















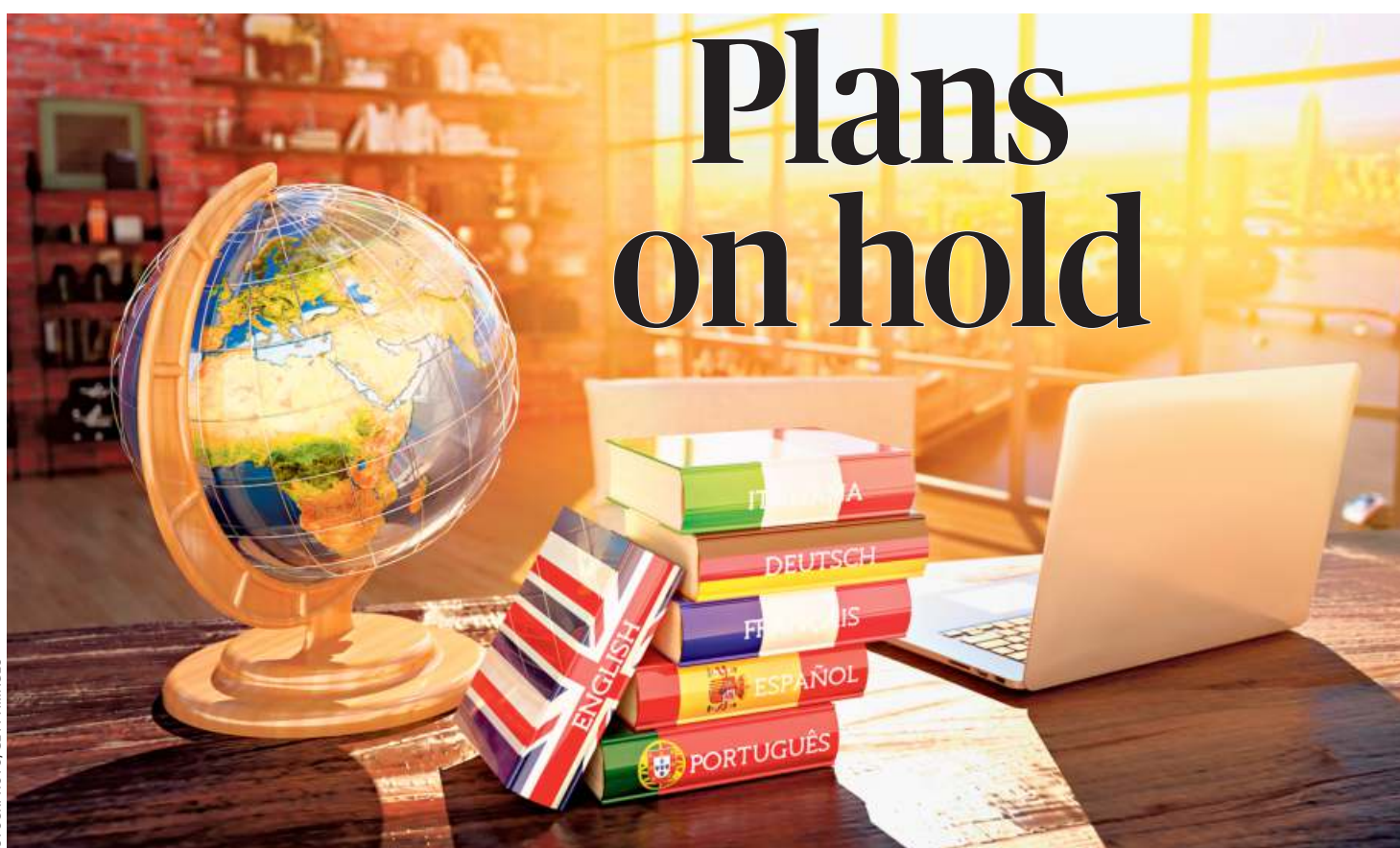
For students heading abroad for higher studies this coming academic season, the current global situation is just a delay and not a dissolution of their plans

■ DEEKSHA TERI

The pandemic, COVID-19, has brought the world to a standstill. However, the education sector is trying its best to make sure that school and university students do not miss out on their studies. But the plans of those who have been preparing to head abroad for higher studies have been thrown off gear.

