

# TTM! CONNECT



Rumi, the poet, once said,

***"Love is the bridge between you and everything."***

Love is not just an emotion, it is a unifying, unstoppable force that connects us with all of creation. It is the incubator for compassion, understanding and harmony.

Love is a process, a blossoming of all the beauty in this world. It opens up layers of emotions that may be lying dormant and hidden. And it is the fuel that drives the TTM! engine.

Many of our mentors come to us as beautiful, vibrant, fragrant blossoms, spreading love and joy wherever they go.

Other mentors may start their association with a tentative dip into the world of giving. Touched by the gentle breeze of love that permeates every act at TTM!, their boundaries fade. They experience a blossoming of unifying love, and of a commitment that makes TTM! the giving tree that it is.

We are all impacted in different ways by the toxicity on our planet, the senseless cruelty, the pain, the darkness. Through these times, our only shield is love.

Protect your mentees. Envelop them in that love, and its constant companion, hope. And make the world a happier place!



~ Malavika Sharma

# Independence Day - Essays

## What is Independence?

Independence in my opinion is freedom from the likes of others, control of others and rules set by others. It was important for us to be free from the British rule since they used us for their work. We were not able to live our lives the way we wanted to as we had to abide by their rules and regulations. Our ancestors fought for the freedom of our nation but we are fighting for our personal freedom. We are unable to live with choices. Now that we are free from British rule, we need our personal freedom. To me, independence means being self-sufficient, able to set our own schedules, choices etc.; not having to ask permission to live my life

**PRIYANKA RANA**

Mensa Rishikesh

## Independence vs Freedom

Independence and Freedom are very essential and they are the fundamental aspects of human existence. Independence refers to the ability of decision making and acting without any external force, influence or control. It embodies self-reliance, autonomy and the power to determine one's own path. Freedom, on the other hand, is the state of being able to express oneself, pursue one's goals and live without oppression or restraint. Both freedom and independence are intertwined, as independence often leads to freedom, enabling individuals to live authentically to their full potential and fulfil their desires. These concepts are essential for personal growth, social progress and for the preservation of human dignity. Embracing independence and cherishing our freedom are vital for a fulfilling and meaningful life.

**MOHD DANISH KHAN**

Mensa Prayagraj

### **Volunteering on Independence Day**

Today was Independence Day. I woke up at 4:00 am in the morning, completed my daily routine activities, wished my beloved family members and friends, and left for school. When I reached, I was assigned a duty. I did the duty but because of that work, my uniform became a little bit dirty. After that, I was free, I had a chit-chat with other volunteers on some general topics. Then, I was given a duty where it was my responsibility with some other volunteers to ensure that the participants and non-participant students didn't roam in the school premises. Instead, they should be sitting in the stadium. Since, I did my duty very diligently, I was praised by our school head boy. Then our guests, the Saints of Narayan Ashram, arrived. The sky was clear and the sun was scorching. But when it was time for the felicitation of students who topped in Class 10 and 12, the sky became a little cloudy. After the felicitation ceremony, the Saints addressed the students and the teachers. Then, the volunteers, participants and non-participants, got the awaited refreshments. This was followed by the photo session with the teachers and it was time for dispersal. I did my duty again as per the instructions. Finally, I returned home. So, my school day started with a duty and ended with a duty. Overall, it was a very memorable day for me in the school as it was my first volunteering day.

**ARNAV MISHRA**

Mensa Prayagraj

## What does freedom mean to the marginalized, underprivileged women of our country?

For marginalized and underprivileged women, freedom is the chance to speak up and be heard in a world that often ignores or silences them. It is the opportunity to learn and get an education, which is crucial for escaping the cycle of poverty and dependence. It means having the power to make decisions about their own bodies, their futures, and their roles in society. Freedom is also about feeling safe in their communities, having a voice that matters, and dreaming big without the fear of being judged or held back.

At VRCT, we support these women in their pursuit of freedom by running awareness programs, conducting workshops that educate them about their rights. We provide loans to help them start small businesses, enabling financial independence. We also run adult education programs helping them achieve formal education through means of open schooling, offer vocational courses to learn new skills, and provide employment opportunities. For these women, freedom is a continuous struggle for equality and respect, and through our efforts, we help them break down the barriers that limit them, so they can live better lives, contribute to their communities, and be heard in ways that truly matter.



**SUNITA PANCHAL**

VRCT Gurugram

## “What freedom means to me”

“To be able to exercise my rights freely.”

~ Rupali Rajbhar - Mensa Rishikesh

“To be able to go anywhere without permission .”

