

IDEAS 36

**International Online Teachers Society
Debate
Educational Materials For
Advance and Upper Intermediate
Students**



**International Online Teachers Society
Publishing Committee**



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THE 36TH INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

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WHY I LOVE MY KIDS

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I love being loved. Who doesn't, really? We all feel a certain thrill, not necessarily the romantic kind, knowing how valued we are, how people love us. The love I get nowadays is purely the familial, familiar kind---no mysterious inhibitions, no stupid hang-ups. Only pure, pious, seesawing-between-motherly-madness-and-genuine-concern type of love. And all this love I get sevenfold and more, both from my inherently-crazy kids and from those who have loved my big brood all these years.

The love I enjoy can often be breathless, tired from the exertions I have to do as a mom each and every day of my motherly earthly life. The adrenaline-rush as I wake up each morning to patter around the house doing what I must do to maintain an orderly existence for the family, in whatever way I can despite a relatively-weaker constitution. The crazy, guttural manner I sometimes address a wayward kid or two who refuses to wash his feet and brush his teeth before bedtime. The often-pleading tone of voice I adopt to get my lovely kids to do house chores as well as school work. Yes, I have steadily gone from I beg yous to if you don'ts, my friend. No doubt about it. Indeed, motherly love can often teeter between caring love to brutal love. Fortunately, when someone once asked me if I had killed any of my kids yet, I could still assuredly answer, NOT YET. Focus on the adverb, folks.

I am the mother my kids love to hate about 70% of the time, and that percentage is pretty precarious, I know. It could more accurately range from 70% to 100%, instead. Well, moms will be moms, just as children will be children no matter what age they get to be. You could either smother them with kisses or smother them with pillows. Hopefully and thankfully, more of the former and absolutely none of the latter.

The first kid is always lucky. He cries, and a mom drops everything and flies to the rescue. The succeeding kids have it less easier. They get hurt, and they are told to wash up and stop crying like a big baby.

When I am swamped with work, all my kids get out of me is just a YES or a NO, and all other questions that range from WHY to HOW can wait till dinner. I have an invisible sign outside the bedroom door that says DO NOT DISTURB, and it's honored with a code of silence. Oh, eruptions do occur, mostly from my side of the door due to a word I can't quite nail into place, or an idea that seems to hang in the air and takes forever to reach my terra firma of an aging, dense head. But my kids know that when I'm in front of the computer, no manner of distraction can possibly pry me off the seat. Except maybe a fire.

This is why I love my kids!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION;

1. Why is parental love different from other types of love? Share your own thoughts on this question.
2. Why is it difficult to be a parent? Can one maintain constancy in being so?
3. Can choosing between a sweetheart and a parent be quite easy? Why or why not?
4. How would you feel if your own kid chose others above you? What would you do if you were in that type of situation?
5. Share your most valued memory of your parents. Why do you consider this as the most valuable above all?



BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA-LOVE NEVER DIES

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This past weekend, I had the pleasure of watching all over again the 1992 film by Francis Ford Coppola, Bram Stoker's Dracula. I remember having read the paperback version when I was in high school, and having had sleepless nights because I kept imagining fog coming in through my bedroom windows, but who was I fooling anyway? There was absolutely no chance on God's green earth that I looked like Dracula's wife or any of his mistresses of the night. Still, I remember also checking my fangs in the morning in case they had gotten longer overnight. But anyway...

The story revolves around how Count Dracula literally "...crossed oceans of time" to be able to reunite with the woman he loved, or her reincarnation, for that matter. It also tells of a woman's courage to face down an unknown and supernatural foe/lover from the dark past to be able to live happily ever after with the man who was truly present and meant for her in the here and now.

It begins with the victory of Count Dracul, as Dracula was earlier known, while fighting for the armies of the Lord. After the suicide of his beloved Elisabeta, who was condemned to hell because of having killed herself, Count Dracul renounced God and vowed to avenge his beloved's death by taking the lives of people through their blood, for "the blood is life."

His journey as the undead continues till the time of Jonathan Harker and his fiancée, Mina. Mina happens to completely resemble Elisabeta, and it is this fact which makes Dracula pursue her from his native Transylvania to London while keeping Jonathan Harker a helpless prisoner in his castle. Dracula assumes a younger persona and a new identity as Prince Vlad, and woos Mina who was lovelorn because of Jonathan's continued absence. Mina falls for the mysterious prince, but receives a letter from Jonathan, who has managed to escape from the castle to the safe confines of a nuns' monastery. Determined not to let Jonathan know of her indiscretion, Mina sails to where her fiancé is, marries him, and goes back to London as Mrs. Harker.

Enraged by this turn of events, Prince Vlad aka Dracula condemns Mina's best friend Lucy to the state of the undead. Lucy's fiancé enlists the support of metaphysics expert Dr. Abraham Van Helsing, who has made it his lifelong quest to eventually put an end to Dracula's evil existence.

