

# **The Introductory Paragraph**

## **What is an introductory paragraph?**

- An introductory paragraph is the start of your essay. The purpose of the introduction is to introduce the topic as well as to grab the reader's attention. It also provides the structure for the rest of the essay. In academic writing, the introduction must always start with a 'hook', continue with a transitional sentence, and then end with the thesis statement.

## **What is the Function of an Introductory Paragraph?**

1. Attract the reader's attention and arouses his curiosity
2. Provide necessary background information about the topic
3. Helps the author achieve credibility

## **Common Methods of Introduction:**

1. Use an incident or brief story (anecdote). The story should be brief and related to the main idea
2. Use a quotation. A quotation can be something you have read or heard; a popular saying or proverb, a current or recent advertising slogan or a favorite expression used by someone
3. Start with a surprising fact
4. Begin with a statistic
5. Introduce your essay by reviewing the history of the topic
6. Ask one or more questions before introducing your thesis statement. You may want your readers to think about possible answers, or you may plan to answer the questions later in your essay.
7. Begin with a broad, general statement of your topic and narrow it down to your thesis statement. That is talk generally about the topic and then narrow it down to specific.

## **Writing a Thesis statement**

### **Definition:**

A thesis statement is a complete sentence that contains one main idea. This idea controls the content of the entire essay. A thesis statement that contains sub points also helps a reader know how the essay will be organized. Look at the introductory paragraph below.

## **Key Features:**

1. states the main idea of the essay in a complete sentence, not in a question.
2. usually at the end of an introduction.
3. states an opinion or attitude on a topic. It doesn't just state the topic, itself.
4. often lists subtopics.
5. does not directly announce your main topic.

## **The Conclusion**

### **Function of the conclusion:**

1. Restates the thesis statement
2. Summarizes the text if it's long
3. Asks open-ended questions
4. Gives future expectation(s) or prediction(s) for future discussions or wishes
5. Gives recommendations

## **Sentence Patterns**

Sentences are organized according to a number of patterns:

1. Cause-effect: a statement that communicates the cause of a certain thing often using transitions such as due to, since, for, as, because, is the reason why, for this reason, etc.
2. Comparison: a sentence that compares the similarities between 2 humans, objects, ideas, this sentence pattern uses transitions like similar to, likewise, similarly, in much the same way as, like, just as, etc.
3. Contrast: It sets the difference between two people, objects, or things. This pattern employs transitions such as in contrast, on the other hand, but, though, although, however, nevertheless, nonetheless, yet, while, whereas, on the contrary, etc.
4. Definition: a statement of the meaning of a word, phrase, or term, as in a dictionary entry.
5. Exemplification: a sentence that provides an example, often using transitions like such as, as, for instance, for example, etc.
6. Listing: a statement that uses parallel structure (e.g. he spent the day working, exercising, and studying.)

7. Result / Effect: it gives the result of a certain action often using transitions such as thus, therefore, consequently, eventually, as a consequence, as a result, etc.
8. Time / Chronological Order: a statement that uses time words and phrases to place the event mentioned in its historical context. It employs words as: last year, week, months... yesterday, tomorrow, this week, next week... in the 1920... in the 19th century, etc.

### **Organizational Patterns / Orders of Organization**

1. Time/Chronological: in this pattern, ideas are presented in the order in which they occurred in time. Signal Words: first, third...; next; then; finally; eventually; following this, etc.
2. List of Items: Also known as listing, series, addition and enumeration, the information listed may be items, facts, reasons, examples, features or characteristics. Signal Words: and, too, in addition, moreover, or, also, furthermore, as well as, plus, in fact, moreover, besides...
3. Compare and Contrast: The material is organized to emphasize the similarities and/or differences between two or more items or topics. Comparison Signal Words: Similarly, like, the same as, compared to, in the same way, likewise... Contrast Signal Words: but, yet, on the other hand, however, instead, nevertheless, on the contrary...
4. Cause and Effect: This pattern describes or discusses an event or action that is caused by another event or action. On occasion, this pattern is also referred to as result. Signal Words: because, for this reason, due to, cause, on account of, if this, then this...as a result, since, consequently, therefore, thus, in effect, resulting, and the outcome is...
5. Order of Importance: In this pattern the information is given either from the least important feature to the most important, or from the most important to the least important. This pattern is also known as hierarchical or chain of command. Signal Words: central, principal, chief, major, main, key, primary, significant... finally, lastly, finishing with, ending with, least...
6. Sequence/Process: In this pattern the information explains the steps in a particular procedure or process. The steps and stages lead up to a final product or finished project. Signal Words: first, second, third, etc. Spatial: Signal Words: above, below, beside, behind, east, west, south, north, down, up, next to, under, etc.

