

IDEAS 94

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



**International Online Teachers Society
Publishing Committee**



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THE 94th INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

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WHY PREJUDICE HURTS

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I think it was a few weeks ago when a government official from my country took offense on the way a major city had been misrepresented as being the Gates of Hell by a well-known bestselling author. A few years back, too, a video was made by a foreigner on why my country was hated not only by that foreigner but probably many other foreigners as well. Left and right, those from my country have gotten pelted with various hurtful observations and conclusions. Sadly, such observations have been immortalized in this highly-technological age through the internet. Easy to access for the curious searchers, those write-ups, works and videos have streamed into the consciousness of the whole world.

I made it a point to watch the video and read the book in question. While it is true that the video creator and book author did not have good words for what they saw, experienced or heard about my country, the realist in me sees what was in the video and the book as a way for my fellow citizens and I to strive harder to gain better recognition for the more praiseworthy things about my country and its people.

We may not be First World, but we still have good old-fashioned beliefs and values. We consider family as the most important basic unit of our society and many among us work hard to keep our Christian values intact. While it is true that our streets are dirty and our level of education may be sub-par, our country is still able to supply brains and manpower to many countries that have very exacting standards on the kind of people they employ from outside. The strongest resource that my country has is manpower. We may be tied to labor, and overseas work may be the brightest aspect of our economy next to business process outsourcing industries. But we work hard to deserve what we get paid, and we strive to deliver more than expected to impress our employers.

My country has been under foreign dominance for so long, but I believe time will come when people from my country will be able to get recognition for having achieved independence and self-sufficiency at last. The road will be long, and even our children's children might not even be able to see its end. But time will eventually come when we will be able to overcome all the unwanted prejudice associated with my country and its people. We will become a nation capable of cleaning its streets, fixing its horrendous traffic problems, feeding its people and giving jobs to its citizenry. That day will come, and hopefully, the prejudice dies with its coming. There will be no greater pride in me than when that day finally comes.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How do people often react to being the subject of prejudice?
2. Why do you think it's not easy to belong to a third-world country?
3. Do you believe the prejudice against a third-world nation like the Philippines is justified? Why or why not?
4. What is the common source of the world's prejudice on countries belonging to the Third World?
5. Would a First World leader turn a Third World country around more effectively? How?



THE IMPORTANCE OF SLAYING PREJUDICE

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Prejudice is easily the child of ignorance. When we make judgments not based on fact and real knowledge, we are afflicted with prejudice. Saying something like, “Oh, she’s from this or that country. She must be lazy and have backward values, “ or, “This place teems with criminals, “ even when we are unfamiliar with the individual or the place smacks of ignorance, which gives birth to the prejudices that we have. Unless we get immersed in the real values of a place or become acquainted with those of an individual, we are never qualified enough to pass judgment over that area or person. Places have hidden beauty just as people have unrevealed goodness in them. Just because a person hails from a particular place does not mean they are the image of that place. In the same manner, just because an area is known for harboring notorious criminals doesn’t mean all people in that area are criminals. We are known by the company we keep, but who’s to tell whether the company we keep has also influenced our character?

Many years ago, I became aware of the ongoing prejudice there was for citizens of my country. Female Filipinos were once perceived to be domestic helpers; our nation was a nation of domestic servants that scrubbed the toilets of houses in rich nations and served as nannies to those nations’ children. Fortunately, the export of manpower that my country has been doing has become greatly diversified. Professionals from my country who are nurses, information technology experts, musicians, artists, sports figures, and many others continue to make their mark in the world. Foreigners have been amazed by the speaking ability and skills of people from my country. Pretty soon, the word Filipino has ceased to be associated with a doggy bag for the maid or mail-to-order brides for aging foreigners. Many foreign people have proven that we learn skills quickly and work hard to get the job done. We are not just a nation of happy-go-lucky individuals who don’t care at all for come-what-may. We can set our minds to the job at hand and often come up better than expected.

The journey to liberate ourselves from prejudice has been long and arduous. Yet many have proven that it can be done. Many have shown that determination comes naturally to those who need to prove themselves in the worldwide arena. Many have demonstrated that they have what it takes to perform as well as their neighbors on the planet. Prejudice is difficult to put down, much less remove from memory. But it can be done with the proper attitude and will. Now all that needs to be done is convincing our detractors to see us differently.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Define prejudice. Determine why it is the child of ignorance.
2. Have you ever been a victim of prejudice? Be able to talk about the incident in class.
3. What are the dangers of prejudice?
4. Should we allow prejudice to prevail? How can it be eradicated?
5. Who, in your opinion, is more severely affected by prejudice, the one who holds the prejudice or the one who the prejudice is against? Elaborate on your answer.