~ Shikha Dey - Mensa Rishikesh

“No homework! Excessive homework is torture.”

~ Vedant - Mensa Prayagraj

“When we get our rights then we get our freedom.”

~ N. S. Bhargav - Mensa Rishikesh

“For me freedom means being successful in our life and not depending on others.”

~ Ayushi Sharma - PYDS, Dehradun

“To me, independence means being self-sufficient, able to set our own schedules, choices etc; not having to ask permission to live my life. For me, independence is making my own decisions on my own ideas and not to the perceptions of others who would never let you succeed if you followed your own ideas. Being able to do what you want and love to do when you want to do it.”

~ Priyanka Rana - Mensa Rishikesh

“Freedom is not only about the fundamental rights but also about self control, the power to control the mind. Freedom acts as a friend to those who are honest for the society as well as for themselves.”

~ Arnav Mishra - Mensa Prayagraj

“Freedom, according to me, is the state of being able to express oneself, pursue one's goals and live without oppression or restraint.”

~ Mohd Danish Khan - Mensa Prayagraj

## New partnership - iDreamCareer

TTM! is delighted to announce a partnership with iDreamCareer. They offer the best-of-its-kind online career counselling in India, backed by a team of 900 career counsellors working across 105 districts in India.

To start with, we engaged with iDC to expose TTM!'s Grade 12 graduates to the width of educational/ skilling opportunities available to them. They were then counseled to help them make wise choices.

Even though this was a short-term engagement, we have received extremely positive feedback from our mentees who have been counseled. iDC has also committed to a long-term engagement with TTM! mentees. They will onboard our students in Grade 9 and counsel them all the way through to Grade 12.

They will evaluate mentees' interests and strengths; next, iDC will help mentees choose subjects and educational/skilling courses aligned to their needs. This counseling will help mentees set an educational trajectory well before they graduate.

We are hopeful that our mentees will then be motivated to work hard to achieve their goals.

iDC will also help identify and facilitate scholarships wherever available. We are in the process of starting a pilot programme with TTM! mentees from three schools.

We will gradually open this program to all TTM! mentees who are enrolled full-time in schools.

This association is a key value add to TTM!'s current portfolio of offerings. We are truly excited and grateful for the opportunity to partner with iDC. We believe this will empower our mentees to embark on an educational path that will help them succeed in their chosen careers.

## Broadening our partnership with Mensa India

TTM! commenced its partnership with Mensa India in April 2020. Starting off with Mensa Gurgaon, Mensa Rishikesh subsequently came on board, and the latest addition is Mensa Prayagraj. There are now close to 300 Dhruv scholars with Mensa India, and TTM! is delighted to watch this partnership flourish over the past four years.

Mensa students in India come from underprivileged backgrounds with high IQ levels. They are in the top 2 percentile in their age group.



## Our Magical Bus team creates more magic!!

Over the last few months, we have been testing a programme called the \*Early Learning Programme\* conceived, designed and executed by our team of Amita Chhabra Saluja and Pincha (Madhurima) Singh. The programme was envisioned and created by Pincha; Amita was the wind beneath her wings; she transmuted that vision into a brilliant programme. They make an incredible team! We are absolutely delighted to announce that the programme, piloted at Saraswati School, has been an amazing success. The programme has recently been launched at Nai Disha, and we are now ready to offer it to more schools.

The ELP programme lays a strong foundation for further study of English for children in grades 4 and 5, with limited exposure to the language, and has now become an important part of the portfolio of TTM's offerings.



## Mentee Speak

This message is for all dear TTM Mentors. I wanted to make a card but I am at my Granny's place as she isn't well so am writing this note. ,I am unable to make it. In this card , I had thought to decorate the front page by drawing a rakhi tied to all the TTM members. I had thought to write a beautiful message inside the card but now I am writing it in a form of note.I hope you feel the warmth and sincerity behind my words.

Just as a perfect blend of tea leaves creates a flavorful cup, our friendship is a beautiful blend of love, trust, and support. As we celebrate the bond of protection and love on Raksha Bandhan , I want to express the deep connection we share as TTM members. Like the threads of the rakhi, our conversations and support symbolizes of trust and understanding.

Wowww, it hard to believe,it has been four years since I joined TTM! I remember the first day of my class , it was fabulous. From that day , I entered a new world of knowledge. I've not grown only in knowledge but also in confidence. Thanks to the encouragement and guidance of our amazing TTM.From preparing for exams to celebrating each other's successes,we've shared countless moments that has made my journey unforgettable. TTM has become my second family and I am grateful for the lifelong friendship and memories we have created together. I am very grateful to spend my upcoming years with TTM.