How the undying love of the undead and the much stronger love of a living, breathing human being clash in this remarkable film is a spectacle to behold over and over again. It also demonstrates the strength of friendship, passion, and tireless perseverance as brought about by the different facets of love.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Is true love undying? Can it really cross oceans of time? Elaborate on your opinions.
2. Is there a certain movie about undying love that you like watching over and over again? Be able to tell the story of the movie in class.
3. Can love sometimes be scary? How?
4. What were your earlier concepts of love as opposed to your present ones? How have they changed somehow?
5. What would you have done if you were in Jonathan Harker's shoes? Would you fearlessly fight for your beloved against a very powerful adversary? Why or why not?



THIS CRAZY LITTLE THING THEY CALL LOVE

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When people are in love, they tend to do things that they would otherwise not do during their saner, more lucid moments. Love, after all, has been touted to give temporary madness to those who are fortunate-or unfortunate-to get afflicted with it. Pardon me if I make it sound like a disease, but isn't this the truth? I mean, which person wouldn't admit to being giddy, high-up-in-the-clouds crazy, deeply, madly in love? Even nuns and priests also feel the love they have for the Lord as a much stronger form than any other earthly love. Lucky for them, the One they have a deep love for remains constant through time, unlike human-to-human love which can often be wrought with negative feelings along the way.

Love has become cliché in this day and age. Somehow, it has turned commercial, too. Notice how celebrating Valentine's day has become pricier every year? What is it with Valentine's day and roses and hotel reservations? Unless some of you reading this would find this writer bitter, let me apologize for that quip back there. I guess having had no Valentine's dates for some time has turned me jaded, but it has somehow made me see how overrated Valentine's day has become.

Oh, but I do love my wedding anniversary day. Despite not having my husband around anymore, I am still able to celebrate the day with my kids, who always remind me when the date is barely a week away. "Mama, it's going to be your and papa's anniversary next week. What will we have?" That's their annual dialogue, friends. One time, I told them that their papa's dead anyway, so what point was there in celebrating? But my children have always shown a fierce dedication to their late father, "Mama, just because he's dead doesn't mean he's not your husband anymore." Whatever smart comeback I may decide to give stays stuck at the back of my throat. Death has apparently not done us part, my late husband and I, as far as my children are concerned. Heck, as far as I am concerned.

The promises we give to our beloved do not ultimately end with their death. It only brings the relationship to a higher level, I guess.

Talking to a fellow widow and classmate back in January, I asked her what she misses most about her late husband. She replied that it was the interesting conversations they always had at the end of the day, which stretched far into the night. It was having someone to listen to your gripes and sympathize with you at every turn. It was the security of having someone to hold you when you felt alone.

I agree, wholeheartedly.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Is love to be "till death do us part"? Why or why not?
2. What would make you stop loving a person? Elaborate on your answer.
3. Why is love often overrated nowadays? Why do you think the writer sees love as becoming cliché-ish?
4. If you had the power to be loved by anyone you want, which person would you want to love you? Why?
5. What makes a successful loving relationship?



AND THEY CALL IT PUPPY LOVE

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Albert Einstein once remarked, "Gravitation is not responsible for people falling in love." Coming from a super-intelligent scientist, the rationalization is both funny and well, rational. We often say we fall in love, but it doesn't mean we literally fall flat on our faces on the ground; although, I may have heard of a person or two who actually did fall flat on their faces in earnest pursuit of their beloved. Suffice it to say that Einstein was just expressing in his scientific way that love is never natural in its very nature---it seeks no explanation and definitely gets none. Why do people do the things they do when they're in love? Just because they're in love, that's why. That line of reasoning has always been enough for everyone.

My son recently had a puppy love experience that we as a family have come to consider a running joke among ourselves. Just as puppy loves go, my son got out of the experience quite literally reborn. My son had always been a jester, playing pranks on his younger siblings every now and then, finding amusement in playing gadget games. When he was at that particular puppy love stage, we all noticed he was more quiet than usual, not enjoying himself as much as he did before with his siblings. After the experience, he became his old self again. I once told him I missed this former personality, and I thanked him for taking it back again. He visibly cried, and my mother's heart cried with him. I told him he's going to be fine, and he's going to have lots of girls falling for him in the future, once he's good and ready. Being a mother has its challenges, but the rewards are infinite. These are the moments that I would never trade for all the wealth in the world.

Love should be free. It should never be forced upon a person. Too much too soon brings regrets, eventually. I fell in love at an early age, but I have advised my children to proceed with caution and wisdom when they fall in love. I tell them not to hurry, for when the right time comes, they will always find the right person. I used to say that finding the right person is enough, but now that I'm older and a mother to seven kids, I find it wiser to tell them to wait for the right time.

