

# TEACH YOUR CHILD TO WRITE A WINNING ESSAY

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TIPS LEARNED FROM MY EXPERIENCE  
JUDGING KIDS' WRITING COMPETITIONS

*" Will you be a judge for our kids' writing competition? "*

*" Yes, sure. " I said calmly, while doing somersaults inside.*

**But first let me introduce myself and my writing experience which allowed me this honor.**

## **A CHILDHOOD DREAM**

When I was in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, all I wanted to do was write. I wrote my first thriller novel about two brothers (one of whom was dead). It never saw the light of day, but it fired a passion within me.

I kept on writing poems, stories and blogged sporadically till 2016 when noticing my loneliness in motherhood, my husband encouraged me to use my writing talents to blog professionally.

From there from journey of writing and learning took me on the cliched miraculous journey of self-discovery. With many trials and errors, I found my niche to be positive parenting, with a focus on cultural sensitivity.

## **MY WRITING JOURNEY**

In September 2016, after many, many rejections I finally got accepted into Huffington Post as a contributing writer. My first writing for benefits began as a feature writer for RichmondMomsBlog. Free dinners and gifts, thank you very much.

My high point came in February 2010 when Arianna Huffington herself accepted me into her fascinating publication Thrive Global. Soon after, I was featured mom on the popular Richmond circulation called Richmond Family Magazine.

Desh Videsh magazine picked up my articles for publication in their south Asian network. I ever coauthored a book "When You Are Done Expecting". I could now call myself a freelance writer.



## CREATING A MOVEMENT

Having found my passion and niche, I desired to provide a platform to other novice writers and thus was born my own publication [Raising World Children Family Magazine](#).

Our website grew to a team of 16 columnists and 150 guest writers from around the world. Our pieces even got featured on NBC12.

Reading articles all day long is part of what I do as Chief Editor of our publication. But there is always the desire to give encouragement to children who want to grow as creators.

## MY EXCITEMENT ON THE JUDGING OPPURTUNITY

I have always had a fascination to seeing kids' photos and creations. And to get a glimpse into kids' minds through their words was a treat for me in many ways.

So, when this opportunity came across to help judge writings about the topic, **"Memories of India"** I was elated.



The occasion of Republic Day 2018 gave our local Indian Organization's cultural team a unique opportunity to provide a chance for budding writers to hone their talents while discussing their roots.

Not only did I gain an insight into tomorrow's leaders, I learned a lot about their cultural perspective as Indian Americans in the subtext.

The experience was such a positive one that I just had to ensure other kids had an insight into what it takes to write a winning essay. I trapped onto paper all the criteria which made us judges choose the winning essays.

*After all writing is a beautiful talent to hone for those college essays and office emails!*

# QUALITIES OF A WINNING ESSAY



## Sticks to The Topic

An essential mistake that is often made, and even adults do this is to veer OFF topics. When writing one MUST always stick to the topic. When judging one piece against several pieces, the one question that is constantly asked is, **"Is this sentence/paragraph" related to the topic.**

It is disheartening when an essay about memories of India turns into an essay about different cities and places to visit there.

## Great Narrative

Always be relevant to the reader. Most people write things mechanically. **But what connects best to someone is when they can feel the person is right there with you.**

One of the best narrative essay was where a girl talked about an afternoon of fun and frolic, applying henna on her hands, listening to the sounds of the Dhol and watching her dad dance to the beat of the drum at a wedding.

I could feel myself there with her. And that's great writing!

### **Be Willing to Share Yourself**

A good article makes the reader feel the connection with you as a person. That means they can see how you **felt. Make someone smile or feel sad out of empathy. If you are funny, be funny.** An amazingly funny quote by one winning piece was someone writing, "If I fail to mention about this place, the judges are sure to cut my marks. "

It got us to smile. And the person extra points. Putting yourself and your story into the essay is a being vulnerable on paper.

### **Beginning, Middle and End**

Ensure your essay has a good flow. A coherence of thoughts. You should start by telling the reader what the rest of the essay will entail. Then you move onto the crux, in detail or in layers.

