you the right to travel the whole world, taking by force things that do not belong to you? What gave you the right to occupy the land of Egypt? Who made you king of Persia?’

By what authority did you invade the land of India?’

Alexander stared at the man in amazement, and Diomedes went on speaking.

‘Because I only use my own boat,’ he said, ‘I am called a pirate. You, however, use your army and your navy, and so you are proclaimed an emperor. If you ask me who the greater criminal is, I can't say. I do know, however, that if I had such weapons at my disposal, I would be an emperor too.’

Alexander was so impressed by this reply that instead of punishing the pirate, he let him go, praising him for his boldness and insight.

Alfred Nobel

How Nobel Prize Started

Alfred Nobel was born on 21 October 1833 in Stockholm, Sweden, into a family of engineers. He was a chemist, engineer and inventor. Nobel amassed a fortune during his lifetime, most of it from his 355 inventions, of which dynamite is the most famous. In 1888, Alfred had the unpleasant surprise of

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reading his own obituary, titled ‘The Merchant of Death is Dead’, in a French newspaper. As it was, Alfred's brother, Ludvig, had died.

Alfred was disappointed with what he read; and he grew concerned about how he would be remembered. This inspired him to change his will. To widespread surprise, Nobel's last will requested that his fortune be used to create a series of prizes for those who confer the 'greatest benefit on mankind'

in physics, chemistry, peace, physiology or medicine and literature. Nobel bequeathed 94 per cent of his total assets to establish the five Nobel Prizes.

Anna Hazare

A book can transform your life

In 1962, events in South East Asia meant that large-scale army recruitments were being undertaken. Despite not meeting the physical requirements, eighteen-year-old Anna was selected, as emergency recruitment was taking place. While in the army, he contemplated suicide owing to the tough life and the constant state of deprivation of his family and village. He even wrote a suicide note, but decided against this, as his sister's wedding had to be fixed.

A vehicle in which he was travelling was hit by a bomb, but he survived. This led him to dwell on the purpose and meaning of life and death.

In a book stall, at the New Delhi station, he came across a small booklet by Swami Vivekananda, titled, *Call to the youth for nation building*. He realised that saints sacrificed their own happiness for that of others, and that he needed to work towards ameliorating the suffering of the poor. He led the greatest anti-corruption fight in India, and today, he is one of the most respected leaders of India.

His is known today as Anna Hazare

Churchill

If I was being hanged

Winston Churchill was once asked, 'Doesn't it thrill you, Mr Churchill, to know that every time you make a speech, the hall is packed to overflowing?'

'It's quite flattering,' Winston replied, 'but whenever I feel this way, I always remember that if instead of making a political speech, I was being hanged, the crowd would be twice as big'.

Qualities of a politician

Once Churchill was asked by a journalist, ‘Please tell us what qualities an aspiring politician should have?’

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‘Well,’ replied Churchill, ‘First of all, he must have the knack to foretell what will take place tomorrow, next week, next month and year.’

Then after a pause he added, ‘Besides, he should have the ability to explain why these haven’t happened.’

Isaac Newton

Limits of Concentration

One evening, a friend arrived as scheduled to dine with Isaac Newton in his room. Finding him deeply engrossed in an abstruse mathematical problem, he simply sat down to wait.

Sometime later, a servant brought in dinner for one; Newton had forgotten about his invitation. When Newton continued to work at his desk, the friend, taking care not to disturb him, pulled up a chair and consumed Newton’s meal.

Shortly thereafter, Newton, having finished his work, finally looked up and was startled, first by the presence of his friend, and then by the absence of his dinner: ‘If it weren’t for the proof before my eyes,’ he declared, gazing at the empty plate, ‘I could have sworn that I had not yet dined.’

Mahatma Gandhi

Eating Goat Meat

A Muslim friend of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi used to persuade him to eat meat. “No,” Gandhi would answer him. “Hindus don’t eat meat, especially my caste. My ancestors never ate meat.” But the friend insisted.

“If you don’t eat meat, you will remain weak. You have to eat meat if you want to be physically strong.”

