

June 2009 Paper 1

Answer both Part One & Part Two. (1 hour 30 minutes)

Part One (40 marks)

Write on one of the following topics.

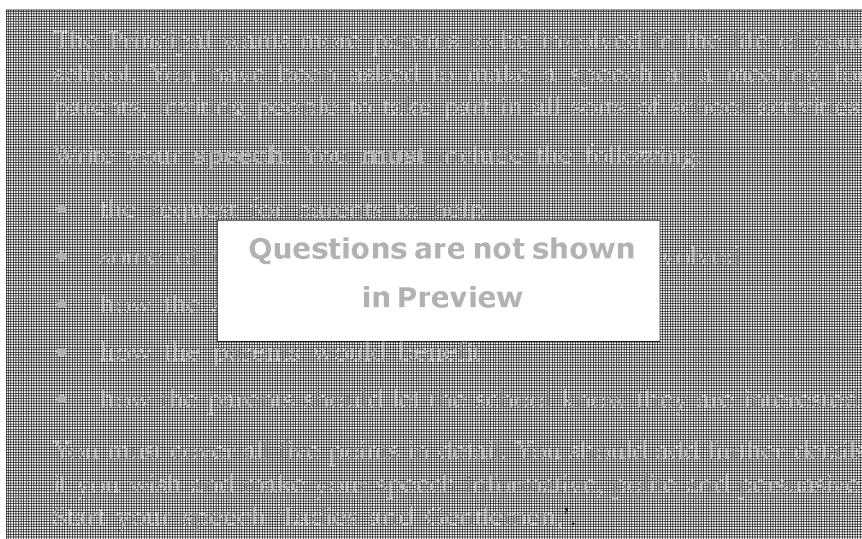
You are advised to spend about 60 minutes on this part of the paper and to write between 350 and 600 words.




Part Two (20 marks)

Begin your answer on a fresh page.

You are advised to spend about 30 minutes on this part of the paper and to write between 200 and 300 words.



 *Model Essays* **Part One****1. Describe the scene during a busy time at your local community centre.**

Amidst the sky scrappers and plazas that surround and loom over it, the single storey community centre looks, in spite of its irregular structure, positively delicate and graceful. It is no less busy than them; there is a double row of cars in front of it, and an even greater number of motorcycles. The sounds emerging from within mingle, albeit discordantly, with the mayhem outside.

Laughter. The excited shrieks of the children as they run about, colliding with everyone and everything. The hum of the voices of the adults, the ear-piercing rock music from the 'Teen zone', as well as the noises from the road, pervade the whole building. The only places where there is comparative peace are the reading room, where shortsighted old men sit hunched over their news papers, and the gym. The gym is, as usual, nearly empty. There are only two people there. A corpulent, middle aged gentleman in a suit far too tight for him, who puffs and pants as he pulls at the straps of the exercise machine, and a boy with dumb bells who is concentrating so hard that he scarcely sees the ludicrous spectacle before him.

However, the 'sports room', a vast, hall like area, is always crowded. Snooker, chess, card games and video games are generally popular among the boys and men. The older, skilful players are relaxed and cheerful; they exchange jokes and comments, and good-naturedly guide the more nervous youngsters. The women play badminton in a miniature court at one end of the room, or simply wander about, gossiping and laughing while they keep an eye on their children. In general, the atmosphere is one of cordiality and fellowship. Fights do breakout among the children occasionally, but their watchful mothers swiftly intervene and resolve them. The smell of tea, biscuits, crisps and cake is diffused throughout the room, as waiters rush about serving these to the players. Most of them partake of these as they play.

Across the narrow, crowded lounge, where a large group, made up mostly of the elderly, intently watching the news, is the teen zone. Some boys dance frenziedly to the music. A group of girls giggles over a fan magazine. Everyone is enjoying themselves. The computers and gaming consoles lined against the walls are crowded. However, most people just sit around talking and laughing, nibbling the refreshments set before them. Considering the volume of the music, it is incredible that they are able to understand each other at all; but it does not seem to bother them.

Neither, even more surprisingly, does it seem to disturb the knitting circle in the next room, some half a dozen old ladies whose tongues click as fast as their needles. Situated between the 'Play land' designed for toddlers, and the teen zone, they have become habituated to the noise.