We never really have to try too hard to find love. The truth is, love can and will eventually find us. Seeking for love is not really a worthwhile pursuit, for there are far more important things out there in the world, ready for the taking.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What advice would you give your own son/daughter who fell in love too early?
2. Is there a right age for being in love? If yes, what age is it and why do you think it's the right age?
3. At what age did you first fall in love? Talk about this particular experience in class. What makes it special?
4. Is it easy to be in love? Why or why not?
5. How can you differentiate love and mere infatuation? Is it easy to know the difference? Why or why not?



LOVE-STRUCK OR OBSESSED

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There are times in our life when love comes unexpected to the point that even if he/she is out of sight, that person can never be out of our mind and then we begin to feel love struck or are we obsessed with this individual to the point of doing anything just for him/her to notice you? Most of the time you either go insane or restless because you always long and crave to see this person who became the apple of your eye. You become startled and just at the mere thought of not being able to see that person even for a day makes you agitated and uncomfortable. He/She starts bugging your mind and you try to think of ways on how he will be attracted to you. This mind-boggling experience or feeling is what obsession is all about.

To be love struck is a mellower but a spine-tingling sensation that happens to the best of us every so often. We come across a complete stranger in our life, then maybe he/she becomes an acquaintance and you find that person to be extremely attractive. Apparently, you develop a crush on him (which is a very normal feeling that everybody experiences), then suddenly it goes out of hand making it go over the extremes, which causes us not to behave normally. To keep a watch and find out if we are not only love struck but beginning to become obsessed, maybe we can consider some factors to serve as a checklist on this behavior that we have developed. These tips may be of help so we could create a borderline on our extreme unbecoming behavior and aide us to double check ourselves so as not to fall in that pit.

A person can be really obsessed with somebody whenever he does everything no matter what it takes. For instance letting everyone know that he or she will be his/her girlfriend or boyfriend and that you will try to make yourself believe that you will marry your crush. You will go as far as checking his/her personal profile, as in having a background check so as to obtain all about his whereabouts. Knowing that you are not really acquainted with this person is plainly showing a sign of obsession. Not only that, if in case you happen to be online friends then you frequently view his/her personal website every now and then since you share the same updates. If you are not acquainted with each other, then you view it for 6 times or even more in a month's time making you an online stalker. There is still that tendency to be creepy because you sneak everywhere trying to get snapshots of your crush without their consent and hang their pictures in your room or maybe hide it in a box. Storing their pictures in your home is a clear sign of being obsessed, not if you merely keep it in a keepsake box to serve as simply memoirs.

Another sign of obsessive behavior is when you google your crush's home address and try to observe his daily routine of what place does he/she usually come and go so that you could accidentally bump on him. The worst part of it is when you become extremely upset when your crush takes interest with someone else and you start treating that person nastily. If we did all kinds of advances, remained unnoticed and feel rejected, we should be able to move on without having a feeling of resentment because if you are unable to do so, then we are really obsessed. Yes, if you still constantly think about him even if he doesn't show interest on you for two to three months and you are still convinced that you will be with him, then you are clearly showing an obsessed behavior.

Obsession becomes even more dangerous when you physically and verbally attack your crush's loved ones (the girlfriend, wife, children and relatives), cursing them on an online website. Extremes may happen if you inflict pain on yourself to the point of trying to commit suicide because of rejection. You also put your crush in a very compromising situation like making threats, blackmail or assault. It will be a lot easier on you if you just remain to be somebody who is love-struck and not really obsessed.

Questions for discussion:

1. Have you ever been love-struck in your life? Explain further.
2. Have you in one point and time become obsessed with anybody? Was it worth it? Why or why not?
3. How do you define obsession?
4. How can you deal with an obsessed person or help him not to be one?
5. How can you describe the feeling of being love-struck? Explain your answer.



TIDBITS OF LOVE

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Everyone knows about the legend that surrounds emotion from the goddess Athena and Helen of Troy to Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. It is a feeling of love. Love is pure and it is for everyone. The famous William Shakespeare once wrote "Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none". It is an emotion that everyone needs. It is one of the natural feelings a person can have and share with anybody on this earth. How do you trust a person you love? It needs a careful evaluation and scrutiny to a person's personal background. Likewise, love is a universal feeling or emotion. Anyone on this earth loves someone. Nobody can deny the existence of love in this world. People express their love in varied styles. They may need appropriate styles and words to deliver and reveal their feelings of love. Sometimes, some people have difficulties to describe the love they have for someone in words. They keep the feelings inside of their own. They are timid and hesitant about it. The reasons are a lot. Probably, they don't have enough courage to release their feelings towards someone. But in the contrary, some people are very vulgar and showy to mean their feelings of love. They are not shy but rather proud of it. These kinds of people are brave and courageous enough to disclose their own feelings.

