Essay · Essay

Inspiration for creativity springs from the effort to look for the magical in the mundane.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2023	Essay	Essay

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
125	~1200 words

Answer Hint

Creativity begins when ordinary experiences are viewed through extraordinary curiosity. The mundane contains patterns, problems, emotions and possibilities that routine perception ignores. Examine how scientists, artists, entrepreneurs and social innovators transform ordinary observations into new ideas, and argue that curiosity, attention, imagination and empathy enable individuals to discover the extraordinary within everyday life.

Model Answer

Introduction

The ordinary surrounds human beings so completely that it often becomes invisible. A simple object, routine activity or everyday problem may appear unremarkable until someone observes it with curiosity. Creativity begins precisely at this point: when the familiar is examined afresh and possibilities hidden within it are recognised. The “magical” therefore need not mean supernatural; it represents the extraordinary potential hidden within ordinary reality.

Seeing beyond the obvious

Routine perception accepts things as they are, whereas creativity asks why they are so and whether they can be different.

An ordinary traffic problem may inspire a new mobility solution. A common household inconvenience may inspire a technological innovation. A daily social interaction may inspire a literary work.

Creativity therefore begins with attention. What others overlook can become the raw material for a creative mind.

Science and the magic of ordinary observations

Many scientific discoveries emerged from seemingly ordinary phenomena.

Newton's reflection on falling objects led to profound questions about gravity. Darwin's careful observation of variations in species contributed to the theory of evolution. Fleming's observation of an unexpected mould around bacterial cultures led to the discovery of penicillin.

The lesson is not that every ordinary observation produces a breakthrough, but that curiosity converts observation into inquiry.

Art and everyday life

Artists frequently transform mundane experiences into meaningful expressions. Literature can turn an ordinary family relationship into a profound exploration of human emotions. Photography can reveal beauty in ordinary streets, workers or landscapes.

Indian artistic traditions similarly demonstrate how everyday life can become a source of aesthetic expression. Folk art, crafts and regional traditions often transform ordinary materials and community experiences into cultural heritage.

Art therefore teaches people to see rather than merely look.

Innovation and entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship often begins with identifying an ordinary problem. Difficulty in accessing services, inefficiencies in transportation, challenges faced by small businesses or limitations in financial transactions can become opportunities for innovation.

Digital payment systems, online learning platforms and delivery technologies emerged partly from attempts to make ordinary activities more accessible and efficient.

The entrepreneur sees inconvenience not merely as a problem but as an invitation to create.

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Social innovation

The same principle applies to social problems. A community worker may notice that women are unable to access healthcare because of distance or social restrictions. This ordinary observation can inspire mobile clinics, telemedicine or community-based health initiatives.

Similarly, everyday experiences of waste, water scarcity or educational inequality can inspire social enterprises and community movements.

Creativity thus becomes a tool of social transformation.

Curiosity as the foundation

Creativity requires the willingness to ask questions. Children naturally ask “why” and “how,” but rigid education and social conformity can gradually suppress this curiosity.

An education system that rewards only correct answers may discourage experimentation. In contrast, inquiry-based education encourages students to investigate, hypothesise, experiment and learn from failure.

Curiosity keeps the ordinary intellectually alive.

Empathy and creativity

Creativity is not limited to technology or art. Understanding another person's experience can generate innovative solutions.

A policymaker who listens to the lived experiences of citizens may discover gaps that administrative statistics cannot reveal. A product designer who understands the difficulties faced by persons with disabilities can create more inclusive designs.

Empathy therefore expands the creative imagination by enabling individuals to see reality from another person's perspective.

The role of failure

Looking for the magical in the mundane also requires patience. Creativity rarely emerges fully formed. Experiments fail, ideas require modification and initial solutions may prove inadequate.

Thomas Edison and numerous modern innovators demonstrate that experimentation and repeated failure can eventually produce useful outcomes.

A society that punishes every failure discourages creative exploration. A society that treats responsible experimentation as learning creates an environment where innovation can flourish.

Technology and the future

Artificial intelligence and digital technologies increasingly automate routine tasks. As machines become better at processing information, uniquely human capacities such as curiosity, imagination, empathy and meaning-making become even more important.

The future will therefore require individuals who can identify questions that machines have not yet been asked to solve.

Conclusion

The extraordinary is often hidden within the ordinary, waiting for a curious mind to notice it. Creativity does not always require extraordinary circumstances; it requires extraordinary attention to ordinary circumstances. By observing carefully, questioning assumptions, empathising with others and experimenting without fear of failure, individuals can transform mundane experiences into scientific discoveries, artistic expressions and social innovations. The ability to find wonder in everyday life is therefore not merely a source of creativity—it is a way of seeing the world anew.

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