



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## EXPOSITORY WRITING – Practice (O-Levels 2023)

### [Sample Question Analysis and Essay Outline]

Use the spaces below to analyse the following question and craft an essay outline.

***‘Schools should teach practical skills such as cooking and managing our finances.’ Do you agree? Why or why not?***

Schools [content word]:

- MOE / School leaders – schools should equip students with practical skills to prepare them for the future
- Teachers – may be concerned about the lack of time for the teaching of academic subjects
- Students – would benefit more from learning these skills in school as opposed to learning them on their own after they graduate; may welcome the different approach to learning (i.e. hands-on experiences)
- Parents – usually responsible for teaching these skills to their children, although some may lack the time and knowledge to do so

should teach [limiting words]:

- Must / obligated
- Included in the curriculum, during school hours

practical skills [limiting words]:

- Skills that equip an individual to face the challenges of life
- E.g. stress management techniques, time management skills, digital literacy

cooking [limiting word]:

- more engaging for students
- hands-on learning (working in groups, movement, solving real-life problems)

managing our finances [limiting words]:

- reflecting on real-life problems
- learning about spending and saving priorities

Do you agree [Task word]:

- Argumentative essay question

**Sample Essay Plan:**

<p><b>Supporting argument 1:</b></p> <p>Schools should prepare students for the future by teaching them practical skills.</p>	<p>Problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals are ill-equipped to face practical challenges of life once they leave school (e.g. maintaining a household, managing finances)</li> <li>• Learning from scratch can be a struggle</li> </ul> <p>Solution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools' responsibility to prepare students for life</li> <li>• Basic practical skills would make the transition easier</li> </ul> <p>E.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooking skills – equips students to live on their own or take care of their family's nutritional needs</li> <li>• Managing finances – enables one to effectively work towards financial independence and freedom</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supporting argument 2:</b></p> <p>Students might welcome the hands-on approach to learning practical skills.</p>	<p>Traditional teaching methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occurs during most academic lessons</li> <li>• Minimal interaction, regurgitation of knowledge and student as a passive receiver</li> <li>• Less engaging for students</li> </ul> <p>Hands-on teaching methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More likely to occur during teaching of practical skills</li> <li>• Group work, games, movement, students get to actively solve real-life problems</li> <li>• More engaging for students</li> </ul> <p>E.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FCE lessons: Collaborating in groups, movement, experiential</li> <li>• Time-management skills: learning how to solve real problems in life</li> </ul>
<p><b>Counterargument &amp; Rebuttal:</b></p> <p>CA: Parents should be mainly responsible for teaching practical skills.</p> <p>R: Parents may lack the resources to teach these skills (i.e. time, knowledge)</p>	<p>Counterargument:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duty of parents in their children's upbringing</li> <li>• Outside school, parents witness their children's practical struggles firsthand → easier for them to impart relevant skills</li> </ul> <p>Rebuttal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In reality, most parents may not impart these skills due to lack of knowledge or time</li> <li>• Schools have the means to create researched and structured lessons, &amp; provide qualified instructors and facilities, e.g. kitchens, classrooms, technology</li> <li>• Group discussions in schools expose students to a wider range of perspectives and methods to adopt</li> </ul>

**Sample Essay**

In the rapidly evolving landscape of the 21st century, navigating life's complexities can be a daunting task without practical skills. As schools strive to prepare students for the future, integrating essential skills like stress management and digital literacy into the curriculum becomes critical. As the hands-on learning approach of practical skills usually aligns with the preferences of many students, they are more likely to be engaged during these lessons. While some may argue that parents should teach these skills, schools are often better equipped as parents may lack the necessary resources. Therefore, incorporating practical skills into education is crucial for holistic student development.

Since students spend most of their formative years in school, it is crucial that schools prepare them for the future by teaching practical skills. Many individuals find themselves ill-equipped to face practical challenges after graduation if they have focused solely on academics throughout their teenage years. These challenges may range from providing for oneself to managing student loans. Without basic knowledge of cooking or financial management, navigating responsibilities such as these can be overwhelming. While academic preparation is important, schools must also recognise that students will eventually leave the sheltered walls of its compound and transition to adulthood. Basic practical skills can thus help to ease this transition and reduce stress. For instance, if students learn basic cooking skills, they will be better prepared to live independently. Similarly, those who receive education in financial literacy will be more capable of managing their finances and working towards financial independence. Therefore, equipping students with practical skills during their formative years ensures that they are better prepared for the complexities of adult life.

Moreover, students are also more likely to welcome the hands-on approach that learning of practical skills entails. Typically, students spend most of their time in classrooms absorbing content passively through traditional teaching methods. This can lead to disengagement, especially when lessons are long and scheduled one after another. Practical skills, on the other hand, are best taught experientially and through reflection on real-life experiences. For example, cooking cannot be learnt merely by reading recipes; students need to handle ingredients and cooking utensils to master techniques properly. This type of learning involves movement and trial-and-error, which keeps students active and engaged. In the same way, stress management techniques are more effective when applied to real-life situations. By recalling past stress experiences or considering hypothetical scenarios, students find these lessons relevant and practical. Thus, learning practical skills provides a refreshing break from traditional classroom experiences and helps maintain student engagement.

Some may argue that teaching practical skills should not be within the purview of schools, and that parents should be responsible for imparting these skills to their children. They contend that parents have a duty to be involved in their children's upbringing, and teaching life skills within the family context can provide valuable bonding opportunities. Additionally, parents are often firsthand witnesses to their children's struggles outside of school, enabling them to impart relevant skills precisely when needed.

While it is ideal for parents to teach practical skills, the reality is that parents may not have the time, knowledge, or awareness to do so effectively. Busy schedules and a lack of expertise can hinder parents from being perceptive to their children's needs and providing adequate instruction. Therefore, to ensure that all students are equipped with essential practical skills, schools must take on this responsibility. Schools typically have abundant resources, allowing them to develop well-researched, structured curricula and provide qualified instructors and specialised facilities like kitchens and workshops. Moreover, learning practical skills in a school environment exposes students to diverse perspectives and collaborative learning opportunities through group discussions and activities. Consequently, while parents play an important role, schools are better positioned to ensure that all students gain the practical skills necessary for life.

In conclusion, schools should indeed take on the responsibility of teaching practical skills to students to help them effectively deal with the challenges of life. Learning skills such as cooking and stress management not only facilitates a smoother transition into adulthood, but also provides varied, engaging learning experiences. While parents play a crucial role in their children's upbringing, schools are often better equipped to teach these skills effectively. Incorporating practical skills into education is essential for preparing students for the complexities of adult life. Hopefully, more schools will recognise and act on this need, ensuring that students are well-equipped for their futures.