Gandhi very much wanted to be physically strong. “Are you sure it will make me strong?” he asked.

“Yes,” replied his Muslim friend.

Since Gandhi was very weak, one evening he tried some goat meat. That night he dreamt that the goat was crying inside his stomach. It was miserable.

Gandhi cried, “I can’t eat meat anymore! I have seen the goat crying inside me.” And he gave up eating meat forever.

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Gandhi goes to killer

In March 1930, Mahatma Gandhi, along with his select band of followers, was on his way to Dandi to break the Salt Law and thereby launch the famous Civil Disobedience Movement in India. A man living near Bharuch, who was opposed to the Gandhian way of ahimsa, threatened to kill him at the first available opportunity.

The news reached the Mahatma. Two to three days passed. In the meantime, the Mahatma ascertained the name and address of that ill-willing person, and one day, in the early hours, he reached his home and announced, ‘Brother!

I am Gandhi. You want my life? Take it soon, none will know.’ But the man was so taken aback, he could not meet Gandhi’s eyes, and went on to become a follower of the Mahatma.

Socrates

Triple Filter Test

One day an acquaintance met the great philosopher Socrates and said,

‘Socrates, do you know what I just heard about your friend?’

‘Hold on a minute,’ Socrates replied. ‘Before telling me anything, I’d like you to pass a little test. It’s called the Triple Filter Test.’

‘Triple Filter?’

‘That’s right,’ Socrates continued. ‘Before you talk to me about my friend, it might be a good idea to take a moment and filter what you’re going to say. The first filter is Truth.

Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?’

‘No,’ the man said, ‘actually I just heard about it and....’

‘All right,’ said Socrates. ‘So you don’t really know if it’s true or not. Now let’s try the second filter, the filter of Goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about my friend something good?’

‘No, on the contrary...’

‘So,’ Socrates continued, ‘you want to tell me something bad about him, but you’re not certain it’s true. You may still pass the test though, because there’s one filter left: the filter of Usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about my friend going to be useful to me?’

‘No, not really.’

‘Well,’ concluded Socrates, ‘if what you want to tell me is neither true nor good nor even useful, why tell it to me at all?’

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Swami Vivekananda

Vivekananda explained Idol Worship

During his wandering days, Swami met the Dewan of the State of Alwar, who introduced him to the Maharajah who was very anglicised in his views and manners, and held most Hindu religious practices in contempt. Once the Maharajah raised the topic of image worship with the Swami and spoke disparagingly about it.

Pointing to an oil painting of the Maharajah on the wall, the Swami asked the Dewan to spit on it. The Dewan exclaimed that such an act would be insulting the Maharajah. The Swami thereupon asked him how it would be an insult to the Maharajah, since it was only some canvas and paint.

Then turning to the Maharajah, he pointed out that just as the picture was by association of ideas identified as him, a believing devotee identifies an idol as the deity itself.

Tulsidas

Wife's Criticism Transformed His Life

Tulsidas was excessively attached to his beautiful wife, Ratnavali. Once, Ratnavali went to her father's house for a few days. Tulsidas missed her so much that he journeyed in the dark and reached her place stealthily at night.

Ratnavali was exasperated by her husband's behaviour and told him that if he cultivated a similar love for Lord Rama, he could easily overcome the sorrows of life.

Tulsidas was a devotee of Lord Rama since early childhood, so these words affected him deeply. He left his home and family to become a wandering mendicant in search of the abiding love of his Lord.

He went on to become a great saint and wrote the story of Lord Rama named *Ramacharitmanas*, which is one of the most popular books for Hindus today.

Valmiki

A bandit becomes a saint

Thousands of years ago, there was a bandit in a jungle who used to loot people passing through the jungle. Once, a few sages were going that way when the bandit stopped them and asked them to surrender whatever possessions they had. A sage asked the bandit, 'Why are you doing this?

Don't you know it is a sin to loot others' wealth?'

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'I know it is a sin. However, I am doing it to feed my family,' the bandit replied.

