

# THINKRITE

## An Introduction to Academic Writing



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## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

**Read the following passages/poems and answer the questions given below:**

### **1. Fox and the Grapes – Aesop’s Fables**

A hungry fox saw some fine bunches of grapes hanging from a vine that was trained along a high wall, and did his best to reach them by jumping as high as he could into the air. But it was all in vain, for they were just out of reach: so, he gave up trying, and walked away with an air of dignity and unconcern, remarking, “I thought those grapes were ripe, but I see now they are quite sour.”

- What do you mean by sour?
- Why did the fox consider the grapes as sour?
- Were the fruits really sour?
- Write a paragraph based on a critical analysis of the text.

### **2. Adventures of Huckleberry Finn – Mark Twain**

You don’t know about me without you have read a book by the name of The Adventures of Tom Sawyer; but that ain’t no matter. That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mainly. There was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth.

- Research the internet and find out answers for the following questions: Who is the narrator of the story? Who is Tom Sawyer? What is the original name of Mark Twain?
- Read any one novel by Mark Twain and write an analytical essay.

### **3. Alice in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll**

Alice was not a bit hurt, and she jumped up on to her feet in a moment: she looked up, but it was all dark overhead; before her was another long passage, and the White Rabbit was still in sight, hurrying down it. There was not a moment to be lost: away went Alice like the wind, and was just in time to hear it say, as it turned a corner, ‘Oh my ears and whiskers, how late

it's getting!' She was close behind it when she turned the corner, but the Rabbit was no longer to be seen: she found herself in a long, low hall, which was lit up by a row of lamps hanging from the roof.

Imagine yourself in the place of Alice in Wonderland. Write a short story in about 250 words.

#### **4. Sesame and Lilies – John Ruskin**

The good book of the hour, then,—I do not speak of the bad ones,—is simply the useful or pleasant talk of some person whom you cannot otherwise converse with, printed for you. Very useful often, telling you what you need to know; very pleasant often, as a sensible friend's present talk would be. These bright accounts of travels; good-humoured and witty discussions of question; lively or pathetic story-telling in the form of novel; firm fact-telling, by the real agents concerned in the events of passing history;—all these books of the hour, multiplying among us as education becomes more general, are a peculiar possession of the present age: we ought to be entirely thankful for them, and entirely ashamed of ourselves if we make no good use of them. But we make the worst possible use if we allow them to usurp the place of true books: for, strictly speaking, they are not books at all, but merely letters or newspapers in good print. Our friend's letter may be delightful, or necessary, to-day: whether worth keeping or not, is to be considered. The newspaper may be entirely proper at breakfast time, but assuredly it is not reading for all day. So, though bound up in a volume, the long letter which gives you so pleasant an account of the inns, and roads, and weather, last year at such a place, or which tells you that amusing story, or gives you the real circumstances of such and such events, however valuable for occasional reference, may not be, in the real sense of the word, a "book" at all, nor, in the real sense, to be "read." A book is essentially not a talking thing, but a written thing; and written, not with a view of mere communication, but of permanence. The book of talk is printed only because its author cannot speak to thousands of people at once; if he could, he would—the volume is mere multiplication of his voice. You cannot talk to your friend in India; if you could, you would; you write instead: that is mere conveyance of voice. But a book is written, not to multiply the voice merely, not to carry it merely, but to perpetuate it. The author has something to say which he perceives to be true and useful, or helpfully beautiful. So far as he knows, no one has yet said it; so far as he knows, no one else can say it. He is bound to say it, clearly and melodiously if he may; clearly at all events. In the sum of his life he finds this to be the thing, or group of things, manifest to him;—this, the piece of true knowledge, or sight, which his share of sunshine and earth

has permitted him to seize. He would fain set it down for ever; engrave it on rock, if he could; saying, “This is the best of me; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved, and hated, like another; my life was as the vapour, and is not; but this I saw and knew: this, if anything of mine, is worth your memory.” That is his “writing;” it is, in his small human way, and with whatever degree of true inspiration is in him, his inscription, or scripture. That is a “Book.”

- What is a book according to John Ruskin?
- What is the purpose of writing a book?
- Identify five important words in the given text.
- Identify the meaning of difficult words in the text.

### 5. Hazlitt on Shakespeare

The four greatest names in English poetry, are almost the four first we come to—Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton. There are no others that can really be put in competition with these. The two last have had justice done them by the voice of common fame. Their names are blazoned in the very firmament of reputation; while the two first, (though “the fault has been more in their stars than in themselves that they are underlings”) either never emerged far above the horizon, or were too soon involved in the obscurity of time. The three first of these are excluded from Dr. Johnson’s *Lives of the Poets* (Shakspeare indeed is so from the dramatic form of his compositions): and the fourth, Milton, is admitted with a reluctant and churlish welcome.

