

# 2018 English Personal Essay | Sample Answer

## Write a personal essay on what you perceive to be the pleasures particular to youth.

Youth. It is defined as the period between childhood and adult age. The condition of being young, fresh, wide eyed and spirited. However, it is only as I come to the end of my so called “youth”, that I have started to fully grasp its meaning. They say that in youth we learn, but in age we understand. I certainly find this to be true. With youth comes contentment, excitement and often, an ignorant bliss. The luxuries of the young.

As a child, I was an avid lover of the outdoors. Summer was my favourite time of the year. A hole to be dug? I’ll do it! Searching for wild mushrooms on the hill? Sign me up! In my mind, I was the real-life Dora the Explorer ( I even had the fringe!) My dad would laugh and say, “Who needs a son?”, as I helped him put up scaffolding or “supervised” the ploughing of the field. I used to climb the high piles of turf on my grandad’s farm, two faithful collies by my side. I lived in the moment and everything was an adventure. Innocence and fearlessness, two attributes exclusive to childhood and ones that fade quickly over time. I am now the responsible one that would stop my young cousin climbing on the turf, in fear that she would fall and hurt herself. The scaffolding (that I still help to put up), is no longer a jungle gym to climb on, but instead a heavy task to be done in all weather conditions. The two dogs are old, preferring to sit beside the fire in the warmth rather than partake in any daredevil stunts on the out of use farm machinery. The reality? I grew up.

The most enticing aspect of being young is the lack of responsibility and worries for the future. “Tell an adult you trust”, is a key directive that children adhere to. Tell an adult; let them worry about the problem, the solution, the consequences. As an almost adult myself, this terrifies me. How do I find a solution to a problem or situation that doesn’t offend, insult or leave anyone out? Is there a “Guide to being an Adult for Terrified Teenagers”? Will Google provide me with an answer? Sometimes I forget when I smile at strangers in the street, that I have lost the charm of a child. Not perceived as innocent or cute, I can also be charged as an adult in a court of law. No

longer legally dependent on a parent or guardian, a single entity all by myself. I think it is this transition from dependent to independent, that frightens me the most.

It is often said that age is only a number and I am inclined to agree. Instead of defining youth as a specific time in our lives, we should see it as a mindset. My grandfather, for example, is eighty-seven years old. He still lives on his own, makes his own meals, drives around the country in his hybrid car and can often be found on a construction site with my uncle. With some help from his favourite granddaughter (me), he is connected to the internet and the living room is full of pictures, printed from his new Bluetooth printer. He is simply living for every day, still a young man at heart. I, along with many others, am guilty of wishing my life away. Wishing for this day to end, wishing for it to be Christmas, wishing that the Leaving Cert was over (because trust me, I do!) We forget the joy that everyday occurrences bring.

“Youth is wasted on the young”, a saying that I have heard from adults all of my life. For us, old age seems impossibly far away. There is always another tomorrow to do the things we haven't done today. The many decades of life, stretching out before us, in which we can achieve our dreams. The irony, of course, is that our youth would be more worthwhile and fulfilling if we had the wisdom typical of middle aged or elderly people. However, a lack of wisdom as well as uncertainty regarding where life is headed, are the key elements and pleasures of youth. Everything is a learning experience and we have time on our side to acquire this wisdom.

As I move on to the next stage of my life, I can't help but feel enthusiastic. The future comes in the form of a (hopefully) successful career, new friends and a different type of adventure. Travelling the world and broadening my horizons. Yes, I have more responsibilities, but I am not tied to any one place or thing. When I turn eighteen, there are not going to be any drastic changes. I may be able to vote, purchase alcohol and apply for my own credit card, but I won't be kicked out of my house and forced to fend for myself. I will still have the support of those around me as I find my place in the world. I can feel the excitement of my inner child, desperate for her freedom and independence.

