

4.3 intellectual rubbish

...Warming up!...

1. How will you react in the following situations

(1) Your Science teacher tells you plants exposed to the sunlight grow faster than those always in the shade.

Ans. (Points: change the location of your plants - disbelieve her, try some experiments, etc.)

(2) Your aunt tells you not to go for a job interview because it's a no same day. moon day, that very same day.

Ans. (Points: you ignore her words - you listen to her words - you ask for proof, etc.)

(3) Your friend argues with you that Mount Everest is not the highest peak in the world.

Ans. (Points: you pity his ignorance - you believe him - you look up the internet to check, etc.)

(4) A stranger at your door claims to be a magician and promises your mother to turn all her silver jewellery into gold.

Ans. (Points: you slam the door - you call the police - you try to trick him, you give the gold, etc.)

2. What do you notice about the following pairs of words?

(1) act naturally

(2) liquid gas

(3) open secret

(4) sound of silence

(5) sweet sorrow

(6) original copy

(7) only choice

(8) growing smaller.

Ans. They are all contrasting pairs of words used together. Such contrasting pairs of words that go together are called Oxymorons.

• **Now try to add a contradictory word (Oxymoron) to the following:**

Ans.

(1) What a **wonderful** mess you've got us into!

(2) It's a **genuine** imitation of a diamond necklace.

(3) My trip to Matheran was a **working** holiday.

(4) With such heavy make-up, she looks **pretty** ugly.

(5) A **tiny** crowd gathered to see the magic show.

... English workshop...

1. The following expressions are a combination of a noun preceded by a describing word.

(a) fatal mistake.

Ans. silly mistake, grave mistake, careless mistake, obvious mistake.

(b) foreign customs

Ans. established customs, local customs, traditional customs, age-old customs.

(c) unappetizing diet

Ans. nutritious diet, healthy diet, unhealthy diet, strict diet, balanced diet, staple diet, vegetarian diet,

(d) plentiful supply

Ans. sufficient supply, regular supply, continuous supply, irregular supply.

(e) simple device

Ans. complicated device, expensive device, helpful device, useless device, clever device, ingenious device. safety device.

(f) savage controversy

Ans. raging controversy, bitter controversy, unending controversy, fierce controversy.

(g) modern technique

Ans. new technique, conventional technique, advanced technique, simple technique.

(h) foolish custom

Ans. quaint custom, ancient custom, Indian custom, accepted custom.

2. Use the following idioms/expressions in sentences of your own.

(a) to be prone to

Ans. We are prone to infections during monsoon.

(b) to have a difference of opinion

Ans. If you have a difference of opinion with someone, you must settle it amicably.

(c) to go beyond

Ans. The fight between the two women was going beyond the limits of decent behaviour.

(d) to have a beneficial effect

Ans. Exercising regularly has a beneficial effect on the body.

(e) to have a bias

Ans. We should not have a bias against foreign ideas.

(f) to undo

Ans. "Do not undo all the good that I have done." said the psychiatrist to the woman.

(g) to be wary of

Ans. One should be wary of schemes which promise to make one rich overnight.

(h) under the influence

Ans. He committed the crime when he was under the influence of alcohol.

3. Say "WHY"?

(a) One should avoid getting angry about a difference of opinion.

Ans. One should avoid getting angry about a difference of opinion because if one gets angry, it will show that one's belief is going beyond what the evidence indicates or states.

(b) The writer found his stay abroad very profitable.

Ans. The writer found his stay abroad very profitable because it helped him to become aware of foreign ideas and customs and diminish the intensity of his insular prejudice.

(c) The writer grew less dogmatic and more open minded.

Ans. When the writer was young, he lived for some time outside his country. He became aware of foreign ideas and customs. This made him grow less dogmatic and more open-minded.

(d) Men declaring that they are Saints write letters to the writer.

Ans. The writer is a renowned person. The men who declare themselves as saints want the writer to mention them in his lectures so that they get some free publicity. Hence they write letters to the writer.

(e) The writer claims that all false beliefs need not be replaced by cold science.

Ans. The writer claims that all false beliefs need not be replaced by cold science because if this is done, the world would lose some of its interest and variety.

4. Make sentences of your own to show the difference of usage of the following Homophones.

(a) 1. device

2. devise

Ans. (1) Today, we make use of various devices to help us.

(2) Mothers must devise ways of keeping their children out of mischief.

(b) 1. advice

2. advise

Ans. (1) It is very easy to give advice but difficult to follow it.

(2) The teacher advised the girl not to waste time.

(c) 1. practice

2. practise

Ans. (1) Dowry is an evil practice prevalent in India.

(2) I have to practise every day if I want to win the dance competition.

5. When a family member is very ill for long, the grandmother of the family urges everyone to send for a person who claims he can cure victims of black magic. Compose a dialogue with her, in which her granddaughter politely convinces her that she should not believe in such things.

Ans. Grandmother: What a situation! Now that you have tried all your fancy modern medicines, listen to me. Call Cureybaba.

Granddaughter: Who is he? Never heard of him. **Grandmother:** I am certain that your mother is the victim of black magic. Cureybaba will cure her. You saw him at our neighbour's house a few days back. He is bald and ...

Granddaughter: Grandma. for Heavens Sake! Mom was ill, no doubt, but her illness has been diagnosed and it is easily curable! There are plenty of medicines in the market.

Grandmother: She's been ill for so long now!

Granddaughter: Oh, Grandma, only for two months! The diagnosis took long.

Grandmother: Cureybaba will cure her in one sitting.

