Essay · Essay

A grateful mind is very beautiful.

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EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2026	Essay	Essay

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
125	~1200 words

Answer Hint

Gratitude transforms entitlement into humility; recognising the invisible contributions behind individual success strengthens relationships and social responsibility; examine gratitude in personal life, leadership, public service and society; distinguish gratitude from complacency

Model Answer

Introduction

Gratitude is the conscious recognition and appreciation of the contributions, kindness and opportunities that shape our lives. A **grateful mind does not merely say “thank you”; it recognises that individual achievements are rarely entirely individual**. Behind every success lies the contribution of parents, teachers, institutions, society, nature and countless people whose efforts often remain invisible.

The beauty of gratitude lies in its ability to transform the way a person looks at life. It replaces entitlement with humility, complaint with appreciation and isolation with connectedness.

Understanding the Essence of Gratitude

A grateful mind understands that life is an interconnected web of relationships and contributions. A student may believe that success is solely the result of personal effort, but parents who provided support, teachers who offered

guidance, institutions that created opportunities and society that provided infrastructure were also part of that journey.

Thus, gratitude is not weakness or dependence. Rather, it is an expression of **self-awareness and humility**.

At the same time, genuine gratitude should not mean accepting injustice or remaining passive. One can be grateful for existing opportunities while continuing to work for a better society.

Gratitude and Individual Life

Gratitude significantly influences individual character.

A person who appreciates what they possess is less likely to be consumed by comparison and endless dissatisfaction. This does not mean abandoning ambition. Instead, gratitude allows ambition to coexist with **contentment**.

For example, a person may aspire to a better career while remaining grateful for the education and opportunities already received. Such an attitude prevents success from becoming a source of arrogance.

Gratitude also strengthens resilience. During difficult circumstances, remembering past support and positive experiences can provide emotional strength. A person who recognises the lessons received from failure may transform adversity into an opportunity for growth.

Hence, a grateful mind does not necessarily have fewer problems; **it possesses a healthier perspective towards those problems.**

Gratitude in Family and Relationships

Human relationships flourish through recognition and appreciation.

Parents often make sacrifices without expecting immediate returns. Teachers invest time in students, friends provide emotional support, and colleagues contribute to professional success. When these contributions are acknowledged, relationships become more meaningful.

The absence of gratitude can produce entitlement: people begin to consider others' sacrifices as their automatic responsibility. Gratitude, therefore, strengthens **empathy, reciprocity and emotional bonds**.

Even a simple expression of appreciation can have profound consequences because it communicates that another person's effort has been seen and valued.

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Gratitude and Society

No individual exists independently of society. Roads, hospitals, schools, courts, public institutions, sanitation systems and security are products of collective effort.

A grateful citizen therefore develops a sense of **civic responsibility**. Gratitude towards society should translate into responsible citizenship—following laws, paying taxes honestly, protecting public property and helping vulnerable sections.

The idea of gratitude thus moves from a private emotion to a public virtue.

For instance, gratitude towards healthcare workers during a pandemic becomes meaningful when accompanied by responsible behaviour that protects public health. Similarly, gratitude towards soldiers becomes deeper when citizens contribute towards social harmony and national development.

Gratitude in Public Administration

For a civil servant, gratitude can become an important component of ethical leadership.

An administrator who recognises that public office is a **trust rather than a privilege** is less likely to develop arrogance. Citizens are not beneficiaries of the personal generosity of the State; they are rights-bearing individuals.

A grateful public servant recognises the contributions of frontline workers, subordinate employees, citizens and communities. Such humility can encourage participatory governance and improve institutional morale.

Gratitude must, however, be distinguished from **favouritism**. A public servant may appreciate someone's contribution but must continue to follow rules, impartiality and constitutional principles.

Thus, ethical administration requires gratitude without compromising objectivity.

Gratitude, Leadership and Emotional Intelligence

Great leadership is rarely based only on authority. It also depends upon the ability to recognise the contributions of others.

A leader who publicly acknowledges the efforts of colleagues creates a culture of trust and motivation. Employees are more likely to take

ownership when they feel that their work is valued.

Gratitude is therefore closely connected with **emotional intelligence**. It requires awareness of one's dependence on others and the ability to communicate appreciation sincerely.

Such leadership converts an organisation from a hierarchy of commands into a community of shared purpose.

Gratitude and Science and Civilisation

Modern civilisation itself is an inheritance.

Every scientist builds upon the discoveries of earlier generations. Modern medicine rests upon centuries of experimentation and accumulated knowledge. Digital technologies depend upon contributions made by scientists, engineers and institutions across generations.

A scientist who recognises this intellectual inheritance is less likely to treat knowledge as personal possession. Gratitude encourages **scientific humility**—the recognition that today's certainty may become tomorrow's starting point for further discovery.

Similarly, humanity's achievements are possible because generations have preserved languages, knowledge, institutions, culture and natural resources.

Gratitude Towards Nature

Perhaps the deepest expression of gratitude is towards nature.

Human beings depend upon air, water, soil, biodiversity and ecological systems, yet often treat these resources as unlimited commodities. A grateful relationship with nature encourages stewardship rather than exploitation.

If society recognises that future generations inherit the planet from the present generation, gratitude can become a foundation for **environmental ethics**.

Protecting forests, conserving water and reducing pollution are therefore not merely environmental policies; they are expressions of appreciation for the natural systems that sustain life.

Gratitude Does Not Mean Complacency

An important distinction must be made between **gratitude and complacency**.

A grateful person can still be ambitious. A grateful citizen can still criticise government policies. A grateful employee can still demand fair treatment. A grateful society can still challenge injustice.

Indeed, gratitude can provide a stable foundation for constructive criticism. When criticism emerges from concern for an institution rather than hatred towards it, it becomes more responsible.

Thus, gratitude should not silence dissent; it should make dissent **more empathetic and constructive**.

The Transformative Power of Gratitude

Gratitude changes the question from **“What do I deserve?” to “What have I received, and what can I contribute in return?”**

This transformation has ethical significance.

A grateful student may become a mentor for others.
A grateful professional may support younger colleagues.
A grateful citizen may serve the community.
A grateful nation may preserve the environment for future generations.

In this way, gratitude creates a virtuous cycle: **receiving → appreciating → contributing → inspiring others**.

Indian Perspective

Indian philosophical traditions have historically emphasised gratitude and interconnectedness.

The concept of □□ **(rina)** expresses the idea that human beings carry various forms of obligation towards parents, teachers, society, nature and the wider world. The idea of *seva* similarly converts appreciation into service.

The spirit of *“Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”* encourages recognition of humanity's interconnectedness. Such ideas demonstrate that gratitude is not merely an individual emotion but can form the basis of an ethical social order.

Conclusion

A grateful mind is beautiful because it **sees beyond itself**. It recognises the invisible contributions behind visible achievements, converts success into humility, hardship into learning and privilege into responsibility.

Gratitude does not ask us to stop aspiring; it teaches us to **aspire without arrogance**. It does not demand silence in the face of injustice; it encourages criticism without contempt. It does not weaken individual agency; it reminds us that our agency itself is sustained by countless relationships and institutions.

Ultimately, the beauty of gratitude lies in its transformative question: **instead of asking only what life has given us, we begin asking what we can give back to life.** A grateful mind therefore becomes not only happier, but also more compassionate, responsible and humane.