Shedding light on this challenging scenario, Ajay Sharma, President, Abhinav Immigration Services says, "If you are about to start a new session in the upcoming months, in any of the foreign universities, there will be a present suspension of any admission. But, that does not mean it has shut down. There will be a delay until the situation improves because the health of students is of the utmost priority in the current scenario."

While many universities are taking similar steps right now, some are sending out customised announcements for students of different departments. In such a case, the best option would be to contact the concerned admissions authority of the respective universities. "I have been given time until July 31 to submit certain documents. In addition to this, I have been receiving emails about video conferences being scheduled in place of the previously scheduled open days for offer holders. Apart from colleges, the career guidance cell of Shiv Nadar School, Gurugram, has been sending every update they have been receiving from universities and test



## Plans on hold

conducting agencies," says Ipsa Yadav, who is planning to head to London School of Economics and Political Science for Law.

Adarsh Khandelwal, Co-founder and Director, Collegify, said he talked to almost 200 families and each one of them have reported good feedback and no delay in terms of test, classes and learning. "The colleges are in readiness to conduct classes online for the September 2020 batch till students can join. If certain students are unable to join this year, they can accept the offer and defer their admission and join next year."

### Bonus time

While the admission process for new students has been put on hold for the interim, there is no need for aspirants to panic. The admissions have only been put on hold, and not

suspended. So, now is a good time for aspirants to utilise this time in a constructive way.

**Research:** Find out more about your preferred university/college and course(s). Reach out to the faculty, alumni and read up on testimonials. Utilise this time to research on what different semesters curtail so that you get a better idea of which course or university is a good choice for you. Also, extend your research to the geography and culture of the city the university of your choice is located in.

**Prepare:** If you are yet to appear for your IELTS, GMAT or GRE, use this time to prepare for them on your own or through an online platform, to improve your admission prospects to your preferred university.

**Write:** You can also start drafting and finalising your Statement of

Purpose (SoP) that you will have to submit with your admission applications.

Aspirants can also use this time to research about the various scholarships available, bursaries and education loans that they will be needing, once the session commences. Dig deeper into the websites of various banks, governments and institutes for more information. You can also contact a university's alumni through social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Facebook.

"I am using this time to read more about the university, its environment, and the course I am going to pursue. I am also reading a lot about the current global scenario. This is the time I can improve some of my skills like communication," explains Anurag Tiwari, a class XII student at VidyaGyan Leadership

Academy, who has secured admission at Cornell University, New York, the U.S.

### Visa issues

Usually, a student starts applying for the study visa as soon as he or she gets the acceptance letter from the university. However, under these special circumstances, when there are unforeseen delays, it helps to contact the university you have applied to and confirm the commencement date for your programme and then apply for your visa. "You should keep a tab on the immigration website of the country you are applying to. They will update you with the recent developments and when are they accepting the study visa applications. Once they start the process, apply for your visa and start preparations," says Ajay.



## Slow down

Rather than rushing to complete the syllabus, teachers should focus on helping students grasp, digest, and apply a topic



BLACKBOARD

VINEY KIRPAL

Summer had begun and so had the exam fever for the undergraduates. The psychology professor had not yet completed the syllabus. We were dependent on his lectures because there was no prescribed text book. The professor announced four extra classes before the preparatory holidays. Everybody came with two divisions packed in a room meant for one, some sat while most stood. The college fans whirred slowly and the heat of 200 bodies packed like a box of boiled rice, made it nearly impossible to concentrate. Yet we sat listening to him because there was no option – no Internet, no videos.

