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Q8

The cost of being wrong is less than the cost of doing nothing.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · Essay · 125 marks · Philosophical and ethical quotes

Philosophical and ethical quotes

Core demand of the question

- **Stake:** error is tuition; paralysis is a larger bill
- **One stand:** a republic that never risks a step still chooses - it chooses decay
- Move through person, science, policy, climate. Keep one honest counter
- Close on responsible action, not gambling

Revision summary

Not a full essay - a map.

- **Open with a delayed drain and a June flood. Stand:** freeze can cost more than a correctable error.
- **Headings:** self, science, state, climate, then one counter.

Earn one line on action; peg Stern or a disaster drill.

Close on move-measure-correct.

Note

This is a map, not the full 1,000-1,200 word essay.

Anecdote

A junior engineer delays a drain because the drawing might be wrong. June arrives. The lane floods. The drawing had a mistake; the delay had a body count. The line says the cheaper bill is often the wrong step you can still correct - not the pose of never moving.

One stand

Doing nothing is also a decision. Write to prefer reversible, checked action over vanity of purity - and still refuse reckless harm. The cost of a wrong is real; the cost of a freeze can be larger.

Heading map**What the line is asking**

- **Cost of being wrong:** apology, a patch, a lost year, a bad tender.
- **Cost of doing nothing:** a flood, a missed vaccine window, a child out of school, a heating planet.
- **Stake:** bias to action with a brake, not bravado.

Self

- **A letter unsent, an apology delayed:** small freezes that become character.
- **UPSC panic:** not starting a paper is a perfect score of zero.

Science and enterprise

- A failed rocket is data; a programme never funded is a desert.
- **Start-ups and labs:** error as method (cousin of the doubter essay).

State

- 1991: the cost of waiting on the licence raj. Also: a badly written farm law - wrong can be expensive. Distinguish haste from action.
- Disaster drills vs a file pending till the cyclone.

Planet

- **Climate:** every year of "more study" is emissions in the bank. Stern: the cost of inaction.

The counter

Some nothing is wisdom (the muddy-water wait; a judge's reserved order). Some wrongs are irreversible (a demolished home, a sterilisation camp, a shot fired). The line is for reversible arenas and known duties. It is not a licence to gamble with the poor.

Last paragraph

- **Close:** move, measure, correct. Keep a brake for the irreversible. A civil servant's courage is a dated file with reasons, not a frozen tray. Expand each heading - this is only the map.

Facts & figures

Roosevelt

The country needs bold, persistent experimentation - try, fail, try again. Use as a civic cousin, not a US civics paper.

Tagore

Where the mind is without fear - including fear of a correctable mistake. One earned use.

Stern Review

The economic cost of climate inaction vs early action - peg, not a lecture.

NDMA drills

Action as rehearsal: cheaper than a freeze until the cyclone.

Precautionary principle

Where harm is irreversible, doing nothing (or stopping) is the right cost - the counter built into law.