

DATE:10-4-19

**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE-27**

**II SEMESTER BA/BSc/BSW/BCom**

**SEMESTER EXAMINATION: APRIL 2019**

**GE 214 - General English**

**Time - 2 1/2 hrs.**  **Max Marks - 70**

**This paper contains TEN pages.**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

**1. This booklet contains THREE themes.**

**2. You may answer any ONE theme.**

**3. Please indicate your stream (and theme) clearly on the front page of your answer**

**booklet.**

**4. Answer all sections under the theme you have chosen. Do not choose sections at random from different themes.**

**5. You will lose marks for exceeding the given word limit.**

**6. You are allowed to use a dictionary during the examination.**

**THEME ONE**

**I. Read the following passage from the travel blog, *Be Yourself* dated January 20, 2016:**

**Why I Travel Solo - by Becca Warner**

I’m 27 and female. Since I was 21, I’ve been away at least once a year, for anything from 3 nights to 9 months, alone. I also go on trips with friends, but I make a point of regularly going solo.When alone, I’ve been met with various reactions, but they tend to fall into two broad camps:

* *Awesome, that must be really fun!* (Wide eyes, look of interest, wants to hear stories)
* *Really? You’re on your own?! Why??* (Raised eyebrows, expression of slight distrust, thinks I’m weird)

Both are totally valid. In fact, depending on what’s happened that day, either can feel completely (sometimes painfully) justified. It’s rare that I forge a friendship with someone from the second camp. And, if they get me on a bad day, their reaction can feel like a gentle kick in the stomach.

As I look to the year ahead, and think about the trips I’ll inevitably make alone, I’m offering myself a small reminder of why it’s necessary and important to me. Just in case I need a little push.

But more than that: I’d like to share my reasons for travelling solo with those who might fall somewhere in the region of camp number 2 — and hopefully do it a little more coherently than I would if I were standing in a hostel kitchen with my hand in a jar of shop-bought pasta sauce.

So, here they are: the seven reasons I travel solo.

1. Because I can do things my way

I can wander off. Stay. Go. Change my mind. Follow a whim. I don’t have anyone else’s preferences, needs or feelings to bear in mind and carefully balance against my own. I can be utterly selfish and not feel bad about it. For most human adults — typically surrounded by and attuned to the needs of children, parents, friends, colleagues, clients, pets — this is a strange and wonderful luxury.

2. Because I can see what ‘me’ really looks like

With no one around who knows me, I’m in my own little social vacuum. Stripping out the group norms of my social circles — those silent rules of engagement, shared experiences and in-jokes that quietly guide our day-to-day interactions — leaves nothing left except… me. Sometimes I like what I see there, sometimes I question it, and sometimes it comes as a surprise. Either way, exposure feels interesting and important.

3. Because new friends are everywhere

It’s seriously noticeable how much more readily people will approach someone who’s sitting alone and strike up conversation. I’ve chewed coca leaves with a Peruvian social activist, played guitar with a Chilean musician, shared my journal with a Chinese mother-of-two, and been taught to surf by an Australian farmhand. I don’t believe any of those moments would have happened — or certainly felt like such rich, colourful moments of connection— if I hadn’t been sitting by myself.

4. Because it shines a light on the kindness of strangers

I’ve learned that the quickest way to see the best of humanity is to make yourself vulnerable. I’ve found myself in hot (make that cold) water more times than I’d like, and every time been rescued by a warm-hearted and generous stranger. Regular reminders of why I should have faith in humanity sure is good for the soul.

5. Because it keeps me present

Other people are distracting. That can be awesome, and being connected with another person is one of the great joys of life. But walking up hills, through city streets, and along beaches with no conversation to be had other than the quiet mutterings and observations that happen inside my head gives me the headspace to take more in. Colours seems brighter, sounds louder. I’m more aware of what’s around me.

6. Because it’s scary

Some days, anyway. I’m not always as gung-ho as I could be. I’m easily scared when lost (which happens a lot), and not being able to communicate in the local language can make me feel painfully vulnerable. But — and I’m desperately trying to find a way to say this without resorting to tired cliché— my comfort zone doesn’t feel very good if I stay there too long. Being in scenarios that send me marching (or reluctantly crawling) into vulnerability, uncertainty and discomfort is utterly crucial to my wellbeing. It’s what brings me to life, and keeps me there.