7. Spatial: This type of organization deals with organizational placement. Signal Words: above, below, beside, behind, east, west, south, north, down, up, next to, under, etc.
8. Problem and Solution: The text presents a significant problem and explains it in detail. Then, a possible solution is proposed. Sometimes, only the problem is presented because there is no solution. Signal Words: problem, need, difficulty, dilemma, enigma, challenge, issue, answer, propose, suggest, indicate, solve, resolve, improve, plan, respond to a need, etc.
9. Definition & Example: a word or concept is introduced then explained or described. Signal Words: define as, is, known, the term means, is stated as, is used to mean... for example, to illustrate, for instance, such as, specifically...
10. Classification: that are based on shared or common characteristics. Signal Words: Categories, classifications, groups, classes, ways, elements, features, kinds, types, varieties, methods...

### **Thematic Relationships Between/Among Paragraphs**

**Two or more paragraphs might be related thematically in seven different ways:**

1. Cause-effect / Result: Two or more paragraphs will have a cause-effect / result relationship when one paragraph lists the causes of a certain phenomenon while the other presents the effects of this same phenomenon.
2. Comparison-contrast/comparison/contrast: Two paragraphs are related in a compare-contrast relationship when one paragraph presents the common qualities between two particular people, animals or objects and the other show the differences between these two.
  - The thematic relationship might only be a comparison as the first paragraph lists a certain situation or condition and the second presents a condition or a situation similar to it.
  - OR it might be only a contrast relationship as the first paragraph presents a certain concept and the second contradicts it.
3. Problem-solution: Two paragraphs are thematically related in a problem-solution sense when the first paragraph exposes a problem and the second suggest a solution to it.
4. Question-answer: Two paragraphs are thematically linked in a question-answer relationship when the first paragraph poses a question and the second paragraph provides an answer to it.

5. Support in the form of Addition or Reinforcement: Two or more paragraphs are joined in an addition/reinforcement relationship when the second (and third, fourth, etc.) paragraph(s) present additional information that reinforce the concept or notion presented in the first paragraph.
6. Support in the form of Exemplification or Elaboration: Two paragraphs are joined in an exemplification/elaboration/illustration thematic relation when the first paragraph presents a certain idea, concept or issue and the second paragraph provides additional information, a specific example, or a piece of evidence to support and elaborate on it.

## **Credibility**

1. Facts: include real names of people and places, dates, real events and anecdotes:
  - Specific names: proper names of people, places, foundations, institutions, countries, cities, schools, theories...
  - Dates: 2008, 1989
  - Anecdote or real life event: A brief occurrence or event from a writer's experience or someone else's life is an asset in making a piece of writing believable.
2. Numbers / or Statistics: (Numbers, percentages, and numerical figures). Numbers and statistical figures add credit to the topic discussed
3. Experts' Opinion: Relevant opinions of scientists, authors, directors, critics, doctors, and professionals add weight to a piece of writing
4. Quotes: This includes statements of presidents, ministers, members of parliament, secretary-generals, judges,
5. Testimonies: A testimony is evidence provided by a competent witness. Testimony is most often oral, but it can be written.
6. Research findings: By providing names and details on specific experiments, studies, surveys, or researches in a particular field, a writer adds credibility to his point of discussion.

