



Proficient | Exemplar Essay

Prep Work

Prepping for College Early



Claim and Focus

This essay introduces a clear and specific claim ("I think that even though it can make life hard, it is important for students to start as early as possible to think about college.") and maintains focus on its development throughout the essay. Reference to a counterclaim is informally made ("I waited until I was in high school and now I feel like I'm so rushed and like they said in a college frenzy."), with some development.



Support and Evidence

This essay provides ample evidence to support its claim, discussing steps that could be taken at each level of schooling. Because of this detail, it is relatively clear that the writer understands the topic and prompt question. A counterclaim is present, but the explanation of that counterclaim is disproportionate to the discussion of the claim.



Organization

A clear introduction and conclusion are present in this essay, with a logically organized discussion occurring within the body paragraphs (elementary school to middle school to high school). The ideas within paragraphs are directly related, and transitions are attempted between different paragraphs ("In elementary school," "In middle school," "In high school").



Language and Style

While some portions of this essay still verge on informal, the student demonstrates a general command of language and sentence structure. The essay includes some interesting vocabulary ("pressure," "realistic," "resumes") and some variety in the lengths and complexities of the sentences that are included. The voice of the student certainly comes through in the writing, which gives the essay a distinct perspective on the prompt topic.



Using Exemplars in Your Lessons

Exemplar essays are tools to take abstract descriptions and make them more concrete for students. One way to use them is to print the clean copies of the essays and allow students to use the rubric to make notes or even find examples of important elements of an essay - thesis statements, introductions, evidence, conclusions, transitions, etc. Teachers can also use exemplars to illustrate what each score point within a trait 'looks like' in an authentic student essay. For additional ideas, please see "25 Ways to Use Exemplar Essays" by visiting the Curriculum Resources page in Help.



Prepping for College Early

Teachers, guidance counselors, and parents are pressuring students to begin thinking about college earlier and earlier in their lives lately. They say they want the best for them, but is this pressure worth it? I think that even though it can make life hard, it is important for students to start as early as possible to think about college. The more time they have to prepare, the better off they will be when it is time to apply and go to college.

In elementary school, teachers can talk to kids about different jobs they can do when they grow up and what majors go with them. They can ask them questions about what jobs they think they would like and read stories about those jobs. They could even take fieldtrips to those jobs. Their worksheets and tests can tie to these things to help kids start to be realistic and think about what job they want and not just silly things like astronaut or football player.

In middle school, kids can start writing about what they want to do and how they will get there. They can start joining sports and clubs to put on their resumes. The more things that they have done for a long time the better. Too many kids wait until they are seniors and want to join clubs and sports to put on their resumes but then it is too late and you're only doing it for college and not to be a better person.

In high school kids can work with teachers and guidance counselors to make sure they are taking the right classes and getting good grades. They should still be doing clubs and sports that they started in middle school. They should visit lots of schools to see what ones they like the most and how far away they want to go to. They should also job shadow some people in different jobs to see if they

will actually like that job they want to pick. If they hate it at the job shadow, then they don't waste thousands of dollars to be unhappy for the rest of their lives.

I think that we should start as early as possible to think about college. Even before elementary school at home wouldn't be bad. I waited until I was in high school and now I feel like I'm so rushed and like they said in a college frenzy. There are too many thoughts and decisions to make in so short of time. I wish i would of started earlier and things would of been easier. That's what I would suggest to other kids like my little brother. Start as early as you can and then you won't be rushed and crazy and risk making a bad choice.

