

WE REMEMBER

November 27th





Youth Actions in Canada

Awareness Campaigns



Tamil Remembrance Day

Commemorated by Youth



Youth Reflections

Grasp Your Role



Youth Actions Around the World

Campaigns for Peace

To work towards the enhancement
of the Tamil Nation and to provide
an avenue for the betterment of the
Tamil youth in Canada

- Vision

TYO

REACH

Official Newsletter of
TYO - Canada

Dear Treasured youth,

November, along with the snow, and cold breeze brings with it a day of remembrance where the fallen soldiers have once again risen within our memories. Living, breathing and fighting for a nation of freedom, self determination, and a nation Tamils can call of their own.

The war - memorials in different parts of the world carry the inscription: "For your tomorrow, we gave our today" The heroes of Tamil Eelam have given their today so that the rest of us and the ones after us may have a tomorrow. For us to have our tomorrow these freedom fighters have not only sacrificed their lives, but more importantly their dreams, ambitions and their youth.

As youth all around the world, we must also become soldiers, not with arms but with words. Standing up for the rights of Tamils in Sri Lanka, spreading awareness of unfair treatment of Tamil civilians and by being active and getting involved within our community.

To ensure you receive all emails from REACH, please add reach@canadatyo.org to your address book or list of safe senders.



In solidarity,
TYO – Canada

To speak in an assembly (of the learned) without fullness of knowledge,
is like playing at chess (on a board) without squares.
- Thirukkural (Verse 401)

[Message from] TYO - Canada

Death of the First Hero



Rajani, who was on the verandah of the main house, saw the army jeep entering their compound. She ran through the house to the back door and shouted, "Nirmala Akka, army jeep is coming."

She warned her elder sister because she knew an LTTE fighter, Shankar, was in her house. Shankar had gone to Nirmala's house to convey the message Seelan had sent from Tamil Nadu that he had reached India safely.

Nirmala insisted that Shankar should have lunch. "Today I have cooked chicken. You must taste it and say whether it is tastier than your leader's (Pirapaharan's) preparation," she said. Seelan had told her repeatedly that Pirapaharan's chicken curry was "tops." Nirmala served two pieces of chicken and Shankar was biting the first piece when Rajani shouted about the arrival of the army jeep.

Shankar slipped through the back door and ran towards the rear wall and the commando who ran to seal off the back entrance of Nirmala's house fired at him. Shankar was

hit in the stomach. Holding the bleeding stomach tightly Shankar ran nearly three kilometers to reach a safe-house where he handed his revolver to his comrades and collapsed due to excessive loss of blood, thus avoiding capture by the army and saving the weapon, both priority items in the LTTE's code of conduct.

Shankar's condition deteriorated fast and his senior colleague, Anton, undertook the perilous task of taking him to Tamil Nadu by boat. Anton took Shankar to Kodaikarai, one of the landing points of Tamil militants on the Tamil Nadu coast, kept him in a safe-house and arranged for a doctor to attend on

him. Anton rushed to Madurai to arrange for his treatment, then he took Shankar to a private hospital in Madurai. Doctors there declared that his condition was too serious.

Pirapaharan, who was in one of the LTTE training camps, was informed. He returned immediately. Baby Subramaniam, who was at the hospital when Pirapaharan walked in, called the occasion poignant. Pirapaharan was highly emotional, he said. Pirapaharan, took Shankar's hands into his, lifted them and pressed his cheeks on them. He put them back softly, went and sat near Shankar's head and took it to his lap. Then he gently stroked Shankar's hair. Shankar looked up. He seemed to have realized that his leader had arrived. He started muttering "Thamby. Thamby. Thamby..." Pirapaharan was "Thamby" (younger brother) to all, even to those younger to him. Shankar was six years younger.

Nedumaran was another who witnessed that moving scene. He has given a graphic description of that event in many interviews. In one interview he said, "They kept gazing

at each other. It was impossible to guess what was going on in their minds. Pirapaharan kept looking at him intently, as if he was silently pleading with him not to go away."

Pirapaharan was visibly shaken. He was seeing the death of one of his cadres for the first time. A 22-year old youth, blossoming into manhood, was dying sacrificing his life for the sake of the honour and dignity of his nation. Tears rolled down Pirapaharan's plump cheeks. The flame of life in Shankar gradually quenched.