OF FALSE PREJUDICE

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There is such a thing as false prejudice. This comes from not having enough knowledge and information on somebody or something and considering the misconception as the gospel truth. To become a victim of false prejudice is hurtful and sometimes, plainly insufferable. Who wouldn't hate being the subject of false prejudice? It hinders growth for many, and will not allow potential for expansion. But for those that are able to transcend such kind of prejudice, for those who are able to look beyond the prejudice and see it as a means to do better and strive harder, there is great hope. When a person sees false prejudice as only being negative and nothing else, there will really come no success in the horizon.

Lucky are those who see false prejudice as a way to prove themselves. The desire to be better and the will to seek a higher plane of existence should be strongest in those who face false prejudice in their daily lives. Unless people learn to rise above the false pre-judgment and establish a reputation worthy of praise, they will never see the end of their difficult journey ahead. Those who are able to overcome pride and who seek a higher purpose will succeed when they proceed with utmost respect for the opinion of others. These are the people who see negatives as positives that only need vertical and decisive hard work. Such individuals do not look at false prejudice as a testament to what they do, but rather as opportunities to show what they can become. Challenged they may be with false perceptions, but unstoppable they become in their pursuit of excellence. Anyone can be great, for greatness is not only reserved for those who always do great. It is also within the minds and hearts of those who believe strongly enough that they can be great and then go about toiling hard to prove that this is so. Nothing comes easy, specially when prejudice is present. But there are those fortunate enough to find a thread of dignity beyond all the put-downs and humiliation. These people come out victorious in the long run.

Let us teach our children that it is wrong to allow false prejudice to control them. Let them know they can be better, stronger and more capable with their own talents and skills. Let us show the younger generation that it is not the hurtful and damaging words that will crush them, but their own hopelessness and loss of determination that eventually will. Let us build stronger future generations that stand firm against false prejudice and come out better individuals in the process. Let us make our children realize that false prejudice needs to be converted to true beliefs and knowledge by way of doing good in life.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How will you teach a child about prejudice?
2. How will you teach a child to combat prejudice?
3. How is false prejudice formed and magnified? Be as specific as needed.
4. If there is false prejudice, can there also be true prejudice? Elaborate on your answer.
5. Do you have false prejudice/s of your own? If yes, be able to talk about it/them and why you harbor such.



PREJUDICE- PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS

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People tend to be prejudice when they already have these preconceived notions about something or of a person. They actually tend to be bias towards a particular person, object, event and whatever they need to make a decision on. To simply define it, prejudice means to have a judgment even before you have seen or heard of something with your own eyes. This happens most of the time in every situation. I just think that it is very close to being discriminating or you are quick to stereotype a person or a particular group.

Almost always, in this modern computer age that we are in now, people have a lot of preconceptions. That is, it frequently carries a negative notion in a lot of instances and circumstances in the life of a person. Apparently, when we talk of prejudice it can mean either a positive or a negative bias. We always have that tendency to cling to our own opinion on a matter even before we have even known and considered about it. This is very true because even if we haven't even seen, known or understood the person or matter, we are so quick to judge it. It is as in we didn't even have to carefully think about it and we already have a judgment formed in our mind.

There is always that tendency to cling or lean towards one side of a person or situation. We have already formed a predilection without even examining and finding out the real truth behind every person, situation or a matter. Yes, we tend to be bias in almost anything. We don't think carefully if we are right in having these prejudgments. Right there and then, we have our own conclusions and judgments. Consequently, we already have a preconceived notion which truly affects a person or a situation because we have judged instantly on that particular aspect.

What then will be left of a person or of something that we have judged instantly? This is plainly a preconceived notion about a person or a matter. You may have accidentally hurt someone's feeling and you took the silence of that person as being angry or maybe planning to get back at you. Whereas, the party involved was just trying to practice self-control and trying his best on holding on to his temper. That person indeed is trying to learn the virtue of patience.

Unreasonable predilections or an objection against anything without sufficient grounds would clearly mean that you are biased. Let not our hasty actions and judgments offend people for you wouldn't want this to happen to you. Let us stop being a critic or being like of a juryman for the sole reason that we all commit mistakes. After all, nobody is perfect. Let us not then have an opinion without just grounds and try our best not to be prejudice thereby having preconceived notions.

Questions for discussion:

1. Do you always have a tendency to be prejudice and make an unreasonable judgment? Explain your answer.
2. Are you not aware of other's feelings that you are quick to judge making you a biased person? Why or why not?
3. Do you believe that to be prejudice is to be discriminating towards a person? Why do you say so?
4. When was the last time you become very critical and acted prejudice on a person or a matter? Describe that situation.
5. Do you agree that prejudice is having a preconceived notion about someone or something? Justify your answer.





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