# Coherence

Sentences in a paragraph or paragraphs in an essay are necessarily linked together whether directly or indirectly. This quality in writing is referred to as coherence/cohesion. To achieve cohesion, the link of one sentence to the next, there are two means:

## A. Direct Links:

### Transitions:

1. Identity. Indicates sameness: that is, that is to say, in other words, ...
2. Opposition. Indicates a contrast: but, yet, however, nevertheless, still, though, although, whereas, in contrast, rather, ...
3. Addition. Indicates continuation: and, too, also, furthermore, moreover, in addition, besides, in the same way, again, another, similarly, a similar, the same, ...
4. Cause and effect: therefore, so, consequently, as a consequence, thus, as a result, hence, it follows that, because, since, for, ...
5. Indefinites. Indicates a logical connection of an unspecified type: in fact, indeed, now, ...
6. Concession. Indicates a willingness to consider the other side: admittedly, I admit, true, I grant, of course, naturally, some believe, some people believe, it has been claimed that, once it was believed, there are those who would say, ...
7. Exemplification. Indicates a shift from a more general or abstract idea to a more specific or concrete idea: for example, for instance, after all, an illustration of, even, indeed, in fact, it is true, of course, specifically, to be specific, that is, to illustrate, truly, ...

## B. Indirect Links:

1. Use of Pronouns, antecedents/reference (that, this, ...).
2. repetition of same words, names, nouns, or phrases, using the same tense.
3. Using synonyms

## Paraphrase & Summary

- a) **Paraphrase:** A paraphrase is a detailed restatement in your own words of a written passage. Apart from the changes in organization, wording, and sentence structure, the paraphrase should be nearly identical in meaning to the original passage.

### When paraphrasing, we should:

1. Mention the author's name and the text's title in the first sentence
2. Include all important ideas mentioned in the original passage but not in the same order.
3. Keep the length approximately the same as the original.
4. Avoid stressing any single point more than another.
5. Do not change the meaning by adding your own thoughts or views.
6. Do not use the original sentence structure.

### Steps to follow to paraphrase:

1. Read the original paragraph until you understand well.
2. Underline ideas to be paraphrased. -Don't omit details.
3. Circle the key words that can be replaced by synonyms.
4. Begin paraphrasing by citing the source (just as summary)
5. Rewrite ideas in your own words without adding thoughts or changing the meaning of the original paragraph.
6. Compare your paraphrase with the original paragraph to make sure you are faithful to the meaning stated.

- b) **Summary:** is a condensation of the main ideas in a selection. It is objective in the sense that no idea which is not the authors should be included in the summary. The writer of the summary should not include his own personal opinion as well. A summary should also be complete in the sense that it contains every main idea in the passage. The global purpose behind a summary is to give readers an objective, complete, accurate and balanced view of a passage they have not read.

### When summarizing, we should:

1. Mention the author's name and text's title in the first sentence
2. Include the main ideas only
3. Do away with details and superfluous additions

4. Follow the text's original order of ideas
5. Be faithful/accurate to the author's point and ideas (we shouldn't include our own opinions)
6. Follow the chronological/time order of events and the cause-effect chain
7. Use our own language (avoid copying from the original text)
8. Preferably use the simple present tense

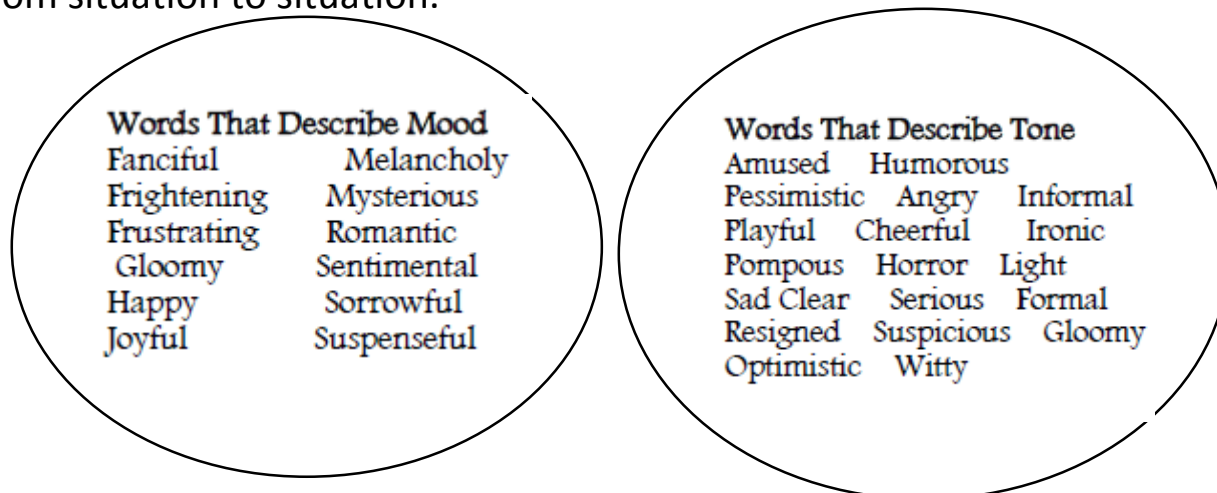
### Follow the following steps to summarize:

