

Part 1: Essay Writing Theory

Introduction			
An exposition is a piece of writing that explains and conveys information while being reflective requires us to ponder over a matter. Thus, in a reflective exposition, you describe and evaluate your experiences and then explain how you draw lessons from them.			
Format	Paragraph 1	Introduction	
	Paragraph 2	Rising Action	
	Paragraph 3	Climax	
	Paragraph 4	Post-Climax / Reflection	
	Paragraph 5	Conclusion / Reflection	
Reflecting & Evaluating Life Experiences			
- Ask yourself the following questions as you consider your experiences: - What have I done right? - What mistakes have I made? - What could I have done differently? - What other perspectives are there to this issue? - What are my strengths and weaknesses? - What do I truly cherish in life? - What are my goals? - How do I feel about what I am going through? - We usually evaluate our experiences in light of our personal values and that of the society that we are in. Personal values are deep-seated beliefs we hold about life and its purpose. Values provide an internal reference to what is good, important and beneficial to guide decision making. The table below gives some examples of personal values.			
Self	Health	Esteem	Recognition
	Joyfulness	Fun	Contentment
	Exercise	Self-discipline	Beauty
	Purpose	Passion	Happiness
	Calmness	Tranquility	Freedom
	Safety	Comfort	Adventure
Others	Love	Family	Connection

		Intimacy	Teamwork	Respect
		Friendship	Belonging	Relationships
		Praise	Tolerance	Forgiveness
Environment		Conservation	Nature	Sacredness
		Permaculture	Self-sufficiency	Awe
		Recycling	Tidiness	Sustainability
		Harmony	Wonder	Care
Learning		Lifelong learning	Stimulation	Challenge
		Education	Consciousness	Discovery
		Curiosity	Variety	Critical thinking
		Growth	Insightfulness	Skillfulness
Achieving		Achieving goals	Financial security	Have a go
		Persistence	Confidence	Goal setting
		Faith	Make a difference	Security
		Lateral thinking	Excellence	Creativity
Community		Humanity	Peace	Contribution
		Responsibility	Honesty	Integrity
		Usefulness	Legacy	Charity
		Justice	Fairness	Freedom
		General Guidelines		
1	Write from a first	person point of view		
2	Use twists and	unexpected events to engage the readers		
3	Personal feelings	and resolutions must be included in the essay		
4	Storylines must	be original and have a sense of maturity and realism		
5	Avoid run-out-of-the-mill	storylines that sound like primary school essays		
		Introductory Paragraph - Thesis Statement		

Thesis statement should be at the end of your introduction to signpost where you are going with your essay.

- Tell readers what the composition is about
- Responds directly to the topic
- Be formulated in a sentence
- Be given in the opening paragraph

4 Ways The Thesis Statement Responds to the Topic

Answers the question and states the main idea of the composition	Topic: What problems do young people like you face? (Personal expository composition) Problems are part and parcel of life. We all faced various problems in different phases of our lives. Adults have their own set of problems and so do young people. Some say youth is the most difficult phase one has to go through. Indeed, a host of problems awaits the youngsters straddled between childhood and adulthood. Topic: What are the advantages and disadvantages of large families? (Factual expository composition) Large families are generally a thing of the past, especially in modern societies like Singapore. The idea of having more than three children is typically shunned here because of the high cost of raising children and the harried pace of life. Just as there are two sides to every coin, there are advantages and disadvantages to large families.
Answers the composition topic by stating your stand	Topic: 'Everyone should sometimes do things that he does not enjoy doing'. Do you agree with this statement? (Argumentative composition) Some things ensure our emotional and physical well-being and we ought to do them though they may not be fun. Even if something may seem boring and meaningless, we should try it at least once to find out for ourselves what it can teach us. The recent Secondary three camp is a perfect example of an event that some of us might not enjoy but it is definitely meaningful and memorable for all of us.
BLANK	
Reiterates the topic and tells	Topic: Write about some kinds of books you enjoy reading. (Personal expository composition)

