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**7 Essays  
7 Types  
'O' Level**

**From  
180 'O' Level  
Model Essays  
Ebook**

**Author: K. Rajamanikam  
Editor: Merle Celine Magness**

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**Title: 180 Model Essays for 'O' Level**

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### The Author



**Mr K Rajamanikam** has more than 40 years experience in teaching English Communication skills to children and adults in public schools, educational institutions and with lessons by email. He has written more than 60 English Educational Supplementary books for Primary One to Junior College, in Composition Writing, Essay Writing, Comprehension and English Grammar. He has also co-written a series of Primary 1 to 6 Composition Writing EWorkbooks with models with Ms Merle Celine Magness. Please refer to [www.compositionwritingbooks.com](http://www.compositionwritingbooks.com).

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### The Editor



**Ms Merle Celine Magness** has taught English to both children and adults and has written Secondary and Junior College essay writing books. She has also co-written a series of Primary 1 to 6 Composition Writing EWorkbooks with models with Mr K Rajamanikam. Please refer to [www.compositionwritingbooks.com](http://www.compositionwritingbooks.com).

She holds a degree in Communication and Media Management from the University of South Australia and has attained a certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language from the Regional English Language Centre (RELC) in Singapore.

<b>Foreword</b>
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This ebook, comprising 180 essays, is a compilation of the different types of essays usually set in the English Language (Subject Code 1128) 'O' Level (Paper I) Examinations as of 2020. Though the book is particularly useful for 'O' Level students, it would be good reading material for secondary level students from Secondary I to Secondary IV, both 'N' and 'O' Levels.

The essays act as supplements to what students learn from professional teachers. The essays are intended to serve as examples of good writing following correct structure and language.

Having spent a lot of time and effort on this project, we are sure that the essays will help students aim at excellence in writing.

Author: K Rajamanikam

Editor: Merle Celine Magness

<b>Message to Students</b>
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Dear Students

We are pleased to present this collection of 180 essays as samples of good writing, to help you prepare for your 'O' Level English Language Examination Paper I. It took us a year to seek out the titles, to write the various types of essays, and to compile them into an ebook.

In choosing the titles we stuck as closely as possible to the past exam papers, avoiding directly adopting them word for word from the examination papers. Our intention is to help you develop writing skills such as structure, description, argument and even how to use appropriate words and phrases.

To make the best use of the essays we suggest that you just read the ebook through once, and then concentrate on the types of essays you are best at and would like to write for the exams. We definitely do not intend that any of the essays be copied and submitted in place of an assignment. That would be a lost opportunity, as real learning takes place only when you actually write essays and have them assessed by professional teachers.

After each essay, under the heading, 'Author's Comment', we have written a paragraph or two about the merits of the essay with some suggestions about how the student can improve his writing. We are sure you will find it useful to read them.

We wish you all the best in your mastery of the skill of essay writing, and in your examinations.

Author: K. Rajamanikam

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## **20 Argumentative (Opinion) Essays**

### **(Arguing Totally for One Side.)**

#### **Model Essay 1: Should we always tell the truth?**

This question bothers all of us at sometime or other. Many of us are told by our parents, teachers, and other elders, to always tell the truth; though we observe that they themselves tell lies at the drop of hat! On thinking deeply, we can see that the truth is that it would not be wise to always tell the truth. There are situations where we just have to tell lies, and others where it would be wiser to tell lies than to tell the truth. A person would surely have to lie in order to save himself, or another, from death or injury; when it would cause more harm to tell the truth than to tell a lie; and, when it would be harmless to tell a lie.

The most important justification we can have for not telling the truth is to save a life, either ours, or someone else's. Imagine a situation where a person has been kidnapped and is being threatened with death, and all it takes is for the person to deny that he or she is the person the kidnapper wants. Surely withholding the truth would be justified. In another case, assume that some aggressive men are in pursuit of another, and that the fugitive is hiding in plain sight of us. Would it make sense to tell the truth and point out the fugitive and watch him get injured or killed, when telling a lie could save his life?

Another situation where it would be justified not to tell the truth would be when we know that the truth would cause more harm than a lie. Imagine a situation where a relative is so ill that the slightest bad news could cause a shock and cause his health to deteriorate or even kill him. If the relative asks about the nature of his illness, surely it would be right to withhold the truth from him and tell him he is recovering? Such cases are sometimes in the news.