Shankar, who was reading the Russian novel *One True Man's Story* when he set out to Nirmala's house at Nallur on that 20 November morning died after seven days of agony on 27 November, the day which has become a day of remembrance of valour and self-sacrifice for the cause of freedom of the Tamil Nation and the man, Shankar, became another "One True Man's Story" of courage.

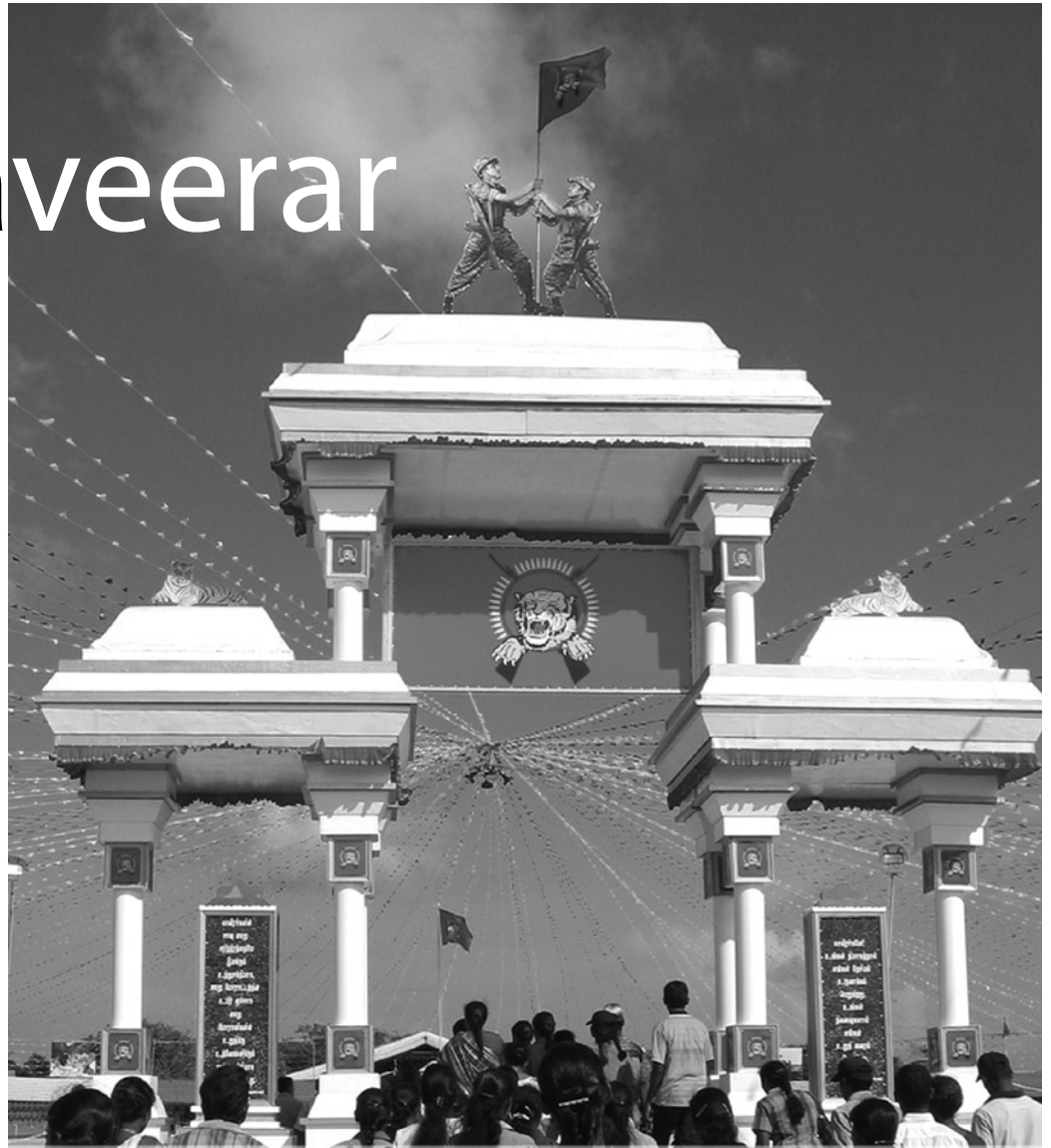
Shankar's death was not announced publicly. Pirapaharan felt the announcement of the death would encourage the army and the police to hunt the militants. The LTTE then was a tiny organization. It had not more than 30 cadres. Announcement of Shankar's death would demoralize the Tamil public and discourage youths from joining it. Shankar's father was informed, however. His father, Selvachandran Master, told me that two "Tiger boys" had visited him one night and told him about his son's death.