Thaaaaaaaannnnnnnk Yooooouuuuu TTM💕



**RAKHI PRASAD**

Government Girls' Senior Secondary School

'When there was darkness everywhere, there lit up a lamp and gave me direction to go ahead'.

A very important person is my teacher Aarti Mehra ma'am who helped me in building my personality and overcome my weaknesses. Our journey started from Class 7 and a stranger became my second mother who never scolded me but worked tirelessly upon me. She gave her precious time to me just to improve my skills and work upon them. Though we have never met we surely share a special and spectacular bond through voice and video calls. In between the classes we always laugh and have lots of fun.

I think I am very lucky to have a teacher like her. She is so cute and the most beautiful human being in this world in the figment of my imagination. Yes I know I can never pay her back anything but only my hard work in studies. I will definitely make her proud.

I just pray that all her wishes come true and she lives her life happily.



**YOGITA**

Himjyoti Dehra Dun

## Creativity

### **Bhagwat Katha (May 11-19, 2024)**

“Karma always returns” - these lines have been taken from the Bhagwat Gita. The main motive of the annual Bhagwat Katha is to motivate human beings to live life selflessly and honestly. Bhagwat Gita is a book full of knowledge. It shows the right path to human beings. People say that after following Bhagwat Gita, all sins (paap) will be washed away. The people of our village organise Bhagwat Katha annually by saving their money. They print pamphlets as an invitation card for other villages. In Bhagwat Katha, a designated Vyas comes and recites stories about Lord Krishna, Vishnu, Shiva, many more. From these stories, Vyas shows the right path to the people. Although we can read the Bhagwat Gita anytime, Bhagwat Katha takes more than 8 days to complete.

On the 11th of May 2024, the Bhagwat Katha was organised by Supi village for 8 days. To listen to the Bhagwat Katha, many people came from different villages. Every day, the Bhagwat Katha started at 12:00 p.m., and continued till 5:00 p.m. Although people thought that some people might feel bored listening to the Bhagwat Katha, a few people from the village changed their clothes and become Krishna and other Avatars of the Lord. At the end of the Bhagwat Katha, people do Mahayagya and women do Kalash Yatra. After completing Mahayagya and Kalash Yatra, people enjoy their Bhandara (a delicious meal of poori and aloo). At the end of the ceremony the attendees give money to Vyas as a bheta. At last people bid farewell to Vyas ji. Before leaving, Vyas ji emphasizes "Bhagwat Gita says happiness is a state of mind and has nothing to do with the external world".



**BHAWNA BISHT**  
Himjyoti Dehra Dun

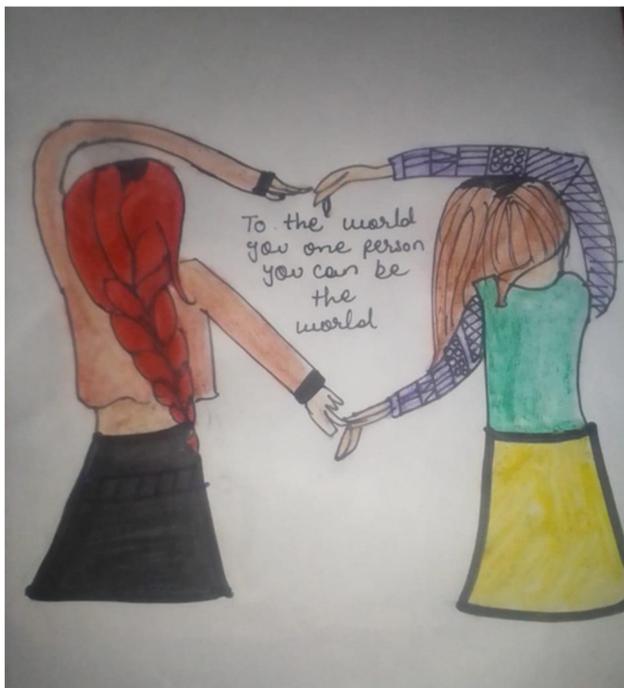
## My Best Friend

I am Chitra. Today I will tell you about my best friend. Her name is Sangam Pal. But I call her Surf Excel. She is good in studies. She participates in debates and other activities. Her birthday is on 1st February. She is always excited about her birthday. She looks very cute and shy. She always cares for me and I also care for her. We met in second class in our school. When she entered the class, I was told she is a girl. But she looked like a boy with her short boy-cut. Now her hair is very long. We sit together in the class.