Finally, there are instances when the truth is withheld and even instances of blatant lies being told that do no harm. One such type of lie is known as the 'diplomatic lie'. Diplomats are known to feign illness to avoid meetings where the issue at stake is a matter that they would rather not face at that particular time. More than all this, we frequently lie to children to protect them from danger.

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Most of us do not tell the truth all the time; however, I believe that only vicious lies that cause serious damage to others or to their reputations would be wrong. Surely, to withhold the truth where no one gets hurt is like a crime where there is no victim?

457 words

### **Author's Comment**

*This essay, which just asks for an opinion and an elaboration, is easy to write provided the student can think of three reasons where lying would be justified. The writer introduces the essay in an interesting way, states his view that in certain situations it is wise, or even imperative, to lie; then he suggests three situations to prove his position. He writes a paragraph on each to elaborate; note that he gives examples. He ends the essay by tying up the conclusion with the position.*

**20 Argumentative Essays**  
**(Arguing two points for and two points against)**  
**Model Essays 21 to 40**

**Model Essay 21: What are the advantages and disadvantages of TV?**

When TV first stepped into the world, no doubt it was welcomed with open arms by everyone but the worst pessimists. However, it soon intruded too much into our lives; so much so that many grave disadvantages became apparent. The advantages of TV are many, but we can mention two great ones. TV is certainly the most convenient form of entertainment in the world, besides being affordable to almost everyone. Its second advantage is that a lot of its programmes are educational and can bring a lot of information to our homes. On the side of disadvantages, it is true that it is addictive and many people – including children – watch too much TV, at the exclusion of more useful activities; it is also true that TV shapes the way we think in many undesirable ways.

The greatest advantage of TV is that it is the cheapest and most convenient medium of entertainment in the world. Most of TV entertainment is paid for by sponsors, so the cost is low for us. Also, it appears in our homes and we do not have to travel anywhere to be entertained. The number of channels and the variety of programmes runs to thousands and caters to all tastes.

Secondly, TV is a great source of education. First of all, there are channels dedicated to documentaries, such as the History Channel and the Discovery Channel. Besides these, entertainment channels provide informal education. Through them we improve our language and get to see sights like the pyramids and the desert.

Of the disadvantages, the first is that many of us get addicted to TV. The serials are so many and so entertaining that one can just sit watching them one after till the whole afternoon, or weekend, is spent. Needless to say, this keeps us from other activities like reading and sports. If unsupervised, children might forget all other activities.

The still more serious disadvantage of TV is that too much of it can shape our behaviour and lives. There is definitely a connection between TV

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violence and real-life violence. Watching too much TV shapes a lot of our ideas about what is right and wrong, and even what is beauty, love, kind and so on. This robs us, especially children, of reasoning to determine what is right and wrong, what is to our advantage and what is real and unreal. People who base their lives on TV might expect too much of life, especially of romance, marriage, and family life.

In spite of there being serious disadvantages of watching TV, it must be remembered that they apply only if we watch TV, or allow children to watch TV, without discretion. There is always a choice about what channels we subscribe to and what programmes we watch. It is within our control; whether we let TV serve us or allow it to run our lives.

480 words

### **Author's Comment**

*Since this is the first essay in this collection, where we present both sides to an argument, I chose an easy title which we can all relate to. We can see clearly that the essay is balanced and shows two advantages and two disadvantages. The points presented are equally important, and the paragraph lengths too are balanced. This is important in an essay where we argue both sides. Please take a look at the conclusion; it tries to neutralise the effect of the disadvantages. This is a good type of conclusion. We will see other types as we read on.*

## **20 Argumentative Essays**

**(Arguing for one side, with one counterpoint.)**

### **Model Essays 41 to 60**

#### **Model Essay 41: Are there advantages in being part of a large family?**

Today, having five members is considered a large family; yet only two generations ago, six members in a family was considered a small family. Many of our grandparents, come from large families of 10, or more, members. The first advantage of belonging to a large family is the members are never lonely; there are also more people available to take care of aged parents or grandparents. However, there is at least one serious disadvantage.

Firstly, with a houseful of blood relatives, it is unlikely that any member can ever be lonely. Housework will be easy with so many members to share the tasks. In a large family, there is no worry of being alone when needing help. There will always be someone to help with your homework, there will always be someone who knows how to do what you are struggling with, or even to borrow money from, usually without any mention of interest. Most of all, family relationships last a lifetime; they do not break up easily. Even if there are one or two members that we do not see eye to eye with, there will be others to choose from.

