

IDEAS 67

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



**International Online Teachers Society
Publishing Committee**



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THE 67th INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

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ANNIE'S TOMORROW---POSSIBLE?

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Even a monkey can fall from a tree, or so an ancient saying goes. It's perfectly alright to make mistakes and be uncertain of the future. No one on God's green earth can profess to have a thoroughly intimate knowledge of what is yet to come, and whether something is yet to be. The future proves to always have an elusive aspect of existence, and it is not man's capacity to hold the future entirely in his grasp. Banking on the advice of those who profess to see the future is a risk as well as a mistake. However, we can be masters of our own future by learning from the valuable lessons of the past and applying those very lessons to the present. By doing so, we make a huge step towards ensuring our destiny in the future. But even that is uncertain.

With December 21, 2012 so close, the internet has had a small number of write-ups about the supposed end of the world based on the Mayan calendar. But I've read one greatly informative article state that the date should be December 23, 2012. And most importantly, the specific date DOES NOT signify a prediction of the end of the world, but rather the end of a cycle in the Mayan calendar. So, just sleep soundly through the night knowing that there's still another tomorrow to look forward to. (Cross fingers here!)

It may be difficult to contemplate what could happen in the future. Despite that, it is still best to plan, meditate, reflect on what one wants to achieve. Is it greatness? Blessedness? Success in a career? A good life for the family? The reason why financial planners and insurance brokers are able to thrive in the industry is because they are able to offer products that seem to be based on sound principles of seeing the future. Who wouldn't want security? Safety? A guarantee of solid perspectives for the future? So we save, invest, obtain insurance policies, put our money into bonds and mutual funds and other similar undertakings.

There's nothing intrinsically wrong with the desire to invest in something that could have the potentials of growing. But believing too much in promises and pledges of stability can be nothing short of simple fanaticism and well, blindness. Many insurance companies have already folded up, even though they have been in existence for decades. Why not invest in something more profound, like the upliftment of values and dedication to living a more responsible way of living? Perhaps, if we are able to commit to a life of kindness, love, generosity, and caring for others, the future might yet prove not to be too difficult or grim. Hope springs eternal, despite the fact that even monkeys can fall from trees.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Based on what has been happening in the world: the crash of economies, countless calamities, and enmity between people, what is your perception of the future? Why so?
2. How do you deal with the uncertainties inherent in the future?
3. Have you secured a personal insurance or something similar? What made you decide on doing so?
4. Can we ever be sure about what is to come in the future? Why or why not?
5. Explain in your own terms: live each day like it was the last day of your life.



WAXING OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE

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How truly ironic, and maybe even oxymoronic, that people today strive to make history by creating futuristic gadgets and some other device. I myself am only concerned with surviving till tomorrow with my family. Life has become harder and more challenging, and there are more people facing bleak futures ahead. What with every little grocery item going up to unreachable prices, the average man on the street can only wish that tomorrow's prices could still be yesterday's. Alas, even the world's most powerful nation, fresh from a slim-margin presidential election, has faced a divided future. Hopefully, people everywhere can look forward to better fates ahead and a much-improved economy in the offing.

Going to the grocery store or supermarket has always been a depressing undertaking for me. The bills and coins I carry are the same size, but seem to have become more diminutive in value. They have even become lighter, thanks to technology. But that only serves to emphasize their buying power: lighter coins, lighter power. Catch my drift? They do look smarter and more 21st century. But that does not take away the fact that they have also declined in value.

Time was when our own mothers used to have a little extra every time they did the marketing. Nowadays, people have to stretch their budgets to make it to the next paycheck. I often fear for my children's future, asking myself whether they still have a genuine future to look forward to.

We fear what we don't know, and the future is so out there it's simply scary. Despite the pep talk about flying cars and floating highways and futuristic gadgets, the fact remains that we might not be able to afford such things in the future. Maybe, if we got reincarnated as a famous high-earning athlete or a member of a very wealthy clan, we might yet be able to lay our claim on the ultimate futuristic comforts of life. But as it is, we just have to remain optimistic about the next day and the next and the next. Believing is half the battle; acting on your objectives wins the rest. No matter how dark and uncertain the future really is, it is our intrinsic responsibility to make our lives worth living and to enjoy each day like it were the last. Yesterday's gone, today is here and now, and tomorrow is yet to come. No matter what the doomsayers say, there's always tomorrow to look forward to.

It doesn't matter now whether I can buy less with the money I hold in my hand. What counts is how I am able to contribute to the future of my own family, others, and even the world. The journey to the future may not always be straight and uneventful, but I definitely need to face it. If I won't, who else will?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How do you look at the future? Is it with optimism or pessimism? Why is it easy to become pessimistic today?
2. How do you keep your hopes up in highly-uncertain situations?
3. What is it about today that makes the future a lot brighter?
4. Why is it important to plan for the future?
5. If you could invent something for the future, what would it be? Why would you create such an invention?



ON HOPES AND GOALS AND THE FUTURE

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People fear the unknown, and the future has always been the biggest unknown there is. We are able to make concrete concepts on what we see here and now, but the ability to look into the future is a talent that's a rarity in these parts. Sure, visionary people have abounded, but studies have shown that they possess a certain, well, something, that makes them exceptionally gifted. We can only envy them for their skills, perhaps try to emulate them in our own little ways. We may succeed at certain points, and that's wonderful, right? Small successes are surely steps to even bigger ones.

