

VALUES THROUGH LITERATURE

How do we know that Ravana, Duryodhana, Shakuni, Kans or Voldemort, Brutus were bad or evil and do not represent true values?

We know because one of the foremost and primary lessons on human values are taught to us by stories. These could be through- bed time stories, fairy tales, folk tales or grandmother tales.

If we tell a child that being selfish and greedy are bad behaviour he/she may or may not listen and remember it, but if we tell the child that Duryodhana was greedy and selfish, therefore he did not give the Pandavas their right. He/she may remember that it is bad being selfish and greed.

What Are Values?

- Qualities, characteristics, or ideas about which we feel strongly.
- Our values affect our decisions, goals and behavior.
- A belief or feeling that someone or something is worthwhile.
- Values define what is of worth, what is beneficial, and what is harmful
- Values are standards to guide your action, judgments, and attitudes.
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Hypocrite – One who subscribes to one set of values, and does another.

Immaturity - One who has not identified his values.

■ Immaturity:	■ Maturity
Unclear values	Clear values
Drifters	Life of purpose
Flighty	Meaning and direction
Uncertain	certainty
Apathetic	empathetic

Values – Goals – Behavior – Self-value

- Values give direction and consistency to behavior.
- Values help you know what to and not to make time for.
- Values establish a relationship between you and the world.
- Values set the direction for one's life.

Where do we get values?

our homes, school, society, friends, TV, church, music, books, families, culture, employers, time-period in which you were raised

Your age will greatly influence your values. Different people and things influence you at different ages:

- Ages 1-7 --- parents or grand parents teach us by correcting us or teaching through stories. E.g. – hare and tortoise, the thirsty crow
- Ages 8-13 --- teachers, heroes (sports, rocks, TV)
- Ages 14-20 --- peers (values because of peers or peers because of values?)
- Ages 21+ your values are established, but you may test your values from time to time.
- Happiness comes from letting values decide your behavior and goals.

Values can change over a life-time as your experiences change your view.

Types of Values: Moral, Material, Aesthetic, Intrinsic, Extrinsic, Universal, Group specific values

PART II

Science and Technology makes us logical as they increase our rationality and our logical analytical thinking but literature keeps us connected to human values. When materialistic ambition becomes the goal of life values take a back seat and corruption and in human behaviour dominate. Some Problems that challenge us- Cloning, social media addiction, hacking, endangered environment, robotics, artificial intelligence overpowering mankind.

At every age literature is used to inculcate values

Toddler are taught through fairy tales, Arabian nights, Jatak Katha, Panchantra

Adolescence – Enid Blyton, Goosebumps, Geronimo stilton

Teenage – popular fiction

Youth- classics, regional and world literature

At every stage we use stories of literature and its adaption to remind and re inforce values in people. Even movies are mostly adapted from literary pieces.

But does literature simply teach us what is right and wrong or it makes us better informed sensitive human being worth being included in humanity.

Let's check.

Benefits of reading literature

- When we study literature, our horizons are broadened, because we can learn about and come to understand people who are different from us.
- Conversely, we might discover characters or poems that we really identify with—it can be really exciting and validating to discover that your exact thoughts and feelings have also been experienced by someone else. Because of these effects, literature encourages us to be sensitive to the whole spectrum of human experience and to consider this when making decisions in our day-to-day lives.
- The process people go through as they think and analyze literature builds their ability to be critical thinkers and problem solvers.
- Sometime studying literature exposes them to words and ideas that reach into their souls and change them forever.
- Thus, studying literature makes the world a better place.
- The study of literature has a civilizing effect on people. literature also has emotional and aesthetic appeal. Empathy is emotional; sympathy, intellectual.
- One of the most important skills children learn through literature is how to react to different situations. Reading allows children to experience situations vicariously, and think about what they would do in the character's place.

All top leaders of the world have been voracious readers- JF Kennedy, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatama Gandhi, Winston Churchill, Bill Gates, APJ Abdul Kalam, Warren Buffet, Steve Jobs, Narayanan Murty, Jack Ma and Narendra Modi.

Read good book as they involuntarily keep us connected to human values.

Literature teaches us to be human without preaching.

It presents best and worst examples for us to learn lessons from.

Literature is not limited to thick big novels.

Books / lit- poetry, prose, novels etc.

One line stories - e.g. Man and God met somewhere: both exclaimed, My Creator!"

The fool didn't know that it was impossible so he did it.

What if after you die, god asks you: "So how as heaven?"

Self help, Short stories, poems, plays, drama, fiction, popular and classics, regional and world, philosophical and romance, sci-fi and Historical books, Mythology, biographies

Read philosophers like Vivekananda, Gandhi, Buddha, Einstein, Aristotle, Plato, Nietzsche etc.

Because anytime we are lost confused – literature and books can present answers. Books like Gita, Bible, Quran have answers to all the problems

List of Books Suggested for reading:-

The Secret by Rhonda Byrne

My Experiments with Truth by M K Gandhi

Hind Swaraj by M K Gandhi

Wings of Fire by A P J Abdul Kalam

History of Everything by Stephen Hawking

The Old man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway

Haroun and the sea of stories by Salman Rushdie

Abhigyan Shakutalam by Kalidasa

Who Moved My Cheese by Robin Sharma

You Can Win by Shiv Khera

Stay Hungry Stay Foolish by Rashmi Bansal

The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari by Robin Sharma

I am Ok You are Ok by Thomas Harris

The Eighth Habit by Stephen Covey

Bhagvat Gita on Effective Leadership I by Poojan Roka

The Kalam Effect By Nair

Tough Times Never Last But Tough People Do by Dr.Robert Schuller

What Employers Want But Business Schools Don't Teach by Yasmin D'sousa and Amitabh

Singh Freedom is not Free by Shiv Khera

Be an Extraordinary Person in an Extraordinary World by Robert Schuller

Making Miracles by Arnold Fox and Barry Fox

The Road Less Travelled by M.Scott Peck

to name a few.....

Reading good books can also help

1. In being exposed to new role models
2. Shadowing or emulating them
3. critically analysing the writing
4. deciding our self image
5. teaches self- control as others experience makes us wise

Problems that we face in our lives can be categorised into three :-

1. Disappointments – in career, relationship expectations
2. Pressure to deliver- in work place
3. Negativity – in people around us, in our thought process

For each of these problems there are stories that can inspire and teach us to overcome such problems. E.g.-

“There once was a little boy who had a very bad temper. His father decided to hand him a bag of nails and said that every time the boy lost his temper, he had to hammer a nail into the fence.

On the first day, the boy hammered 37 nails into that fence.

The boy gradually began to control his temper over the next few weeks, and the number of nails he was hammering into the fence slowly decreased. He discovered it was easier to control his temper than to hammer those nails into the fence.

Finally, the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father the news and the father suggested that the boy should now pull out a nail every day he kept his temper under control.

The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence.

‘You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there.’”

Part III

Reading good books can stimulate thought process and encourage you to write and produce new literature

Benefits of writing

1. Builds confidence
2. Develops artistic self-expression
3. Boosts imagination
4. Clarifies thoughts
5. Improves understanding of mechanics of reading and writing

6. Develops empathy and communication skills
7. Strengthens emotional and mental health.

Therefore, read to be human and write to enrich humanity.

Because “Today a reader, tomorrow a leader.” Margaret Fuller