Many people ask this common question "What is love?" It is one of the most difficult questions for everybody. Many centuries passed, many relationships bloomed, and many individuals engaged, many of us married, so has love. But nobody could give an exact definition of love. To some love is friendship set on fire for others. Maybe love is like luck. You have to go all the way to find it. No matter how you define it or feel it, love is the eternal truth in the history of mankind. Love is the most powerful emotion man has ever known. Because of love, people are united to one another. It might not be a perfect unity but it is bounded by the thing called love. What drives a person to be with someone or with other people is the love they share with. Love is the opposite and the absence of hate. Love can occur between two or more individuals. It bonds them and connects them in a unified link of trust, intimacy and interdependence. It enhances the relationship and comforts the soul. Love should be experienced and not just felt. The depth of love cannot be measured. Look at the relationship between a mother and a child. The mother loves the child unconditionally and it cannot be measured at all. A different dimension can be attained between any relationships with the magic of love.

Love can be of different varieties according to its context. There is a romantic love which is deep, intense and unending. It shared on a very intimate and interpersonal and sexual relationship. The term Platonic love, familial love and religious love are also matters of great affection. It is more of desires, preferences and feelings. The meaning of love will change with each different relationship and depends more on its concept of depth, versatility, and complexity. But at times the very existence of love is questioned. Some say it is false and meaningless. It says that it never exist, because there has been many instances of hatred and brutality in relationships. The history of our world has witnessed many such events. There has been hatred between brothers, parents and children, sibling rivalry and spouses have failed each other. Friends have betrayed each other; the son has killed his parents for the throne, the count is endless. Even the modern generation is also facing with such dilemmas every day. But love is not responsible for that. It is us, the people, who have forgotten the meaning of love and have undertaken such horrible apathy.

Questions for discussion;

1. In your own words, what is love?
2. What is an unconditional love?
3. How do you show love to your family, relatives, friends, and neighbors?
4. Do you think love is important? Explain why.
5. When does love become pure? Cite an example.



Love: Thoughts to Consider

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Love is what we all want to receive or give. Love can overcome so many difficulties that we face with in life. Love is definitely so powerful that it can turn our miseries into happiness. It can help mend broken hearts. It can even turn all of the ugliness in the world into the most beautiful thing. Having a peaceful and a wonderful world is indeed a monumental task but if each of us will contribute in our own simple way, that task can become a reality. Love can be potent as it can be, but it can only use its magic if we allow it to. For love to come, we must let go of other emotions that gets into love's way. How to do it? Here are thoughts to consider

Perfection- No one is perfect! Perfection doesn't exist and we have to accept that fact. If only people understand this, they can easily get along with other people. They won't need masks to hide their imperfections.

Anger- Being angry is really normal, but holding on to that anger isn't really necessary. Why not try to forgive? Forgiving might be hard but it is the only way for us to have inner peace.

Expectations- Try not to have high expectations so you and other people won't be disappointed. Having high expectations usually result to failure. And I know no one wants to feel like a failure. Set your expectations low enough to make it achievable!

Harshness- Consider your choice of words before you utter them. As said in Proverbs "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

Mistakes- We all make mistakes! So when someone else does, forgive them as you hope others would do for you. Allow them to be "only human" and consider the fact that they didn't mean any harm by it.

Impatience- Always be reminded by the old saying- "Patience is a virtue". Who wouldn't want to be a little more virtuous? (According to Webster, "virtuous" means moral quality or excellence)

Envy- Anna Monar once said "Some people suffer from the green-eyed monster called envy". Instead of envying the people around you, why not concentrate on how you'll be successful in life. You'll never know, someday you may wind up being envied instead.

Revenge- Someone always gets hurt by this, and the sad part is, those who are hurt are merely innocent ones.

Instead of any of the above, why not consider this options.. Smile more often- it may cause a few wrinkles, at the very least, but then so does frowning. Isn't it great to gain friends by simply giving a smile to everyone? Like what the song says, "You'll find that life is worth living if you just smile". Take time to know each other's heart- when you do you will be able to be more understanding and less apt to misunderstand other people's intentions, which probably were never meant to hurt or upset you to begin with. Love causes less heartache, less misunderstanding, less stress, less of just about everything negative. Love does reap rewards- happiness, joy, peace, health, and so much more that are positive. Isn't that what we want most for this world? It's not really impossible and we can all help to make it. We can at least try? Think about it.

Questions for discussion;

1. What are the options that should be less considered in order to gain love?
2. What are the pros and cons of jealousy?
3. In your own words, why do we have to smile?
4. Do you think revenge is good? Why? Why not?
5. What can you contribute in making the world a happy place to live in?



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