'But you are making a big mistake,' said the saint. 'As you are doing it through the act of looting, you have to carry all the burden of this sin.' He then asked the bandit, 'Your family may be sharing the loot, but will they also share your sin?'

'Surely they will,' said the bandit confidently. 'When they share my loot, why shall they not share my sin?'

'Please go and ask your family members,' replied the saint. 'If they are willing, please take all we have.'

The bandit went home and asked each member of his family if they were willing to share his sin. However, all the members replied that since he was the one committing those sins, only he must bear their burden. They showed their unwillingness to be a party to his sins. Shocked, the bandit realised his mistake and came back to the saints. He fell on their feet and sought their forgiveness. ‘Only God can forgive you,’ they said. ‘Please go and pray to God and He will forgive you and give you light.’

The bandit did penance and prayed for many years and sought light from God. Finally, he gained enlightenment and became one of the greatest saints of India. He later went on to write the most famous Indian epic, Ramayana—

the story of Rama—and earned eternal fame.

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Part III: Inspiring Stories

Aesop’s Fables

Envy and Avarice

Two neighbours came before Jupiter and entreated him to grant their hearts’

desire. Now, one was full of avarice and the other eaten up with envy. So to punish them both, Jupiter granted that each might have whatever he wished for himself, but only on the condition that his neighbour had twice as much.

The avaricious man prayed to have a room full of gold. No sooner had he said that, it was done, but all his joy was turned to grief when he found that his neighbour had two rooms full of the precious metal.

Then came the turn of the envious man, who could not bear to know that his neighbour had any joy at all. So he prayed that he might have one of his own eyes put out, which would ensure his companion would become totally blind.

Message: Vices are their own punishment.

A horse and an ass

An Ass congratulated a Horse for being taken care of so well, while he himself had scarcely enough to eat, and not even that without hard work.

But when war broke out, the heavy armed soldier mounted the Horse, and rushed into the very midst of the enemy, and the Horse, got wounded and fell dead on the battle-field.

Then the Ass, seeing all these things, changed his mind, and commiserated with the Horse, saying: 'How fortunate am I! I can remain at home in safety while he is exposed to all the perils of war.'

Message: Be content with what you have.

Wolf and Lamb

Once upon a time, a wolf was lapping water at a spring on a hillside. He saw a lamb just beginning to drink a little lower down. "There's my supper,"

thought he, 'if only I can find some excuse to seize it.'

Then he called out to the lamb, "How dare you muddle the water from which I am drinking?"

"Nay, master, nay," said the lamb: "if the water be muddy up there, I cannot be the cause of it, for it runs down from you to me."

"Well, then," said the wolf, "Why did you call me bad names this time last year?"

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"That cannot be," said the lamb; "I am only six months old."

"I don't care," snarled the wolf; "If it was not you it was your father;" and with that he rushed upon the poor little lamb and ate it up.

Message: Any excuse will serve a tyrant.

Mulla Nasruddin

Searching Key outside

Once, a man found Mullah Naseruddin searching for something on the ground outside his house. On being asked, Nasruddin replied that he was looking for his keys. The man

also joined in the search and in due course asked Mullah– ‘Where exactly did you drop it?’

Mullah answered– ‘In my house.’

‘Then why are you looking here?’ the man asked.

‘There is more light here than in my house,’ replied Mullah.

Message: Happiness comes from inside. It can't be found in the outside world.

Make a Man Happy

Mullah Nasruddin once met a man in shabby clothes, carrying a ragged sack; he looked careworn and lost, mostly like a scavenger. Nasruddin asked him,

‘How’s life?’

‘What do you think? It’s terrible,’ the man whined, ‘I’ve no home, no food, no job, no money. Everything I have is in this stinky little bag.’

Without another word, the Mullah grabbed his bag and ran off. The man chased him but could not keep up. After a while, the Mullah dropped the bag in the middle of the road and hid himself behind a shop.

