

IDEAS 76

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



**International Online Teachers Society
Publishing Committee**



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THE 76th INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

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ELECTIONS IN SOCIETY-WHAT THEY ARE FOR

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There have been times when I have personally felt that I am not getting enough from society. The leaders that I expect would have the benefit of their constituents as primary considerations in their minds have other things to think about. They think about how much they will get for a certain project or how long they will earn dividends from pushing for specific legislations. Currently one of the hottest topics on debate is the “fat bonuses” that the majority in the country’s law-making body received last Christmas. The main figure of the controversy says those “bonuses” are earmarked for the specific lawmakers’ constituencies. Wow, wonderful! But the garbage in my village continues to be uncollected, so that assurance seems not to be that assuring at all.

With the elections fast approaching, one can not help but be overwhelmed by all the promises that the various candidates have begun to give to society. There will be enough food for all. Jobs will increase. Children will enjoy the best opportunities in society. Safety will be a priority. Income will be sufficient to cover all of our daily needs. Great healthcare will be a right and not a privilege of the few. Whew! With all those promises and more, we will start to live in a heavenly society after the elections.

Imagine. No worries about where to get the money for the next meal for our families. Our children will be properly educated and be well-cared for. We’ll have a society that has more jobs than job seekers, and more business opportunities than can be imagined. Society will be safer. Our rights will be protected at all times. We should vote for all of the candidates, then. This is probably the only way we can finally have the life we seek and deserve.

As voters, we have the power to choose who’ll govern us in society. If we choose sensibly and vote wisely, we may still get the quality of life we seek and not the way of life we so desperately want out of. The leaders we vote for will impose their will over ours for a certain number of years. If we allow the worst among them to get into power, we only have ourselves to blame for the collective action we do in installing them. We have one shot in a specific number of years to make our opinions count in society. Let us not waste that single opportunity by allowing ourselves to be bought or manipulated. Let us make conscientious decisions that reflect true wisdom in society living. Let us strive to build a society that reflects our collective wishes for a better life and a better existence.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Do you believe that all elections that have happened in your own society have been fair? Why or why not?
2. What kind of society leaders should we vote into office? Be as specific as needed.
3. How important are elections to the society we live in?
4. How do elected leaders erode the concept of society? Elaborate on your answer/s.
5. If you would run for office, what would be your top priority/ies?



BELONGING TO SOCIETY

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We all belong to a society of laws. This means we simply can not flout laws without suffering the consequences. We all belong to societies that have become the evolving product of civilization; therefore we owe it to those we live in community with to act not just in our own selfish interests but to seek the common good. We are a society of civilized individuals who know what is right, believe in what is just, and uphold the greater good.

Many of us belong to certain societies where we are governed by specific patterns of existence and interaction. We do the same things together and basically engage in common activities and patterns of relationships that correspond to the commonality that binds us. In this very structure, when someone dares to live outside what is deemed the norms of society, they are branded as individualistic or acting outside what is expected of them. To illustrate this concept, consider how individuals adopt certain patterns of living that have never been perceived as normal. In so doing, they are thus considered unconventional, choosing alternative ways of living and being individualistic. However, there are some teachings that also define society as a collection of individuals, so basically, belonging to a society is simply blending in, while not doing as society dictates is considered a form of “rebellion”, if you will.

As a member of society, any person can sometimes (or often, depending on one’s personal perception) claim to be suffocated or constrained against their will to act according to what society dictates. Being a member of a society can be difficult when there’s a specific set of laws one must adhere to. However, laws in society give the community a degree of stability and security. These laws make order possible in society and serve to prevent flare-ups and outbreaks that could potentially result into erosion of values and the break-up of society as we know it.

As responsible members of society, we need to observe ordained and promulgated laws not just as guidelines, but rather as accepted boundaries of behavior. Laws dictate what must be done, yes, but they also enable us to live peaceably together while maintaining orderliness and a certain degree of purpose in all that we do. Once individuals openly disregard these laws and open their lives to anarchy, the very fiber of living itself becomes disrupted. We can always protest but we still need to remember that the discordant clang of rebellion eventually takes its toll on the individuals we live in society with.

Too much protesting can become a hackneyed way of telling everyone that you can not be a member of the society you were born in to. And surely, no one wants to be a social pariah all the time, would they?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Define society.
2. What are the essential factors of living in a society?
3. Have you ever felt constricted by society? In what way?
4. Would you consider yourself a law-abiding person? Why or why not?
5. How has society defined what you are now? Elaborate on your answer.



LIVING TOWARDS THE PERFECT SOCIETY

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We often hear of people living it up in society. They go to the most talked about events and get seen in the company of other well-known personalities. They move in powerful circles and are members of influential cliques. However, it behooves us to wonder at times whether they truly are happy being how they are and what they are.

Most often, the answer is NO. These individuals may move in circles that ordinary mortals like us do not dare familiarize ourselves with, much less become members of. They might be able to enjoy the greatest privileges there are on this planet but they are also humans like us. They get tired and get lonely. Sometimes this happens at the unlikeliest times and places.

That's when we can say that our Lord is a Just God. He does not always give in excess of what we deserve. Others may seem to have more in society than we could ever hope to even get, but society has a way of limiting itself, strangely.