The 'play land' is full of all sorts of swings, slides and rides designed for two to six year olds. All sorts of toys, from teddy bears to toy dolls and aeroplanes are scattered about. There are dozens of children here,

**COMMENTS ON THE ESSAY**

A community centre is the hub of social activity. It is a descriptive essay hence its interest hinges on creating a word picture of what happens at the centre. The writer has focused on the activities of each group. The style has touches of humour to break the monotony and keep interest alive.

along with their mothers, nurses, and in some cases, elder brothers and sisters. Laughing and screaming, squalling and squabbling, they play on happily until their parents decide to leave.

The community center provides people of the neighborhood a place for recreation and to socialize. In the heart of the city, where there are no public parks or libraries, it is an invaluable institution.

(576 words)

1. Describe the scene during a busy time at your local health centre.

A cacophony of sounds - moans, groans, raspy coughs and nervous giggles, the indignant outcry of the infants - greets you as you approach the local health centre. The pungent smell of the mounds of filth and open drains that hem it make you lurch and reel back drunkenly. Clearing the steps at a run, you launch yourself into the reception area panting and gasping like you have just won the 100 m dash.

Judging by the multitudes thronging it, you begin to feel apprehensive that a very severe epidemic must be rife. However, a closer scrutiny reveals that each patient - and these are by no means few - is accompanied by what may very justly be termed 'the entire clan'.

Sometimes, indeed, it is positively impossible for the sorely harassed receptionists to distinguish the actual 'sufferer' from his or her attendants. Some of them are of course genuinely ill, but generally, since the health center is entirely free, the slightest excuse serves for a visit. A headache, a stomachache, a slight itch or irritation - anything will do. The rest of the extended family unit, perceiving excellent chance of an outing, tags along with barely - concealed joy.

The health center has something for every body, the Geriatric section, for instance, is full of elderly patients with their long, minutely detailed list of symptoms. They insist on giving blow by blow account of every slight twinge of pain to the poor doctors, whose headache is aggravated by the fact that they are compelled to converse in a differential bellow.

Screams, wails, shouts, alternate coaxing and scoldings of mothers - these are continuously and clearly audible from the Pediatric section. Children balk at the very thought of seeing the doctor, who is more terrible than Count Dracula to their young minds. Some of them are irritable, because they are really sick; but generally, the uproar is caused by the wails of the peevish and frightened. Some dig their heels into the floor and refuse to budge; others fling themselves on to the floor and throw ear splitting tantrums. Mothers, fathers and elder sisters, all weary and decidedly out of temper, try their level best to coax and cajole them into the doctor's office.

The Gynaecology section is swarming with women of all ages. From the blushing, giggling young brides to the stout matrons who already have several children. They chat amicably as they wait, the older women discussing their previous experiences in graphic detail, and giving useful tips and advice to the nervous young girls.

The sterile, impersonal atmosphere of a hospital is no where to be found. Everyone knows every one; the patient who visits the doctor in a professional capacity today is quite likely to invite him to lunch tomorrow. For the doctor this can become problematic. Since he usually



The descriptive essay is always difficult to attempt. The essay tries to capture the exact atmosphere of a local health centre. At times the writer hinges on humour to try and create an authentic picture.

knows at least three generations of each family, the norm is to expect him to cater to their physical and emotional well being with complete attention and dedication, with about 500 patients a day, this is, of course, impossible. It speaks volumes for their tact and social address that they manage not to seriously offend anyone.

The general atmosphere of amicability and cordiality makes each visit a pleasure, which is why, in spite of its flaws, the health centre remains an important part of the life of our community.

(562 words)

2. Which two of your local customs are most important to you, and why do you value them?

As the afternoon shadows lengthen, a flurry of activity begins near the old Banyan tree. An age old custom, prevalent in the rural area is the 'Choppal.' After the day's work is over, the villagers look forward to an evening of social get-together and problem solving.

The area under and around this tree is swept and sprinkled to settle the dust. A 'charpoy'(local bed) is placed under this tree. Gradually the village elders appear one by one, wearing clean and starched clothes. A 'Hookah' is lit and placed in the centre. As it is rotated and puffed in turns talk turns to politics, social issues and petty disputes. The elders often hear arguments and settle disputes on the spot. No one challenges their decisions which are unbiased and fair.