Parents with seven children can rest easy with the thought that they are unlikely to be abandoned in retirement homes. With the aging population that so many countries in the world are worried about, it is easy to see that such fears appear ridiculous where a large family is concerned. With so many to share the expenses and time, it is unlikely to be a problem at all. In a large family that the writer knows of, where there are seven children, neither the parents nor even the grandparents, who live with them, have any problem with loneliness. Since they have large families, the question of medical expenses is nothing to worry about; especially with the Singaporean invention of Medisave.

Still, there is at least one serious disadvantage to being in a large family. The early days can be a struggle; especially when income is small. Large families often face many challenges with money, sometimes even for

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basic necessities. This situation has often resulted in some family members having to forego their studies and go to work to contribute to the family; thereby delaying or sacrificing the development of their own futures. However, this problem usually disappears when the children grow older; also, the unfortunate member who had to make sacrifices is usually revered, and gratefully repaid amply in his later years.

If you have seven siblings and everyone has four children each, that will be 28 cousins for your children with whom to form alliances, including business alliances. Who needs many friends, while they have so many cousins, until they decide to marry? Though the disadvantage mentioned is a serious one, it is something in the past, and is hardly an issue in these affluent times. With both parents educated, and working; problems of poverty are uncommon, at least in Singapore.

494 words

### **Author's Comment**

*Can we see that the writer is probably a member of a large family? This is probably why his arguments are convincing. This is not to say that we have to have a large family in order to write about one. It is possible to listen to the senior citizens talking about their large families and absorbing enough information to write convincingly about one. The writer's three points are simple and well-presented, and the examples he gives are only common sense. His conclusion is impressive too, as he sums up what is really great about a large family.*

## 30 Discursive Essays

### Argumentative Essays 61 to 90

#### **Model Essay 61: 'We must all study history.' Do you agree?**

"History is bunk!" said Henry Ford, the man who commercialised the use of the automobile. I totally agree with him; history is a waste of time and we should stop studying it and spend the time saved in studying subjects that help us to improve life globally. For one thing, history leaves the human race mired in the past. Many are the frosty and even hostile relationships between nations, which used to be at war decades and even centuries ago. Words of anger are still thrown about events, usually wars, whose veterans are all dead or in their last days. Being mired in the past keeps these countries from progressing forward, into new eras of friendships which would benefit their people and even the world.

China and Japan fought an unfortunate war which ended more than 70 years ago; yet they have not really mended fences between them. Every now and then all a politician has to do to gather some support, is say something nasty to remind them about the war, like the Nanking massacre or comfort women. Then there is the border conflict between China and India, over a piece of land which serves little actual purpose. Even people of the same race, like India and Pakistan, and North and South Korea are spoiling for a fight. Then there are the conflicts among the countries in the Middle East, which are devastating on the people. When we trace the reasons, we see that the culprit is history.

One justification preached by history believers, is that we learn from the past. Though perhaps there are some instances when we did learn from history, we see that most of the time we did not. Just 20 years after World War I, which killed a million people and destroyed so many homes and cities, World War II; even more devastating than the first, broke out and cost even more lives.

Another justification is that history makes us proud of the past. Sad to say, this applies only to the victors, and sometimes not even that. Countries which won wars often celebrate their victories annually. Does it ever bother them that they are taunting those who had lost the war? It is akin to keeping old wounds open and preventing natural healing.

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Keeping countries always prepared for war too has been pointed out as another justification for history. Does it not occur to the leaders that being prepared for war, and spending vast amounts of the country's wealth, could actually cause the wars? Neighbours remain suspicious at arms build-ups, though they smile and bow to each other. Is it not more probable that arms build-ups will lead to conflicts?

Self-help teachers, like Anthony Robbins, teach that individuals cannot progress in life if they stay stuck to their past errors. When studying the lives of successful people, we see that they succeeded mostly by letting the past go. Does it not make sense that this would apply to countries as well too?

498 words

### **Author's Comment**

*The writer has taken a rather unusual, if not drastic, view: that to study history is not only a waste of time, but actually, destructive. The most important factor that decides what view we take in an essay is how strongly we believe in it and can prove our position. It is only then can we write a good essay. It would sound only lukewarm if all we want to do is write something rebellious, just to be different from other writers.*

*Yes, we have written on the same title earlier on. Well, I just wanted to show you how to write on the same subject as a discursive essay.*



## **30 Expository Essays**

### **(Model Essays 91 to 130)**

#### **Model Essay 91: How do young people in your country spend their spare time?**

For purpose of discussion, 'young people' will be people from the age of 13 to 19, better known as 'teenagers'. Unlike youth in many other countries, youth in Singapore do not have much time for entertainment. They are rather serious people devoted to activities linked to education and preparation for the future; in short, they do not have much 'spare time'. Still, those who can find the time do entertain themselves. Many of them are rather active people and entertain themselves with lots of physical activities; others prefer to spend hours at their hobbies, which are often computer-linked, and many others prefer to just relax, like listening to music, watching TV, hanging out or just doing nothing.

