

Oral Presentation Script

Word count: 1623

Good morning and good afternoon Respected Provost, Ms Deng and my fellow students. I am Loo Wen Hui. Today, I would like to share one of the essays which I had been learning from this module —— ‘*An Admonition Letter to His Child*’ 誠子書.

There are five parts in this presentation. Firstly, I will introduce the author who wrote this essay. Secondly, I will give an explanation on the title. Since this essay was written in Chinese Classical Form, the meaning of the whole essay will be briefly explained in English in the third part. After that, I will share my opinions about the essay structure and the theories that I gained from this essay. A simple conclusion will be finalised then.

First, Self-Introduction of The Author

Mr Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮, courtesy name 孔明 Kongming, was a well-known Chinese statesman and military strategist during the Three Kingdoms period. As we know, the era of the Three Kingdoms was in a state of chaos owing to the moral degeneration of humanity. Although Zhuge Liang was intelligent and knowledgeable, he had been living in seclusion since he was young. He was a person who always kept a low profile and did not show off his abilities to others, that is why he is known as ‘Wolong’, which means ‘Crouching Dragon’ or ‘Sleeping Dragon’.

Even though Zhuge Liang concealed his talents so as not to draw others’ attention, there was a commander, Liubei attempted to persuade Zhuge Liang in succouring him setting up a peaceful kingdom for citizens at that moment. After Liubei’s thrice visits, Zhuge Liang ultimately promised to lend a hand in order to repay Liubei’s faith by providing the utmost supports to the country. While aiding Liubei in materialising his hopes, Zhuge Liang became the main adviser in Liubei’s administration and the military.

After a few years, as Liubei became the Emperor of Shu Han, Zhuge Liang was promoted to the Imperial Chancellor of a country. When Liubei passed away, Zhuge Liang was given a title of ‘Marquis of Wu District’ to assist Liubei’s son, Liuchan in running a country. As Zhuge Liang was always loyal to his Emperor as well as his citizens and responsible for his job, he did everything hands-on.

Unfortunately, he was worn out owing to the heavy workload and passed away during the Battle of Wuzhang Plains. Those are Zhuge Liang's biographical details.

After concisely listening to the author's life, let us move on to the second part.

Second, The Explanation of The Essay Title

This essay was named as 誡子書, and I translated it into 'An Admonition Letter to His Child'.

The meaning of *jie* 誡 in the title is exhorting, *zi* 子 means someone's child and the meaning of *shu* 書 is a letter.

This essay was written in a letter format in the past, which without any formal format like the letter currently. The purpose of writing this letter is to advise Zhuge Liang's son, Zhuge Zhan, on some important life experiences which should be aware of in the future, so that his son would always be on the right path.

After introducing the author and title of the letter, we wonder what kind of advice did Zhuge Liang give to his son? Let us find the answers below.

Third, The English Meaning of The Essay

This is the Chinese Classic Form essay that Zhuge Liang wrote to his son. I will give simple definitions of some words which I think are difficult to comprehend.

Firstly, the meaning of *jing* 靜 is being tranquil and keep calm. *jian* 儉 means to be thrifty and *danbo* 澹泊 is to have low desire on everything. Besides, *taoman* 怠慢 is the state of being lazy as well as self-indulgent while *xianzao* 險躁 is a kind of emotion that is impatient, irritable, and venturesome.

After defining the meanings of the words, let us go through the essay and I will explain each sentence in English.

文言文（正文）	English Translation
夫君子之行，靜以修身，儉以養德	A person who has noble characters and virtues would cultivate his own habits and morals by keeping calm, being tranquil as well as thrifty.
非澹泊無以明志，非寧靜無以致遠。	If we do not minimise our desires, we will not be able to realise our aspirations. At the same time, if we do not keep calm and be tranquil when encountering matters, our ambitious goals will not be achieved easily.
夫學欲靜也，才欲學也，非學無以廣才，非靜無以成	Thus, being tranquil is important for learning as acquiring knowledge could improve our abilities in every field. If we are not calm in our studies, we will not possess great skills

學。	and erudition in our future careers.
慆慢則不能研精， 險躁則不能理性	Being lazy and self-indulgent will not be able to focus on our learning while being impatient, irritable, and venturesome will not lead us to think rationally.
年與時馳，意與日 去，遂成枯落，多 不接世，悲守窮 廬，將復何及！	As time flies, our determinations will wane, like plants will wither. If most of our aspirations are not compatible with the reality of society, the only thing that we can do is to stay in our poor dwelling. By that time, feeling regret is pointless.