The future always holds promise for those who persevere enough and are optimistic enough to grab today's opportunities. It's not always easy, but taking the journey is a genuine learning experience to ultimate self-discovery. We need not fear all there is about the future. We might feel discouraged at certain points, but let's not allow those points to rule our lives. We learn lessons from our mistakes in the past so we should be able to face today with renewed vigor, and tomorrow with endless hope. Hope, after all, translates to "esperar" in Spanish, and also means "to expect". We have much to look forward to, to expect and to hope for in the future. The future that we get has been designed just for us, just as what we have received in the past and the present remain ours.

Alfred Adler said: "We cannot think, feel, will, or act without the perception of a goal." We need to move forward to the future with clear goals in mind. Wandering aimlessly is not the thing to do. Time waits for no man, and the future is our destiny. It is our ultimate personal duty to approach life with all the fullness of hope and compassion for our fellowmen. We must face the future with renewed hope, no matter how bleak it may be. We don't let go of the dark by electing to remain in the dark. We need to look for that light, not at the end of a tunnel like dead souls do, but the light that'll take us out of the uncertainty we may be entrenched in. Be mindful of the past, love today, embrace tomorrow. Welcome the future with guns blazing. If we don't, the world might pass us by before we even know it.

Though it is true that the future is filled with uncertainty, facing it requires a whole lot of courage and strength. Pray for strength and guidance, and the world will be yours now and in the future. The promise of a brighter tomorrow is not something made to only a few. It is a gift we need to give to ourselves and those who matter in our lives.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What do you see in the future for yourself? For the ones you love?
2. How have you personally prepared for the future?
3. What is your opinion on predictions of the world ending soon?
4. Do you patronize or believe in fortune tellers? Why or why not?
5. What is it about the future that scares you the most? Elaborate on your answer.



The time yet to come

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The future is still unwritten and it is still a mystery to all of us. The future is known to us as time yet to come. This means that it is still coming and it is still unknown. Today, millions of people from around the globe are trying to predict the future. From Nostradamus to magic crystal balls, we tend to try various things in order to find answers about our destiny. To some people, the future is filled with gifts and new challenges. However, to others it is often based on the end of the world or the end of life as we know it.

Why do people fear the future? There are several reasons as to why most people fear the future. One of which is that people fear what will happen to their lives. They are afraid about leaving their families or working. They are afraid that they might be poor someday or they might be alone. In reality, there is really nothing to fear. It is normal to be anxious about the future. By thinking more about our future, we will be able to do better in life. Because we do not want to be poor, we try to study more in order to get the best jobs. In order to not be alone, we look for someone special.

By thinking about the future, we also value the present. One of the teachings of Buddha pointed out that it is important to not dwell in the past, nor should we dream about our future. The most important thing now is to concentrate about the present moment because the present is our basis for our future. If we work hard today, like in the fable of the Ant and the Grasshopper, we will be able to save for the future. Like the determined ant, we should try to work hard so that when winter comes and hard times come we will be able to overcome it.

Determination is the key to a brighter future. All endeavor calls for determination. It is important to shape life and to endure until the future comes. This is what we need in order to have a better future.

The future is mysterious and that is why it is beautiful. We do not know what will happen tomorrow and that is why we often think about it. We should never listen to charlatans, they are the types of people who will do anything just to earn a little bit of money. We should face the fact that no one knows the future and because it is still not written yet, we should never fear it.

Questions:

- 1) What is mysterious and beautiful to us?
- 2) Why should we not fear the future?
- 3) What type of people will do anything just to earn money?
- 4) What is the key to a brighter future?
- 5) What is the story of the Ant and the Grasshopper?



FUTURE LEADERS

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There is no other person whom we can consider the future leaders of our country except the youth. The youth stage is the most important part in the life of an individual for it is in this stage when one is full of energy, ideas, zest in life, zeal to work and a lot more. We should actually take this opportunity to let them channel their talents so they can resort to making and enabling themselves in developing our economy. Let the voices of the youth be heard. Let us all nurture their talents for they are supposed to be the future leaders of tomorrow.

Since there is so much hope, strength and energy coming from the youth, we should never allow them to let all of these resources go to waste. This is so much so for they are part of the blessings that God has given us. Our elders should not forget the “young shall grow theory” and therefore take the necessary step. There is so much to be done for the youth so let the old ones who are in power take their final bow and retire. Let us assume the post of being their advisers so we can mentor these young ones.

As it is, teenagers are now forming their thoughts and opinions as to what they would grow up to be someday and be able to shape the society of tomorrow. How can they do that if we don't give them tremendous amount of responsibility, so why don't we give them a fair chance to prove their worth. Apparently, we as their elders should serve not only as their mentors but we can also serve as a coach to these young ones. With the steady growth of the youth population, the more we should be bent on nurturing them to become the future leaders of our nation. It also holds true that if we consider them to be the forefront of our economy, then we should all put our hope in them.

Time flies so fast and we have to face the reality that the strength of a young man couldn't be compared with that of a young man. Let us give them all the opportunities to make the right decisions in whatever endeavor that they wish to embark on. Let them take the lead role and support them. Let us give these young people the chance not only to learn about their selves but also to be able to see their full potential. Let them get involved with the social science as well as the wider society itself. Give them all the favors so we can put out the best in them.

All of these make these young individuals what they are right now. It is inevitable that in the future these young minds and hearts will make our world a better place to live in. After all they are the hope and future leaders of our tomorrow.

Questions for discussion:

1. Do you believe that the youth are our future leaders? Why or why not?
2. How can the youth be trained to be our future leaders?
3. Do you agree that the youth have all the potentials to be successful as our future leaders? Explain your answer.
4. Do you favor the youth of today to be prepped up as our future leaders? How will you do it?
5. How can you take part in upbringing these youth to be in the right track of becoming the future leaders? Justify your answer.



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