readers what the composition is about	When one is lonely, the perfect companion is a book. A book can fill your hours with delight as you escape into other worlds and vicariously live the lives of the characters within the pages. Amidst the bustle and hustle of daily living, a book can ease our minds and offer escape from the noise of the world. I love reading. The kinds of books I most enjoy are fantasy, thrillers and science fiction. Topic: Describe your favourite place in your house. (Descriptive composition) When I started studying in Secondary one, my family decided to convert the guest room into a study for me. Since then, I have spent most of my time there and I have developed strong feeling for this sanctuary of mine. When I return home from school, I go to the study right away. As soon as I enter this room, I feel myself leaving behind the stress of the day and entering a realm of tranquillity. The study is truly my favourite place in my house.
Shows how you interpret the topic, how you will approach it and what aspects you will cover	Topic: Write about an important gift in your life. We all receive gifts every now and then. We sometimes receive gifts on special occasions like a birthday. When we do well for an examination, we may also receive a present from our parents. Then there are holidays such as Christmas when we shower our friends and family with gifts to show our love for them. Few of us forget the special gifts we have received, for gifts have a significant place in our hearts. One such gift was my favourite teddy bear from my late maternal grandmother.
Variation in Thesis Statements	
General VS Comprehensive thesis statement	General Thesis Statement Problems are parts and parcels of life. We all faced various problems in different phases of our lives. Adults have their own set of problems and so do young people. Some say youth is the most difficult phase one has to go through. Indeed, a host of problems awaits the youngsters straddled between childhood and adulthood. Comprehensive Thesis Statement Problems are part and parcel of life. We all faced various

	problems in different phases of our lives. Adults have their own set of problems and so do young people. Some say youth is the most difficult phase one has to go through. The problems that beset the young centre around generation gap, school and peer pressure issues.
Two-sentence Thesis statements	A thesis statement is usually given in one sentence. But a two sentence thesis may help narrow the focus further. This example names three specific areas the writer wants to address in the composition. Problems are parts and parcels of life. We all faced various problems in different phases of our lives. Adults have their own set of problems and so do young people. Some say youth is the most difficult phase one has to go through. Some problems young people face centre around generation gap between them and their parents. School-related difficulties also beset youngsters as does peer pressure. This example gives a <u>broad thesis statement</u> first and then gives a <u>sneak preview</u> of the main points. Problems are parts and parcels of life. We all faced various problems in different phases of our lives. Adults have their own set of problems and so do young people. Some say youth is the most difficult phase one has to go through. Indeed, a host of problems awaits youngsters straddled between childhood and adulthood. These problems centre around generation gap, school and peer pressure issues.
Conclusion Writing Techniques	
Technique	Description
Concludes	Conclude your final thoughts and reflection on the topic given
Resolution	Mention that the write / main character took a positive approach when resolving the incident
Changes	Mention the changes that occurred
Compare	Compare the before and after effect of those changes on the parties involved. Reflect on how you / the main character has transformed as a result of what happened.

Past	If reflecting on the past, the writer should note how different he or she was in the past. Often, the writer will compare past and present / future selves to emphasise the difference.
Present	Takeaways (what you have learnt)
Future	If looking ahead, the writer shares how he or she thinks the experiences in the essay will influence / affect him or her in the future
Outcomes	Suggest possible outcomes of the problems encountered / issues raised that have been discussed to give readers something to think about.
Quotes	Sum up with a convincing and well-chosen quote. You can try to quote a famous personality who shares your opinion as mentioned in your essay.

Part 2: Classified Vocabulary

Reflective Writing - Sentence Starters	
Thinking about your own learning	Something I have found out about myself is...
	I know I need to change the way I...
	I learn best when...
	What I have learnt today reminds me about...
	I really admire the way...
	My point of view is...
	When I read over my journal reflections, I am surprised at how my thinking has changed because...
	In the future, I would like to...
As a record of what happened	The most important event that happened for me was...
	Thinking back over the day what I valued most was...
	I am not sure why we...
	Something funny that happened was...
Insights into what you think and feel	One of the things that surprised me was...
	I am still shocked by...