As the afternoon advances, women, free from their household tasks gather a little further away. The children play together while they sit and chat. Cackles of laughter, strains of old songs reverberate in the air. However, this time is also utilized in constructive activity. Some sew, others embroider, passing on tips they have learnt from their mothers and grandmothers. The young girls also make use of this time to laugh and giggle. Giddy youth sees cause to break into bubbling laughter at the slightest pretext. Skipping, hop skotch, and of course singing are their favourite activities. The young men of the village are also a topic of discussion and maidenly blushes appear on many faces.

The 'Choppal' is the pulse of the village. It brings the community together and helps to foster tolerance and love. The spirit of caring and sharing is highlighted by this custom. In a world where human values are being relegated to secondary importance the Choppal highlights the human aspect.

Visitors are greeted with smiling faces, outstretched arms and warm smiles. This custom of hospitality makes my heart swell with pride. Visitors are considered to be a blessing from God and are received cordially. The custom probably originated from the belief that angels often disguise themselves as humans and visit the earth. No visitor was received coldly for it could bring down wrath upon the host's family. Whatever the origin extending hospitality is a part and parcel of our life.

In this fast paced world of today where people tend to become self-centred and selfish the spirit of hospitality still prevails. News of an expected visitor sends a wave of excitement through the host's family.

There is a flurry of activity as the guest room is prepared and mouth watering cuisine planned. There is an air of anticipation and everyone – from the youngest to the eldest await the visitor's arrival.



COMMENTS ON THE ESSAY

Customs are part of every country and society. Students can pick out any two — religions oriented customs to local ones and try to highlight their importance.

This custom of hospitality is carried a step further in the village. The visitor is everybody's responsibility. It is a matter of honour and pride if there is a visitor in their midst. They feel it is their joint responsibility to cater to his well - being for on this hinges the reputation of the village. Each villager out does the other in extending hospitality. This eagerness to share, to go without and give away your best shows inherent goodness of heart and simplicity of nature. This custom is like an oasis and I hope it remains an intrinsic part of our society!

(546 words)

3. Write a story which includes the words: 'I was so glad that my mother didn't give up ...'.

I picked up the photograph from the mantelpiece and kissed it. The familiar face that stared back at me was beautiful. Even behind the signs of age one could see the wisdom in those deep dark brown eyes. It seemed as if those wrinkles were like the pleats in a curtain, which hid the experiences of life behind them.

I wiped the thick layer of dust on the frame's surface with my hand and looked down at the picture with renewed concentration. My eyes now searched for memories and recollections in that familiar face no longer by my side. It was as if the past had resurfaced from behind those layers of dirt as fresh as new. The past now flashed before my eyes as alive as the present.

My mother had been divorced when I was six years old and with my three younger siblings she was left to fend for us in this ruthless world. I still remember how in winters she sat by the fire for hours and hours stitching clothes so that we could eat something in the night. How she was always active and exuberant roaming around the house working actively wiping the dust from a shelf while her other arm cradled the baby.

I remembered how she not only managed to take care of all of us but ensured that we had the best in life. In all those hard times never did a day pass without us having food or even missing out a day of school because of financial reasons. Even when we grew up and those hands could not do our work anymore she never disappointed us. All of us got busy in our lives and as ungrateful beings we humans are we neglected her when she needed us most...

I still remember how in her last days that smile on her face made me regret all the times I had ignored her messages and calls. Looking at myself at that moment and where I was happily married with my children, I was so glad that my mother did not give up on us like we gave up on her. She was always there for us in time of need and sadness, thick and thin.

The regret of not being with her was something I couldn't very well change. As I gave this a thought I replaced the photograph of the woman who had given me everything no matter what I did, her favour and love could never be reciprocated to the same extent. For she was my guardian angel, my mother...

(431 words)



COMMENTS ON THE ESSAY

A story that touches on love and emotion. It focuses on the intrinsic love of a mother and the indifference of children as they get busy, with their own life. This is a 'so common' aspect of life and students can write interesting and touching stories on the topic.