The man came running behind, got down on his knees, grabbed his bag and shedding tears of joy, cried out hysterically, ‘Ah! My bag, I’ve got my bag back! I thought I’d never see you again. Thank you God! I’ve found my bag.’

The Mullah murmured to himself, ‘Now, that’s one way to make someone happy.’

Message: We can be happy, if we are able to appreciate what we have.

Zen Stories

Two Monks and A Young Women

Two travelling monks reached a river where they met a young woman. Wary of the current, she asked them if they could carry her across. One of the monks hesitated, but the other quickly picked her up on to his shoulders,

transported her across the water, and put her down on the other bank. She thanked him and departed.

As the monks continued on their way, the first one brooded and was preoccupied. Unable to hold his silence, he finally spoke out.

‘Brother, our spiritual training teaches us to avoid any contact with women, but you picked that one up on your shoulders and carried her!’

‘Brother,’ the second monk replied, ‘I set her down on the other side, while you are still carrying her.’

Message: Don't be attached to anything. Attachment is the root cause of human pain.

Heaven and Hell

A big, tough samurai once went to see a little monk. He barked, in a voice accustomed to instant obedience: ‘Teach me about heaven and hell!’

The monk looked up at the mighty warrior and replied with utter disdain:

‘Teach you about heaven and hell? I can't teach you about anything. You're dumb. You're dirty. You're a disgrace, an embarrassment to the samurai class. Get out of my sight. I can't stand you.’

The samurai got furious. He shook, red in the face, speechless with rage. He pulled out his sword, and prepared to slay the monk.

Looking straight into the samurai's eyes, the monk said softly, ‘That's hell.’

The samurai froze, realizing the compassion of the monk who had risked his life to show him hell! He put down his sword and fell to his knees, filled with gratitude.

The monk said softly, ‘And that's heaven.’

Message: There is no heaven or hell outside. It lies within us.

Indian Mythologies

Boon from Kuber

A man was extremely poor. He had to support his wife and four children. One day, there was nothing to eat in their house, yet he failed to earn anything during the day. So, instead of going home, he thought of committing suicide.

He climbed up a hill with the intention of jumping off.

Fortunately for him, a great saint sat meditating on the same hilltop. He pulled back the poor man and saved his life. The unhappy man then narrated

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his story to the saint. He begged the saint to help him end his life for his family had nothing to eat.

The saint smiled and said, 'I shall summon Kuber, the lord of wealth. Please ask him to give you whatever you need.'

As promised, Lord Kuber immediately appeared before the poor man and offered to provide whatever the man wanted. With folded hands, the poor man then asked the lord of wealth to give him food for one day for his entire family.

The saint smiled at the ignorance of the poor man. Had he asked for billions from Kuber, he would have got it immediately, but the man could not imagine anything bigger.

Message: Think big and dream big. Ask great things from life.

Lord Shiva and Bhasmasur

Bhasmasur the great demon (Asura) was a great devotee of Lord Shiva.

Pleased with his years of austerities and penance, Shiva promised him a boon. Bhasmasur asked for the boon of immortality but Shiva said that he did not have the power to give immortality. Then Bhasmasur asked Shiva to grant him the boon that if he put his hand on someone's head, the person would burn to ash. The boon was granted by Lord Shiva.

Immediately after, Bhasmasur tried to put his hand on Shiva's head. Shiva fled from the spot and requested Lord Vishnu to help. Lord Vishnu turned into a beautiful woman, Mohini. Bhasmasur was attracted towards Mohini and wished to marry her. Mohini responded she would marry him only if he dances with her step by step. Both of them danced and Bhasmasur followed her steps. After some time she placed one hand on her

head and Bhaskasur did likewise. He immediately burned to ashes due to the power of Shiva's boon.

Message: Beware of your acts of kindness to an evil person.

Sivi and Dove

Sivi, a righteous king, was known for his justice and compassion. Once a dove, pursued by a hawk flew towards him for help. The king took mercy on the dove and gave it protection. The hawk shouted: 'Tell me what I should eat now?' The king offered the hawk another dove. 'But that shall not be fair to the other dove,' said the hawk.