1. Read the paragraph carefully
2. Underline the important words and ideas
3. Cross out needless words: numbers, names, repeated words
4. Categorize items
5. Begin summary by citation: title of the text, the author's name, the paragraphs number
6. Use reporting verb in the present tense (explains, illustrates.)
7. Combine the main ideas in one paragraph
8. Compare your paragraph to the original one.
9. Limit your summary to the number of sentences required.

## Tone and Mood

### Watch out! Tone and mood are similar!!

- ✚ Tone is the author's attitude toward the writing (his characters, the situation) and the readers. A work of writing can have more than one tone. Tone is set by the setting, choice of vocabulary and other details.
- ✚ Mood is the general atmosphere created by the author's words. It is the feeling the reader gets from reading those words. It may be the same, or it may change from situation to situation.





## Figures of Speech

A figure of speech can be defined as “a way of using language in order to heighten its effect and make it stronger or more beautiful.” The most common figures of speech are:

1. Simile: this is comparison between two persons, things or ideas which have one feature in common. The comparison is introduced by using such words as: as, as...as, so...as, as...if, and like.
2. Metaphor: this is an indirect comparison between two persons, things and or ideas which have one feature in common. In a metaphor we do not use words like” as” or “like”.
3. Analogy: It is a comparison in which an idea or a thing is compared to another thing that is quite different from it. It aims at explaining that idea or thing by comparing it to something that is familiar. Metaphors and similes are tools used to draw an analogy.
4. Personification: this is a comparison between a non-living being or an animal and a person. Here the thing or animal is treated like a person and is given human characteristics.
5. Irony: this is a figure of speech where we use words to mean something different, or even opposite, to what we say. Irony is the contrast between what is expected or what appears to be and what actually is.
  - a. Verbal irony: The contrast between what is said and what is actually meant.
  - b. Irony of situation: This refers to a happening that is the opposite of what is expected or intended. It occurs when a character’s actions bring unexpected results.
  - c. Dramatic irony: This occurs when the audience or reader knows more than the characters know.
6. Sarcasm: this figure sometimes contains irony. Here, the speaker intends to give insult in an indirect manner.
7. Alliteration: unlike the former figures of speech, this one and the following, are not based on meaning but on sound. Alliteration is a figure of speech in which a consonant sound is repeated in group of words.
8. Onomatopoeia: is the use of words which in their pronunciation suggest their meaning.
9. Paradox: this is a statement which contains apparent contradiction, but is still true.

10. Hyperbole: an exaggerated statement used to heighten effect. It is not used to mislead the reader but to emphasize a point.

11. Alliteration: unlike the former figures of speech, this one and the following, are not based on meaning but on sound. Alliteration is a figure of speech in which a consonant sound is repeated in group of words.

### **Author's Purpose**

**There are three main purposes to an author's passage:**

1. To inform
2. To entertain
3. To persuade

### **Author's Audience**

Author's audience is the group of people the author is addressing in his piece of writing. The person that could be interested in the author's text is the author's audience.

#### **Examples of authors' audiences**

Historians

Doctors

Students

Scientists

Archaeologists

Teenagers

Parents/ Future parents .....

### **Character sketch**

A character sketch informs you about a character in a book. When you write a character sketch, you want the reader to have a stronger mental image of the person including how the person talks, acts, and thinks. Here is a list of words that can be used to describe a person and a list of the types of things you can write about. Character sketch can be revealed through **direct characterization** and **indirect characterization**.