The LTTE announced Shankar's death on his first death anniversary. Jaffna's walls were plastered with his photograph. Leaflets giving details about his life and exploits were distributed.

- By T. Sabaratnam

Source: www.tamilnation.org

Maaveerar



All peoples remember, honour and mourn their war dead. The 11th of November is Remembrance Day for the countries of the British Commonwealth such as Great Britain, Canada, Australia and South Africa as well as for some European countries such as France and Belgium. The Cenotaph (meaning Empty Tomb) in London carries the simple inscription "The Glorious Dead" and it is here that a Remembrance service is held each year at 11 am on the Sunday nearest 11 November.

For the people of Tamil Eelam and for Tamils living in many lands and across distant seas, the 27th of November is the day on which they remember, honour and mourn those who have given their lives in the Tamil Eelam struggle for freedom from alien Sinhala rule. It is the day marked by the death of Shankar in 1982 - the first death of a cadre of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Since then, more than 22,300 have given their lives so that their brothers and sisters may live with self respect and in freedom - in Tamil we say 'thanmaanam.'

The Tamil people do not seek to glorify war because we know too

well the pain and suffering that war brings in its trail. Neither do we seek to glorify our war heroes. To glorify is to boast and magnify.

And we seek neither to boast nor to magnify. But we do seek to remember, honour and mourn our war dead - remember with gratitude, honour with humility and mourn from deep within our hearts. And, at the same time, we seek to re dedicate ourselves to the cause of justice and freedom for which our brothers and sisters, gave their lives. Those who have died shall not have died in vain.

The people of the United States honour their war heroes with burial in the Arlington National Cemetery. The people of Tamil Eelam have honoured their war heroes with burial, in Thuyilum Illam. Today many memorials exist in Tamil Eelam where the war dead, the Maaveerars, have been buried. They are the resting places, the homes of those who will not die in our hearts.

by: Nadesan Satyendra,

Source: www.tamilnation.org

Day of Action to Reduce Tuition Fee

Tamil Youth Organization and Tamil Student Associations along with the Canadian Federation of Students supported the Day of Action to drop tuition fees in Ontario for post secondary students. It took place at Queens Park on November 05th.

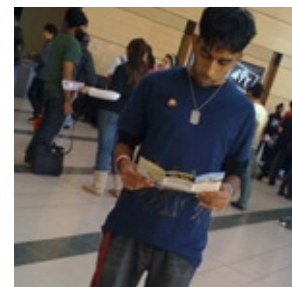
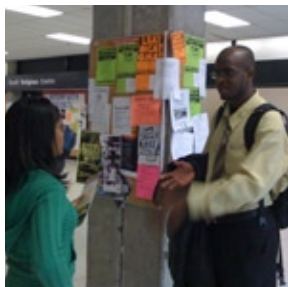


IDP Awareness Campaigns

U ofT Scarborough



York University



CanadianHART is a coalition that has the support of over 40 Canadian organizations and has the goal of highlighting the humanitarian catastrophe in northern Sri Lanka. Canadian HART Campaign – Open your Eyes for HART held a 72 hours Vigil which started on Wednesday, November 5, 2008. Many human rights activists had camped out at the Dundas square, in downtown Toronto while simulating the present plight of the Internally Displaced People (IDP) in Sri Lanka. The Vigil featured photo exhibit illustrating the humanitarian crisis. Thousands of Canadians stopped to enquire about the IDP crisis and to extend their support to the call for immediate International intervention. Video documen-

taries about the plight of the displaced people in Vanni moved several people to tears. Petitions for several Canadian political party leaders and to various Greater Toronto Area Members of Parliament were also signed by thousands of Canadians. Human rights activists, Anti-War activists, politicians, leaders from various community groups, and more than two thousand community members rallied under very bad weather conditions, to call for immediate international intervention to avert a humanitarian catastrophe in Sri Lanka. The rally held was on Friday, November 7, 2008 to conclude the 72 Hours IDP Vigil.