Many college teachers are guilty of going slowly at the beginning of the academic year and then speeding when the semester is about to end. In principle, they have completed the syllabus. But, what about the students? Did they internalise the subject? No. The topics covered at the end are often the most difficult and important ones for which students need time to grasp, digest and apply. But where is the time for

that? Teachers have their own problems. They get less than 180 days a year to complete the courses. Can we do something to overcome these challenges?

### Possibilities

i. Define the objective of the target course and stick to it. The object will vary with the level of the students. For first-year students, the course could be an introductory one. Whether it is Logic or Chemistry, we need to tell them how these subjects will benefit them. In the second year, the course will be taught at a more advanced level; one can skip the introduction.

ii. Depending on their complexity, list the most important topics in a course and decide in advance whether we need one lecture or three out of a total 42 lectures per semester to cover them satisfactorily.

iii. List important concepts within a topic and teach only those. The rest can be 'taught' through discussions/problem-solving/applications/case studies. Today, most students own a smartphone. Videos can be accessed in class to give a graphic understanding of the topic. Raising thought-provoking questions and involving students in a meaningful discussion will further clarify concepts and ensure deeper student learning.

iv. Select and narrate anecdotes around the concepts. Students like to hear stories woven into the explanation as it increases their engagement with the subject and helps them learn better.

v. Often, teachers speak fast while teaching. Students may listen to them without grasping the concept. Speaking at an even pace – neither too slow nor too fast – and focusing on the most important concepts is the key to syllabus completion, the purpose of which is understanding. When students comprehend a topic, they begin to like it and will read beyond the lecture.

To sum up, plan for a realistic syllabus coverage within the given timeframe. Focus on the most important, interesting and thought-provoking concepts. Teach them at an even pace to get optimum results.

The writer was former professor of English at IIT Bombay. vineykirpal@gmail.com

## Switching careers

Do you feel uncertain about a career? Do you lack the freedom to choose a subject that you really want to pursue? Do you always feel low on self-confidence? Are you constantly doubting yourself? A Q&A column to assuage your doubts



OFF THE EDGE

NANDINI RAMAN

I am a first-year B.Com student, and am interested in the stock market. Is there a way I could become a stockbroker while studying? – Khusboo Patel

Dear Khusboo, Sure, you can, though it is not as easy as it seems. You will need an on-the-job training programme and an internship that can help you understand and gain practical experience. Try and look at a National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM) certification as well as a NSE Academy's Certification in Financial Markets (NCFM) course, as these are specific to the securities markets. These will also help towards earning the needed professional licenses. Please talk to a few people in the field and seek their advice on the pros and cons. As long as the proper licenses are obtained, a stockbroker could have only a high school diploma in our country. However, most stockbrokers earn a degree and specialise in order to compete in a very competitive market. Do understand the nuances of the trade thoroughly, before you jump into it.

I am 23 years old and I have completed my graduation in history. I am currently pursuing a master's in sociology. What are the opportunities I have in both fields, apart from government exams? Also, I really enjoy writing on social issues. – Poonam Negi

Dear Poonam, Have you considered being a college instructor? You could get into research, join a public health and welfare organisation, a law firm, a human services agency, or work as a drug and alcohol counsellor, a school or a geriatric social worker, and continue writing on social issues.

I am studying in Class XI (Humanities) and plan to pursue BA Economics. What are the career opportunities I will have in India as well as abroad? – Sreya Santhosh

Dear Sreya, You have a wide range of career opportunities post your BA in Economics. There is a lot that is possible; options such as actuarial sciences, law, finance, Indian Economic Services (IES), management, consulting, rural development, public policy and so on are available.

Your course completion also provides an excellent foundation for graduate studies in social sciences, economics, journalism, business, and law. Enough evidence proves that economics majors perform very well compared to other majors on graduate and professional exams such as LSAT and GMAT.