7. Because it reminds me that I can

The knowledge that I need no-one other than myself is the source of my deepest inner reserves. Other people — those who help in a crisis, or become road trip buddies, or share small moments with me around bowls of coca leaves — become a wonderful added bonus that I feel real, conscious gratitude for. But strengthening the quiet voice that says ‘I’ll be OK’ is an important gift to keep giving myself, for as long as I still need to be reminded.

There will always be moments of discomfort: when I have to take a selfie (I still cringe) because there’s no one else there to take a picture of me atop some famous waterfall; when I’m lost, skint or otherwise and wish I had someone to laugh instead of cry with; or when I’m having a down-day and there’s no one around who knows me. But the difficult moments are what make the reasons above all the more important and true for me. And it is these seven reasons which have propelled me towards the intense, grounding, connected experiences that sit like bright beautiful splashes of colour on the weird patchwork that is my twenties-so-far.

So. If you’ve ever found yourself in the second camp — looking at this slightly bedraggled solo-traveller as she makes herself some sad looking pasta-for-one, and thinking she might be a bit odd — well, I hope this explains it a little.

**I.A. Answer the following questions in about 150 words each:**

**(4X10 = 40)**

1. One of the reasons the author cites, to defend solo travelling is “Because new friends are everywhere”. What do you think she means by it?
2. According to you, what are some of the things the author has not considered? Can you think of points to consider before you would undertake a solo trip?
3. Travelling alone can be a daunting task - Would you ever do it? Why or Why not? Give reasons for your stand.
4. The author uses the word, ‘vulnerable’ more than once. Look up the meaning if you need to. Have you ever felt ‘vulnerable’? What did you learn from that experience? How has it changed you?

**II. Observe carefully the comic strip, *Dilbert*.**

**(Dilbert is an American comic strip written and illustrated by Scott Adam. The strip is known for its satirical office humour about a white-collar, micromanaged office featuring engineer Dilbert as the title character.)**



**II.A. Answer the following questions in about 150 words each:**

**(3X10 = 30)**

5. What strikes you about physical appearance of the two characters - Dilbert and his boss - in the given strip? What do you think it signifies? Why do you think Dilbert is always portrayed with his tie curving upwards?

6. What significance do you think the second panel in the comic strip has? Why do you think it is devoid of humans?

7. What are the things that could possibly go wrong on a trip? How would you overcome such challenges? Use personal examples to answer this questions.

**THEME TWO**

1. **Read the following opinion pieces carefully:**

**I.1. Make one resolution and stick to it - Dr. Shyam Bhat**

[Bhat is chief psychiatrist, mind.fit. and this piece was published in *The Week* dated January 12, 2019*]*

I don't make New Year resolutions since there is nothing really sacred about January 1.

Of course, I understand that psychologically January 1 seems to wipe the slate clean, allowing people to start afresh. However, each day, each moment is an opportunity to commit to a course of action or to a lifestyle. So I prefer to cultivate mindfulness, an appreciation of the present moment, and I make resolutions or commitments to myself as necessary through the year.

If I am not clear about my priorities, I end up making resolutions that are sometimes in conflict. For example, wanting to work on a book, and wanting to spend more time with family and friends. Since time is a limiting factor, making two such resolutions make it harder to stick to them. I, therefore, now make one resolution at a time and then move on to the next one after accomplishing it. Science proves that this approach may be more effective than making multiple resolutions since it takes mental discipline and focus to bring resolutions to fruition.

Many years ago, I made a resolution to get into standup comedy. I wanted to do so to bring a balance to my otherwise serious profession. I was successful in doing so and for a few years, I was a psychiatrist by day and a standup comic by night! However, it takes focus to do anything well, and my commitments as a psychiatrist didn't allow me enough time to continue comedy, and so I gave it up.

Staying committed to the resolution can be daunting. Make one resolution —make it important and as life-changing as possible. Discover an emotional connection with the resolution—why do you want to do this and how it will change your life for the better. Enlist support—find people who have made similar resolutions and motivate each other along the way. Say, “I will do something” rather than “I won't do something”. For example, rather than saying “I won't eat unhealthy food”, say “I will eat healthy food”.