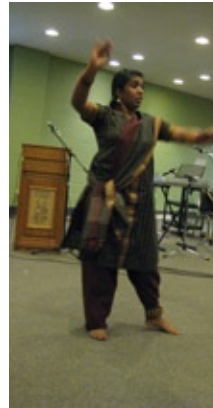
IDP Campaign



Tamil Remembrance Day by Students

Tamil Students Associations (TSAs) across Canada commemorated Maveerar Naal at their respective institutions on different dates during the Tamil Remembrance Week.

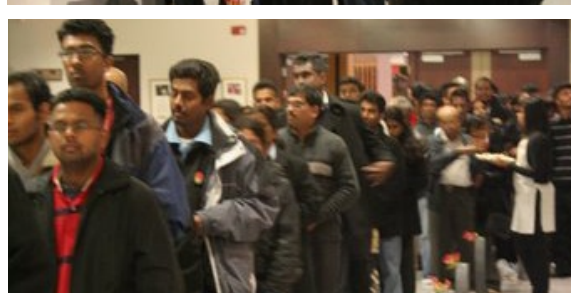
University of Ontario Institution of Technology (**UOIT**), successfully held their Tamil Remembrance Day at their campus in Oshawa. Around 60 students attended the event and witnessed many inspirational and cultural performances and speeches. UOIT proudly raised the Tamil Eelam flag and commemorated the fallen heroes with due respect.



University of Toronto Downtown campus (**UTSG**), Mississauga campus (**UTM**) and Scarborough Campus (**UTSC**) held their Tamil Remembrance Day together as a tri-campus event. Over 350 students attended the event which consisted of many informative programs including a drama about the current IPD crisis. The Tamil Eelam flag was also raised at the tri-campus Remembrance Day.



After UOIT and U of T, a **coalition of the university and college** Tamil Student Associations came together to hold a united Tamil Remembrance Day. This event was successfully coordinated and attended despite the pressures from the Sri Lankan Consulate of Toronto to cancel the event. Over 500 students and youth attended the united Maveerar Naal and illustrated the unity and strength within the Tamil youth.





Following the United Maveerar Naal, Carlton University Tamil student's association students (**CUTSA**) held Remembrance Day on the 27th of November. During the campaign, CUTSA exhibited national symbols of Eelam and further went on to explain the human rights breaches that Tamils face in Sri Lanka and decades of oppression of Tamils under Sri Lankan rules.



The **Waterloo University TSA** held their Tamil Remembrance Day at their campus in Waterloo. Guests at the event included University of Waterloo's Federation of Students Clubs Director, Dave McDougall. The Waterloo agenda also included a human rights presentation which created awareness about the current violations in Sri Lanka.



McMaster University Tamil Students held their Tamil Remembrance Day at their campus in Hamilton. Approximately 200 students attended the event and commemorated the fallen heroes with candles and Karthigai flowers. Maaverar Lt. Kenal. Ranimynthan's sister raised the Tamil Eelam National flag and Major. Ahalnjanhan's mother lighted the common candle for the event.



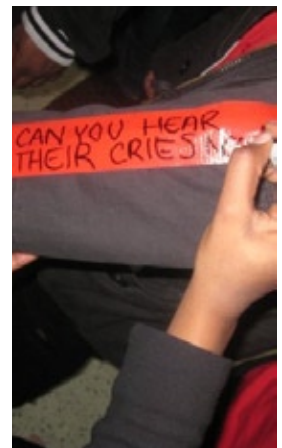
Highschool Students Resist Injustice

November 27th marks the day of remembrance for the fallen heroes whom bravely fought for the independence of our Tamil people. Sulaksana Sabaratnam and Keerthana Pathmanathan along with co-activists Senthan Thiruyanasampanthar, Tharsiga Kumaradasan, Sujith Sutharsan, Mithilan Mathipalan, Annoj Sathanathan thought to do a memorial service at their school, Middlefield Collegiate Institute, and also spread the importance of the current IDP situations back home.

However the permission was denied from their school authorities. This created a fire of motivation within these students and they decided to launch a campaign called SPEAK. This campaign was planned

to raise awareness to the fellow student body and staff about the lack of freedom of speech and lack of freedom of assembly. The students taped their mouths with bold red tape and kept silence.