Though it is true that many of the youth are physically active, it is also true that most of them are not dedicated sportsmen, which probably accounts for our unimpressive showing in international games like soccer, hockey, boxing etc. Many of the youth stop serious sporting activities, involving local and international competitions, after leaving school; however, they do keep active and stay fit by working out in gymnasiums, jogging, swimming etc. Most are not keen on competitive sports.

There are of course the dedicated hobbyists. Though there is involvement in various hobbies, like reading, gardening, woodcraft, photography, fishing and even birdwatching, most hobbies are computer-based; not involving much, if any, physical movement. Many youths are hooked to social media. There are those to whom the centre of the world is 'Facebook' or other social media platforms. Others are seriously involved in playing computer games. In this area, some indulge in competitions with their peers from all over the world.

Singaporean youth are fond of entertainment and relaxation; probably, to balance their hard work in schools aiming for excellent grades. They go to movies frequently and listen to music with their peers, or on their own, or at weekend parties in homes or chalets or beaches and parks, where there is even dancing. Other forms of relaxation are home-based; like watching TV or movies on videos. There are many who prefer to hang out

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with friends. They can be seen in arcades furiously playing exciting games. Naturally, there are some loners who relax on their own, by wandering about or just sleeping for long hours.

Spare time is intended for recreation and relaxation and refreshing themselves in between serious life-activities, like working or studying to prepare for their working lives. Quite often, just doing a different activity from the main life-activity serves to refresh and prepare the mind for more serious activity. To do this, each of them has his or her own way. They follow their own inclinations with the same result in mind: to do a different activity before returning to the battleground. The important thing to note is that most Singaporean young people entertain themselves only with constructive activities.

478 words

### **Author's Comment**

*The writer has chosen to divide the young peoples' activities into three aspects: physical activity, hobbies, and relaxation. He then elaborates on them by giving details of each type of activity and the youth that indulge in them. Notice that he just 'exposes' the activities in a few sentences, but without judgement. This is a common way to write an expository essay with a title like this; since the title asks what the young people do to entertainment themselves, the essay describes what they do. Notice how he begins in the third person (using 'they and them'), continues in the third person and ends in the third person. He could just as well have chosen to write in the first person (using 'we and our'). The important thing is he has stayed in the same 'person' throughout the essay. If he had strayed from this, it would have been a serious error.*

## **30 Descriptive Essays**

### **Model Essays 121-160**

#### **Model Essay 121: Describe the first hour in a school**

There is a hive of activity as each student looks forward to another day of learning; some with eager anticipation, others with dread, and still others with boredom. There are three important things in the first hour: the assembly, which includes flag-raising with the singing of the National Anthem, the giving of updates by the principal or someone appointed for the task, the walk to the classroom and commencement of the first lesson.

To announce the start of school, a bell screams suddenly, prompting instant reactions from all. Some walk briskly to the assembly area in front of the school building, while others drag themselves there reluctantly. Soon everyone is standing in neat rows, with the teachers at the end. All eyes are to the front. The trained parade-ground voice of Mr Sim, the Scoutmaster, commands the school to come to attention. Everyone responds and the well-drilled 'thud' of 500 feet comes down in a single move. The teacher of singing, Mrs Chong, has the honour of leading the students in singing the National Anthem, while two nervous scouts slowly raise the flag under the watchful eyes of their scoutmaster. Fifteen minutes pass.

This is followed by the usual updates, announcements, and admonitions by Mr Singh the principal. There are a few reminders about the coming charity fair; everyone is urged to volunteer. Another announcement is that, since there are too many volunteers for cleaning the adopted elderly couple's home, the ten students who had placed their names first would be accepted for this week; others would be rostered for the following few weeks. Mr Singh thanks the volunteers, and then directs an admonition at a group of unnamed students who had been found loitering outside a theatre after school hours, the previous day. "Please don't damage the good name of our school. Go straight home after school and do something useful" he finishes. This part of the morning is over in just five minutes.

