

Prompt: Is a college education necessary for success in today's world?

Document 1. We Need Better Alternatives to College Education

In a 2012 survey of parents and college students conducted by the U.S. Department of Education 60 percent of those who responded believed that by tenth grade, young people had all the skills they needed to enter the workforce. The founder of a non-profit group, Gerald Jackson has made the point that not all students need to prepare for college. He argues that educational institutions should offer more vocational programs for those who want to go directly into the workforce. Since the early 2000's there has been a 10 percent increase nationwide in the number of vocational courses offered. These courses help prepare students who wish to enter the workforce right after high school.

In the 2012 survey, more than 90 percent of the respondents felt that the school system pressured them to go to college. They were told they would not be able to earn a good living if they didn't. This is unfortunate. Although college can be a wonderful, mind-expanding journey, it is not appropriate for everyone. It is not the only path to a satisfying career, and it is expensive. Many graduates leave with huge debts. The Wall Street Journal's front page article in 2012 stated that the average amount of debt for a college student is \$40,000. The article also claimed that graduates often lack the skills needed to get good jobs.

We need to come to a new conclusion about the worth of a college education. It is time to stop forcing students into a one-size-fits-all mold. We need to strengthen vocational preparation for those who want to go right into the work world.

Document # 2 The Value of a College Education

According to a report published in U.S. News & World Report in 2011, individuals with college degrees earned approximately 100 percent more over their lifetimes, on average, than those who only had a high school diploma or its equivalent. A college degree should not be underestimated. A college degree is required before one can pursue an advanced degree which involves an additional two to eight years beyond college. The report stated that those with advanced degrees, on average, earned more than 200 percent than those with a high school diploma or its equivalency. It's more than just an issue of money. The U.S. Department of Commerce believes that 75 percent of new jobs created in the United States will require at least a college degree just to apply.

A college education clearly opens the doorway to a better, more satisfying life. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Affairs the average wage of those with just a high school education was \$11.50 per hour in 2011. In a typical 40 hour work week, before taxes the average wage would be approximately \$442, or \$1,768 per month. Is that enough to afford the basic necessities in life? In a New York Times article from February 2012, it stated that the national average for basic goods to include rent/mortgage, transportation and food was about \$1,500 per month. This did not include a phone, internet, clothes or other unplanned costs and taxes.

Not going to college means you can barely afford the basics and your opportunities will be reduced. As more and more jobs require extended training and knowledge, options for less well-educated citizens drop. In a world where many jobs are going overseas to countries that pay their workers less, it is even more important to recognize the value of a college education.

VOCABULARY

WE NEED BETTER ALTERNATIVES TO COLLEGE EDUCATION

U.S. Department of Education: ED's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

ED was created in 1980 by combining offices from several federal agencies. ED's 4,400 employees and \$68 billion budget are dedicated to:

- Establishing policies on federal financial aid for education, and distributing as well as monitoring those funds.
- Collecting data on America's schools and disseminating research.
- Focusing national attention on key educational issues.
- Prohibiting discrimination and ensuring equal access to education.

Survey - Measure

Approximately - About

Required - Necessary

Workforce – People engaged in or available for work

Founder - Originator

Nonprofit - Charitable

Institutions - Organizations

Vocational - Occupational

Pressured - Forced

Unfortunate - Regrettable

Journey - Trip

Debt – Money owing

THE VALUE OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION

Department of Commerce: The mission of the Department is to create the conditions for economic growth and opportunity. As part of the Obama administration's economic team, the Secretary of Commerce serves as the voice of U.S. business within the President's Cabinet. The Strategic Plan is how the Department maintains its focus on achieving its Open for Business Agenda.

"America is Open for Business" - Penny Pritzker

U.S. Bureau of Economic Affairs: The **Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB)** is a bureau of the U.S. Department of State charged with promoting economic security and prosperity at home and abroad. It reports to the Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment. The Bureau's work lies at the nexus of economic prosperity and national security. As the single point where international economic policy tools and threads converge, EB helps to promote a coherent economic policy across the U.S. government.^[1] It is headed by the Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, Charles Rivkin.^[2]

The Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs consists of the following sections:^[1]

- Commercial and Business Affairs (EB/CBA);
- Counter Threat Finance & Sanctions (EB/TFS);
- Economic Policy Analysis & Public Diplomacy (EB/EPPD);
- International Communications and Information Policy (EB/CIP);
- International Finance & Development (EB/IFD);
- Trade Policy and Programs (EB/TPP); and
- Transportation Affairs (EB/TRA).

Underestimate - Miscalculate

Value - Worth

Earned – Be paid

Equivalency – Equal to a...

Credentials - Diplomas

Pursue - Chase

Estimates - Guesses

Wage - Salary

Insurance - Protection

Barely – Just about

Severely - Harshly

Extended - Prolonged

Recognize – Be familiar with

COLLECTING SUPPORTING DETAILS

1. What point of view is presented in the first passage?

2. What details are used to support this view?

3. What point of view is presented in the second passage?

4. What details are used to support this point of view?

Workshop 6 – Lesson 1

Answers to the Question Graphic Organizer “Collecting Supporting Details”

1. The point of view expressed in the first passage is that college is not the best choice for everyone and that schools ought to stop promoting a one-size-fits all approach to education.
2. Details used to support that view; students graduate from college with an average debt of \$40,000, they often don't have enough experience to get a job, and the majority of parents and students felt that students had enough education to enter the workforce after the tenth grade.
3. The author of the second passage thinks that getting a college education is the only realistic way to avoid financial struggle.
4. Details used to support that view; the average cost of basic necessities is \$1,500 per month while the average wage for a person with a high-school level education is \$1,768 per month before taxes.

Answers to “Develop a Thesis Statement”

1. College is not a good fit for everyone. Schools should not try to force everyone into that path. We need better vocational options in schools.
2. People who don't go to college earn much less than people who do, so we should encourage everyone to go to college.