**Constructing an Argument**

***Is College Worth It?***

We’ve examined a number of sources related to the value of a college education. Some of the texts we have read include the following:

**SB p. 46** “WMDs,” by Brian O’Connor

**SB p. 51** “Chuck Liddell” Interview Transcript, by Steven Yaccino

**SB p. 66** “Education Still Pays,” by The College Board

**SB p. 70** “…Address to America’s Schoolchildren,” by President Obama

**SB p. 81** “An Early Start on College,” by the *StarTribune*

**SB p. 83** “Why College Isn’t … for Everyone,” by Robert Reich

**SB p. 86** “Actually, College Is Very Much Worth It,” by Andrew Rotherham

**HANDOUT** “Why College Isn’t for Everyone,” by Richard Vedder

**VIDEO (notes in CompBook)** “Five Ways Ed Pays,” by The College Board

**Personal Interview** “Interview Narrative,” by YOU: you talked to an adult about post-secondary education

**ASSIGNMENT:**

Your assignment is to write an essay of argumentation about the value of a college education. Your essay must be organized as an argument in which you assert a precise claim, support it with reasons and evidence, and acknowledge and refute counterclaims fairly.

To write this essay, you may use any of the articles / resources listed above. You may also add additional documents of your choosing as long as you clearly cite the source.

Your goal is to convince your reader that you are an expert on the topic. To accomplish this, make sure you write strictly in third person so you can achieve a formal voice. Avoid slang and abbreviations. Do not include phrases such as “I think,” “I believe,” or “in my opinion.” Cite all sources by recording exactly where you got your data or quotation.

**ORGANIZER:**

Complete the following chart to prepare for writing your essay. Fill in each box using *COMPLETE SENTENCES.*

**START WITH YOUR THESIS:**

Do you think going to college is worth it? **YES** or **NO**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CLAIM:** Write out your thesis in one or two sentences. Be sure it clearly states your opinion. |  |

**BODY PARAGRAPH 1:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **REASON 1:** Write one or two sentences explaining one reason for your opinion. |  | |
| **EVIDENCE:** What is one quote, statistic, analogy, example, etc. that supports your opinion? |  | **CITATION:** Where did you get this information? (Provide name of source and page or paragraph number) |
| **COMMENTARY:** How does this piece of evidence support your opinion? |  | |
| **EVIDENCE:** What is one quote, statistic, analogy, example, etc. that supports your opinion? |  | **CITATION:** Where did you get this information? (Provide name of source and page number) |
| **COMMENTARY:** How does this piece of evidence support your opinion? |  | |

Include additional evidence/commentary pairs as needed…

**BODY PARAGRAPH 2:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **REASON 2:** Write one or two sentences explaining one reason for your opinion. |  | |
| **EVIDENCE:** What is one quote, statistic, analogy, example, etc. that supports your opinion? |  | **CITATION:** Where did you get this information? (Provide name of source and page number) |
| **COMMENTARY:** How does this piece of evidence support your opinion? |  | |
| **EVIDENCE:** What is one quote, statistic, analogy, example, etc. that supports your opinion? |  | **CITATION:** Where did you get this information? (Provide name of source and page number) |
| **COMMENTARY:** How does this piece of evidence support your opinion? |  | |

Include additional evidence/commentary pairs as needed…

**BODY PARAGRAPH 3:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **REASON 3:** Write one or two sentences explaining one reason for your opinion. |  | |
| **EVIDENCE:** What is one quote, statistic, analogy, example, etc. that supports your opinion? |  | **CITATION:** Where did you get this information? (Provide name of source and page number) |
| **COMMENTARY:** How does this piece of evidence support your opinion? |  | |
| **EVIDENCE:** What is one quote, statistic, analogy, example, etc. that supports your opinion? |  | **CITATION:** Where did you get this information? (Provide name of source and page number) |
| **COMMENTARY:** How does this piece of evidence support your opinion? |  | |

Include additional evidence/commentary pairs as needed…

**COUNTERCLAIM:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **COUNTERCLAIM:** What is ONE reason that might suggest your claim is wrong? |  | |
| **EVIDENCE:** What is one quote, statistic, analogy, example, etc. that supports your **counterclaim**? |  | **CITATION:** Where did you get this information? (Provide name of source and page number) |
| **REFUTATION:** Why is this evidence inadequate? Include facts or logic explaining why this opposing data is not convincing or enough. |  | |

**CONCLUSION:**

|  |
| --- |
| **CONSEQUENCE**: Write one or more sentences explaining a potential and likely RESULT of your claim. Why is this result likely and positive? |
| **CONNECTION**: Write one or more sentences explaining how this relates to another topic or hopes for the future? |
| **CALL TO ACTION:** Write one or more sentences stating what you want the reader to do, think, or believe. |

**INTRODUCTION:**

|  |
| --- |
| **GRABBER/HOOK:** Write one or more sentences to grab the reader’s attention. This could be a quote from an article, a piece of counterevidence, and anecdote, or a useful statistic. Do NOT begin with a question. |
| **BACKGROUND/BRIDGE:** Write one or more sentences providing information about the topic. This should connect to post-secondary education. |
| **CLAIM/THESIS:** Transfer your sentence that clearly states your opinion on the question of whether going to traditional college is worth it. |

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Record any additional thoughts, ideas, quotes, data, or information that you would like to include in your essay here. Be as specific and thorough as possible.