Throughout the day, hundreds of students wore the red and black colour t-shirts and joined together in support. Over time, teachers were shocked by the number of students that were taking part. "I've never seen this many students take part in a protest in all the years I've taught here. You guys made history! And for all this to be done without approval? I'm proud!" one of the supportive teachers told the activist students.





Imagine waking up every morning to the sounds of sonic booms created by supersonic fighter jets and the bloodcurdling sounds of aerial and artillery bombardments. Imagine living your life without having guarantee that you would live to see another day. Imagine being too weak to walk, too hungry to talk and too frightened to sleep. My fellow citizens, this is the life of our people who have become internally displaced persons in their own lands.

After terminating the Norwegian mediated ceasefire agreement and the internationally backed peace talks, the Sri Lankan government has gone on a terror spree. The aggressive military operations targeting innocent Tamil civilians have all the hallmarks of a genocidal program against Tamils in Sri Lanka. As a result of this genocidal program, hundreds of thousands of innocent Tamil civilians have become victims. Today, aid agencies estimate that more than 300,000 Tamil civilians have been uprooted from their homes and now live under trees, in schools, churches, temples and temporary displacement camps in appalling living conditions. Several leading aid agencies and human rights groups have described the plight of the internally displaced Tamils as a "humanitarian nightmare." Furthermore, all aid agencies have been expelled by the Sri Lankan government from operating in the affected areas. The racist regime in Colombo, has deliberately placed an economic and aid embargo on the affected areas to increase the sufferings of the people. This has created a situation where the future of these innocent civilians seems bleak. Prominent aid agencies and human rights groups have denounced the government setup displacement camps as an attempt by the Sri Lankan government to hoodwink the international

Grasp Your Role

community. Shockingly, aid agencies are now claiming that the conditions in these displacement camps draw parallel to Nazi concentration camps.

We are living in the 21st century, in which democracy, the rule of law, human rights and international norms are considered to be enshrined in the collective conscious of human beings. However, time and time again, we have seen that the Sri Lankan government is moving backwards in terms of human progress and it is challenging international norms that have come to shape international relations. It is time that the international community recognizes this duplicity in the Sri Lankan government's approach. It is time that countries, like Canada, stop their double standards approach and condemn and isolate violators of human rights and perpetrators of war crimes. A collective effort by the international community to place diplomatic and economic sanctions, would force Sri Lankan to abandon its genocidal program and immediately bring relief to the internally displaced persons in Northern Sri Lanka.

It is the duty and responsibility of the International Community to remind Sri Lanka of its obligations to providing safety and security to all citizens in the island. The International Community must also remind Sri Lanka of its obligation to adhere to international norms, conventions and treaties. The ball is in the International Community's court now. They can prevent the sufferings of the Tamil IDPs in the Vanni region before its too late.

A concerned Canadian citizen,
Nishanthan Vijayarajah

Rise for the Truth by Swiss Youth

Swiss Tamil Youth Organization once more amassed vast amount of citizens to rise for the Truth on Nov 15th in front of the Bern parliament around 4PM. The Swiss TYO organized speeches on German, Italian and French to better explain the struggle of Tamils in Sri Lanka to the vast crowd of diverse people. Cultural events, dramas and speeches condemning Sri Lankan government by Swiss politicians followed the speeches. A crowd of all ages who held banners and place cards depicting the plight of Tamils among torrential rain and even worse artillery barrages, aerial bombardments, food and medicine embargos by the Sri Lankan government. As the event neared completion, the crowd wrote about the human rights violations on helium balloons and let it on air in hopes to advocate other Swiss citizens.