1. **Direct Characterization** *tells* the audience what the personality of the character is.
2. **Indirect Characterization** *shows* things that reveal the personality of a character. There are five different methods of indirect characterization.

1. Speech	What does the character say? How does the character speak?
2. Thoughts	What is revealed through the character's private thoughts and feelings?
3. Effect of the character	What is revealed through the character's effect on other people? How do other character feel or behave in reaction to the character?
4. Actions	What does the character do? How does the character behave?
5. Looks	What does the character look like? How does the character dress?

Bright	interesting	tall	friendly	thoughtful	curious	short	mean
Strange	compassionate	dark	brave	talkative	shy	devious	entertaining
Lazy	caring	plump	responsible	fair	helpful	negative	scruffy
Energetic	frightening	busy	stubborn	stern	active	funny	loving
Daring	quick-tempered	cool	grumpy	lively	gentle	impatient	calm
Quiet	cruel	supportive	irritable	mysterious	reliable	cunning	faithful
Wise	prankster	sensible	disorganized	patient	kind	determined	slim
Smart	reassuring	stocky	patient	strong	cowardly	trustworthy	fickle
suspicious	honest	excitable	mischievous	weak	unsmiling	sly	foolish
wild	unhappy	deceitful	serious				

## Adjectives to describe a person

### Writing a character Sketch

- ✓ Consider the following about your character:
- ✓ Gender, age, and name
- ✓ Appearance
- ✓ Physical and personal strengths and weaknesses
- ✓ Likes and dislikes

- ✓ Feelings and behaviors towards the other characters
- ✓ How the other characters feel about him/ her
- ✓ Personality at the beginning and the changes in it
- ✓ Your opinion about the character

It is important to include a proof (either direct quotes or indirect quotes) from the story to support what you are writing in the character sketch. If you can't support it with something from the story, then it doesn't belong.

## Fact and Opinion

A **fact** is information that can be proved true through objective evidence. An **opinion** is a belief judgment, or conclusion that cannot be objectively proved true. Value Words to remember: They often represent opinions expressing judgment\_\_ they are generally subjective, not objective.

### Examples of value words:

Best	great	beautiful
Worst	terrible	bad
Better	lovely	good
Worse	disgusting	wonderful

## Writing Samples

Machines now play an important role in most people's lives. Computers, cars, and household machines (such as washing machines) have become very common. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having so many machines in people's lives? Use specific examples in your answer.

## Technological Machineries

Technology has highly evolved over time. In fact, nowadays almost everybody has some sort of machine at hand, be it computers, cars, or even washing machines. But although machinery was devised to benefit mankind, it has also brought along many flaws to match.

Firstly, when it comes to technological equipment such as computers, disruption most often arises between the person using the computer, and the household he or she is surrounded by, or living with. For example, many old family traditions such as eating meals with your relatives at the dining table seldom take place now that one of the family members might be too busy working on his Mac. laptop. Thus, family values and morals have changed in order to adapt to this technological age.

Secondly, having many kinds of machinery at hand is not only destroying family traditions, but is also very harmful to our environment. Many people are careless about allowing their car engines to run haphazardly, or leaving their laptops on for long periods of time, however they do not seem aware of the fact that all this energy and electricity consumption is dangerous to not only our local environment, but to the world as a whole. Additionally, it is the over-usage of machinery, big or small that is bringing our society ever closer to Global Warming, and we must stop.

As I mentioned in my introduction, technological equipment was never programmed to damage nature per se, but to help people all around the globe. Now that nuclear families aren't as closely intact compared to the 1950s or 1990s, technology has given us an alternative method to keep in touch with our relatives thanks to computer applications such as Skype, or even cell phone applications such as VIBER or WhatsApp. Machinery has most definitely done wonders in our lives, and we as people should be grateful to easily possess cars, and/or phones when poorer countries do not even have the chance to.

However, with all the advantages machinery has brought to us all, I personally believe that possessing too many cars or phones, or even consuming too much of their energy and battery, is beginning to get out of hand and needs to be controlled.