In comparing these four writers together, it might be said that Chaucer excels as the poet of manners, or of real life; Spenser, as the poet of romance; Shakspeare, as the poet of nature (in the largest use of the term): and Milton, as the poet of morality. Chaucer most frequently describes things as they are: Spenser, as we wish them to be; Shakspeare, as they would be; and Milton as they ought to be. As poets, and as great poets, imagination, that is, the power of feigning things according to nature, was common to them all: but the principle or moving power, to which this faculty was most subservient in Chaucer, was habit, or inveterate prejudice; in Spenser, novelty, and the [Pg. 35].

Notes love of the marvellous; in Shakspeare, it was the force of passion, combined with every variety of possible circumstances; and in Milton, only with the highest. The characteristic of Chaucer is intensity; of Spenser, remoteness; of Milton, elevation; of Shakspeare, everything.—It has been said by some critic, that Shakspeare was distinguished from the other dramatic writers of his day only by his wit; that they had all his other qualities but that;

that one writer had as much sense, another as much fancy, another as much knowledge of character, another the same depth of passion, and another as great a power of language. This statement is not true; nor is the inference from it well-founded, even if it were. This person does not seem to have been aware that, upon his own shewing, the great distinction of Shakspeare's genius was its virtually including the genius of all the great men of his age, and not his differing from them in one accidental particular. But to have done with such minute and literal trifling.

The striking peculiarity of Shakspeare's mind was its generic quality, its power of communication with all other minds—so that it contained a universe of thought and feeling within itself, and had no one peculiar bias, or exclusive excellence more than another. He was just like any other man, but that he was like all other men. He was the least of an egotist that it was possible to be. He was nothing in himself; but he was all those others were, or that they could become. He not only had in himself the germs of every faculty and feeling, but he could follow them by anticipation, intuitively, into all their conceivable ramifications, through every change of fortune or conflict of passion, or turn of thought.

- Who are the major writers mentioned in the passage?
- What are the unique qualities of each writer?
- Compare and contrast the different writers based on their works.
- What are the unique qualities of Shakespeare?

## 6. The Little Black Boy – William Blake

My mother bore me in the southern wild,  
And I am black, but O my soul is white!  
White as an angel is the English child,  
But I am black, as if bereaved of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree,  
And, sitting down before the heat of day,  
She took me on her lap and kissèd me,  
And, pointing to the East, began to say:

‘Look on the rising sun: there God does live,  
 And gives His light, and gives His heat away,  
 And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive  
 Comfort in morning, joy in the noonday.

‘And we are put on earth a little space,  
 That we may learn to bear the beams of love;  
 And these black bodies and this sunburnt face  
 Are but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

‘For, when our souls have learned the heat to bear,  
 The cloud will vanish, we shall hear His voice,  
 Saying, “Come out from the grove, my love and care,  
 And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.”

Thus did my mother say, and kissed me,  
 And thus I say to little English boy.  
 When I from black, and he from white cloud free,  
 And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,

I’ll shade him from the heat till he can bear  
 To lean in joy upon our Father’s knee;  
 And then I’ll stand and stroke his silver hair,  
 And be like him, and he will then love me.

- What are the issues raised by the little black boy in the poem?
- What is the significance of the line, “I am black, but O my soul is white!”?
- How can you relate the poem to the contemporary times?
- Explain the significance of the line, “And be like him, and he will then love me.”
- Write an essay highlighting the central theme of the poem.

**7. The Lamb and The Tiger – William Blake**

The Lamb	The Tiger
<p>Little lamb, who made thee?            Does thou know who made thee,            Gave thee life, and bid thee feed            By the stream and o'er the mead;            Gave thee clothing of delight,            Softest clothing, woolly, bright;            Gave thee such a tender voice,            Making all the vales rejoice?                Little lamb, who made thee?                Does thou know who made thee?</p> <p>Little lamb, I'll tell thee;            Little lamb, I'll tell thee:            He is callèd by thy name,            For He calls Himself a Lamb.            He is meek, and He is mild,            He became a little child.            I a child, and thou a lamb,            We are callèd by His name.                Little lamb, God bless thee!                Little lamb, God bless thee!</p>	<p>Tiger, tiger, burning bright            In the forests of the night,            What immortal hand or eye            Could frame thy fearful symmetry?</p> <p>In what distant deeps or skies            Burnt the fire of thine eyes?            On what wings dare he aspire?            What the hand dare seize the fire?</p> <p>And what shoulder and what art            Could twist the sinews of thy heart?            And, when thy heart began to beat,            What dread hand and what dread feet?</p> <p>What the hammer? what the chain?            In what furnace was thy brain?            What the anvil? what dread grasp            Dare its deadly terrors clasp?</p> <p>When the stars threw down their spears,            And watered heaven with their tears,            Did He smile His work to see?            Did He who made the lamb make thee?</p> <p>Tiger, tiger, burning bright            In the forests of the night,            What immortal hand or eye            Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?</p>



- How does William Blake make use of questions in the poem? Paraphrase the questions in your own words.
- Compare and contrast the two poems in terms of themes, images, symbols and figures of speech and write an essay in about 250 words.

