
Writing a two-sided argument essay

Topic: University degree costs

Argument: *'Is a university degree worth the cost?'*

Type: General

Level: ****[B1/B2]

Lesson Plan

Aim: to develop the students' ability to generate main ideas with support and write a two-sided argument.

3 types of lessons (writing x2 / reading)

1. Writing

- Ask Students to discuss *'Is a university degree worth the cost?'*
- Write down the reasons for 'yes' and 'no'
- Feed in / check key vocabulary (see next page)

Free Writing #1: [give out [Outline #1](#)] Students choose 2/3 of the positives / negatives discussed and add support. Go to introduction and fill the ideas of general, specific, outline, thesis, then to conclusion. Write the essay and students check ideas against the text [they could do the Reading Exercise]

Guided Writing #2: [give out [Outline #2](#)] Students read the outline with the basic points and then write the essay around these ideas. Then compare to the text.

Marking Student's work:

Use marking code: www.academic-englishuk.com/error-correction

2. Reading

1. Give out text and [Outline #3](#). Students read the essay and write down the key points and support in the structured outline [the bullet points relate to each piece of support]. Students check answers with [Outline #4](#).

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Is a UK university degree worth the money?

C. Wilson (2017)

Key vocabulary

1. Incredibly popular
2. College^{AmE} / University^{BrE}
3. An integral part of something
4. Necessity
5. Trebled
6. A Bachelor's Degree
7. A graduate
8. Expertise
9. A career
10. A profession
11. Networking
12. Critical thinking skills (analyse & evaluate)
13. Innovation / innovative
14. Focused on profit
15. A production line (in a factory)
16. Individual attention
17. 'One size fits all' [a phrase]
18. Guarantees
19. A swamped job market
20. Vocation training
21. Student loans / student debt
22. Redundant educational investment
23. Merits
24. To open doors [idiom]
25. Ranking

Is a UK university degree worth the money?

C. Wilson (2017)

University education in the U.K has become incredibly popular for young people with on average one in every three college students going on to study at university. Such high numbers seem to suggest that a degree qualification has become a necessity in modern society and an integral part of developing a future career. There is also evidence that graduates earn more money than those who have not been through a university education system. Nevertheless, the average cost for three years of higher education has trebled in the last three years and with such high numbers of students this has had an effect on the quality of teaching. This essay will discuss the positives and negatives in the value of a degree and state that a university degree is worth the investment but only with integrated vocational training.

A university degree is worth the money for a number of important reasons. The most significant is a bachelor's degree is a high qualification. It presents employers with a highly educated and highly knowledgeable person in a specific area of expertise. For the graduate it offers an opportunity for a career rather than just a job. Of course, certain professions such as doctors, lawyers and teachers need this qualification to work in these areas. Secondly, is that most young people state that the university experience is one of the best times of their life. This divides into two main areas in that for many it is the first time away from home and the first steps to becoming independent but also the friendships, parties and networking are all enjoyable parts of university life. Finally, the university education testing system focuses on the development of critical thinking. These skills help graduates to be innovative and creative in the workplace by being able analyse and evaluate situations as they arise. In sum, university helps develop the key skills to benefit society and employers.

Many critics argue that university education is not worth the amount of money it costs. The first argument is that universities have become too focused on making profit rather than quality education. Some claim that universities now resemble production lines, similar to factories where creativity and innovation is not encouraged. High numbers of students also mean lecturers cannot provide individual attention to students thus teaching to a one size fits all model. The second argument is there is no guarantee of employment when you graduate. In fact, with record numbers of students graduating, the job market has become swamped and only one out of every five graduates have found work in their subject area. The biggest problem is that many graduates do not have any experience. This highlights the need for courses to include vocational training. Lastly, is the cost and student debt. For example, tuition cost of a three-year bachelor degree is £29,000 and with accommodation and living expenses the average debt of a graduate is £50,000 (as of 2016). Such an excessive debt at 21 years old is a significant burden to bear and if the graduate cannot find employment in their subject area quickly they have to take any job to start to pay back the debt. This can result in a redundant educational investment. Overall, a university course seems to be a gamble.

