

Ashland English 100 Essay #3

Arguing a Point

Begin by reading “The Lessons I Didn’t Learn in College” by Caitlin Petre (available through Blackboard).

Your Writing Task

Petre begins with a specific example that is a symptom of a larger problem. The reader must ask whether her assessment is correct. If she is right, there is a bigger issue that we need to deal with. This is an essay which invites the reader to take a side; therefore, choose one of these two directions and craft your thesis and essay to support the point:

1. It is not the business of high school or college to teach “basic life skills” (changing a tire, frying an egg, sorting laundry, or filling in a tax form). A smart person will pick these skills up; schools should focus on academic subjects.
2. Because of the breakdown in traditional family and village structure, there is no way a young person can learn “basic life skills,” so schools which want to produce successful adults really should have specific courses to teach these skills.

Choose a side; give reasons for your choice and a possible strategy for dealing with Petre’s problem.

Note and warning:

Abusive language (for example calling Petre, the instructor, or the editors of *Newsweek* magazine idiots) will earn you a *very* low grade on this paper. Argument is not about insult; it is about presenting reasons for the point you are making.

Mechanical Details

Length: Minimum 980 words not counting title, your name, etc. That’s about a three-page paper. There is no maximum, but try to keep it under 1400. Papers significantly under the minimum (90% or less) will not receive the best possible grade.

Format: Standard MLA format. (12-point Times Roman type, double-spaced, 1” margin all around, MLA header.)

Submitting the paper:

- The English Department wants electronic copies of all your essays this semester, so please upload the final product to the drop box in Blackboard. Some students (especially those who use Google Docs) have trouble figuring out how to do this, so ask if you are uncertain how to proceed!
- If you have any trouble getting the Blackboard upload to work, simply print a copy and bring it to class.

Due Dates

1. **Paragraph Coherence Exercise:**

Bring in a printed rough draft of your paper Monday, October 8, 2018

2. **Final Copy:** Wednesday, October 10, 2018

This essay is worth 75 points.