People find it hard to stay committed to their resolutions because human beings are hard-wired for conflict within the mind. A part of our brain seeks and is tempted by immediate pleasure. Another part of the brain is designed to check these impulses and to think about the long-term consequences of our actions. With discipline and practices such as meditation, we can improve our willpower and stay committed to our resolutions.

**I.2. Resolutions are Meant to be Broken**

A study reveals that nearly 80 per cent of those who make resolutions on New Year's Day abandon them before January end. Popular as 'Ditch New Year's Resolution Day,' January 17 is a day when a large number of people discard the resolution that they made on the first day of the year.

Orissa POST interacted with some women who set a few goals on January 1 but couldn't achieve them either because of some pressing reasons or because they simply found them too difficult to keep.

 Sumitra Bhuyan, teacher in a Bhubaneswar law college, said, "I took a vow that I would give up junk food completely. I manage to keep to that for the first week. But eventually I had to ditch my resolution while attending family picnics. I am part of a big family and we had some picnics in which my in-laws too participated. I had to give in to the demands of the members of the family. Frankly speaking, I didn't know about this day earlier, but I have already broken my resolution before the arrival of the day."

 "You may have valid reasons to break your resolutions. But you can do it on 'Ditch New Year's Resolution Day' without feeling guilty," said Sthita Pragnya Nanda of Bhubaneswar. "Every year, I resolve to maintain my workout routine throughout the year. But I fail to hit the gym due to frequent change of working hours in my office. I have failed to stick to my New Year's resolutions since 2015. This year is no different. I joined the gym on the first day of the year but discontinued it from last Saturday due to my erratic working hours."

 "Ditch those resolutions, relax and stop feeling guilty about breaking them. After all, resolutions are meant to be broken," said Rossy Devi of Keonjhar. "Being an office-goer, it's very tough to make a New Year resolution and maintain it throughout the year. This year I resolved to not use a vehicle and instead walk to office at least one day in a week. But I had to drop the plan as I couldn't reach office in time on a few occasions. I tried to maintain the resolution during the first week of the month. But eventually I had to rely on other modes of transportation to reach office as the mornings were too foggy to walk. So, I had to break my resolution out of compulsion. I am not too sure whether others who have New Year resolutions can stick to them for long."

Poonam Nayak of Bhubaneswar said, "My resolution for this year was to hit the bed early, but the plan went awry this year too. I work from home for a US-based company. Therefore, working hours are different from that of offices in India. Although I managed to finish my work before 10 pm every day, I usually spend time talking to my sister and other members of the family till late night and go to bed late. This year too, I ditched my resolution before the 'Ditch New Year's Resolution Day' arrived."

**I.A. Answer the following questions in 150 words each:**

**(2X10=20)**

1. In the first article, the author claims, “each moment is an opportunity”. What are the ways in which the author attempts to seize such an opportunity? Do you agree with him?
2. Refer to the opinion piece I.2. January 17 is popularly known as ‘Ditch New Years’ Resolution Day’. According to you, how far away from January 1st do you think Ditch New Year’s Resolution Day should be? What is your logic?

**I.B. Answer the following questions in 200 words each:**

**(2X15 = 30)**

1. Imagine that you are drawing up a list of your resolutions for 2019, make three categories namely, ‘things I will start doing this year’, ‘things I will stop doing this year’ and ‘things I will avoid this year’. Enumerate three things that you list under each category, explain their likely outcomes and present their possible challenges.
2. New Year’s is a time to discard the old and embrace the new. Share any experience where you may have taken up a challenge to start something new, it could be a workout regime, a new habit, or a culinary experiment.

**II. Read the following poem by** *Brendan Kennelly***:**

**Poem from a Three Year Old**

And will the flowers die?

And will the people die?

And every day do you grow old, do I

grow old, no I’m not old, do

flowers grow old?

Old things – do you throw them out?

Do you throw old people out?

And how you know a flower that’s old?

The petals fall, the petals fall from flowers,

and do the petals fall from people too,

every day more petals fall until the

 floor where I would like to play I

want to play is covered with old

flowers and people all the same

together lying there with petals fallen

on the dirty floor I want to play

the floor you come and sweep

with the huge broom.

The dirt you sweep, what happens that,

what happens all the dirt you sweep

from flowers and people, what

happens all the dirt? Is all the

Dirt what’s left of flowers and

people, all the dirt there in a

heap under the huge broom that

sweeps every thing away?

