

English 96

Essay #1: Choices

Essay Length: 500-750 words (2-4 handwritten pages)

Choose one of the topics below and write an essay that responds to it.

Choice One: We can't go through a day without making decisions: what to wear, what to eat for dinner, and so on. Some decisions we face, however, are much more important: where to attend college, whether or not to break up a relationship, when to leave home and go out on our own.

Write an essay in which you tell about a significant decision that you have made. Be sure to provide background information that helps your reader understand why you needed to make a decision and why this was an important decision. Also be sure to include a detailed description of the decision making process as well as an explanation of your reasons for choosing it as significant. Did you make the right choice?

Choice Two: A few years ago, American scholar Joseph Epstein lectured at CSULA on the question, "What is the point of a college education?" Many students think that the purpose of college is to prepare for a career. However, Epstein argued that students should go to college to achieve intellectual growth, and to discover universal values through a study of the past.

What do you think the purpose of college should be? Write an essay in which you explain your views, supporting them with specific illustrations from your knowledge or experience.

General Hints

1. Read the topic a couple of times and note what it requires you to do. Complete all the tasks of the assignment.
2. Take time to plan and organize your essay before you begin to write. (Scratch outlines are often quite helpful.)
3. Be sure to start with a clear main idea. (In other words, make sure you can answer this question: "What is the main point I want my readers to understand?")
4. Make sure that you support or illustrate general points with specific examples and vivid details from your own experience and from the text (when appropriate).
5. Allow yourself enough time after writing to go back over your essay, check for errors or omissions, and make any necessary corrections.