We have put together this collection of essays and letters for students from the UPPER SECONDARY classes.

The essays and letters have been classified into different types to allow easy reference. We have stuck to simple language at about the same level as the students for whom we have written these essays.

To help students get the best out of the essays, we begin with SUGGESTED APPROACHES on how each essay could be tackled. In the margin of each essay, we also write short COMMENTS on why the essay is well written.

Using this book as a guide, students would do well to master the art of essay writing in the early stages of secondary school. Once mastered, the skill of writing will serve them throughout their school and university days, and beyond as well.

To this end, we hope this book is helpful.

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(NARRATIVE) STORIES @20

Essay 1  Write about the rivalry between two elderly people. (N.B. You must not repeat a story you have encountered elsewhere.)

Essay 2  One day you made a bad mistake which upset other people. Write about how you tried to put things right.

Essay 3  Write a story entitled "The escape".

Essay 4  "Money isn't everything", Discuss.

Essay 5  A shameful act.

Essay 6  Jumping to the wrong conclusion.

Essay 7  Write a story beginning, "When John met Alice, the two took an instant dislike for each other..."

Essay 8  Write a story entitled 'An end to loneliness'.

Essay 9  Write a story suggested by the following newspaper headline: BOYS ENCOUNTER ALIENS!

Essay 10 Write an original story based on: 'Ghosts'.

Essay 11 Write an original story based on: 'An elderly woman'.

Essay 12 Write an original short story based on: 'A dangerous invention'.

Essay 13 Write an original short story based on: 'An unusual adventure'.

Essay 14 Write an original short story based on: 'Strange friends'.

Essay 15 Write an original short story based on: 'The rescue'.

Essay 16 Write an original short story based on: 'A strange encounter'.

Essay 17 Write an original short story based on: 'A fake'.

Essay 18 Write an original short story based on: 'An adult decision'.
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Essay 20. Continue the following story: I had enough of this...

Essay 21. Write a story about: 'A princess'.

Essay 22. Write a story on: 'The enemy'.

Essay 23. Write a story based on: 'The hypocrite'.

Essay 24. Complete the story: I looked at her face; it had hard work written all over...

Essay 25. Write a story with the title: 'The broken promise'.

Essay 26. Write a story where the following sentence appears somewhere: Somehow I knew that this was going to happen.

Essay 27. Write a story where the following sentence appears somewhere: She regretted everything, and wondered, "Is it too late now?"

Essay 28. Write a story based on the following: "You have let me down for the last time," he roared.

Essay 29. Continue the following story: Plain though she is, I love her and always will.

Essay 30. Write a story that ends with the following sentence: The quest having ended we went our separate ways.

Essay 31. Continue the story that begins: "Weep no more my child, I am here," said a gentle voice.

Essay 32. Write a story that ends with the sentence: He had never felt so ashamed in his life.

Essay 33. Write a story that ends: Finally, after all those years, peace was restored.

Essay 34. Write a story based on the following: It was a hot night, but I felt cold all over.

Essay 35. Write an original short story based on: 'A different type of courage'.

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Essay 83  The advantages of growing old.  

Essay 84  Life is meant to be lived with pleasure.  

Essay 85  All men and women must have purposes in life.  

Essay 86  If you had only one year to live, what would you do within that year?  

Essay 87  If you could undo one historical happening, which would that be and why?  

Essay 88  Man has no right to hold so much power over animals.  

Essay 89  How would you set about stopping war in the world?  

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Essay 95  Explain the effects of heavy rainfall.  

Essay 96  How would you take care of an old sick person in your home?  

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Essay 99  “What a wonderful sound!” Write about some of the sounds you like best and why they mean so much to you.  

Essay 100  Imagine a reunion with three friends from your school days in 10 years’ time. How will your lives have changed?  

Essay 101  Describe a brave act that you did.  

Essay 102  Recount your childhood days.  

Essay 103  Sweet memories.  

Essay 104  Describe a trick that backfired.  

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Essay 174 There have been some unusual noises every night of the last five nights near where you live. They happened at the same time and in the same way each night. Your family and neighbours are very upset. Last night you saw what happened and you now decide to report to the police.

Write your report. You must include the following information:

• at what time and where this occurred
• what exactly happened
• who was involved
• why your family and the neighbours are so upset
• what you want the police to do.

You must cover all five points in detail. You should also add further details if you wish and make your report clear and helpful.
Essay 175  You have been asked to raise money for a charity by organizing either a sports event or a concert. Write a letter to invite an important guest to take part. You must include the following information in your letter:

- Exactly what type of event it is
- When and where the event will take place.
- What you would like your special guest to do
- What other arrangements have been made for the day.
- Why the money is needed

You may add further details if you wish. Your letter should be written in clear, correct English. It should try to persuade your guest that this is a worthwhile cause.