Why you work so hard, why brush

and sweep to make a heap of dirt?

And who will bring new flowers?

And who will bring new people? Who will

bring new flowers to put in water

where no petals fall on to the

floor where I would like to

play? Who will bring new flowers

that will not hang their heads

like tired old people wanting sleep?

Who will bring new flowers

that do not split and shrivel every

day? And if we have new flowers,

will we have new people too to

keep the flowers alive and give

them water?

And will the new young flowers die?

And will the new young people die?

And why?

**II.A. Answer the following questions in about 150 words.**

**(2X10 = 20)**

4. a. Do you think this is really how a three-year old speaks? Critically comment on the voice of the speaker of the poem. (5 marks)

4. b. What do you think ‘petal’ as a symbol stands for, in the poem? (5 Marks)

5. As a child, what was your first encounter with Death? Do you remember how it was explained to you?

**THEME THREE**

1. **Read the given poem carefully**:

**Disabled**

BY [WILFRED OWEN](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/wilfred-owen)

He sat in a wheeled chair, waiting for dark,

And shivered in his ghastly suit of grey,

Legless, sewn short at elbow. Through the park

Voices of boys rang saddening like a hymn,

Voices of play and pleasure after day,

Till gathering sleep had mothered them from him.

About this time Town used to swing so gay

When glow-lamps budded in the light-blue trees,

And girls glanced lovelier as the air grew dim,—

In the old times, before he threw away his knees.

Now he will never feel again how slim

Girls' waists are, or how warm their subtle hands,

All of them touch him like some queer disease.

There was an artist silly for his face,

For it was younger than his youth, last year.

Now, he is old; his back will never brace;

He's lost his colour very far from here,

Poured it down shell-holes till the veins ran dry,

And half his lifetime lapsed in the hot race

And leap of purple spurted from his thigh.

One time he liked a blood-smear down his leg,

After the matches carried shoulder-high.

It was after football, when he'd drunk a peg,

He thought he'd better join. He wonders why.

Someone had said he'd look a god in kilts.

That's why; and maybe, too, to please his Meg,

Aye, that was it, to please the giddy jilts,

He asked to join. He didn't have to beg;

Smiling they wrote his lie: aged nineteen years.

Germans he scarcely thought of, all their guilt,

And Austria's, did not move him. And no fears

Of Fear came yet. He thought of jewelled hilts

For daggers in plaid socks; of smart salutes;

And care of arms; and leave; and pay arrears;

Esprit de corps; and hints for young recruits.

And soon, he was drafted out with drums and cheers.

Some cheered him home, but not as crowds cheer Goal.

Only a solemn man who brought him fruits

*Thanked* him; and then inquired about his soul.

Now, he will spend a few sick years in institutes,

And do what things the rules consider wise,

And take whatever pity they may dole.

Tonight he noticed how the women's eyes

Passed from him to the strong men that were whole.

How cold and late it is! Why don't they come

And put him into bed? Why don't they come?

**I.A. Answer the following questions in about 150 words:**

**(4X10 = 40)**

1. Look at line three, according to you, what does “legless, sewn short at elbow’ indicate? Comment on the mood and tone of the poem that this sets.
2. Elaborate on your observations about imagery in the poem. Notice specially, the line “He's lost his colour very far from here”. What do you think it refers to?
3. Most people expect concrete help and action with regard to their disability, not merely pity and sympathy. Do you agree with this view? Give reasons for your answer.
4. While orthopaedic and visual handicaps may be visible, there are several disabilities that may not be apparent. What measures can we take to be more careful about our etiquette with others lest we hurt them? Comment.

II. **‘Read the following interview from *The Guardian* dated January 17, 2019:**

**Sometimes You Feel Alone: Studying at University with a Disability**

Three disabled students tell us about how they have coped with the transition from school to university. While the number of disabled people studying at university is growing, they are still [far less likely](https://theconversation.com/low-expectations-are-stopping-young-disabled-people-going-to-university-93033) to go than their non-disabled peers. The universities minister, Chris Skidmore, is now [calling on universities](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/jan/17/universities-can-do-more-to-support-their-disabled-students) to do more to support their disabled students, in the hope of encouraging more applications. Here, several disabled students share their stories about what starting university was like for them.