Granddaughter: Listen, Granny dear, these people are all frauds. If your Cureybaba was so good. why doesn't he get some hair on his head - we know he wears a wig - or cure his horrible cough? Why doesn't he cure his own mother who is so ill? And has he cured that poor little girl next door? No. he hasn't. He's a fraud, Granny.

Grandmother: But... but....

Granddaughter: Granny, there's no such thing as black magic. You know that full well. You have seen enough of these 'babas' being exposed. Then why....

Grandmother: Oh, OK. If you say your mother's illness can be cured by modern medicines easily, I will forget Cureybaba and black magic. Now that I come to think of it, our other neighbour was telling me how he cheated somebody the other day...

Granddaughter: There you are, Granny!

6. List the various ways of avoiding error mentioned in the passage.

Ans. 1. Observation: make the observation yourself. Thinking that you know when in fact you don't is a fatal mistake.

2. If an opinion contrary to your own makes you angry, that is a sign that you are subconsciously aware of having no good reason for thinking as you do. Whenever you find

yourself getting angry about a difference of opinion, be on your guard; you will probably find, on examination, that your belief is going beyond what the evidence warrants.

3. Traveling is a good way of ridding oneself of certain kinds of dogmatism by becoming aware of opinions held in social circles different from one's own. It is also very profitable in diminishing the intensity of insular prejudice.

4. Imagine an argument with a person having a different bias. You may grow less dogmatic and cocksure through realizing the possible reasonableness of a hypothetical opponent.

5. Be very wary of opinions that flatter your self-esteem.

6. Other passions (strong emotions) besides self-esteem are common sources of error. We often make mistakes when we are overwhelmed by emotions.

7. Fear is the most common source of error. There are two ways of avoiding fear: one is by persuading ourselves that we are immune from disaster, and the other is by the practice of sheer courage. Poltroons are more prone to cruelty and superstition than brave men.

7. Answer the following questions :

(a) If an opinion contrary to your own makes you angry, what does it indicate?

Ans. If an opinion contrary to your own makes you angry, that is a sign that you are subconsciously aware of having no good reason for thinking as you do.

(b) What are the most savage controversies about?

Ans. The most savage controversies are those about matters as to which there is no good evidence either way. So whenever we find ourselves getting angry about a difference of opinion, be on our guard; we will probably find, on examination, that your belief is going beyond what the evidence warrants.

(c) What are the benefits of travel?

Ans. Traveling is a good way of ridding oneself of certain kinds of dogmatism by becoming aware of opinions held in social circles different from one's own. It is also very profitable in diminishing the intensity of insular prejudice.

(d) Is the influence of foreign customs always beneficial?

Ans. The influence of foreign customs is not always beneficial. In the seventeenth century, when the Manchus conquered China, it was the custom among the Chinese for the woman to have small feet, and among the Manchus, for the men to wear pigtails. Instead of each dropping their own foolish custom, they each adopted the foolish custom of the other, and the Chinese continued to wear pigtails until they shook off the dominion of the Manchus in the revolution of 1911.

(e) What are the advantages of an imaginary argument with a person having a different bias?

Ans. Having an imaginary argument with a person having a different bias has only one advantage, as compared with the actual conversation with opponents; this one advantage is that the method is not subject to the same limitations of time and space.

(f) Why should one be wary of opinions that flatter one's self-esteem?

Ans. One should be very wary of opinions that flatter one's self-esteem. Both men and women, nine times out of ten, are firmly convinced of the superior excellence of their own sex. There is abundant evidence on both sides. For example, if you are a man, you can point out that most poets and men of science are male; if you are a woman, you can retort that so are most criminals. The question is inherently insoluble, but self-esteem conceals this from most people.

(g) How does fear lead us to error?

Ans. Fear is the most important source of error. It sometimes operates directly, by inventing rumours of disaster in wartime, or by imagining objects of terror, such as ghosts; sometimes it operates indirectly, by creating belief in something comforting, such as the elixir of life, or heaven for ourselves and hell for our enemies.

(h) What are the two ways of avoiding fear?

Ans. There are two ways of avoiding fear: one is by persuading ourselves that we are immune from disaster, and the other is by the practice of sheer courage. The latter is difficult, and to everybody becomes impossible at a certain point. The former has, therefore, always been more popular.

8. What is the meaning of 'intellectual rubbish'?

Ans. This is an oxymoron, where the writer has used contrasting or contradictory words that go together. The writer uses the phrase to describe all false beliefs, baseless opinions, dogmatism, fears and superstitions of various kinds. People follow certain beliefs, ideas and customs without inquiring into their validity. Sometimes, many of these beliefs and customs lead to evil and suffering in the world.

9. Find the opposites of the following:

cautious, dogmatic, contrary, savage, beneficial, reasonable, hypothetical, cruelty, immune.

Ans.

Cautious -	reckless
Dogmatic -	open-minded
Contrary -	agreeable
Savage -	calm
Beneficial -	worthless
Reasonable -	irrational

Hypothetical -	actual
Cruelty -	compassion
Immune -	susceptible

10. Write an imaginary dialogue contesting opposite views on a topic of your choice, e.g., 'Girls should learn to do all the housework and not boys.'

Ans. Topic: Girls should learn to do all the housework and not boys

Myself: Mom, what is this? Why should I learn to do the housework, and not Rohan?

Mom: You are a girl. Girls have to look after the house.

Myself: Why? Don't boys live in a house?

Mom: A woman can look after a home better than a man.

Myself: That's ancient history, Mom! Haven't you heard of something called gender equality?

Mom: These new-fangled notions of yours!

Myself: And these notions of only girls having to do housework are all man-made. Look at the west - men and women both do housework.