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**RI06/RI08 Author’s Purpose; Evaluating Arguments**

Source:<http://college-education.procon.org>

**Is a College Education Worth It?**

The debate over whether a college education is worth it may have begun when the colonists arrived from Europe and founded "New College" (later renamed Harvard University) in 1636. With 19.9 million US college students in 2013 and average student debt at over $26,500, the debate continues today.

People who argue that college is worth it contend that college graduates have higher employment rates, bigger salaries, and more work benefits than high school graduates. They say college graduates also have better interpersonal skills, live longer, have healthier children, and have proven their ability to achieve a major milestone.

People who argue that college is not worth it contend that the debt from college loans is too high and delays graduates from saving for retirement, buying a house, or getting married. They say many successful people never graduated from college and that many jobs, especially trades (electrician, plumber, mechanic, etc.) jobs, do not require college degrees.

1. What is the author’s purpose for writing the passage “Is a College Education Worth it”?
2. To persuade the audience that college is not worth the money because students end up with a high amount of student debt.
3. To inform the audience on the debate regarding the value of a college education.
4. To entertain the reader with a story about a young woman moving across the country to attend college.
5. To inform the audience about the courses a student needs to take in order to earn a college degree.

2) Give one piece of textual evidence that supports the purpose you chose.

**The Truth about a College Education**

Student loan debt is crippling for college graduates. Between 2003 and 2012 the number of 25-year-olds with student debt increased from 25% to 43%, and their average loan balance was $20,326 in 2012--a 91% increase since 2003. 10% of students graduate with over $40,000 in debt and about 1% have $100,000 in debt. The average student borrower graduated in 2011 with $26,600 in debt. According to the US Congress Joint Economic Committee, approximately 60% of 2011 college graduates have student loan debt balances equal to 60% of their annual income. Missing or being late for loan payments often results in a lower credit score and additional fees, thus escalating the debt problem and potentially jeopardizing future purchases and employment.

Student loan debt often forces college graduates to live with their parents and delay marriage, financial independence, and other adult milestones. According to a 2012 Federal Reserve Study, 30-year-olds who have never taken out a student loan are now more likely to own homes than those who have taken out loans. Auto loans are also trending down at faster rates for those with student debt history than for those without. In 2013, student loan borrowers delayed retirement saving (41%), car purchases (40%), home purchases (29%), and marriage (15%). Less than 50% of women and 30% of men had passed the "transition to adulthood" milestones by age 30 (finishing school, moving out of their parents' homes, being financially independent, marrying, and having children); in 1960, 77% of women and 65% of men had completed these milestones by age 30. In short, the extremely high cost of college makes a college education not worth the expense. A college education may lead to better jobs for some, but it leads to life-long debt for all.

1) What is the author’s purpose for writing “The Truth about College Education”

1. To inform the reader about how much money a college education actually costs.
2. To inform the reader about scholarships and financial aid opportunities that students can use to help pay for college.
3. To persuade the reader to attend college despite its high cost.
4. To persuade the reader that the high cost of a college education makes college not worth the money.

2) How does the author develop his point of view? In other words, what appeals does he use? Include ALL appeals that apply—don’t just stop at one; however, you might not find all 3!

**\*\*You only have to provide 1 example for each appeal that you find.**

Ethos:

Pathos:

Logos:

**Beyond Tuition and Degrees: The True Value of a College Education**

A college education goes beyond earning a degree or getting a better job. Earning a college degree is a major life achievement. College graduation can represent an attainment of the American Dream, the culmination of years of hard work for the student, and the payoff for sacrifices made by supporting parents and friends. Blogger Darrius Mind wrote that his graduation day at Wilberforce University was, "probably the best day of my entire life. That was the day I finished my challenge to myself and also the day I made history in my family, it was the day I EARNED my college degree.”

To put it simply, a college education makes you a better person. According to Rebecca Mead, staff writer for *The New Yorker*, college teaches students "to nurture critical thought; to expose individuals to the signal accomplishments of humankind; to develop in them an ability not just to listen actively but to respond intelligently;" all of which "are habits of mind…from which a letter carrier, no less than a college professor, might derive a sense of self-worth." In 2011 74% of students said college helped them "grow intellectually" and 69% said college helped them grow and mature as people. Jonathan D. Fitzgerald, MA, Visiting Professor at Eastern Nazarene College, argues, "The value of a liberal arts college education --to you, to employers-- is that you've spent four years in a place where you were forced to consider new ideas, to meet new people, to ask new questions, and to learn to think, to socialize, to imagine. If you graduate, you will get a degree, but if you are not a very different person from who are you are today, then college failed.” Henry Bienan, PhD, President Emeritus of Northwestern University, argues that a college education results in "greater productivity, lower crime, better health, [and] better citizenship for more educated people.”

While a college degree does provide better job opportunities, there are many more important benefits to a college education. Attending college prepares students for a more fulfilling and enriching life.

1) In “Beyond Tuition and Degrees: The True Value of a College Education” what is the author’s central claim?

1. that a college education is not worth the high cost.
2. that a college education provides lifelong benefits that extend beyond better job opportunities.
3. that the primary benefit of a college education is a higher salary.
4. that attending college is not for everybody.

2) How does the author develop his point of view? In other words, what appeals does he use? Include ALL appeals that apply—don’t just stop at one; however, you might not find all 3!

**\*\*You only have to provide 1 example for each appeal that you find.**

Ethos:

Pathos:

Logos:

3) Compare and contrast how the authors of “**The Truth** about College Education” and “**Beyond Tuition** and Degrees: The True Value of a College Education” use evidence to achieve their purpose. Include text evidence in your response.

a. What appeals do both authors use? **Provide evidence.**

b. What appeals differ between the 2 articles? **Provide evidence.**

4) Which article makes a stronger argument “**The Truth** about College Education” or “**Beyond Tuition** and Degrees: The True Value of a College Education”? Why? Include text evidence in your response.