**‘Having a disability can make it harder to fit in’**

 (Hillary Mensah is a third-year student at the University of Nottingham, studying politics and international relations)

I have a long-term health condition called lupus, an autoimmune disease which causes inflammation to the joints, skin and organs. I experience symptoms including joint pain, stiffness and fatigue, and also have difficulty concentrating. Having a disability can make it harder to fit in, especially when it’s not a visible disability, because it can be difficult to open up about your experiences.
When I started university, the disability support office was helpful. I had someone I could talk to about my difficulties settling in. They helped me apply for Disabled [Students](https://www.theguardian.com/education/students) Allowance (DSA), and get extra support for my exams and coursework. But now I don’t have the same level of support as when I started. I find it much harder to get an appointment and I no longer have someone I can email directly. Sometimes this can make you feel alone: you have to find a way to get through any problems by yourself, because you don’t want it to have a negative impact on your grades. I liked having a rapport with an officer at the beginning who knew my history, which made it easier for me to confide in them. After I received my DSA, communication slowed down and eventually stopped; it would have been nice if it had been able to continue.

**‘With assignments, I have to start four weeks early’**

(Christy McBride is a third-year sociology student at the University of Portsmouth)

I have dyslexia and dyspraxia, along with a long-term health condition. Some days it does not affect me at all, and some days it does. With assignments, I have to start four weeks early to make sure I produce something of quality. Normally I go to my additional support advisor for help with planning and structuring my assignments. I also bring an audio recorder to my lectures as I find it difficult to concentrate for that length of time, so I relisten at home.

I was given support from my lecturers straight away, even though I didn’t have the post-16[[1]](#footnote-2) diagnosis that I needed to get DSA until seven months in. After I had my official diagnosis I was given lots of assistive technology, such as speech-to-text software and global spellcheck. I was also given extra time in tests, which made all the difference. Before applying I checked out Portsmouth’s additional needs department, as I knew I would struggle without support. It made a huge impact on which university I chose.

If I had not been diagnosed at an early age, perhaps I would not have developed the coping strategies that have allowed me to go to university. Lots of people who have dyslexia are diagnosed in university, but in my opinion that’s just too late. Those who achieved well in college may suddenly struggle and have to recalibrate their academic identity.

**‘I couldn’t shake the fear of failure’**

*(Isaac Verkaik is a fourth-year biology student at the University of Bristol)*

I am dyslexic. I have a slow processing speed and poor short-term memory, but I was able to get into university by learning facts through feverish repetition. When I arrived, I needed a learning structure that I was comfortable with. This structure was provided at A-level, which had a pre-determined syllabus, but at university I had to hastily re-evaluate the study methods I was comfortable with.

My university experience has been among the best years of my life, but I’m aware that I could have enjoyed it more were it not for my dyslexia. Mentally I couldn’t shake the fear of failure that I had come to associate with being underprepared. I therefore found myself working many more hours than my peers, sometimes choosing the library over opportunities to have fun.

I believe that having the confidence to declare and seek help is one of the hardest challenges for a disabled student at university. When your disability is non-visible the temptation to ignore it is very great. I am extremely happy with my decision to declare my decision at Bristol. I received help in buying my first laptop, free accessibility software and hours of training that helped me use it. I also had access to weekly one-to-one study skills sessions.

I was required to produce my educational psychologist report before I could receive my disability funding. These reports can reach in excess of £500. I was fortunate enough to have an up-to-date report, but it upsets me to think that many others would not be this fortunate.

I don’t believe that most universities are currently doing enough to encourage openness over disabilities. Ideally, I would like to see universities formally take disabilities into account in applications, in the same way that they are beginning to consider your school and your postcode as part of contextual offers schemes.

**II.A. Answer the following questions in approximately 200 words each:**

**(2X15 = 30)**

5. “I believe that having the confidence to declare and seek help is one of the hardest challenges for a disabled student at university.” Do you agree? What are the other challenges that students with disability face around the university space?

6. Based on your reading of the campuses mentioned above, what more do you think can be done towards making our college campus more accessible to students with disability.

1. Post-16 is a diagnostic assessment to ascertain dyslexia and learning disability in learners post 16 years of age and adults. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)