

Tips for Writing the Essay on War and Wealth

Learning to write a well-constructed essay is an essential life-skill and also a vital exam skill. Here are some tips to help your children tackle the essay about War and Wealth in Section 2.

Essay prompt:

War and Wealth

It has been said, “all wars are about wealth ... about who gets the money.” Discuss the truth of this statement with regard to the South African War of 1899 -1902. Refer to Cecil John Rhodes and the discovery of wealth on the Witwatersrand.

Have a family discussion and record the main points raised together as bullet points. Older children can write an essay on this topic. Refer to the appendix for guidelines on how to write an essay.

1. Essay Prompt

Read and re-read the essay prompt and the issues/topics that it asks you to address. It's about WAR AND WEALTH but it asks you to address this in the context of the South African War of 1899-1902. You must mention the wealth discovered on the Witwatersrand and you must mention Rhodes.

2. How to Structure an Essay

Read aloud together the instructions for how to create a good essay in the appendix of the manual.

3. Discussion and Notes

Start a discussion with your children about the main issues that relate to the topic of war and wealth and how, in the SA context, the discovery of wealth led to the outbreak of the war. Let them randomly call out and mention the various events that led up to and triggered the outbreak of the war. Let each person make bullet point notes.

We flipped through sections 1 and 2 in the manual and created a timeline of events that we could refer to while composing each paragraph of the essay. As the parent, you can call out the dates and recap the info from the guide or get them to do that. Get the children to jot down the important events and dates on scrap paper. Encourage them to allow space between the items to add in more dates and add notes and comments of your own. Each person can create their own summary of notes, but as a guide, here is ours. It didn't evolve in this sequence. We ordered it afterwards.

1852 – Transvaal recognised as an independent state
1870/71 – Diamonds discovered in Kimberley area
1871 – Rhodes arrived in SA and in 1873 he moved to Kimberley
1872 – Gold discovered in the Transvaal

1877 – Britain annexed the Transvaal but the Boers fought back in 1881 (First Anglo-Boer War)
1880 – Rhodes became prime minister of the Cape Colony
1886 – A rich gold deposit found on the Witwatersrand
1895 – Jameson Raid failed
1899 – October – British ultimatum to Kruger about uitlanders getting the vote
Kruger responds with his own ultimatum. War breaks out.

4. Point Form Essay Outline

Create a point form outline of the essay. First, we searched for a quote about war and wealth to use as a 'punchline'. We found one that fitted well, by Socrates.

"All war is fought for money." ~ Socrates

Then we decided on one topic for each of the three body paragraphs.

This was our essay outline:

Intro & Thesis statement – a general discussion about war and the causes of wars, then focus on the SA War and how it supports the quote by Socrates. End with the thesis statement. Write the introduction and thesis statement last.

Paragraph 1 – The Discovery of Wealth- Diamonds first and then gold on the Witwatersrand – link the info back to the topic of war and wealth

Paragraph 2 – Rhodes:

- a) political position
- b) business
- c) colonial dream
- d) link this info back to the topic of war and wealth

Paragraph 3 – Factors that Triggered the War

link this info back to the topic of war and wealth

Conclusion

Sum up the three sub-topics above and discuss how the SA War confirms the truth that "all wars are about wealth...about who gets the money." Relate the discussion back to the thesis statement and try to end with a strong statement or clincher.