**Different people value different qualities in a medical doctor. Everyone wants a well-educated and knowledgeable doctor, but what other qualities should a good medical doctor have? Explain why these are important.**

### Medical Doctors

It is true that medical doctors are health professionals whose roles are of great importance in the society. They are usually educated and people generally look up to them to take good care of their health issues. In fact, whether people live or die depends to a very great extent on the doctors in charge of their health situations, depending on how serious they are. Almost everyone wants a doctor that is vastly knowledgeable in the medical field, especially those with many years of experience.

Although I agree that the level of education of a medical doctor is of much importance for a doctor to be regarded as a “good medical doctor”, I am also of the opinion that that is not the only criterion for a doctor to be regarded as a “good medical doctor”. Character and the integrity of the person contribute to a large extend. I am also of the view that a medical doctor should be a very responsible person in the society because a lot of people tend to emulate them. Young adults usually look forward to becoming medical doctors in the future. That being the case, they tend to copy the behaviors of medical doctors they know.

The country where I come from, Nigeria, where the health system has some issues, some medical doctors who lack good character and do not care about their integrity can, because a patient does not have enough money to pay their medical bills, walk away from a dying patient. During oath taking, these doctors state that they will put patients first before anything, but some of them do not keep up with this. Although I agree that doctors in the third world countries usually face some challenges, I am still of the opinion that when it comes to saving a patient’s life, a good medical doctor should always swing into action. In Canada, though I have stayed here for just a year, I think many of their doctors can be regarded as “good doctors” from the little I have seen.

In conclusion, I believe that a well-educated doctor without a good character and integrity and also without a passion to save lives is as good as a “bad doctor” since, with his education but with love for money rather than love for his patient’s lives, can still lead to the loss of lives.

## London vs. Washington, DC

Both Washington, DC, and London are capital cities of English-speaking countries, and yet they offer vastly different experiences to their residents and visitors. Comparing and contrasting the two cities based on their history, their culture, and their residents show how different and similar the two are.

Both cities are rich in world and national history, though they developed on very different time lines. London, for example, has a history that dates back over two thousand years. It was part of the Roman Empire and known by the similar name, Londinium. It was not only one of the northernmost points of the Roman Empire but also the epicenter of the British Empire where it held significant global influence from the early sixteenth century on through the early twentieth century. Washington, DC, on the other hand, has only formally existed since the late eighteenth century. Though Native Americans inhabited the land several thousand years earlier, and settlers inhabited the land as early as the sixteenth century, the city did not become the capital of the United States until the 1790s. From that point onward to today, however, Washington, DC, has increasingly maintained significant global influence. Even though both cities have different histories, they have both held, and continue to hold, significant social influence in the economic and cultural global spheres.

Both Washington, DC, and London offer a wide array of museums that harbor many of the world's most prized treasures. While Washington, DC, has the National Gallery of Art and several other Smithsonian galleries, London's art scene and galleries have a definite edge in this category. From the Tate Modern to the British National Gallery, London's art ranks among the world's best. This difference and advantage has much to do with London and Britain's historical depth compared to that of the United States. London has a much richer past than Washington, DC, and consequently has a lot more material to pull from when arranging its collections.

Both cities have thriving theater districts, but again, London wins this comparison, too, both in quantity and quality of theater choices. With regard to other cultural places like restaurants, pubs, and bars, both cities are very comparable. Both have a wide selection of expensive, elegant restaurants as well as a similar amount of global and national chains. While London may be better known for its pubs and taste in beer, DC offers a different bar-going experience. With clubs and pubs that tend to stay open later than their British counterparts, the DC night life tend to be less reserved overall.

Both cities also share and differ in cultural diversity and cost of living. Both cities share a very expensive cost of living—both in terms of housing and shopping. A downtown one-bedroom apartment in DC can easily cost \$1,800 per month, and a similar “flat” in London may double that amount. These high costs create socioeconomic disparity among the residents. Although both cities’ residents are predominantly wealthy, both have a significantly large population of poor and homeless. Perhaps the most significant difference between the resident demographics is the racial makeup. Washington, DC, is a “minority majority” city, which means the majority of its citizens are races other than white. In 2009, according to the US Census, 55 percent of DC residents were classified as “Black or African American” and 35 percent of its residents were classified as “white.” London, by contrast, has very few minorities—in 2006, 70 percent of its population was “white,” while only 10 percent was “black.” The racial demographic differences between the cities is drastic.