Friends, let me tell you about the differences between us:

- She is short and I am tall
- She is first topper, and I am second
- She is good in studies, and I am good in sports
- Her hair is long, and my hair is short
- She is very talkative, and I always listen to her

Sangam is from Uttar Pradesh, and I am from Uttarakhand, but we live in Delhi. When she wears lehenga she looks very pretty. I am so lucky because I have a best friend like Sangam.



**CHITRA TADIYAL**

Gyan Arambh

### My never ending chatter

Chitter Chatter  
Chitter Chatter  
Other opinions never matter  
All I do is talk  
Ride or die  
My words never lie.  
It's so boring without talking  
Even when I am sleeping  
My mind is still talking  
Chitter Chatter  
Chitter Chatter  
Now, let's close this talking matter.

**SHRISTY JHA**

Om Foundation School Noida

## JANMASHTAMI



**RUPALI RAJBHAR**

Mensa Rishikesh

## MADHUBANI ART

Madhubani art (originally Mithila art) is a style of painting practiced in the Mithila region of India and Nepal. It is named after the Madhubani district of Bihar, India, which is where it originated. Jitwarpur and Ranti are the two most notable cities associated with the tradition and evolution of Madhubani art.



**SWATI SINGH**  
JEET

## Chicken Soup - Amreen

### Amreen's letter to her mentor, Usha Swarup:

Dear Usha Ma'am,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits. It brings me immense joy to share some exciting news with you—I have secured a wonderful job at the American Welcome Association (aka American Women's Association) housed in the premises of the U.S. Embassy. This opportunity is a dream come true, and I owe much of my success to your guidance and unwavering support throughout my journey.

As I settle into my new role, I am reminded of the valuable lessons and insights you imparted during our mentorship. Your encouragement and belief in my abilities have been instrumental in shaping my career path. I am truly grateful for your mentorship, and I promise to continue learning and growing under your guidance.

Allow me to share some details about this remarkable organization:

1. AWA is an organisation and not an NGO, but they do accept donations.
2. Membership is for US citizens basically those living in India
3. They raise funds by sales at their Thrift Shop, social events and melas.
4. They visit several NGOs like Muskan, Rehab Center for Hope and help them with money and old clothes, books, etc.
5. They have a Library.

I look after the Thrift Shop, Library, organizing of various events, enrolling new members and other activities.

I am thrilled to be part of AWA's efforts and look forward to making a meaningful difference in my new role. Once again, thank you for being an exceptional mentor, Usha Ma'am. Your belief in me has fueled my determination, and I am committed to paying it forward.

**P.S. Here's what Usha had to say:**

"I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Mala and Debika, who have nurtured Amreen since she was a child and have always stood by her. She undoubtedly owes her success to them. I am also grateful to Gauri, who made us aware of the opportunity at the AWA, and facilitated the process. When Amreen was confirmed, Debika sent a message saying "We have become proud parents all over again". Such a heartwarming message! I would also like to add that Amreen has been a very sincere, hardworking and well mannered mentee. She never shied away from any amount of homework I gave her. My blessings to her, she deserves the best!"

**P.P.S. And here's what Mala had to say about Amreen's mentor, Usha:**

"Usha has been an incredible mentor. When Amreen needed support for her Grade 12 English course, Usha would wake up at 6 in the morning, took time to familiarize herself with the texts, and then teach Amreen later in the day. And she has seen Amreen through her BA and beyond! Her commitment has been phenomena!!!!"



## Dreaming Big

A rock pile ceases to be a rock pile the moment a single man contemplates it, bearing within him the image of a cathedral.

~ Antoine de Saint ~

Hope has two beautiful daughters. Their names are anger and courage; anger at the way things are, and courage to see that they do not remain the way they are.

~ Saint Augustine ~

Inspiration is a guest that does not willingly visit the lazy.

~ Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky ~

You often become what you believe yourself to be. If I keep on saying to myself that I cannot do a certain thing, it is possible that I may end up by really becoming incapable of doing it. But if I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning.

~ Mahatma Gandhi ~

No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit...Life is either a great adventure or nothing.

~ Helen Keller ~

## Editorial team signing off

Signing off the 12th edition of the TTM! Newsletter with love, and the joy of knowing that -

“No candle loses its light while lighting another candle. So, never stop caring, sharing and helping others. It makes our own lives more beautiful.”

**BRIDGET GANGULY**  
**DEBIKA LAHIRI**  
**RAJAT RAY**



Spread love everywhere  
you go. Let no one ever  
come to you without  
leaving happier.

*“Love opens the most impossible gates; love is the  
gate to all the secrets of the universe”*

~ Swami Vivekananda