In conclusion, higher education has its merits through providing academic knowledge, educating a person to a high standard and offering experience. However, there is an element of uncertainty regarding teaching, finding work and going into debt. Having a degree is worth the initial investment because it opens more doors than other alternatives. There are a range of practical solutions for the negatives discussed in this essay by choosing a university through quality of teaching ranking, choosing courses with vocational training and working part-time while at university to reduce the debt.

[633 Words]

Outline #1

Make notes using this outline to plan an essay on: 'Is a university degree worth the cost?'

Introduction	
General	
Specific	
Outline	
Thesis	

Positives - write your ideas and support	
1) point / idea: Support	
2) point: Support	
3) point Support	

Negatives - write your ideas and support	
1) point: Support	
2) point: Support	
3) point: Support	

Conclusion	
Summary:	
Thesis	
solutions	

Outline #2

Use these ideas to write a two-sided argument on: 'Is a university degree worth the cost?'

Introduction	
General	University popular 1:3 college students
Specific	A degree = good career a& more money. Costs = trebled / high class numbers, /poor teaching.
Outline	Positives & negatives
Thesis	University degree is worth it but need work placement. / experience

Positives
1) High qualification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers want educated and knowledgeable person in a specific area of expertise. Graduate: a career than a job. Certain professions (doctors, lawyers and teachers) need qualifications
2) University 'life' experience (best times of their life) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> independence Friendships, parties and networking = enjoyable parts of university life.
3) Critical thinking skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help innovation / creativity Able analyse and evaluate as situations arise. (important for work)

Negatives
1) Uni too focused on profit rather than quality education. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Like a factory or production line = prevents creativity and innovation. High numbers of students prevent individual attention
2) No guarantee of employment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1:5 (in UK) graduates have professional work No experience. Degree courses need vocational training.
3) Cost and student debt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student loans +Tuition cost = £50,000. Excessive debt at 21 years old = take any job. A gamble.

Conclusion	
Summary:	Merits =academic knowledge, high standard education & life experience. Uncertainty = regarding teaching, finding work & debt.
Thesis	Yes, worth the money as a degree opens more doors than other alternatives
solutions	Choosing a university for quality of teaching ranking, courses with vocational training and working part-time.

Outline #3

Read the essay on: 'Is a university degree worth the cost?' Fill in the outline *(basic notes only)*

Introduction	
General	
Specific	
Outline	
Thesis	

Positives - find the main points and support	
1) _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
2) _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
3) _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •

Negatives - find the main points and support	
1) _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
2) _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
3) _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •

Conclusion	
Summary:	
Thesis	
solutions	

Outline #4: ANSWERS

Introduction	
General	University is popular 1:3 college stds
Specific	A degree is necessary for a good career and more money. Costs have trebled, high class numbers, and poor teaching.
Outline	Positives & negatives
Thesis	University degree is worth it but need work placement.

Positives	
1) High qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers: educated and knowledgeable person in a specific area of expertise. Graduate: a career rather than just a job. certain professions (doctors, lawyers and teachers) need this qualification
2) University 'life' experience (best times of their life)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing independence Friendships, parties and networking are all enjoyable parts of university life.
3) Critical thinking skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help innovation and creativity in the workplace Able analyse and evaluate as situations arise.

Negatives	
1) Too focused on profit rather than quality education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production lines, similar to factories prevents creativity and innovation. High numbers of students prevent individual attention
2) No guarantee of employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One out of every five graduates have found work in their subject area. No experience. Degree courses need vocational training.
3) Cost and student debt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuition cost = £50,000. Excessive debt at 21 years old forces graduate to take any job. Redundant investment. A gamble.

Conclusion	
Summary:	Merits =academic knowledge, high standard education & life experience. Uncertainty = regarding teaching, finding work & debt.
Thesis	Yes worth the money as a degree opens more doors than other alternatives
solutions	Choosing a university through quality of teaching ranking, courses with vocational training and working part-time.