Even though Washington, DC, and London are major capital cities of English speaking countries in the Western world, they have many differences along with their similarities. They have vastly different histories, art cultures, and racial demographics, but they remain similar in their cost of living and socioeconomic disparity.

### Effects of Video Game Addiction

Video game addiction is a serious problem in many parts of the world today and deserves more attention. It is no secret that children and adults in many countries throughout the world, including Japan, China, and the United States, play video games every day. Most players are able to limit their usage in ways that do not interfere with their daily lives, but many others have developed an addiction to playing video games and suffer detrimental effects.

An addiction can be described in several ways, but generally speaking, addictions involve unhealthy attractions to substances or activities that ultimately disrupt the ability of a person to keep up with regular daily responsibilities. Video game addiction typically involves playing games uncontrollably for many hours at a time—some people will play only four hours at a time while others cannot stop for over twenty-four hours. Regardless of the severity of the addiction, many of the same effects will be experienced by all.

One common effect of video game addiction is isolation and withdrawal from social experiences. Video game players often hide in their homes or in Internet cafés for days at a time—only reemerging for the most pressing tasks and necessities. The



effect of this isolation can lead to a breakdown of communication skills and often a loss in socialization. While it is true that many games, especially massive multiplayer online games, involve a very real form of e-based communication and coordination with others, and these virtual interactions often result in real communities that can be healthy for the players, these communities and forms of communication rarely translate to the types of valuable social interaction that humans need to maintain typical social functioning. As a result, the social networking in these online games often gives the users the impression that they are interacting socially, while their true social lives and personal relations may suffer.

Another unfortunate product of the isolation that often accompanies video game addiction is the disruption of the user's career. While many players manage to enjoy video games and still hold their jobs without problems, others experience challenges at their workplace. Some may only experience warnings or demerits as a result of poorer performance, or others may end up losing their jobs altogether.

Playing video games for extended periods of time often involves sleep deprivation, and this tends to carry over to the workplace, reducing production and causing habitual tardiness.

Video game addiction may result in a decline in overall health and hygiene. Players who interact with video games for such significant amounts of time can go an entire day without eating and even longer without basic hygiene tasks, such as using the restroom or bathing. The effects of this behavior pose significant danger to their overall health.

The causes of video game addiction are complex and can vary greatly, but the effects have the potential to be severe. Playing video games can and should be a fun activity for all to enjoy. But just like everything else, the amount of time one spends playing video games needs to be balanced with personal and social responsibilities.

### Social Problem Among Teenagers

For a very long time now, the world has been faced with many issues related to or affecting young people. Not that any one person can label the young as problematic or even socially delinquent, but that their very way of life, and seemingly too fast bodily changes, that they cannot afford to cope with in "the right," is partly to account for this. The adolescents, particularly those in the age bracket of 10 to 20 years, have been noted as very vulnerable to these changes in life. In the United States of America, one of the major issues that parents and the young people in their teens have had to grapple with is the souring rate at which teenagers are getting into social problems due to absence of parental guidance, peer pressure, mass media and being exposed to much pressure.

Parents play a crucial role in guiding their children and instilling values in them. Unfortunately, the influence of parents is steadily diminishing. This is because often both parents hold full-time jobs and their children are left in the care of babysitters or foreign maids. Because children spend less time with their parents, they are deprived of the essential guidance and discipline parents should provide. This effect is not apparent until it is seen in their behavior and attitudes when they become teenagers. The social problems among teenagers are examples of these attitudes. These include gangsters, loitering, vandalism, alcoholism, smoking and drug abuse. These problems arise because teenagers, left in the care of maids, tend to do as they please. Consequently,

they rebel against any form of authority because they feel it as an infringement of their rights.

