

## Class Lecture (29<sup>th</sup> July 2012)

### *“Expansion of an Idea”*

Expansion of an idea or expansion of a proverb is simple and straightforward. It involves 5 easy steps. They are:

**Step 1: Understand the symbol of the words in the proverb:** Most proverbs or ideas are symbolic. The name of place or animal or thing or person stands as a symbol of some quality. We have to try to understand that in the context of the proverb.

For example take the proverb, ‘Rome was not built in a day’. Here the noun ‘Rome’ is the name of a place. We also (should) know that Rome was a great city. So what does Rome stand for? It stands for Greatness or success. (Remember it was a great city).

Or take the example of ‘All that glitters is not gold’. Here we have the noun ‘gold’. It is the name of a thing. We know that gold is a precious metal. So what does gold stand for? It stands for precious.

**Step 2: Substitute the meaning in the idea or the proverb:** Take the two previous examples. ‘Rome was not built in a day’ and ‘All that glitters is not gold’. Now substitute the symbols we found out earlier in the sentences. What do we have?

1. ‘Greatness or success was not built in a day’
2. ‘All that glitters is not precious’

The proverb is now decoded and ready for understanding.

**Step 3: Look for a story or anecdote or example or illustration:** Now that you have understood what the proverb stands for or what the proverb means, we should look for a suitable example to illustrate it. Where do we get these stories? There are plenty of them.

We can also look for example from our history or today’s world. We could, for example, for the proverb ‘Rome was not built in a day’, talk about the effort put in by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to achieve greatness of Islam as whole over the World, and that it took many years to build it, that it did not happen overnight.

**Step 4: Look for similar proverbs or ideas:** “Patience, persistence and perspiration make an unbeatable combination for success” by Napoleon Hill is similar to ‘Rome was not built in a day’; so is the proverb ‘Do not judge the book by its cover’ similar to ‘All that glitters is not precious’.

**Step 5: Sum up the paragraph:** Use summing up words or phrases to indicate that you have finished the expansion and intend to sum it up. You could use ‘Thus’ or ‘In fine’ or ‘So’ or ‘The proverb advises that’. Let the reader know that you are signing off.

So we have 5 Steps on 'How to do expansion of an idea or expansion of a proverb':

- Step 1: Understand the symbol of the words in the proverb
- Step 2: Substitute the meaning in the idea or the proverb
- Step 3: Look for a story or anecdote or example or illustration
- Step 4: Look for similar proverbs or ideas
- Step 5: Sum up the paragraph

**[Transitional Words & Phrases are one of the most important elements of expansion. Click here to download a comprehensive list of transitional words and phrases.](#)**

- (1) Devote a few minutes to thinking over and grasping the precise meaning, significance and implications of the statement before you. This is very important, because if you make a mistake here, all your work will be in vain.
- (2) Arrange your ideas and set down the important points in the order in which they should be developed.
- (3) Having grasped the subject and meaning of the given statement proceed to expand it by adding details, illustrations, proofs, examples, etc., until it is a tiny essay only long enough to make a paragraph.
- (4) If the expansion is to be based on a given outline, it must contain all that is in the original skeleton in your own words and more can be added so long as it is strictly relevant to subject.
- (5) If the sentence for expansion is conclusion or a finished product, it is your work to trace the steps by which this thought has been arrived at.
- (6) If it is a metaphor, explain its full meaning in plain language, and give reasons to support it.
- (7) Avoid beginning your expansion with any such stereotyped or uninteresting phrase as The meaning of the saying is or This proverb means, or These lines teach us, or Instances are not wanting to prove the truth of this statement. Such openings are dull and indicate lack of originality.
- (8) Write simply and to the point, taking care, if a limit has been set, not to exceed it. For an expansion, the limit usually is a page or a page-and-a-half of ordinary handwriting. Keep the personal pronoun "I" out of your expansion. It is safest to write in the third person.
- (9) Your expansion should read as a complete piece of composition, expressed in good English; such that it can be clearly understood apart from the original passage. So, when you have written it, go over it carefully to see that nothing essential has been omitted or left obscure.
- (10) Carefully revise what you have written, correcting all errors of spelling, punctuation, grammar, idiom, etc.