about the ideas	I keep thinking about...
Quotes	
Confidence	1 “Confidence is contagious. So is a lack of confidence.” - Vince Lombardi 2 “Success comes in cans, not can’ts” - (Unknown)
Determination	3 “It does not matter how many times you get knocked down, but how many times you get up” - Vince Lombardi
Old Age	4 “Old is gold” (Proverb)
Family	5 “Family is not an important thing. It’s everything.” - Micheal J. Fox
Failure	6 “You can’t let failures define you - you have to let them teach you. You have to let them show you what to do differently next time.” - Barack Obama
Friendship	7 “A real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out.” - Walter Winchell
Gratitude	8 “When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around.” - Willie Nelson
Hard Work	9 “Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.” - Herman Cain
Happiness	10 “There is no substitute for hard work.” Thomas Alva Edison
Inspiration	11 “All our dreams can come through, if we have the courage to pursue them.” - Walt Disney
Kindness	12 “Sometimes it takes only one act of kindness and caring to change a person’s life.” - Jackie Chan

	13 “Do things for people not because of who they are or what they do in return, but because of who you are.” - Harold S Kushner
Learning a lesson	14 “Mistakes are the growing pains of wisdom.” - William Jordan 15 “The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing.” - Henry Ford
Respect	16 “Respect yourself and others will respect you.” - Confucius

Idioms

A narrow escape	Have the last laugh
A pack of lies	Hold (one's) tongue
Against all odds	In good hands
At sixes and sevens	In the face of
As quick as a flash	Keep (something) at bay
By hook or by crook	Leave no stone unturned
Call it a day	Look daggers at (someone)
Come rain or shine	Many moons ago
Come to nothing	Neck and neck
Drive (someone) up the wall	Now or never
Donkey's years	Once in a blue moon
Follow suit	Penny wise and pound foolish
From scratch	Put (one's) foot down
Get on (someone's) nerves	Pull (one's) socks up
Give (someone) the greenlight	Rub salt into the wound
Go downhill	Show (one's) true colours
Green with envy	Time and again

Weather	
The Sky and Clouds	Sunrise and Sunset
• The high sunlit clouds drifted across a clear blue sky. • The sky above was full of tumultuous, dark, ragged clouds. • A sky of mackerel clouds, crimson and amber-tinted. • It was a grey afternoon with a dull sky threatening rain. • A cloud, ominous and black, drifted over the mountain and released a sudden shower.	• The sun rose in a pool of crimson and gold, spilling light all over the land and the white clouds. • From freezing night, it turned to scorching day as the sun climbed towards its zenith. • As the sun set, the few thin strips of clouds on the horizon turned shimmering gold. • It was a lovely walk, with the sun setting behind the mountain in a sea of liquid gold. • The sunsets have been glorious lately, all rosy and salmon- pink.
Lightning and Thunder	
• Thunder came marching from far away with increasing tread. • Lightning and thunder raged with fury. • A flash of forked lightning and a great clap of thunder came close upon each other • A bolt of lightning tore across the sky and a peal of thunder followed	
Moon	Wind and Rain
• The moon was abnormally large and it bathed the earth with its luminous glow.	• The wind was sighing and thrashing in the tree tops and the boughs moaned. • The morning was cold and wet with a brisk wind sweeping the rain across the land. • A curtain of rain beat down from the heavens.
Good Weather	Bad Weather
• The sun shone brilliantly and the water in the pond glittered invitingly. • The sun filtered through the clouds, signalling the end of the rain. • A golden glow spread across the sky as the sun chased the dark clouds away.	• The sky above was full of tumultuous, dark and ragged clouds. • It was a cold grey afternoon with a dull sky and threatening rain. • Ominous black clouds covered the sky and released a sudden shower.

• The whole landscape was bathed in the warm glow of the rising sun. • Palm trees swayed gently in the breeze in the warm tropical sunshine. • Fresh air filled my lungs and I felt refreshed and exhilarated. • The breath-taking scenery captivated everyone. • The pond was bathed in a golden hue by the gentle sunlight and the water was as clear as crystal. • The sunlit clouds drifted across a clear blue sky.	• Thunder rolled in from the west and rain began to fall. • The dark clouds grew ominous. • Lightning and thunder raged with fury. • The morning was cold and wet with a brisk wind sweeping the rain across the land. • Thunder roared and lightning flashed across the sky. • The howling of the wind frightened us all.
Feelings Descriptions	
Excited	Elation was an almost unbearable gurgle in (one's) stomach
	Waggled his eyebrow comically
	Nibbled at her lower lips to hold back a smile that was threatening to erupt
	Words tumbled over each other in a high-pitched gabble
Concentrating	Stared off into the distance, his eyes steady and unblinking
	Spoke in a tone that assumed no possibility of argument
Sympathetic	Brown eyes were like velvet - warm and comforting
	Voice was silky and soft, like a feathery whisper
	Slid arms around shoulder, gave a gentle squeeze and whispered
Relieved	Pounding eased in (one's) chest and the sweat dried on (one's) brows
	Lowered (one's) shoulders and uttered a heartfelt sigh
Anger	(One's) reply fuelled (one's) anger and (one) erupted like a volcano