However, the absence of parental guidance is not solely to blame for social problems among teenagers. Another critical factor is the influence of friends. Teenagers need to belong to a group and have a circle of friends with whom they can identify. They feel they need to conform in order to belong. This is peer pressure. Members of a group will all try to do the same things. For example, they may even begin to look like each other, sport the same hairstyle, speak in the same way, dress like each other and so on. This helps enhance the sense of belonging. Imagine how left out a teenager would feel in a group of friends who smoke. The influence of peers and his desire to belong would compel him to take up the habit or leave the group.

In addition, there is the all-pervading mass media that influences impressionable teenagers. It affects their values, behavior, thought patterns and expectations. The influence of the mass media is so great that teenagers cannot tell where fantasy ends and reality begins. In other words, they believe what they see in the movies is reality. They expect things to happen like they do in the movies. They enter into relationships and expect everything to be romantic and rosy. When this does not happen, they get angry, frustrated and extremely disappointed. Many resort to socially unacceptable behavior such as vandalism to give vent to their frustration. Others may turn to smoking or worse still, to drugs. It is a form of rebellion against reality because it does not meet their expectations.

To make matters worse too much pressure is put on teenagers. Their parents, as well as their teachers, have high expectations. They expect their children to excel. To this end, parents rush them here, there and everywhere for extra classes and tuition just to ensure they score straight as in public examinations. And this begins at a very tender age! It is not surprising therefore, that many teenagers react in silent protest. They refuse to work hard; they prefer to go out and have fun with friends. It may be that they feel they have been robbed of their childhood. They have not experienced the care-free days of fun and laughter. It is always study, study and more study. So now, in their teenage years, they are protesting. The pranks they resort to as an expression of their protest may have more serious consequences, and may even be criminal.

To conclude, social ills among teenagers are increasing as parents and society demand more from them than they can give. Parents cannot be blamed entirely as much is beyond their control. The influence of peers, the subtle messages of the mass media

and the resulting boredom with life and its pressures all play a part in creating an environment that gives rise to social ills among teenagers.

### Mankind Is Responsible for Natural Disasters!

A powerful earthquake struck Nepal on Saturday. It is the worst earthquake recorded in Nepal in last 80 years. It was followed by a major aftershock on Sunday. The reported earthquake killed thousands of people and demolished a number of buildings. The issue here is not to discuss the after impact of natural calamities, but is to discuss who should be held accountable for such major losses. Although there is a group who believe that it is nature or God that uses such measures to discipline humankind, mankind is also as responsible for such natural disasters.

First of all, men have resulted in the process of climate change and it is the prime reason behind most of the natural calamities witnessed in the present world. Moreover, Global warming, which is converting into a slow onset disaster, is a result of human interference with nature. Human beings are the creations of nature. They drew everything needed for their very survival from nature. The air they breathe, the water they drink, the food they eat and thousands of articles they use daily-all come from nature. Yet, strangely enough, man keeps a hostile attitude towards nature. Conquest of nature is the expression which is often used to denote man's activities like space exploration, taming the rivers, etc. which sums up man's attitude towards nature.

In addition, global changes, deforestation, depletion of ozone layer, landslides etc. have been giving warning to humans about the upcoming problems. Still, there are no considerable measures implemented to control the damage. The development is coming at the cost of nature. There is a growing imbalance leading to a rise in natural calamities. It is the mankind who need to understand that they cannot carry on the development work in the areas prone to natural calamities.

However, it is argued that everything is interconnected in this world, whether it is the earth or then other galaxies. So, it cannot be said that human actions lead to natural calamities. Even when the earth was free of pollution and then were no factors leading to global warming, at that time too natural disasters used to occur. It is a natural cycle where everything is balanced by the nature itself. If there are no corrective actions, then world would become a worst place to live in. On the other

hand, even though the word 'natural' indicates that humans have not caused the disaster, human activity can certainly interfere with nature, which in turn may either cause a natural disaster or make its effects much worse. For example, humans do not cause earthquakes that are generated by tectonic movement and seismic activity, but underground mining can result in instability that causes earthquakes.

All in all, there is a need to change perception of life. It cannot be decided who is responsible for natural calamities, but measures can be taken to control the damage. It is necessary to remember the ancient times when life was seen as integral part of the natural scheme wherein humankind was given an opportunity to work for the benefit of the entire universe without disturbing or playing with it.