

SPM ESSAYS – EXTRA!

EXAMPLE 1

Reading has many benefits. What are they?

Introduction

Most of us have been exposed to reading since we were young but not many of us have the habit of reading for leisure.

- read only because they have to study for their examinations but reading is not only limited to study materials
- fun to read storybooks, novels, magazines, comics, newspapers and any other reading material that is of interest to us

Main body

a) Reading enhances our general knowledge.

- learn about various and cultures in other parts of the world
- take us on a journey to these countries without traveling
- open our eyes to the world around us and teach us about the lives of other people in other countries
- also have the opportunity to learn more about things that are of interest to us through books
- example - interested in photography - read books and instructional guides on photography and photo-editing to improve our skills
- expose us to many things which we are not aware of
- National Geographic magazine often features strange animal behaviours and even unknown cultures in remote locations

b) Reading also trains our minds to be more imaginative.

- helps us to process new information faster and develop our ability to understand how other people think and feel
- more flexible in their thinking and are more open to new ideas
- train our minds to think faster and more efficiently if we read more

c) We can also improve our awareness of the current events worldwide by reading newspapers.

- knowing what is going on around us will also help us socialise with others by discussing the current issues with them
- need not solely rely to newspapers for news
- read real time news online via the Internet
- update the information on their websites every hour just to keep the readers updated with the latest events

d) Reading is important to help us improve our language proficiency.

- exposing ourselves to the proper use of language
- improve our grammar and vocabulary
- enhance our understanding of word usage in different contexts
- can eventually improve on our writing and speaking skills

Conclusion

The benefits of reading are numerous.

- a cheap activity as we can go to the library to borrow books for free
- exchange books with our friends
- help us save a lot of money
- prefer to buy their books so that they can keep them in their collection
- books are a source of knowledge, spending money to acquire them is not a waste, it is a form of investment

EXAMPLE 2

Good Health

The one thing everybody should value the most is good health. No matter how rich, intelligent and powerful a man is, he cannot be happy if his health is poor. Good health is the best wealth.

In order to keep ourselves in good health, we should eat balanced meals, maintain cleanliness, exercise regularly and keep away from unhealthy habits.

What are balanced meals? Meals that contain all the essential food types are considered balanced meals. We have to drink at least eight glasses of water each day to flush out the impurities from the body's system. Also, eat each meal at the same time every day, and never miss breakfast as it is the most important meal of the day.

Maintaining cleanliness is a must for good health. This means living in clean surroundings, wearing clean clothes and keeping our bodies clean. A person should also have enough sleep. For an average adult, an average of eight hours of sleep at night is considered sufficient to help maintain the body's good health. Sleep is very important for the body and mind. The body rejuvenates itself during sleep. If possible, go to bed early and wake up early in the morning so that one will feel fresh and energetic the next day to carry out the day's tasks.

Regular exercise is also a major factor in keeping in good health. Physical exercise increases bio circulation, whets the appetite, helps digestion and keeps away illnesses. Regular exercise is a habit that needs to be cultivated. With improving transportation, there are very few who are prepared to walk or climb stairs. Instead, they prefer to use the lift. Cultivating this habit requires a lot of discipline, which is a rather rare quality these days.

There is a powerful connection between the body and mind. A strong and healthy body needs a strong mind in order to make it most useful. As the saying goes, *A sound mind is lodged in a sound body*. It is for this reason that great stress is put on physical exercise as well as mental training. Physical exercise is vital to develop a healthy body.

Finally, to maintain good health, we should also stay away from unhealthy habits such as smoking and drinking. Heavy drinking and smoking bring upon illnesses and

shorten our lives. We must remember that is easier to fall sick than to recover, as illustrated by the saying, *Sickness comes on horseback and goes away on foot*. So lead a healthy lifestyle to avoid falling ill constantly. It is usual that we seldom miss something till we have lost it. Having said this, be aware that good health is an asset that we should never wait to lose before we start appreciating it.

EXAMPLE 3

Tourism is good for our country. What do you think?

Tourism consists of activities of people visiting a place on holiday and providing the services to these people. All countries of the world from the developed to the under-developed, from the first world to the third world have jumped on the bandwagon to earn at many tourist dollars as possible. Tourism is a big money spinner, from the safari parks in Africa to the ancient historical sites in China.

However, to some people, tourism is not at all what it looks like. If we delve deeper, we may be able to understand why they say we do not need to depend on the tourist dollars. Some people say that we can do without the Western tourists and their so-called decadent culture characterised by the sprouting up of pubs, lounges and other centres of entertainment to cater to their taste. They also claim that local consumers and local people lose out in the long run because the presence of foreign tourists and their money have resulted in rising prices of food and services offered by local vendors. Accusation of preferential treatment meted out to big-spending tourists are rife but also justified.

However, if we look at the flip side, tourism is a much needed tonic for the economy of any country for several reasons. Firstly, we cannot look at the picture of a few bikini-clad western tourists soaking in the sun on our beaches or a few drinkers doing happy hours at a hotel bar and get paranoid. Even without the physical presence of these tourists and their lifestyle, we cannot isolate ourselves and live under the proverbial coconut shell and banish those scenes from our thoughts and life. Given this age of satellite television, we have to live and cope with the presence of this brand or any other brand of foreign culture, the money tourism brings in is much needed. Besides, recent developments have shown that we are also welcoming tourists from other parts of the world including Arabians, Japanese and Chinese. Hence, we need to look at the bigger picture; there are other people from other parts of the world to woo to our shores.

Secondly, there are limitless prospects for tourism given the natural assets that we have as well as the rich cultural heritage of our country. Natural attractions such as beaches, sand, exotic islands and wondrous underwater sites and a warm tropical climate are nature-endowed and lasting if we take well-concerted plan to develop and display but preserve. Our natural rainforests, our forest reserves, Taman Negara and the forests of Borneo and our stupendous caves such as the Mulu and our Mount Kinabalu are Nature's gifts which we

should use with tender loving care. Compared to other sectors such as agriculture and industrialisation which are capital intensive, tourism is viable and attractive. We have so much in terms of cultural and historical legacy to offer to the tourists after more than 500 years of immersion in one cultural wave after another from the Portuguese to the British.

We also have a rich historical legacy in what was formerly the British Straits Settlement, Malacca and Penang. This is attracting tourists' interest and it comes at a small cost-maintenance and preservation. The multi-ethnicity of Malaysia, with its cultural and culinary diversity is a tourist attraction that comes by default. Hence, given all the potential, we should focus on tourism.

Tourism is also seen as ideal because tourism gives employment to people and has spawned a host of related activities from the hawker selling 'roti canai' to the ticketing clerk to the hotel bell boy. For the majority who may not be brilliant in the academic sense but who have plenty of people skills and the aptitude and interest to work with people and make people happy, tourism means jobs. Tourism is also a lifeline for the small business and traders selling trinkets, bric-a-brac and souvenirs, not to mention the host of cottage-based and handicraft industries such as silverware, batik, songket and pottery.

Therefore, the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages and seen from this perspective, tourism is here to remain for the simple reason that the groundwork is there. We have what it needs for any type of tourism, be it ecotourism or adventure tourism.