	Hissed at (someone) out of the side of (one's) mouth, spraying spittle as (one) spat out the words	
	Gripped knuckles until they turned white	
	Pounded on the table with his fist	
Scared	Smile dropped from (one's) face like a theatrical mask, to be replaced by a look of sheer terror	
	Kept (one's) narrowed eyes fixed to the floor, unable to meet (one's) cold, unblinking stare	
	Spoke in a rush, the words tumbling over each other in a jumbled stream, one rushing into the next	
	Ran like a scuttling lizard, with (one's) legs flailing sideways	
	Synonyms for 'Walk'	
	● Falter: walk unsteadily ● Bounce: walk energetically ● Hobble: walk unsteadily or with difficulty ● Lumber: walk slowly and heavily ● Lurch: walk slowly but with sudden movements ● Prance: walk joyfully, as if dancing or skipping ● Saunter: to walk about easily ● Scuff: to walk without lifting one's feet	● Stagger: walk unsteadily ● Stomp: walk heavily, as if in anger ● Stride: walk purposefully, with long steps ● Swagger: walk with aggressive self-confidence ● Trample: walk so as to crush something underfoot ● Traverse: walk across or over a distance ● Tread: walk slowly and steadily
Assorted Descriptive Phrases & Sentences		
	● The realisation hit me like a bolt out of the blue ● Earned us a few minutes of lecture on the importance of ● Finally succeeded in (something) only to be devastated by ● It felt as if time has stood still as (one) watched the disaster unfold in mute horror ● Spelt the end of ● Just when (one) thought it could not get any worse ● What meets the eye is just a handful of ● Hotbed of spirited conversation and enthusiastic cheers ● That dreadful thought put (one) off ● Promising (oneself) to never trivialise any opportunity	

- A prolonged pause set in
- Every twitch of (one's) muscle was carefully choreographed
- However, now that I thought back, was it really worthwhile?
- As though mocking (one's)
- Found it an impossible feat to (do something) no matter how hard (one) tried
- Felt the spirit of adventure rise up within (one)
- Could not more be wrong
- We came face-to-face and the reality became clear. There was no room for (something).
- (One's) unwavering stare said it all
- (One's) unwavering tone and steady gaze delivered the poignant message sharply
- Suffocated by those words and blatant insistence, (one's) mind soon reached its limits
- The awkward moment froze, causing everything to come to a standstill
- Lose the usual confidence glitter in (one's) eyes
- Felt foolish for being judgemental
- The impending judgment minutes came
- Could not quite measure up to the immensity of the daunting situation
- (One's) voice lingered in my head. (One's) words resonated with me.
- Till now, the (something) of (someone) lives on.

Nature	Nice and pleasant scenery change from the hustle and bustling of the city
	The drive down the (place) was scenic but uneventful. Cruising along the highway, I observed the cluttered skyline of the concrete jungle gradually fading into low-rise buildings, and eventually I was surrounded by countryside. A vista of rolling pastures flew by (one's) window as (one's) rusty sedan that has seen better days chugged along winding roads.
	Mother Nature took things into her own hands.
Action	Retort in disagreement towards
	Result of combined effort
	Running in for our usual hug that carried on far too long as we gushed about our lives with smiles lighting our faces
	Caught the familiar smell of (something) wafting in the air
	Paused to survey (one's) surroundings
	Asked with a tinge of curiosity mixed with concern

Exemplar (Narrative-Style) Introduction

Each time I hear the word 'precious', the sequence of events on that glorious day – 24th November 2012 – immediately rushes to the front of my mind. It was a dreaded day for most of my friends – including me, initially of course – before the life-changing string of events transpired. We were collecting our life-defining Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) results on that day.