I have done my bachelor's in Philosophy (Hons) from Delhi University and I am really interested in pursuing a master's in psychology with a specialisation in clinical psychology. I am, however, unsure as to what jobs I would get and if I would be able to earn enough money in this field. Could you guide me? – Shivani Saraf

Dear Shivani, MA Clinical Psychology is a two-year long graduate degree programme focusing on the aspects of adolescent therapy and psychiatric rehabilitation. You need a minimum of 55% marks or above in aggregate from a recognised college/university in India. There is an entrance exam to secure the admission. The course prepares candidates to assess and evaluate patients and clients who have emotional problems and behavioural disorders, and help create treatment plans for them. Such postgraduates are hired as career counselors, social workers, career employment specialists, developmental psychologists, counseling psychologists, educational psychologists, clinical psychologists, and so on.

*Disclaimer: This column is not a substitute for long-term therapy. It is merely a guiding voice. Some issues may need medical intervention.*

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. She will answer questions sent to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com. The subject line should be: 'Off the edge'

### EXAM PREP

## Get down to the basics

March on to the gateway to the elite defence services, armed with a strategic study plan and a focus on your fitness levels

■ ROHIT MANGLIK

The National Defence Academy (NDA) exam is a gateway to the Defence Service. NDA, which is a training ground for defence personnel, follows a stringent procedure to induct the country's future soldiers. To sail through the NDA exam, you need to possess not only factual knowledge but an intriguing personality and sound health. Here are some tips and advice to help you crack the rigorous exam:

**Brush up your fundamentals:** First, you should be well-aware of the syllabus and pattern of the exam. Stay updated about the changes implemented, if any, and prepare accordingly. Revise and re-revise the basics.

**Sharpen your quantitative skills:** Math is one of the core subjects of the written test. Hence, fast calculations and a stronghold on the basics are prerequisites for getting through the exam. Go back to basics, try to solve as many questions as you can, and develop clarity on the various concepts.

**Read an English newspaper every day:** This will serve two purposes. First, it will expand your vocabulary. Second, it will build your knowledge of national and international current affairs. This will determine your performance in the General Ability Test (GAT). GAT assesses the English proficiency and general knowledge of candidates. And, an English newspaper is the best tool to polish these skills. Turn the pages of your grammar book, scroll through economic magazines, and catch up on policy updates.

### Make your own notes:

Just reading will not get you through the doors of NDA; you need to write as well. Whatever you read and learn, jot it down in a notebook. Make your own notes, draft your own study book. Make charts, tables, listicles, or work on visual cues and cards. Doing this will help you during revision. In the final days of the exam, you will not get the time to scroll through the entire study material. That is when your notes will come to your rescue.

**Practice quality sample papers:** It would be a no-brainer to say that practice is what differentiates qualifiers from non-qualifiers. However, what you practise is as important as how much to practise. Don't pick any practice paper at random and go about solving it. Every book is not worth your time, nor is it advisable to practise every sample paper. Analyse the ones available in the market, compare them and choose the ones that offer the best. Previous years' papers would be more reliable.

**Focus on your health and fitness:** Physical and mental fitness is the most crucial parameter to mark one's entry into NDA. No matter how good your preparation and performance is in the written tests, it all comes down to your health and fitness levels. So, don't just immerse yourself in books. Pay attention to your fitness too. Many candidates are rejected every year on medical grounds. Do not let that be the reason for you. Get yourself medically examined, get your health in order, and polish your personality.

Finally, be dedicated to your goal and determined towards your preparation. Build a study plan, develop a strategy, and focus on your health, attitude, and personality. Analyse your weak areas and work on them. Focus on your communication skills too.

The writer is Founder and CEO, EduGorilla.



JIGNESH MISTRY



# How we think vs how to think

Remaining curious and open is the key to developing a mindset that can help us act more effectively



LIVE LIGHTLY

NIVEDITA DAS NARAYAN

The late 19th century approach to thinking called pragmatism suggested that the purpose of philosophy and thought is not to provide us with a true picture of the world, rather than to help us act more effectively within it. In the pragmatist perspective, the question to ask is NOT 'Why is this view the way it is?', rather 'What are the practical implications of adopting this perspective?'

Pragmatism advocated learning by experience, and philosophical thoughts were believed to be squarely in the realm of daily living.

