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## Language Activities

### From TED to Text: Developing Analytical Writing Skills of Undergraduates

*Nikita Goel*

**Skill in Focus:** Analytical Writing

**Sub Skill(s):** Critical Analysis, Argumentation, Textual Interpretation

**Level:** Undergraduates

**Estimated Time:** 60-90 minutes

**Student Group Size:** Individual or Small Groups (2-4 students)

**Aim:** To enhance students' analytical writing skills by using TED Talks as a source of material for developing critical thinking and argumentation.

#### Learning Objectives

1. To develop students' ability to critically analyze and interpret content from TED Talks.
2. To improve students' skills in constructing coherent and well-argued written responses.
3. To foster students' capacity to synthesize ideas and arguments from audio-visual materials into written form.

#### Materials

- TED Talk video ("Why You Procrastinate-and How to Stop it for Good" by Elyssa Smith)
- Transcript of the TED Talk
- Writing Prompts/Questions/Worksheets
- Paper and pens or digital writing tools

**PROCEDURE:****Pre-Writing Activities****1. Brainstorming**

The teacher will announce the title of the TED Talk, “Why You Procrastinate—and How to Stop It for Good” by Elyssa Smith, and facilitate a discussion based on the following questions:

1. Have you ever watched a Ted Talk before? If yes, what did you like about it or the speaker?
2. What does the title of the Ted Talk suggest to you? How might it relate to the main theme?
3. How does the topic of the TED Talk relate to your own experiences or interests?
4. What questions or doubts do you have about the topic that you hope the TED Talk will address?
5. What do you hope to gain from watching this TED Talk?

**2. Vocabulary Preparation**

The teacher will ask the students to review some key vocabulary words from the TED Talk. Working in pairs, they will discuss and predict the meanings of these words and try to form sentences using each one.

Key Vocabulary Word	Predicted Meaning	Sentence
Eradicate	To get rid of something completely	The government implemented new policies to <i>eradicate</i> poverty in the country.
Procrastination		
Agony		
Derail		
Trauma		
Distress		
Survival		
Ridiculous		

**Writing Activities**

The teacher will play the TED Talk and instruct students to watch it attentively. Students are encouraged to refer to the transcript if they encounter any difficulties in understanding the content. While watching, they should take notes in bullet points to capture key ideas and significant details, which will assist them in completing the subsequent writing tasks.

**1. Analytical Essay**

Write an analytical essay based on the TED Talk. Focus on the following aspects:

**I. Introduction (100-150 words)**

- Introduce the TED Talk, including the title, speaker, and main argument.
- State your thesis about the effectiveness of the TED Talk.

**II. Body Paragraphs (200-250 words each)****a) Argument Analysis**

- Analyze the main argument of the TED Talk. Is it clearly defined? Are there any potential counterarguments?

**b) Evidence Evaluation**

- Evaluate the types of evidence presented. How does the evidence support the main argument?

**c) Rhetorical Strategies**

- Examine the use of rhetorical strategies (ethos, pathos, logos). How do they enhance the speaker's argument? Provide specific examples.

**d) Presentation Style**

- Discuss the speaker's delivery and use of visual aids. How do these elements contribute to or detract from the overall effectiveness of the talk?

**III. Conclusion (100-150 words)**

- Summarize your analysis and restate your thesis.
- Reflect on the overall impact of the TED Talk and its relevance to the audience.

**Instructions:** Use the TED Talk transcript and your notes to craft your essay.

## 2. Quote Analysis

Keeping in mind the metaphors used, analyze the following quote from the TED Talk:

*“If you are running a race and you kept tripping over your shoelaces, would your solution be, ‘I’m just going to keep my band-aids right here, and every time I fall, you’re just going to dress your wounds’? No, right? I mean, you would tie your laces before the race starts. Procrastination is the band-aid. It’s the thing that makes you feel safe, but you actually have no shot at winning the race.”*

### Analysis

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## Follow-On Activity

### 1. Reflection

Write a brief reflection (200-300 words) on how analyzing this TED Talk has influenced your understanding of procrastination and motivation. Consider the following questions in your reflection:

- How has the TED Talk changed or reinforced your views on procrastination?
- What new insights have you gained about overcoming procrastination?
- In what ways has this analytical exercise enhanced your writing skills?

*Nikita Goel is a PhD scholar pursuing her research in English Language Education at The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad. Her research interest lies in second language writing, self-regulatory strategies, and developing ESL learners’ voices in writing.*