The king then offered the hawk an equal measure of his own meat. The hawk said, 'How can that solve the problem? If you keep offering your meat for

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every dove that is chased, you will soon die. Unless one creature dies, how can another creature survive?'

Message: You can't solve the problems of the world even if you are willing to give your life.

Ganesh and Kartikeya

Lord Shiva had two sons, Ganesh and Kartikeya. The elder one Kartikeya was powerful, swift and a great warrior, while the younger one Ganesha was fat and slow in action. Once Kartikeya declared that he was the best among all gods. Hence Lord Shiva decided that he and Ganesha should contest a race by circling the universe to decide who should be worshipped first. Kartikeya confidently accepted the challenge. He started circling the universe on his peacock. Ganesha, on his rat began to circle his parents whom he regarded as his universe. He completed the race much before his elder brother. That is why on auspicious occasions, Hindus worship Lord Ganesha before worshipping any other god.

Message: Respect your parents.

Vishwamitra and Maneka

Vishwamitra was one of the greatest sages in ancient India. Indra, the king of gods was scared of his powers and sent Maneka, a beautiful celestial nymph from heaven to earth to lure him and break his meditation.

Menaka successfully incited Vishwamitra's lust and passion. His meditation was broken and he made love to her. Soon, Vishwamitra realised that he had been tricked by Indra. He cursed Menaka to be separated from him forever.

Message: Control your temptations.

Bible Stories

The Parable of the Sower

A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seeds, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Some fell on rocky places, where there was not much soil. They sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seeds fell among thorns, which grew and choked the plants. Still other seeds fell on good soil, where they produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear.

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Message: Help those who deserve it. Don't waste your time and energy on teaching fools.

Miscellaneous Stories

Bureaucrat at the Temple

A bureaucrat was appointed for guard duties in a temple. There was a board at the gate stating the precondition for entry into the temple: 'Please remove your shoes before entering the temple.'

The bureaucrat enforced this rule with utmost sincerity. He used to sit at the gate of the temple to ensure that no one entered the temple against the rules.

One day, a man came walking without shoes and tried to enter the temple.

The gatekeeper refused him entry. 'Why?' the man argued, 'I am not wearing any shoes. How can you deny me entry?'

‘Read the rules,’ replied the bureaucrat. ‘It requires that you have to remove your shoes before entering the temple. So please go home, wear your shoes, remove them here and then only can you enter the temple,’ he insisted.

Message: Don't implement the law without application of mind.

Two Teachers

Two teachers walking by the road came across the mansion of the richest businessman in the country. One teacher said to the other, ‘If only I can get all the factories of this man along with all his wealth, I can earn more than him.’

‘How do you think you can do that,’ asked his fellow teacher.

‘Look, I shall make as much money as this gentleman is making from all his businesses. And then I shall also give couple of tuitions to add to my income,’

replied the beaming teacher.

Message: Fools consider themselves to be smarter than the wisest ones.

Burning the boat

In February of 1519, a general by the name Hernando Cortez set sail on the final leg of an ocean voyage that was to take him from Cuba to the distant shores of the Yucatan, Mexico. Cortez, who had heard of the great riches of the Yucatan and had set his mind on conquering them. When Cortez and company finally arrived on shore, Cortez suddenly turned to his men and ordered them to ‘Burn the boats!’ The jaws of his soldiers dropped. Burn the boats! Then, how in the world were they going to get back?

That’s when Cortez explained to his men that they wouldn’t need the boats because they would conquer the Yucatan army and gain their fortune. And then they would take the Yucatan’s boats home!

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As the story goes, Cortez and his men did burn the boats and then conquered the Yucatan army, taking all its treasures. And they left the island with the Yucatan’s boats just as Cortez said they would.

Message: Limit your options to increase the chances of your success.

No Free Lunch

There was a king who loved his people very much. He had many wise nobles as consuls. One day, he called all his wise nobles and asked them to pen down all their wisdom for the future generation. The wise nobles worked for a year and put forth all their knowledge in twelve volumes of a book. When the king saw their collective work, he said, 'It is too big. Make it smaller.'