### 8. Silver – Walter de La Mare

Slowly, silently, now the moon  
 Walks the night in her silver shoon;  
 This way, and that, she peers, and sees  
 Silver fruit upon silver trees;  
 One by one the casements catch  
 Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;  
 Couched in his kennel, like a log,  
 With paws of silver sleeps the dog;  
 From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep  
 Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep;  
 A harvest mouse goes scampering by,  
 With silver claws and a silver eye;  
 And moveless fish in the water gleam,  
 By silver reeds in a silver stream.

- Who is personified in the poem?
- Define a sonnet. What are the characteristics of a sonnet?
- Identify the different poetic devices used in the poem.
- Make list of unfamiliar words in the poem and find their meaning.

### 9. Gitanjali – Song 11 – Rabindranath Tagore

Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads!  
 Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut?  
 Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!

He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground  
 and where the pathmaker is breaking stones.

He is with them in sun and in shower,  
and his garment is covered with dust.  
Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil!

Deliverance?

Where is this deliverance to be found?

Our master himself has joyfully taken upon him the bonds of creation;  
he is bound with us all for ever.

Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense!

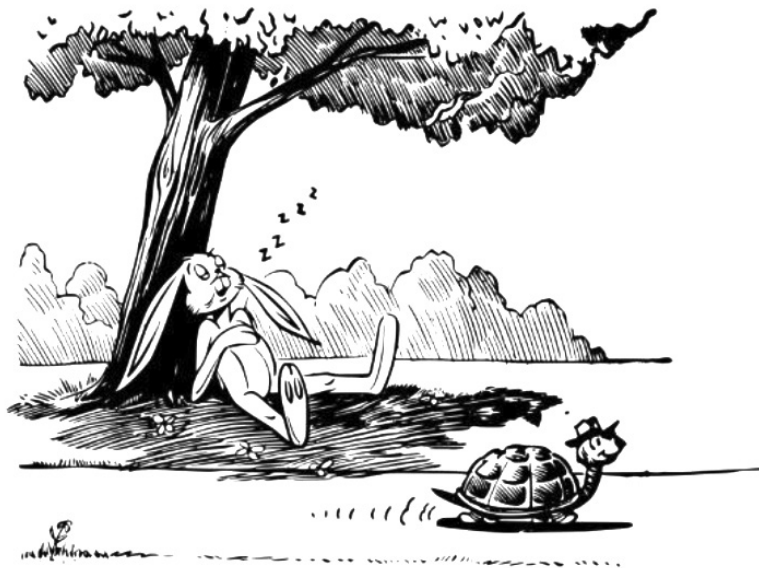
What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained?

Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow.

- What are the important questions raised by Tagore in the poem?
- Write a paragraph on the theme of eco-spirituality in about 100 words.
- Comment on the figures of speech in the poem.

**10. Picture composition and paragraph writing – Observe the following pictures and write a paragraph in the given format.**

**Paragraph I Slow and Steady Wins the Race**



Topic Sentence .....

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Explanation of the Topic Sentence .....

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Elaboration of the Central Idea of the Paragraph .....

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Giving an example to substantiate your topic sentence .....

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Paragraph II Unity in Diversity



Topic Sentence .....

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Explanation of the Topic Sentence .....

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Elaboration of the Central Idea of the Paragraph .....

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Giving an example to substantiate your topic sentence .....

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***Paragraph III Tree-Planting***



Topic Sentence .....

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Explanation of the Topic Sentence .....

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Elaboration of the Central Idea of the Paragraph .....

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Giving an example to substantiate your topic sentence .....

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*Paragraph IV Cleanliness is Next to Godliness*



Topic Sentence .....

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Explanation of the Topic Sentence .....

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Elaboration of the Central Idea of the Paragraph .....

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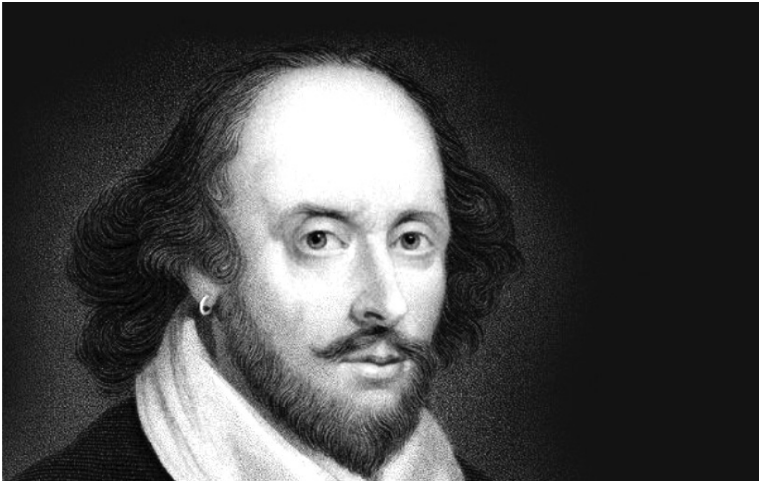
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*Paragraph V Shakespeare*





Topic Sentence .....

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Explanation of the Topic Sentence .....

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Elaboration of the Central Idea of the Paragraph .....

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Giving an example to substantiate your topic sentence .....

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