The principal wishes everyone, "Have a wonderful day," and walks away. Instantly everyone moves, and the quietness is broken with words of greetings and enquiries. The lively chatter is heard throughout the school as everyone troops, in neat orderly rows, to the classrooms. Within

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seconds, smiling teachers appear at the front of every classroom. The students get to their feet and greet their teacher, who returns the greeting, meets all the students' eyes one by one, and invites them to sit. After the clatter of sitting down comfortably, textbooks are taken out and flipped to the required page. Elsewhere, problems are written on the board and tackled with enthusiasm; while in another classroom, a heated argument begins on 'Was Brutus an honourable man?' Another day of learning has begun.

Half an hour later, the first hour of a typical day in school fades away, and the learning continues intensely. Excited teachers, with equally excited students, pour over complex problems of mathematics, languages, science, literature, art, and other subjects. Education is a serious matter.

498 words

### **Author's Comment**

*The writer has adopted an unusual style; that of imagining that he is at the scene; observing and describing everything as it happens. Notice how he describes three main activities: the assembly; dismissal of the assembly and the walk to the classrooms and commencement of the first lesson till the end of the first hour. You would have observed that the whole essay is mostly in the present tense, since he is describing what is going on, with some points in the past perfect tense when referring to events that had happened earlier.*

**30 Personal Recount**  
**(Reflection, Reflective, Narrative Essays)**  
**(Model Essays 151 to 180)**

**Model Essay 151: Write about a time when you made a surprise visit.**

I smiled to myself as I imagined the look on Diana's, face when I stand before her. I had completed the project and was going home on one month leave. I was eager to marry Diana; and go off on another project. When I told Diana's mother my plan to return the following day, she laughed non-stop; I wondered why. Through her laughter, I asked her not to tell her daughter my impending return the following day.

I rang the doorbell. I could hear the squeaks from my future mother-in-law's wheelchair, as she moved towards the door. When the door opened, I went in and hugged her and asked where Diana was. She pointed to Diana's room with her chin and wheeled away, laughing all the while.

I knocked the door softly. There was no response. I knocked again, louder. Again, no response from within. I kept knocking non-stop and called her name; then I heard sobbing behind the door. I kept calling and knocking, and realised I was shouting. Then suddenly, I heard Diana; she said, "Go away!" I was shocked. Then I heard the familiar squeak of the wheelchair and turned around. Laughing all the while, Diana's mother handed me the room key, and wheeled away, still laughing.

I inserted the key, turned it, and pushed. The door would not budge; apparently someone was pushing against it. I pushed again; with my shoulders this time and pleaded, "Please Sweetheart, please open the door." Thoughts of calling the SCDF crossed my mind, but I decided that persuasion was the better option. "How did she get so strong in just two years?" I wondered. Suddenly the door yielded, and I found myself racing across the room; and if the bed had not been in the way, would have sailed out the window. I landed on the bed and turned to look; and got the shock of my young life!

A sumo wrestler version of my beloved was standing over me! I waited for her to explain, and whispered, "What happened, Sweetheart?" She started sobbing again, "I missed you and ate like crazy. I will slim down; I will go on a diet; I will swim and jog every day; I promise," she said

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between sobs. I sat her on the bed and sat beside her. I took out my box and took her hand and tried to slip the ring on her finger. It went only halfway. This brought out fresh sobs and a loud wail. "Look I said, we will go on a diet, and on a strict regime of exercise.

"In three months, I am sure you will slim down. We will have a quiet wedding, and then sail away on a cruise to Bangkok, where we will report for my new project," I said. She stopped sobbing and nodded. Then suddenly we started laughing. We laughed till tears ran down our cheeks. Then the three of us went out for supper.

494 words

### **Author's Comment**

*This is our first narrative essay, also known as 'personal recount (personal reflective, personal reflection) essay'. Basically, it is a story; it may not be true or even possible. The most important thing is it has to be original. One word of caution; a question on a narrative essay does not appear in every exam, so please do not put all your eggs in one basket; a disaster might result.*

*The writer has written a simple, amusing story. Please note that the entire story is told by one person, in the first-person narrative. The story begins with a problem: the protagonist returns after a two-year absence and goes to his fiancée's home to surprise her. Surprisingly, she refuses to open the door and let him into her room. Unlike other situations, we, the readers, do not know the problem either. The writer strings us along, with little things happening and intrigues us as to why Diana refuses to open the door and how she had become so strong in two years. The story ends with a sudden revelation, aka a twist.*



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