John Dewey, the eminent pragmatist, philosopher and education reformer, explains, "We only think (effectively) when we are confronted with problems". Dewey authored *How We Think*, a masterwork that is especially relevant in today's milieu of over-thinking and over-information. If you consider, our thoughts often fall in the realm of philosophising – am I good enough? Is it essential? How will it impact my life? These idle questions lead to more questioning, rather than resolving the inherent confusion in them. Dewey offered clues to mastering the art of thinking to halt this endless loop.

## Reflective thoughts

Idle thinking locates in our everyday hopes and aspirations and arises from the challenges we face in the course of life. The pragmatist approach encourages us to get beyond idle thinking and inaction into finding practical stimuli to our hopes and goals.



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Reflective thought is a practical response. Reflection is an active, persistent process and includes careful consideration of underlying beliefs and supposed knowledge. And when reflection leads to a conclusive decision, it births rational, reasoned ideas.

Dewey suggests that the best setting for reflection is a blank, ambiguous state. "The spark of thinking is a kind of psychological restlessness rooted in ambiguity", and our intuitive demand for resolution is a cue to reflect.

Like the scientist who is intimately familiar with uncertainty and failure, the pragmatist cultivates a capacity for uncertainty. This helps in trumping the autopilot mind that is quick to jump to conclusions and offer

Like the scientist who is intimately familiar with uncertainty and failure, the pragmatist cultivates a capacity for uncertainty.

inputs.

## The irony of Intelligence impeding Curiosity

Intelligent humans tend to rationalise the most unproven concepts or irrational action, aided by experience, insight and underlying belief. This is conditioning. The only way through is in cultivating a curious mind – like the alert, exploratory and eager mind of a child. Dewey calls child-like curiosity the most natural and uncontaminated state of mind for robust thoughts, "From this springs the next developmental stage, the what/why

phase that often exasperates parents and teachers but provides the foundation for critical thinking"; "the open-minded and flexible wonder of childhood".

A thought that gets stuck in a loop of stupor is situated in our past and maybe dangerously devoid of the present. The challenge of navigating a volatile, uncertain, ambiguous world will be easier when we interact with the present in an open and curious state of mind; we will closely participate in choice and problem solving and will be in better control of our hopes and fulfilment. That, to me, is pragmatic living.

The writer is a life coach, blogger and writer who simplifies the patterns and archetypes she encounters at work and in life. nivedita@lifealigncoaching.com



THINK

ARUNA SANKARANARAYANAN

Like many psychological constructs, humility is often misconstrued. On the one hand, people who claim to be humble, often don't realise the irony behind their assertion. To boast about one's humility is obviously oxymoronic. On the other hand, some people equate humility with self-effacement. However, psychologist, Robert Enright, points out that humility doesn't entail belittling ourselves. Rather, "It is a realistic assessment of who we are as persons." And, at its core, personhood involves realising that "we are all the same." No matter how rich or poor we are, what talents or faults we may have, or how much we have achieved or failed to attain, when we look at people through the lens of personhood, no one is "worse or better as a person than anyone else."

Management consultant, Karl Albrecht, adds that being humble involves being free of our "competitive reflex," which he defines as a "preconscious, visceral impulse to oppose or outdo others." Thus, when a friend shares pictures and describes her trekking exploits, do you feel compelled to state that you have been on more arduous climbs? Or, when your host serves a freshly-baked cake, instead of simply appreciating the treat, do you comment on how the

cake could have been spongier?

## No special privileges

Albrecht claims humility is evident in your behaviour towards others. A truly humble person makes others feel "affirmed, appreciated, encouraged, validated, and psychologically nourished." Listing the characteristics of humble people, psychologist Mark Leary says they have an accurate perception of themselves, including their flaws, are open to dissenting views, are not self-absorbed, and value all people. However, the core feature that distinguishes humility, according to Leary, is the belief that one is not entitled to special privileges or attention, "as a person."