The wise nobles worked for another year and condensed their wisdom to just one volume and presented it to the king. The king again said, 'It is too big. Make it smaller.'

So they worked for yet another year, and finally reduced the entire wisdom to one single page and presented it to the king. The king complimented them for their work, but said again, 'Make it even smaller.'

Finally, the nobles reduced the entire wisdom to just one phrase and the king was extremely happy. He said, 'That is what people can understand.'

The phrase read—'There is no free lunch!'

Message: Be ready to pay the price for what you get in life.

Three Masons

A man came across three masons who were chipping chunks of granite from large blocks. The first seemed unhappy with his job and as he chipped, he glanced frequently at his watch. When the man asked him what he was doing, he responded rather curtly, 'I'm hammering this stupid rock, and I can't wait till five, when I can go home.'

The second mason, seemingly more interested in his work, was hammering diligently. When asked what it was that he was doing, answered, 'Well, I'm shaping this block of rock so that it can be used with others to construct a wall. It's not bad work, but I'll sure be glad when it's done.'

The third mason was hammering at his block fervently, taking time to stand back and admire his work. He chipped off small pieces until he was satisfied that it was the best he could do. When he was questioned about his work, he stopped, gazed skyward and proudly proclaimed, 'I...am building a cathedral!' Three men, three different attitudes; all doing the same job.

Message: The higher the purpose of work, the greater is the happiness of doing a work.

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Faithful and A Boat

It was raining heavily and the water entered the house outside which stood a man. A rescue boat came and the rescuer asked the man to step into the boat.

The man said—”No. I have faith in God who shall save me.”

The rain kept pouring and the man had to stand on top of the house. Soon another boat came and the man was again asked to board it. But he refused again saying that God would save him.

The rain did not abate and the water level kept rising. Now the man was barely able to keep his head above the water. Another rescue team arrived in a helicopter. The rescuer lowered the rope and asked the man to hold on to the rope to save his life. The man still refused as he believed that God would save him.

As the water level increased further, he got fully submerged in water and died. When he reached heaven, he asked God— “I had full faith in you.

Why didn’t you save me?”

God said—”Who do you think sent you two boats and a helicopter?”

Message: God helps those who help themselves.

Importance of Expertise

A giant ship engine failed. The ship’s owners tried one expert after another, but none of them could figure out how to fix the engine. Then they brought in an old man who had been fixing ships since he was young. He carried a large bag of tools with him, and when he arrived, he immediately went to work.

He inspected the engine very carefully, top to bottom. After looking things over, the old man reached into his bag and pulled out a small hammer. He gently tapped something. Instantly, the engine lurched into life. He carefully put his hammer away. The engine was fixed!

A week later, the owners received a bill from the old man for \$10,000.

“What?!” the owners exclaimed. “He hardly did anything!”

So they wrote the old man a note saying, “Please send us an itemized bill”.

The man sent a bill that read:

Tapping with a hammer..... \$ 2.00

Knowing where to tap..... \$ 9,998.00

Message: Expertise fetch best value of effort.

How Much Land Does a Man Require

A peasant named Pahom had good chunk of land, but he wanted more. He used to think that if I have plenty of land, I would enjoy my life. He buys as much of that land as they can, but still not happy with his possession. Finally,

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after buying and selling a lot of fertile and good land, he is introduced to the Bashkirs, who own a huge amount of land. Pahom goes to them to take as much of their land for as low a price as he can negotiate.

Their offer is very unusual: ‘Pay us just one thousand rubles, and get as much land as you can walk around from sunrise to sunset. But if you don’t reach the starting point, you lose your money and receive no land.’

Pahom is delighted as he believes that he can cover a great distance and has chanced upon the bargain of a lifetime. He started running since early morning taking a huge circle. When it was about the sun set time, he realizes he is far from the starting point. He runs as fast as he can to arrive at the starting point just as the sun sets. However, exhausted from the run, Pahom drops dead.