Essay 176  You are the security officer in a popular shopping centre. One day as you were on duty in the middle of the store, a salesgirl came up to you and breathlessly described how she saw a tough looking customer just stuffed his bag full of all sorts of things and walked towards the exit. Describe what actions you took. Use the following words and phrases to help you.

- escalator
- muscular
- called for help
- surrounded
- fought fiercely
- police
- arrested
- commendation

Essay 177  You were on a cruise to nowhere. In the dark, with the moon overhead, it was romantic. As you were strolling on the deck, you heard a scream. You rushed towards it and saw a woman on the floor. She had been stabbed. You saw a man running from the scene. You recognized him as a member of the crew. Write what happened after, using the following words to help you.

- blood flowing
- doctor
- alarm
Essay 178  You were visiting your cousin in a village in Malaysia. As you were talking to her you heard a loud cheer. Your cousin ran out and naturally you followed. To your amazement, you saw the number one state footballer, one of your favourites, standing there. He was from that village and had come back to visit. Write what happened after that, using the following words to help you.

- famous
- humble
- broad smile
- teacher
- signed autograph
- story
- secret
- donate
- local mosque
- relatives

Essay 179  One day you are at a busy shopping centre and you hear a commotion. A man is running towards you with a lady’s handbag. He is obviously a snatch thief. Slyly you put out your foot and trip him. He falls down cursing and the bag falls near you. Complete relating what happened. The following words are to help you.

- snatch thief
- scared
- got up
- large crowd
- snarl
- break through
- police
- returned handbag
- report
Essay 180  One day you were returning from your office when you saw a man sitting by the roadside. He looked forlorn and stretched out his palm with a sad look in his eyes. Relate what you did after that. The following words may be of help.

- pathetic
- story
- on drugs
- prison
- returned to old friends
- deserted by wife
- shunned by society

Essay 181  A new girl/boy from an island in the Pacific Ocean has just enrolled in your school. Give him/her a briefing about how to get along in the school.

Essay 182  You are disgusted that there are so many drugs being advertised that are guaranteed to help one reduce weight. Also, the slimming salons are getting rich. You want to recommend the most rational way: diet and exercise. Write views to the papers.

Essay 183  On your way to school you saw a fight. Actually it was not much of a fight. Three youths were ganging up on one to other youth. You ran forward shouting at them to stop. When they saw you, they fled. You helped the fallen youth and then called the police. Give a report to the police on what you saw.

Essay 184  A certain monument near your school is being vandalized by some boys. You know who they are. Write an anonymous letter to the police.

Essay 185  Once there used to be a clean river near your home. Now the river has become a dumping ground and stinks. There are no fishes in it. Write a letter to the Minister of Environment expressing your views.
Essay 186  Last year some friends from Thailand spent their holidays with you and you had promised to spend this year’s holiday with them. Regrettably, something has happened and you are unable to go. Write a letter to them to tell them about the situation.

Essay 187  Your father has been given employment in a foreign country. Write a letter to your best friend expressing your mixed feelings and mention what you will miss most about Singapore.

Essay 188  Soon you will leave your present school and go to a new school. Write a letter to a friend telling him or her what you will miss most about the school.

Essay 189  At a religious festival you feel a nudge on your feet. You look down and you see a child. He is obviously lost from its parents. Relate what happened after that. The following words may assist you.
- crying
- ice cream
- page
- loudspeaker
- maid
- parents
- grateful
- cheerful
- prayers

Essay 190  You have been asked to give a talk on healthy living to a group of lower secondary boys. Write down what you intend to say.

Essay 191  There is a very pushy salesman in your neighbourhood who is successful in selling all sorts of things to people, which they usually find they do not want later on. Write a letter to all your neighbours warning them about him.
Essay 192  You are an astronaut and you have just landed, with your crew, on what was thought to be an uninhabited planet. But to your surprise, you see that the planet is inhabited – indeed by a civilisation, which is more advanced than ours. Write a report back to your headquarters on Earth.  

Essay 193  An unfortunate thing happens to you one day. You did not mean to but arrived 30 minutes late at your company’s annual dinner. The boss’s face turned dark when he saw you, but he said nothing. Knowing his sensitive nature, you are sure that he will take it personally. Write a letter to apologize and explain to him the reason you were late.  

Essay 194  It does not usually flood in your neighbourhood. One day it happened. You were away at work. When you returned, you could not get through because of the floods. Relate what happened after that. The following words may be of help.