Leary highlights the phrase "as a person" because, in some contexts, a person may merit certain benefits. For example, elite sportspeople should have access to the best training facilities and leading scientists should be given grant money for their research. But outside the domain of their expertise, they should not expect to be treated in a privileged manner, no matter what accolades they have received.

Psychologist, June Price Tangney, emphasises that humble people have a "relatively low self-focus" which is akin to a "forgetting of the self." And, that is one reason why humility, as a construct, is

# Free yourself

Truly humble people are free from competitive reflex and make others feel appreciated and encouraged

hard for psychologists, who rely on self-report questionnaires, to measure. Though humility remains a challenge for psychologists to pin down and quantify, Tangney suggests that the trait may be beneficial for our physical and mental health. Most psychological disorders are characterised by a disproportionate self-focus. Likewise, heart disease has also been linked with an undue preoccupation with the self.

Writer Benedict Carey describes the work of psychologist, Daryl Van Tongeren, who enumerates further benefits of humility. These include forgiving oneself and others, being patient, and not holding on to grievances. Likewise, psychologist, Elizabeth Krumrei Mancuso, finds that people who score high on a measure of "intellectual humility" are more curious and open-minded. Interestingly, the trait does not correlate with IQ scores. If we cultivate and prize humility, we can reap its benefits at both the individual and interpersonal levels.

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# To kill or cut?



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

S. UPENDRAN

What is the correct pronunciation of 'vase'? (J Deepthi, Mysuru)

There are two different ways of pronouncing the word. The Americans tend to rhyme it with 'face', 'pace' and 'case'. The British, on the other hand, pronounce the 'a' like the 'a' in 'path' and 'bath', and the final 'se' like the 'z' in 'zip' and 'zoo'. They pronounce the word 'VAAZ'. It comes from the Old French 'vas' meaning 'container' or 'receptacle'. Nowadays, the word is mostly used to refer to a vessel in which cut flowers are placed.

Don't you dare drop that vase! It's really expensive. The killer used the flower vase to smash the victim's skull.

What is the difference between 'butcher' and 'slaughter'? (SV Anand, Vellore)

When you slaughter an animal, you are killing it for food. It comes from the old Norse word, 'slatr' meaning 'killing animals for meat'. This explains why places where animals are killed are called 'slaughter houses'. Butchering is the process of cutting up the slaughtered animal into smaller pieces. The butcher cuts up the meat of the slaughtered animal and makes it available for his customers. The two verbs can be used with people as well. When you 'butcher' a person, what you are doing is killing him in a very cruel manner – you are making the person suffer by torturing him. Perhaps, you are cutting him into small pieces. You can butcher one person or several. The word 'slaughter', on the other hand, suggests you are indiscriminately killing many people – their death is usually violent. The killing of a single individual cannot be considered a slaughter.

The serial killer had butchered 20 teenagers before being caught.

The rebel troops slaughtered everyone in the village.

Is there a difference between, 'She was a good dancer, she was' and 'She was a good dancer, was she?' (R Shanthi, Chennai)

Yes, there is a big difference in the meaning between the two. 'She was a good dancer, was she?' is a question; you are seeking information in this case. You are attempting to find out from the person whether the individual was a good dancer or not. 'She was a good dancer, she was' is a statement – an emphatic one, to be precise. You are stating that the person in question was a good dancer. The addition of 'she was' at the end of the sentence reinforces the point you are making – that the person was indeed a very good dancer.

Here are a few more examples:  
Mythreye was a wonderful teacher, she was.  
The movie was terrible, it was.  
\*\*\*\*\*

No flower is happy in a vase, because a vase is nothing but an ornate coffin for the flower. Mehmet Murat Ildan

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## IN FOCUS

# The climate in class

Are we to leave our successors a scorched planet of advancing deserts, impoverished landscapes and ailing environment? Or, should we factor in climate change as a core subject?

