NOTES+

EXCEL IN EXPOSITORY, ARGUMENTATIVE AND DISCURSIVE ESSAYS

For Upper Secondary Levels

SAMPLE

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LIST OF IDIOMS		T1-T9



- Refer to a glossary of useful words to enhance essay writing skills and practise using some of the words.
- Practise using the idioms.

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SAMPLE

Title What are the traits of a good teacher?

Tips on drafting the essay:

INTRODUCTION

- Subject of the essay – Traits of a good teacher
  - The consequences of having good and bad teachers
- State your general opinion of a good teacher
  - Dedicated, passionate and inspirational

PARAGRAPH TWO

- State the first trait – Knowledge
- Elaborate on what a knowledgeable teacher can achieve
  - Able to convince students
- Give exa mples of knowledgeable teachers

PARAGRAPH THREE

- State the second trait – Passion
- Elaborate on what a passionate teacher can achieve
  - Able to motivate and inspire students
- Give examples of how passionate teachers teach
  - Teach beyond textbooks
  - Relate lessons to real life issues

PARAGRAPH FOUR

- State the last trait – Good role model
- Elaborate why teachers should be good examples for their students
  - Students are young and impressionable
  - Idol worshipping is common among students
- Provide evidence to show that good conduct by teachers is not taken lightly
  - Ministry of Education has guidelines on what good conduct should be

CONCLUSION

- Present your final thoughts
  - Teachers have great responsibilities
  - Emphasise the importance of having good traits

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1. What are the traits of a good teacher?

While a good teacher is effective in imparting knowledge and values, a bad teacher is often associated with negative reinforcement and impatience. This can cause students to grow up with **a chip on their shoulder** causing them to resent learning. Despite the inevitable presence of bad teachers, there will always be dedicated, passionate and inspirational teachers who possess traits that undeniably make them good teachers.

Firstly, a good educator should know his subjects well. With this understanding, he is better able to deliver his message to the class, convincing rather than confusing more students. For instance, an English teacher should always speak proper English. Otherwise it may confound students on the correct use of grammar and nuances of the language. And for theory-based subjects such as Chemistry or Biology, teachers should know their theories well. A confident teacher is able to let students understand the concepts thoroughly, making something **all Greek to the students** seem so simple.

Secondly, a good educator is passionate about teaching and aims to inspire his young charges. His energy and passion can be felt by his students which can indirectly evoke the curiosity of the students to learn. Textbooks and video clips are never enough. Learning should be brought out of the classroom. When students are given the opportunity to experience and learn not by referring to their textbooks, the lessons would no longer be ephemeral but lasting ones. Students' love for a subject would also grow as they know that what they learn is actually applicable in the real world. Thus a good teacher does not just let students bring homework home, but conducts valuable lessons sometimes ever surreal ones that spur thinking.

Teachers should also be good role models for their students. With more parents working outside the home, children spend more time with their teachers at school than with their families at home. Since teachers and students see each other so often, it is imperative that teachers set good examples for their students. As students are still young and malleable, they would often prize their teachers as idols and follow in their footsteps. In Singapore, the Ministry of Education has set guidelines for teachers to follow. This "Code of Conduct" **makes no bones about** how teachers should behave at all times.

Teachers play a large role in every student's life. As they have great responsibility for their students, we should not compromise on the traits of a good teacher. It is not just knowledge but values that should be imparted to students. Thus it is important that every teacher develops good traits to inspire more students.

(434 words)

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Title Should animals be kept in zoos?

Tips on drafting the essay:

INTRODUCTION

- State the general advantages of zoos
  - It is convenient for people to see animals
  - They oreate an awareness of animal protection
- Present your stand – Zoos are beneficial to animals in the long term

PARAGRAPH TWO

- State the first supporting point – Safe environment for survival
- Elaborate
  - Threat of animal poaching in the wild
- Give examples

PARAGRAPH THREE

- State the next supporting point – Protect from diseases and illnesses
- Elaborate
  - They help with the conservation of threatened species
- Give examples

PARAGRAPH FOUR

- State the first opposing point – Animals need to perform
- Elaborate
  - It is against the laws of nature
  - It causes undue stress to the animals
- Give examples
- Rebuttal
  - Simple stunts are usually performed
  - Animals are kept happy and motivated
  - The Interaction between trainers and animals strengthens the bond between man and animal

PARAGRAPH FIVE

- State the next opposing point – Animals are deprived of freedom
- Elaborate
  - It is tantamount to cruelty
  - Zoos are like mental hospitals for animals
- Rebuttal
  - Zoos are getting bigger and better equipped
  - Animals are free to wander around and are protected

CONCLUSION

- Reiterate your stand
  - Zoos help endangered species to thrive
  - We must ensure that zoos are properly maintained
  - Then, the existence of zoos is justified

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1. Should animals be kept in zoos?

Zoos are convenient places to come face to face with a variety of animals living in a mock-up of their natural habitats. Zoos also increase public awareness on preserving animal habitats, enable the reintroduction of endangered species and research on ways to save animals. Although animals may enjoy more freedom in the wild, keeping them in zoos is more beneficial for them in the long term.

Zoos create an environment that will ensure the safety and survival of a variety of species. In the wild, many animals have been extensively hunted. Animal poaching is real and prevalent. Today, there are fewer than 5,000 tigers left in the world and if we continue to **turn a blind eye**, the next generation would not get to see these beautiful creatures anymore.