If you break things up into many sections also, you need to ensure to tie it all up into a conclusive end.

**A great conclusion makes the reader ponder over what they have just read or brings forth a new perspective.**





## Spelling and Grammar

When you are done, you should make sure your article has good spelling and grammar. Sometimes it is okay to twist the grammar to make parts of writing stand out.

Like when someone wrote. - "Choo, Choo ", the train whistles. Birds chirp. On a beautiful morning the train leaves.

I understood the child was trying to get me to relate to where they were. That is beautiful writing. Akin to poetry. Mistakes are ignored.

## Presentation

When you are writing in a competition, you are tied for time. You cannot correct a lot of errors. So, there will be spelling and grammatical mistakes but **keep your writing neat and try to present with bold headings and section your work for easy reading.**

## Keep Your Paragraphs Short

Not a lot of people know this but these days skimming has become the new reading. With so much to do, teachers, judges often just read the main parts.

When faced with a multitude of papers to check, no person can possibly read each word. Unless of course you are someone like, me who edits for a living. I'm a speed reader but most people are not.

When faced with long paragraphs, readers often take the short cut and skip ahead.

**So, keep your paragraphs short. Use underlining, bold sentences. When typing on the computer use bold sentences/stylizing your work.**

**That gives the person the illusion of having to read less and thus they pay more attention to each word.**

## First Person Account

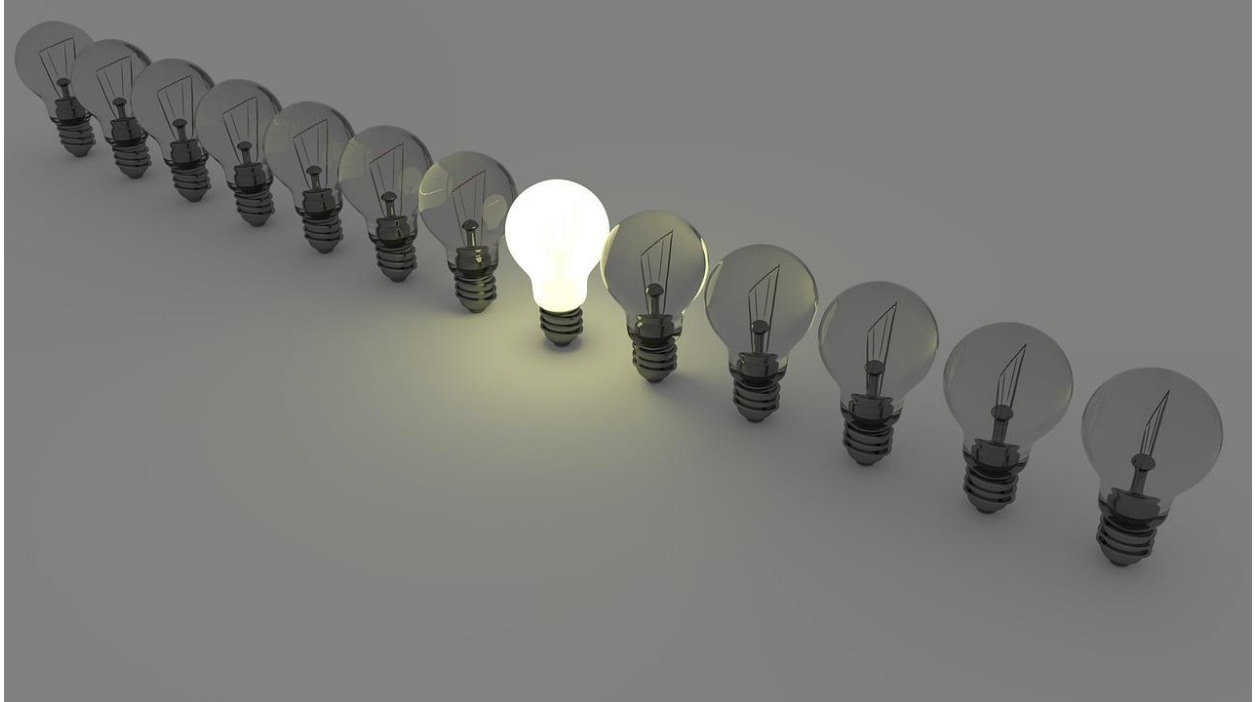
Gone are the days of writing essays in the third person. A good essay these days are first person account of what a person experienced in a certain situation.