■ ALKA KAPUR

Rapidly melting ice sheets at the poles, disappearance of many animal and plant species, increase in the frequency of extreme weather events, and unprecedented pollution of air, water and land – (em dash) all these undesirable events are linked together by a common cause – (em dash) global warming. It would not be wrong to say that the earth's vital signs reveal a patient in declining health. The need of the hour is to acknowledge that global warming is real and thus address the challenge before humankind faces extinction.

Since today's students are the stakeholders of tomorrow, it has become more important now than ever before, to include climate change as a subject in school curriculum so that youngsters can familiarise themselves with the problem at hand and innovate solutions. Besides turning students into responsible adults who care about the wellness of the environment, the subject of climate change has another crucial role to play. It is to reduce the panic and crippling fear that has gripped the youth regarding global warming because of what they have



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seen in the mainstream media. Another important objective is to systematically teach students about the phenomenon and measures that can be taken to curb it. Teaching youngsters about climate change will sensitise them towards the cause, and consequently, these students will grow up to become responsible citizens. Even if they don't turn into conservationists and opt for alternative careers as industrialists, they will be responsible industrialists and promote sustainable development.

Although the majority of teachers and parents worldwide believe that climate change should be taught as a mainstream subject in schools, there exists a lobby of change deniers that is resisting this idea. They hold the belief that climate change occurs on its own and no amount of human intervention could have any effect on it.

Hopefully, though, with the expansion in our knowledge about geology and weather patterns, we will have undisputable, definite proof of climate change and the numbers of these naysayers will

shrink.

Climate change cannot be approached only in a theoretical direction. More emphasis should be laid on inculcating practical activities in the curriculum. The idea is to make the teaching process interactive so that more students actively engage in this fight against climate change. This can be achieved in a number of ways.

## Lab experiments

Performing lab experiments that concisely depict the global warming process on a small scale will give students the idea about the enormity of the problem.

## Movie screenings

Organising movie screenings is another great idea. Kids love watching movies and it is, perhaps, one of the easiest and most effective ways to acknowledge them about the climate change issue. Movies like *Before the Flood*, starring Leonardo Di Caprio and *An Inconvenient Truth* are a few among many enlightening movies which can be shown to students.

## Industrial visits

Schools can also organise excursions to sites such as wastewater

treatment plants or invite environmental activists and experts to give the students reports from ground zero. Engaging in dialogue with people who are actively involved in the conservation process will give students a better idea of the gravity of the situation and might even inspire them to become conservationists themselves.

## Service projects

Another brilliant idea is to give small service projects to students, such as cleaning up their neighbourhood or setting up a waste recycling mechanism in their houses. Besides being a learning exercise for students, it would also have a positive impact on the environment. Climate change is real, and we are fast approaching the point in time after which the damage done will be irreversible. Hence, we need to realise our ethical obligations to be the good stewards of the planet and responsible trustees of the legacy to future generations.

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## KNOWLEDGE

Q1

In March, this year, a 45-year-old advocate filed a PIL (Public Interest Litigation) at the Madras High Court claiming that something was against the right to privacy and the principles of the right to live peacefully. It mentioned the Ministry of Health, Telecommunications, Information and Broadcasting and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) as the respondents.

Q2

Coined in 1897 by psychologists G. Stanley Hall and Arthur Allin, "knismesis" and "gargalesis" are the two types of \_\_\_\_\_. While 'knismesis' refers to a light and feather-like touch, 'gargalesis' refers to a harder touch and greater use of high pressure to sensitive areas. What are these types of \_\_\_\_\_?

Q3

The ancient Roman encyclopaedist, Pliny the Elder, used to claim that a copy of Homer's *Iliad* existed that was small enough to fit inside a \_\_\_\_\_ shell. Almost 2000 years later, in the early 1700s, the Bishop of Avranches successfully tested Pliny's theory by writing out the epic in tiny handwriting on a \_\_\_\_\_ sized piece of paper. Which phrase in English, meaning a brief summary of a longer work, traces its origin back to these accounts?



A1. Coronavirus caller tune  
A2. Tickling  
A3. Nut; in a nutshell

Answers

## EAR SHOT

ASHOK RAJAGOPALAN