His servant buries him in an ordinary grave only six feet long.

(A story by Leo Tolstoy)

Message: Excessive greed brings ruin to people.

The Wisdom of God

One hot day, an old man was relaxing in the shade of a mango tree. After some time, he saw some watermelons on nearby field.

He murmured— ‘Sometimes I just can’t understand the ways of God! He lets tiny mango grow on so majestic a tree and huge watermelon on the delicate vines!’

Just then a mango snapped off and fell on the man’s head.

He got up at once and lifting up his hands and face to heavens said—‘Oh, my God! Forgive my questioning your ways! You are all-wise. Where would I have been now, if watermelon grew on trees!’

Message: Nature has designed everything properly in the world.

The Starfish Story

An old man used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach every morning before he began his work. Early one morning, he was walking along the shore after a big storm had passed and found the vast beach littered with starfish as far as the eye could see.

He then noticed a small boy approaching. As the boy walked, he paused every so often. As the man came close, he could see that he was occasionally bending down to pick up an object and throw it into the sea. The boy came closer still and the man called out, “Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?”

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The young boy paused, looked up, and replied “Throwing starfish into the ocean. The tide has washed them up onto the beach and they can’t return to the sea by themselves. When the sun gets high, they will die, unless I throw them back into the water.”

The old man replied, “But there are thousands of starfish on this beach. You won’t really be able to make much of a difference.”

The boy bent down, picked up yet another starfish and threw it into the ocean. Then he turned, smiled and said, “It made a difference to that one!”

Message: We all have the opportunity to create positive change in the world.

Part IV: Beautiful Poems**If you think you can**

If you think you can

If you think you are beaten, you are, If you think you dare not, you don't.

If you like to win, but you think you can't, It is almost certain you won't.

Life's battles don't always go

To the stronger or faster man.

But soon or late the man who wins,

*Is the man who thinks he can. (CW Longenecker) **Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers** Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers, but to be fearless in facing them.*

Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain, but for the heart to conquer it.

Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved, but hope for the patience to win my freedom.

Grant me that I may not be a coward, feeling Your mercy in my success alone;

but let me find the grasp of Your hand in my failure.

(Rabindranath Tagore)

Ekla Chalo Re (Walk Alone)

If they answer not to thy call, walk alone.

If they are afraid and cower mutely facing the wall, O thou unlucky one, open thy mind and speak out alone.

*If they turn away, and desert you when crossing the wilderness, O thou unlucky one,
trample the thorns under thy tread, and along the blood-lined track, travel alone.*

*If they do not hold up the light when the night is troubled with storm, O thou unlucky
one, with the thunder flame of pain ignite thy own heart, and let it burn alone.*

(Rabindranath Tagore) **The round pegs in the square holes**

Here's to the crazy ones,

the misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers, the round pegs in the square holes...

the ones who see things differently—

they're not fond of rules....

You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them,

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but the only thing you can't do is ignore them because they change things...

they push the human race forward,

*while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius, because the ones who are
crazy enough to think that they can change the world,*

are the ones who do. (Rob Siltanen)

Good and Evil

In men whom men condemn as ill

I find so much of goodness still,

In men whom men pronounce divine

I find so much of sin and blot,

I do not dare to draw a line

Between the two, where God has not. (Joaquin Miller) **Beauty and Ugliness**

*When the world knows beauty as beauty, ugliness arises
When it knows good as good, evil arises.*

The Tao doesn't take sides;

It gives birth to both good and evil.

The Master doesn't take sides;

*He welcomes both saints and sinners. (Tao Te Ching) **Power of action***

Somebody said that it couldn't be done But he with a chuckle replied

That 'maybe it couldn't,' but he would be one Who wouldn't say so till he tried.

So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin On his face, if he worried he hid it.

*He started to sing as he tackled the thing That couldn't be done, and he did it. (Edgar Guest) **A Very Cautious Man***

He was a very cautious man,

Who never romped and played,

He never smoked, he never drank,

Nor ever kissed a maid.

And when he up and passed away,

His insurance was denied.