Like when a boy wrote – 'Standing there in the mundane ceremony, I saw the baby was dressed up, but crying. There are people happy everywhere. The barber came with his cutting tools. "

## Choose a Uniquely Relevant Title

Lot of people make the mistake of being very witty or tricky with their headings. Always choose a title that is unique yet tells the reader exactly what the article is going to tell them.





## Something New in The Old

As writers we have the power of show someone a new aspect of some place. **So, if a person shows us a new perspective or vantage point, you have drawn the reader in by giving them something new to ponder over.**

Like the 8-year-old child who told us about the time they travelled in the train for the first time. The innocence of his perspective enthralled us to how the seats felt and how the train moved.

## Use New Descriptions

" As bright as the sun " and " as clever as a fox " are old ways to describe. It is amazing when kids go ahead to explain something in a new way. Like, when a 11-year-old wrote, her dress sparkled with the colors of the rain bow. It is enchanting to say the least.

## Don't Make the Writing Cumbersome

One entry started with, "Here is what is going to come, 1. 2. 3 and then went onto write 6 pages worth of article filling it with irrelevant information.

No one wants to feel like the reading is work. Try to make your writing as light and entertaining as possible. **Your job is to make the person want to be reading your piece.**

## No Clearly Coached Writing

It is disappointing when someone sees clearly coached writing. When a 7-year-old writes, " This experience got me in touch with the Indian in me who I had lost years ago ... " the writing reeks of **bad preparation by parents** to get the child to be something they aren't.

With years of experience behind them, every person in the field can clearly make out what age is capable of writing what. Don't let the innocence go!

## Never Plagiarize

When you come across a teacher or judge who is well read, plagiarizing content from books even in reference can take away from your other writing. Unless you use the plagiarized content to enhance your own to enhance your own writing, you are sure to lose out of points.

## Cater to The Reader

This is above all the most important tip. When writing, always keep in mind the person you are writing for. Writing is like gift giving. A gift makes no sense when given because it is something you want.

To have a gift appreciated, you must ensure it is something the receiver desires. Not something you want. ***So always keep in mind, the person you are writing for.***

## WRITING PROMPTS

Now that you have learned to write, how about practicing those amazing skills? Without application, all the knowledge in the world is worthless. Here are some writing prompts for you to help your kids try their writing prowess on.

- Memories of your Homeland.
- What does your city look like?
- A memorable holiday.
- What do your mom and dad do differently than you?
- Your favorite birthday party.
- Why is diversity important.
- A book that you have enjoyed.
- Who are you? Where are your roots?
- A celebration that you do not enjoy.
- What are your favorite things about your culture.
- What language do you speak? What is unique about it?
- The souvenirs in your home.
- The story behind your favorite photographs
- Your favorite festival/s.

After writing the above, go ahead and take a picture of your writing or email it to us with yat [contact@raisingworldchildren.com](mailto:contact@raisingworldchildren.com) and we will publish it in our Kids Korner. If you request it, we will even provide feedback on your writing and tell you how to improve.

Bonus points if you send in an illustration. We often award prizes to extremely unique submissions!

At Raising World Children, it is my mission to provide a [platform to today's minds and tomorrow's thought leaders to present their world view through writing and arts in our Kids' Korner](#)



Join our [Facebook group for parents](#) who share their perspective and kids' creation for us to feature the best ones on the Raising World Children platform.

I welcome you to our [group aimed diversity in dialogue for better parenting](#). We have regular giveaways for our participating families.

Thank you for your interest in fueling your child's passion for writing.

For more parenting resources and guides, visit –

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