

# **1. Write an essay (of 800–1000 words) on any one of the following topics:**

## **1.1 Lessons Learnt from the Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic, a global crisis that began in 2019, reshaped societies, economies, and individual lives in unprecedented ways. Its impact transcended borders, exposing vulnerabilities and strengths in human systems while offering profound lessons. The pandemic highlighted the importance of resilience, adaptability, global cooperation, and the need to prioritize health, equity, and preparedness in an interconnected world.

One of the most significant lessons was the critical role of public health infrastructure. Countries with robust healthcare systems, proactive testing, and contact-tracing mechanisms managed to mitigate the virus's spread more effectively. The pandemic exposed disparities in healthcare access, particularly in underfunded systems, where marginalized communities suffered disproportionately. This underscored the need for equitable healthcare policies, ensuring access to medical care for all, regardless of socioeconomic status.

The crisis also revealed the fragility of global economies. Lockdowns disrupted supply chains, halted industries, and led to widespread job losses. Small businesses and low-income workers were hit hardest, emphasizing the need for diversified economies and social safety nets. Governments introduced stimulus packages and relief measures, highlighting the importance of fiscal preparedness to support citizens during crises. The shift to remote work and digital platforms accelerated technological adoption, demonstrating the potential for innovation to sustain productivity under constraints.

Socially, the pandemic redefined human connections. Lockdowns enforced physical distancing, yet fostered a renewed appreciation for community and family. Virtual platforms became lifelines for maintaining relationships and work continuity, but they also highlighted the digital divide. Access to reliable internet and technology became a necessity, not a luxury, prompting calls for universal digital inclusion. The mental health toll of isolation and uncertainty brought psychological well-being to the forefront, urging societies to destigmatize mental health issues and invest in support systems.

The pandemic exposed the consequences of environmental neglect. With human activity reduced, air and water quality improved in many regions, suggesting a link between industrialization and environmental degradation. This reinforced the urgency of sustainable practices to combat climate change, as zoonotic diseases like COVID-19 often emerge from disrupted ecosystems. The crisis also emphasized the importance of scientific research and trust in expertise. Vaccines were developed at unprecedented speeds, showcasing human ingenuity, but misinformation and vaccine hesitancy posed challenges, underscoring the need for science literacy and transparent communication.

Globally, the pandemic highlighted the necessity of cooperation. No nation could tackle the crisis alone, yet initial responses were marked by competition for resources. The uneven distribution of vaccines between developed and developing nations exposed inequities in global health systems, calling for stronger international frameworks to ensure fair resource allocation in future crises.

On a personal level, the pandemic taught resilience and adaptability. Individuals adapted

to new routines, from home-schooling to remote work, learning to find balance amidst uncertainty. It also prompted introspection, with many reassessing priorities, valuing health, relationships, and personal growth over material pursuits.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic was a wake-up call for humanity. It exposed systemic weaknesses, from healthcare inequities to economic vulnerabilities, while highlighting the power of human resilience, innovation, and cooperation. The lessons learnt—prioritizing health, equity, sustainability, and global unity—must guide future policies and actions to build a more resilient world.

## 2. Grammar and Vocabulary Exercises

### 2.1 Frame sentences with the following idioms:

- (i) **do without**: I had to do without my phone for a day, which taught me to appreciate face-to-face conversations.
- (ii) **few and far between**: Opportunities to travel abroad are few and far between due to my busy schedule.
- (iii) **come off**: The charity event came off successfully, raising significant funds for the cause.
- (iv) **leave out**: Please don't leave out any details when explaining the project plan.
- (v) **fall through**: Our plan to start a new business fell through due to lack of funding.

### 2.2 Fill in the gaps with appropriate prepositions:

- (i) They have done away **with** the system.
- (ii) We arrived just **in** time to watch her go.
- (iii) A good citizen should adhere **to** the rules.
- (iv) Alas! we are done **for**.
- (v) The patient has now come **to** his senses.

### 2.3 Give the antonyms of the following words:

- (i) **Accept**: Reject
- (ii) **Resolute**: Indecisive
- (iii) **Allow**: Forbid
- (iv) **Former**: Latter
- (v) **Meek**: Bold

### 2.4 Turn the following into indirect speech:

- (i) The old man asked his son if he knew their neighbours.
- (ii) John said that he had seen her once.