Living a high existence in society does not always guarantee happiness. There will be limits, and they often come unannounced. Even the rich and famous suffer from society's ills such as drug abuse, crime, separation, broken families. It can be ironic sometimes how the most powerful and influential among us are also beset with problems that ordinary mortals can not really fathom for them to be facing. Yes, society is still made up of humans, no matter how high that society may be. Humans have frailties that show. Those are frailties that break down even the heavily fortified of fortresses we build all around us. Money can buy you mountains, but it can never buy you the power to create mountains, specifically the ones that are as perfect as the One Maker has made His mountains to be.

Money can buy influence and a certain kind of power over others, but it can not earn you the respect of others. Respect is something freely given and not bought. Such is the law of society.

You might attend the hippest events in town and be seen with the right crowd for the major part of your life. But how much have you invested into belonging to a spiritual society where your money and influence are only as powerful as the rug you step on? Strive to be happy in a society where there's no grief and anxiety but only genuine happiness. Be good, and society will become better for you. That society is one beyond this life and one we will all be called to eventually. While we still can, let us "invest" into a membership for that "society".

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What "society" do you think the writer is talking about?
2. How can we invest in that "perfect society"?
3. Can the way we live our lives on earth become effective tools for us to reach that "perfect society"? Why or why not?
4. Are you happy with your life in the society you currently belong to? Why or why not?
5. In your opinion, are all people in high society happy with what they have? Why or why not?



Traditional and Modern societies

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Human beings are social creatures and it is in our instinct to form communities in order to survive. Instinctively, we know that no man is an island and one relies on his survival through the means of others. Without communities, the survival of human beings might have been bleak. Traditional societies are based on hunter and gatherer responsibilities. Jobs are based on responsibilities and each person has a certain task to complete. At the end of the day, products are given to village heads or shamans and it is divided among the members of the society.

Such techniques have been replaced by a barter system. People traded their products through a buy and sell system. The first type of items to be traded was commodities to shells. Yes, seashells were considered as money before. This quickly changed into gold, silver and money printed with papyrus. Today, trading can be done through online accounts and through the use of virtual agreements done in virtual banks. People can send money simply through the use of their phone or through their email.

Primitive communities were often based on clans or family groups. Members of the same bloodline were the ones who made communities along with their slaves and with extended members. Of course, such settings changed after a couple of years. Human beings were no longer obligated to only one task and all were allowed to partake in education. Before, only monks and priests were only allowed to study various arts. Today, people now have equal footing and those who want to study are allowed. Through the use of the internet, data gathering and sharing information has also been much easier.

Today, kings and monarchs also have lesser power because human beings rely on modern practices, such as democracy and the electoral system. Communities today no longer rely on primitive means of communication. Both adults and children can create peer groups and small communities through the use of the internet. Social sites have been created in order to help people create their own groups and mini communities. Children can just add their friends online, link them to several interests or simply share an event or news.

Along with social sites, we also employ other means of communication, such as VoIP and email sending. Families can talk with their loved ones through the means of their computers. Even education and corporate meetings can now be practiced through the use of modern techniques. Modern devices, such as mobile phones and tablets, also make communication easy. If there is an important event or if someone simply wants to communicate with others, he can simply use his mobile phone and message other people.

Questions

- 1) What were the changes that happened to the society?
- 2) What are the devices that we can use in order to communicate?
- 3) What are the forms of money before?
- 4) What were the responsibilities of people in the primitive era?
- 5) What are social sites? Do you have an account in a social site?



MAN'S RELATION TO SOCIETY

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Man as a human being cannot live without society because it is crucial for the human life for him to arise and continue, and that is what man's relation to society is. We need a society to belong because we cannot exist alone. We need to interact with our peers in an environment adaptable to us and this is the society. God created the nature but we created the society. It is only right that we have a direct relationship with our society.

Every individual belongs to a society just like the nature which belongs to God. A society exists because of its standard norms and values that the people created to live with. Societies are curbed by ethics and they are made according to human behavior and requirements. With the long line of generation where we come from, our ancestors created the society. But this society is revised since its inception by us. This is true for it is formed and created according to our different needs, comfort and behavior.

We cannot survive without our socialization and interaction with others. As humans, we crave for socialization, that is, we need that extra opinion, joke or recommendation from other people. The same thing is true when we simply chat with fellow humans and these are the reasons why we cannot survive without a society. Every human being is a part of a society in which we live and move. And yes, we need to survive in a society, where there are rules formulated for us to follow and live happily with.

So much as an individual cannot exist without a society, the vice-versa holds true too! Society does not exist without the individuals for a society is composed of individuals. In the same manner, we can say that society is comprised of primary and secondary organizations and bodies. In this organization, the individuals are connected with them and they are inseparably related with one another. In any changes that occur in an institution, whether it is cultural, economic, religious, legal or educational, it will also bring about changes in other institutions too. This makes the social life a phenomenon for it is dependent on the social machinery, but neither can we say that the identity of the individual nor that of the institutions is dissolved completely as a whole in the society.

Human life is social, for human needs, benefits, work and activity are social in essence. Thus, the social system can be maintained through the division of labor, division of profits and a shared common satisfaction of needs within a particular set of traditions and systems. Therefore, a society represents a group of human beings who are under the influence of a set of beliefs, ideals and goals and who are amalgamated with one another. They are immersed in a continuum of collective life. These collective social experience and collective life are man's relation to society.

Questions for discussion:

1. How do you think man is related to society?
2. Can man exist without a society? Explain your answer.
3. Is the relationship of man to society a fact? Why or why not?
4. Do we try to cultivate our relationship with the society? How?
5. How would you define a society in your own terms?



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