Those are the vital teachings from Zhuge Liang to his son, hoping that his son would always be in a peaceful situation in the future.

Next, let us come to the fourth part.

Fourth, Essay Structure and Theories

This essay has three main structures. The beginning part states that a person who obtains noble characters and virtue will possess two types of attitudes, being tranquil and thrifty. If one is not tranquil, one will not be able to achieve one's goals. Besides, if one is not thrifty, one will not be able to grasp one's aspirations.

The second part is to specify the way of learning in order to attain good success in future. As a learner, he or she must keep calm to gain knowledge, so that he or she is talented.

Finally, the last part is to explain the bad outcomes if one does not follow the lessons above. There are two bad habits that we need to avoid, being lazy as well as self-indulgent and being impatient, irritable, and venturesome. Those manners will indirectly lead us to the wrong paths, and we will deplore throughout our lives.

Based on the above essay, there are two lessons, which greatly influence me. From the outset, I could realise that parents are the ones who always think of our benefits. Same as the author, Zhuge Liang who attempted to pass down his invaluable life experiences to his child, thereby preventing his child from facing serious problems. So that, his child would not feel remorseful for the rest of his live.

In fact, my parents also treat me the same by telling me the precious moral values and some necessary skills, which they feel useful throughout their lives. However, sometimes I cannot accept their views and will turn a deaf ear. Besides, I will also refuse to follow their instructions too. As the old Chinese saying goes, 'Even a vicious tiger will not eat its cubs.', how about humans? In contrast, they will take good care of us instead of leaving us in a hazardous condition since we are their offsprings and the pillar of the society.

Therefore, respecting parents and following their advice are the duties of a child. According to the ‘*Guidelines for Being a Good Person*’, there is a paragraph of: ‘When my parents intrust me, I will listen respectfully. When my parents reproach me, I will obey and accept their scolding.’ As the Chinese old saying goes, ‘If you do not listen to the elders’ advice, you will get trouble sooner or later.’ Hence, accepting elders, especially our parents’ views, are vital for our future.

Other than that, the second lesson that I had learned from this essay is the way to become a person who possesses morals and virtues. Based on the essay above, there are two good habits that we should pick up, being tranquil as well as thrifty while two bad habits that we should restrain, being impatient and venturesome. On the one hand, if we have low desires besides being thrifty, we will not be easily affected by others and our learning will become more effective. Therefore, our abilities will gradually be improved.

This reminds me of an essay that I read from this module —— ‘*The Biography of Five-Willow Gentleman*’ that briefly introduces the life of Mr Taoyuan Ming. He was a great example of a noble character. As he was not eager for things that were out of his ability, he could always be peaceful. In fact, he had the ability to learn and write well and his writings were handed down through the generations. Thus, being thrifty and tranquil are the essential manners that I should cultivate in my daily life.

On the other hand, if we are always impatient and venturesome, it will be an obstacle in our learning path as we could not think wisely. As the words that Professor Zhu always encourages us: ‘We must learn the tortoise’s spirits.’ which means that we must be patient and steady as a tortoise, although it moves slowly, it is always in an improving situation. In a nutshell, being thrifty and tranquil are the fundamental characteristics of a noble person.

Fifth, Conclusion

In summary, this is a letter that contains critical teachings from Zhuge Liang to his child, Zhuge Zhan. The purpose of writing this letter is to advise his child to be thrifty and tranquil, so that he would be brilliant and able to accomplish great success, whereas being impatient and venturesome are attitudes that he had to avoid or even leave off in his daily life.

This is the end of my presentation today. Any comments or suggestions are appreciated. Thank you for the attention.