- (iii) The teacher said that silence was more powerful than words.
- (iv) The mother told her daughter to remember that she had a son.
- (v) The Army-General ordered the soldiers to be on the alert.

## 2.5 Rewrite the sentences according to the instructions given in brackets:

- (i) Despite being rich, he is poor in health. (Use 'despite')
- (ii) The stairs were too steep for me to climb. (Use 'too')
- (iii) The head that wears a crown lies uneasily. (Turn into a simple sentence)
- (iv) Drinking should be abstained from. (Turn into passive voice)
- (v) He is braver than any other man in the locality. (Use the comparative degree)

## 2.6 Supply the missing words:

- (i) It was raining **cats and dogs**.
- (ii) You should not run **to and fro**.
- (iii) He left **no stone unturned**.
- (iv) Prices are rising **by leaps and bounds**.
- (v) Books lay scattered **at sixes and sevens**.

## 2.7 Correct the errors:

- (i) The president as well as the secretary **has** objected.
- (ii) **Gold** is a precious metal.
- (iii) **How many years does a dog live?**
- (iv) We rarely see **a one-rupee** coin.
- (v) Who will look **after** the orphan?
- (vi) He cannot hear you unless you **speak loudly**.
- (vii) **Listen to** his advice.
- (viii) We are **waiting for** his arrival.
- (ix) Ram said that he **had** won.
- (x) One should know **one's** limits.

## 2.8 Make sentences with the following pairs of words to indicate the difference in meaning:

- (i) **Dead**: The plant was dead after weeks without water. **Deadly**: The snake's venom is deadly to humans.

- (ii) **Firm:** She runs a firm that specializes in eco-friendly products. **Farm:** He grew up on a farm, tending to crops and animals.
- (iii) **Ring:** She wore a gold ring on her finger. **Wring:** He had to wring the wet clothes before hanging them to dry.
- (iv) **List:** I made a list of groceries to buy. **Least:** This is the least expensive option available.
- (v) **Stick:** He used a stick to stir the fire. **Steak:** She cooked a juicy steak for dinner.

### 3. Read the passage carefully and answer the questions that follow:

- (i) **What does the author find very surprising about Gandhi's command over English?** The author finds it surprising that Gandhi, who never heard English at home, began learning it only at age eleven, and had mediocre Matriculation marks, could write prose that was clear and direct.
- (ii) **How did Gandhi come to know about the way of life of the shepherd?** Gandhi came to know about the shepherd's way of life by observing pastoralist communities in Kathiawar, who grazed their flocks in pasturelands after monsoons, and by meeting them during fairs and festivals where they sold their wares.
- (iii) **Who influenced Gandhi's idea about pastoral life?** Gandhi's ideas about pastoral life were influenced by Henry Salt, Edward Carpenter, William Wordsworth, and John Ruskin, who romanticized the purer, more natural lifestyle of farmers and shepherds compared to industrial workers.
- (iv) **What was so praiseworthy about that life?** The pastoral life was praiseworthy for its purity and naturalness, representing a simpler, more harmonious existence compared to the industrialized lifestyles of businessmen or factory workers.
- (v) **Write in your own words about the future envisaged in Gandhi's essay on The Foods of India.** In his essay, Gandhi envisioned a future where the dietary differences between meat-eating in England and grain-eating in India would diminish, fostering greater cultural unity and mutual understanding between the two nations, leading to a deeper connection of hearts and shared customs.

### 4. Make a précis of the following passage (about 410 words):

The development of modern Indian theatre in the nineteenth century, particularly in British-built seaports like Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, was shaped by a middle class educated in English and aspiring to emulate British culture. This theatre adopted British theatrical practices, introducing the proscenium stage, which separated the audience from the performance, treating it as a spectacle without ritualistic involvement, and emphasizing entertainment for financial gain. Unlike traditional Indian theatre, which relied on patronage and improvisation within familiar myth-based narratives, this new theatre required paid tickets and prioritized immediate commercial success. Actors trained for specific roles rather than rehearsing fixed scripts, similar to North Indian classical

music, where improvisation within a raga's structure creates variability and audience engagement. This shift marked a departure from the participatory, patron-supported, and flexible nature of traditional Indian theatre, influenced by Western models despite India's ancient theatrical heritage dating back to AD 200.