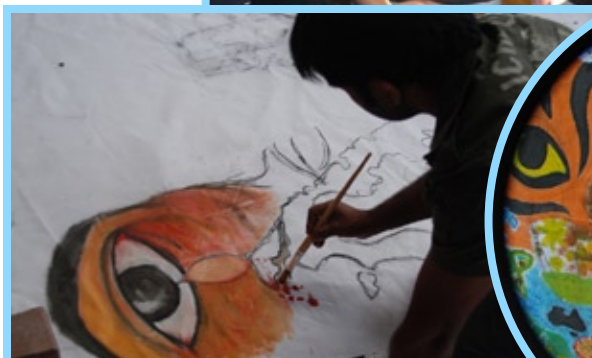
Norwegian Tamil Youth - 48 hours Famine



Norwegian Tamil Youth started 48 famine in Bergen city's Metodis Church to bring out sufferings of Tamil people in North Eastern Sri Lanka among torrential rains and indiscriminate artillery barrages. Along with the Tamil youth, 13 concerned Norwegians started fasting and the event has attracted vast amount of concerned citizens. Human Rights activists from nearby cities and ethnicities were seen attending the event and learning about the plight of Tamils caught in Sri Lankan government's war for peace. The Famine started with priest Tor Bernard lighting the ceremonial lights as Norwegian politicians' speeches followed. During the course of the event, videos depicting the Eelam struggle and the plight of Tamils were screened. Many cultural events such as flute playing and an emotional speech by a youth brought tears to the audience. The following day, the Bergen Avis published the story along with pictures in its editorial. This attracted many more concerned audiences who promised to support the cause.

Tamil Youth in Australia Paint for Peace

“...It is this peace and freedom which the Eelam Tamil Diaspora all over the world dream of. On the 22nd of November 2008, Tamils in Australia had the chance to depict these dreams on massive public murals around Sydney and Melbourne. In a world where society has a greater social conscience than ever before, it is deeply saddening to see a once island paradise disregard the rights and liberties of its own citizens with such candour, under the rule of the current Sri Lankan president, Mahinda Rajapaksa....”





IDP Situation in Vanni



“Open your eyes for HART”



Tamil Youth Organization of Canada (TYO-Canada) and several community partners have launched a campaign to bring awareness to the issue of the Tamil IDP crisis in an attempt to ensure immediate International humanitarian intervention.

“Open your eyes for HART” Campaign is set to take place in the week of November 02nd to November 09th, 2008 across the Greater Toronto Area.

Canadian HART (Humanitarian Appeal for the Relief of Tamils) is a community wide coalition formed to highlight the IDP crisis.

Phone:

416. 838. 9637

E-mail:

info@tamilidpcrisis.org

On Wednesday December 10th 2008 the world stops to mark the 60th anniversary of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was necessary to establish the human values that were lost during the World Wars.

Our people in Sri Lanka continue to face waves after waves of attacks on their fundamental and human rights.

The Canadian HART plans to run a letter writing campaign **from December 8th to December 12th** to educate fellow Canadians on the current plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

The objective of the campaign is to bring awareness to the to key decision and policymakers in Canada and the United Nations so that the rights of internally displaced people in Sri Lanka are protected and respected.

"The only thing necessary for the triumph [of evil] is for good men to do nothing."

- Edmund Burke



Speak Out - Tamil IDP Crisis

As Tamil youth in Canada, we have the ultimate duty of educating others, as well as ourselves of the suffering of the Tamil people. Understanding is crucial. And with understanding comes awareness, the most essential step in the path to progress.

Ignorance is not a bliss.

- Stay updated with recent news
- Write to your local politicians
- Attend rallies
- Enlighten non-Tamil peers
- Write a poem, articles, essay
- Research, understand and recite

Join TYO

Tamil Youth Organization is always looking for hard-working, dedicated youth who would like to join in serving the Tamil community.

As an organization with the interests of Tamil youth at heart, TYO provides opportunities for Canadian Tamil youth to network, contribute, and develop their skills in various areas.

Interested in getting involved?

Please contact us at

contact@canadatyo.org

Or visit us at

www.canadatyo.org



For our next month's issue:

Submit your written work based on
'What's on your mind?'

Please follow the guidelines below.

Don't forget to add reach@canadatyo.org
to your e-mail safe list.

We appreciate all of your time and effort.

TYO - Canada



Guidelines:

- o All submissions must be in English
- o You may create your own title for your work
- o Written work should be within 750 words (or 2 pages letter sized), 12 pt font (Times)
- o Can be written in any form (article, research essay, poem, story, etc.)
- o Include your name, contact info, and University/ College/ High School (If applicable)
- o Submit before **December 20th, 2008**
- o Must be e-mailed to reach@canadatyo.org with the subject '**Reach-Dec 2008**'
- o Please attach a word file or copy and paste your work in your e-mail