Besides being safe from illegal hunting, animals in zoos are also better protected from diseases and illnesses. Researchers are able to study the diseases that plague the creatures and this can further enhance the conservation of threatened species. For example, the rabies virus vaccination was developed which proved to be helpful not only for wild animals but domesticated ones as well.

Critics have pointed out that animals in zoos have to perform at the whims and fancies of man and this is against nature. For instance, elephants can be made to stand on two legs during a performance which causes undue stress to the mammoth creature. Although animals are trained to perform at zoos, not all animals are subjected to such stressful acts. They usually do simple stunts that not only keep the animals happy and motivated when they are rewarded for putting up a good show, the interaction between the animals and their trainers also strengthens the bonds between man and animal.

Also, as animals are meant to live in the wild, keeping them in captivity deprives them of their freedom and is tantamount to cruelty. That is why renowned nature writer Barry Lopez will never set foot in a zoo. According to him, “a zoo is like a mental hospital”. However, zoos these days are getting bigger and better equipped with each occupying more than 100 acres of land in which the different species are free to wander around and stay protected from diseases and poachers.

In conclusion, while animals living in the wild may have more freedom and greater space than those in zoos, we should not be too **quick on the trigger** to write zoos off. Zoos play a critical role in the continued survival of endangered species and to do so, they should ensure that they are able to create and maintain an environment as humane and as natural as possible for the animals.

(448 words)

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Title There is little or no value in playing computer games. Discuss.

Tips on drafting the essay:

INTRODUCTION

- Introduce the topic
  - Computer games are getting popular
  - Computer games not only cause problems but can also generate benefits

PARAGRAPH TWO

- State the first advantage – Computer games build relationships
- Elaborate with facts
  - There are fun activities that bring people together
  - They strengthen family bonding

PARAGRAPH THREE

- State the second advantage – Computer games enable skills development
- Elaborate with examples
  - They require people to develop strategies
  - They help people learn to deal with challenging situations
  - They enhance problem-solving skills and teamwork

PARAGRAPH FOUR

- State the third advantage – Computer games are educational
- Elaborate with examples
  - They help to create awareness

PARAGRAPH FIVE

- State the first problem – Computer games can be addictive
- Elaborate with examples
  - They are a distraction from school and work

PARAGRAPH SIX

- State the second problem – Computer games can promote undesirable values
- Elaborate with examples
  - Values such as violence, gambling and pornography can be picked up

PARAGRAPH SEVEN

- State the third problem – Computer games can affect our health
- Elaborate with examples
  - They lead to poor eyesight
  - Players lack sleep, resulting in headaches
  - Also contribute to obesity because of players eating junk food while playing

CONCLUSION

- Present your personal opinion
  - There is little or no value when we play the wrong games
  - Negative consequences can be overcome with self-control
  - Computer games are additional tools to assist us in various ways

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1. There is little or no value in playing computer games. Discuss.

Given the rise in technological advancement, it comes as no surprise that computer games have become **a dime a dozen**, with 97% of people in the US playing these games an hour each day. While computer games can lead to negative consequences like addiction and gambling, they also generate an overwhelming number of benefits such as providing good entertainment value and opportunities for brain stimulation.

As a shared form of entertainment, computer games can bring people together and play an important role in building relationships. Not only can it be a fun activity for a group of friends to bond, it can also strengthen cohesion amongst family members. According to the Entertainment Software Association, as high as 49% of families in the US play computer games together.

Computer games also expose us to a variety of novel situations that require us to be spontaneous in developing strategies to cope with them. For instance, Cisco has developed the *Mind Game* to train its staff to deal with disasters as they learn to coordinate resources. Furthermore, teamwork can be honed through multi-player games that require players to orchestrate actions and strategies. In fact, according to a 5-year research in Holland, computer games enhance intrinsic skills such as cognitive development and problem-solving.

In addition, computer games can amount to educational benefits for its users such as how HopeLab Foundation has created the *Re-Mission* game to raise the awareness of cancer treatment options and adherence to the treatment for 200,000 cancer patients. The game parallels real world strategies in cancer treatment. Playing the game helps boost positive emotions shifting attitudes about chemotherapy.

However, computer games can come with a price if one becomes addicted to it. This could have a range of implications from mere distraction from work to fatality such as the South Korean who died from a heart attack after playing computer games non-stop for 50 hours in 2005.

Furthermore, computer games also promote debauchery, violence and gambling. The severity of the negative impact can be amplified by an incident in the US in 2013 when a mother was shot dead by her son for confiscating his game. Such a tragedy, shows that computer games can definitely bring about far-reaching negative consequences.

Lastly, computer games have an adverse impact on one's health. Long exposure to computer screens leads to poor eyesight and long hours of playing results in inadequate sleep that could lead to headaches. Besides that, many would often **pig out** on junk food, giving rise to another health concern – obesity.

In conclusion, the concept of computer games is actually a valuable idea. It is only of little or no value when choosing the wrong games to play. Some computer games could promote bad values and games are sometimes played till the point of addiction. However, these negative consequences could be avoided if one exercises self-control. Computer games are simply additional tools that can assist us in various ways and **the ball is in our court** when it comes to using these games to our advantage.

(505 words)

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