- boats
- rescue party
- trucks
- army
- evacuate
- guide
- worried  

Essay 195  You have found a fantastic way of making a fruit or a vegetable (choose one) grow faster and to twice their size. Write to the relevant government department offering to teach you method to all who want to learn – free of charge.  

Essay 196  One day you arrived home past your ‘curfew’ time. Your father was furious and yelled at you without asking for an explanation. You lost your cool and yelled back. Your father kept quiet and you were distressed to see the hurt look on his face. Write a letter to him to straighten the matter.
Essay 197  After buying a pair of sports shoes at a certain shop, you saw exactly the same brand on sale somewhere else for half the price. Naturally you are furious. Write a letter to the Better Business Bureau to complain about what happened.

Essay 198  A mental hospital is to be built near your neighbourhood. Your neighbours are going all out to stop it and are collecting signatures on a petition. You are disgusted with their attitude, as you feel that mentally ill people are also Singaporeans and have rights too. Write a letter to the press airing you views.

Essay 199  One day you are alone at home when there is a knock on the door. You open the door, and see an old lady standing there. "I know we have not met before, but I am your grandmother," she says with a smile. Continue and relate what happened after that.

Essay 200  Describe how you would go about organising a picnic for the children in a children's home near your school.
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**INTRODUCTION**

Essay titles which require you to narrate stories often give explicit instructions to write an imaginative story. But then again, in some cases only the essay title is given - leaving the writer to write the type of essay he chooses. In other words, the title does not tell you what type of essay to write. In such circumstances, the writer is entirely privileged to write whatever he chooses. Our advice: Choose what you are best at.
**Essay 1**

Write about the rivalry between two elderly people.
(N.B. You must not repeat a story you have encountered elsewhere.)

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**ELDERLY RIVALRY**

Ignatius looked across at his rival. All the three nurses were around him. Something had to be done to make them look his way. With a deft ‘accidental’ movement he knocked the kidney dish. With a loud clatter, the utensil fell to the floor. They had to look his way now and did. He pointed with pretended helplessness at the floor. Angie rushed over with a broad smile and picked it up for him. Then they all came over. He looked across at his rival. Their eyes met; Ignatius saw the daggers in George’s eyes and smiled in triumph. He had won again! After they left, he smiled and waved at George again. His heart glowed. Victory was sweet.

4:00 PM was visiting time. He looked around at all the ancient warriors and their visitors. As usual, George and he were the only ones without visitors. He decided he would fix that. He struggled to his feet. Painfully, step by step he hobbled to the bed at the far end. Salim’s visitors would talk to him. Unlike everyone else, Salim always had visitors to spare. Not all of them could talk to Salim at the same time so some would talk to him. Of course they did. They asked about his health; his family; whether he had eaten and so on. He felt a glow of pride and looked...
across at his rival. George could not walk; so he could not 'borrow' visitors from the other patients. Ignatius saw that he was pretending to read and chuckled to himself. Obviously George was avoiding his eyes. Then he hobbled back to his bed, but not before passing George and giving him a triumphant, gloatting smile. George turned away.

As usual Ignatius rose at dawn. It was a habit. Birds chirping always woke him up. He closed his eyes and prayed. He prayed that that day too he would triumph over his rival. But something was bothering him. It was something nagging; something uncomfortable; something demanding to be addressed. It was about the rivalry. He tried to push the thought away but it pushed its way back in. Suddenly, it dawned on him. All his victories were empty. The care of the staff was just drama. The enquiries by Salim's visitors was drama. They did not really care did they? In fact no one cared about him or about George. It was all one big drama. Tears filled his eyes. He had sinned. He prayed to God for forgiveness. He decided he would put everything right later that morning; no, he would do it immediately. He looked across at George's bed. The curtains were drawn. Obviously he was sleeping. He had to wait till later after all.

He smiled at his own cleverness. He had a plan. As soon as it was bright enough, he would walk over to George's bed. He would be direct. He would smile at him. He would apologise for his hard-heartedness. George would understand and apologise in return. They would then laugh heartily over their rivalry. They would become friends. After that they would not have to worry about seeking attention from the staff or from other patients' visitors anymore. They would have each other. He wondered if George played chess. He decided he probably did. He knew George was an intellectual. Did he not read the whole day? Everything would be alright. He smiled to himself again.

Then he saw a covered cart coming stealthily into the ward. He wondered whom it was for. He saw it being pushed straight to George's bed. A feeling of emptiness gripped his heart as floods of tears streamed down his face.

(612 words)