For since he hadn't ever lived,

They claimed he never died. (Anonymous)

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Part V-Research and Studies

Florida Effect

In a classic experiment conducted by John Bargh, a social psychologist of New York University, students were shown a set of words associated with the elderly but not including the word 'elderly'. The words were - wrinkled, forgetful, bald, grey, Florida. These students were then asked to move to another room and timed in contrast to another set of students with randomly selected words.

It was found that the suggestion of words connected with the elderly caused the students to walk slower. This experiment is popularly known as the

'Florida Effect.'

This experiment also works in reverse as it was also found in an experiment that when students were forced to walk slower, they were 'primed' to think about the elderly.

'Little Albert' experiment

The 'Little Albert' experiment conducted in 1920 demonstrated that punishments can instill a deep fear in children. It was conducted by John B

Watson and his partner Rosalie Rayner at Johns Hopkins University on a nine-month-old infant 'Albert'. Initially, when a small rat was placed before Albert, he showed no fear.

When Albert was 11 months old, Watson gradually began to create fear in him. Whenever the little child touched the rat, a hammer was struck on a steel bar. The sudden loud noise would cause Albert to cry and burst into tears.

Soon after, the child developed fear of the rat itself. Instead of loving and trying to touch the rat, Albert would be scared and start crying as soon as he saw it. Watson gradually created similar conditioned reflexes with other common animals and objects until Albert feared them all.

Robbers' Cave Experiment

A classic experiment known as 'Robbers' Cave Experiment' was conducted in the 1950s by Mazafer Sherif to understand the reason of the cooperation and conflict between different social groups. In the experiment, 22 eleven year old boys were randomly divided into two groups of eleven each. They were taken to Robbers' Cave State Park in Oklahoma for a summer camp.

The groups were named Eagles and Rattlers. These two groups spent a week apart, not knowing the existence of the other group. During this one-week period, each group had

lots of fun as they played together. Gradually, the group members developed intimacy and bonding with each other.

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After a week, these two groups were finally integrated. The researchers found to their surprise that each group had developed an independent identity within this short period, and were verbally abusing the other group and calling them names. When the researchers resorted to competition between the two groups, the enmity increased many-fold. They even refused to eat in the same room.

Thereafter, in the next phase of the experiment, Sheriff designed activities in which both groups had to play together, solve a problem together and shoot firecrackers. Gradually the two groups reconciled. Finally, they became friends and the boys decided to ride the same bus home.

The experiment established the role of the conditioning of mind when we live together for a long time.

The Stanford Prison Experiment

Philip George Zimbardo, a psychologist and Professor Emeritus at Stanford University conducted a unique experiment in 1971 called ‘The Stanford Prison Experiment’ to understand how our roles in real life affect our thoughts.

He picked 24 male students to participate in a psychological study of prison life. The experiment was conducted in a makeshift prison located in the basement of Stanford Psychology Department and each participant was paid \$15 per day. Half of them were randomly assigned the role of ‘prisoners’

and the remaining half were to act as ‘prison guards’. The experimenter tried to expose the participants to real-life conditions of prisoners, including fake arrest at the participant’s home.

Initially the prisoners did not take the guards seriously. Soon the guards began to impose their authority. They blew whistles to force the prisoners to wake up at 2.30 in the morning. When the prisoners refused to obey, the guards used power against them. The next day, the prisoners rebelled. They ripped their uniform and locked themselves in the prison which the guards forcibly opened, stripped the inmates naked, tore apart the beds and put the rebels in solitary confinement, pushups and public humiliation. They separated the ‘good’ prisoners who did not rebel and rewarded them by giving them

permission to lie in bed, wash themselves, brush their teeth and eat, while those who had started the riot were not allowed to do so.

Within a few days, the students who were merely ‘acting’ as guards, began to behave like real prison guards and became sadistic. The students playing the role of prisoners became extremely stressed and developed symptoms of acute depression. The experiment was originally planned for two weeks but had to be called off within six days due to its extreme effect on the participants.

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