

**Ashoka University
Office of Admissions**

On-the-Spot Essay Sample Prompts

The On-the-Spot Essay evaluates the following parameters: engagement with the prompt, critical thinking, clarity of thought, and creativity.

Candidates will be given two topics (ranging from arts and humanities, social sciences, and the sciences) to choose from at the time of writing the essay. Candidates cannot use any external resources to help them write the essay. The essay has no word limit, but must be a minimum of 250 words. Candidates are given 30 minutes to complete their essay. The essay can be attempted with minimal preparation.

Below are some sample prompts from previous Admissions Cycles:

1. History is based on facts and evidence, while Literature is considered to be works of imagination. Do you agree or disagree with this distinction between History and Literature? Write a reasoned response with examples.
2. Science communication has been transformed by social media, as it makes scientific research easily accessible and engaging to the masses. In your opinion, to what extent does social media retain the accuracy and reliability of scientific knowledge? Write a reasoned response and give examples as required to support your views.
3. People occupy many identities, but their linguistic identity, an identity that is based on a person's association with a group of people that speaks the same language, is more prominent than all other kinds of identities. Do you agree or disagree? Write a reasoned response.
4. Discuss an innovative technological solution to address at least one global crisis. Substantiate your response with scientific principles, benefits, and limitations of such a solution.
5. Transgender people affect the fairness of sports competitions where the gender binary is the presumed norm, and sports teams are divided based on the biological sexes of the participants. Do you agree or disagree with this view? Give a reasoned response.
6. Is 'Graffiti' (anything written, painted, or drawn on walls or other surfaces, usually without permission and within public view) considered to be art or an act of vandalism? Which do you agree with? Provide reasons to support your response.
7. Child labour may be acceptable under specific circumstances in certain countries. Do you agree or disagree? Give a reasoned response with examples to support your view.
8. Advancements in the field of neuroscience have a direct correlation to the reduction in the stigma around mental health in society. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Give a reasoned response. Use examples as required to support your view.
9. History of Science is not a mere record of scientific discoveries but a lens to enhance our understanding of science as a whole. Do you agree or disagree with the view that scientific discoveries are better understood in their historical contexts?
10. The recent popularity of generative AI, which can create art in seconds, raises important questions about its impact on the art world. Do you believe generative AI diminishes the value of art, or does it help popularise an artist's style?