

Student Exemplar

Directions: Record your observations and reflections on the questions below in the response section of the assignment in Google Classroom. Be prepared to share your observations with a partner or Mr. Restad.

- What is the main idea of the essay? Underline what you would label as the thesis.
- What does the writer use as a hook or intro?
- Highlight a citation the author uses. How does the writer integrate the sourced information? What effect does this have?

A level examples:

“Lessons From Failure” (453)

There it is. Among the countless 100s, I see it: a 37. A hideous, black mark in the grade book. I had to nearly restrain my mother from pouncing on the phone to call my teacher. “Let me handle it,” I said. Uneasily and reluctantly, she did. She, thankfully, is not a snowplow parent.

According to an article in The New York Times, snowplow parents clear the road for their children to chug ahead on their perfect path to success. It’s why some students turn in homework handwritten by middle-aged adults, why a sophomore girl’s dad picks her up the period before every math test, why lunches flood the main office, delivered by parents of forgetful students. Perhaps students are all too happy to have parents control their lives. Or maybe parents don’t listen and need to run the show. Both need to rethink their positions.

Stellar grades and fancy admission letters seem like “proof” that parents’ meticulous managing and manipulating produces results. On paper, today’s seniors look successful: lists of APs, high test scores, varsity letters, unique community service projects, ability to play fifteen instruments while simultaneously winning chess competitions.

The reality? Dean Julie Lythcott-Haims of Stanford University observes these same students, now at prestigious universities, constantly calling home for advice, special packages, and help with basic tasks like registering for classes or contacting professors.

Beyond college, a poll by The New York Times showed that 76 percent of parents reminded their adult children of deadlines, 74 percent set up appointments and 11 percent called employers about issues at work. Parents, how long are you going to continue living two lives?

Overprotective parents limit teens’ opportunities to build skills needed in adulthood. Many parents feel that kids can’t succeed without nagging and protecting at every turn. This stunts kids’ growth and conveys that failure, life’s best teacher, is their worst enemy. The short-term gains of A+ report cards come at the long-term cost of sense of self. When failure is foreign to kids, what will they do in the real world where frustration and lost opportunities are commonplace?

Of course, parents need to be there when necessary, but not for tracking studying and extracurriculars and proofreading homework at night. Most of the time, let children govern their own lives to develop habits and skills for adulthood. Instead of putting answers in their mouths, guide them to solve their problems.

Let them mess up. Let them fail. No parent wants to see their child fail (the horror!), but failure is fundamental. My mom showed she respected me and my autonomy by letting me deal with my own problem. In the end, that one 37 taught me much more than all the 100s did.

A Well-Lived Life (492)

The key to living a good life is to form your own identity and become your truest self. Being able to express yourself and show your true self makes the life you're living even more meaningful. Being yourself gives you a certain comfort and stability that you can only get within yourself, and largely contributes to your overall happiness and mental health. It also allows you to find solitude within yourself.

A part of forming your own identity is to be able to formulate your own opinions as well. Creating your own opinions and ideas about life gives you a sense of purpose in the world and gives you the opportunity to put out your own thoughts and ideas towards something bigger. Another benefit that having your own identity brings, is giving you the opportunity to love deeper. Knowing your own identity and self allows for you to love yourself but also creates a window for being able to love others with this new found self-love.

In Waldo Ralph Emerson's philosophy, "Self Reliance", he builds on the idea that you should become your own person with your own opinions and thoughts to be able to rely on yourself. He believes that you should be dependent on yourself and make the best out of any situation you are given. Society makes it difficult to become self-reliant because of how much we fear the opinions and thoughts of others. He is big on the prospect of not letting yourself become a follower of others due to the pressure of general society, to not conform to society just because it's the easier way to live.

Emerson uses the metaphor, "Envy is ignorance, imitation is suicide." by using this metaphor, Emerson is further explaining his idea that the best way to live is to live a life that is truly your own. If you are jealous of everything that everyone else has, then you will miss all the important things that you have. If you spend your life replicating someone else's life then you are essentially killing off your own identity and self. He asserts it will always be difficult to be your own self and not follow others, but the end result is always worth it and your life will feel more meaningful.

While I agree with Emerson's philosophy of becoming reliant on yourself, I also believe that on many occasions it is also okay to create those connections with others and allow yourself to lean on them every once and a while. Otherwise, I agree that being your own person and expressing yourself despite what others might say is very important in regards to living a well lived life. I particularly love Emerson's point about how, to be great is to be misunderstood. Not everyone will agree with every opinion and thought you have, and that is okay. Being able to express yourself and opinions is more important than having everyone agree with you.

Proficient (B) Level examples

Choices in Life (397)

Life is an experience we all are going through everyday but what can we do to make it worthwhile? In my opinion, to live a good life you have to be happy with who you are as a person. If you're not content with yourself how can you be content with others? Understanding the importance of That is why it is important to be happy with who you are.

We are able to make decisions and choose between good and bad. However, it is important we know about integrity and how it helps you choose. "Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind." This quote is important because it shines a light on the idea that our consciousness is important and the decisions we make reflect it. If we lived life not understanding that we wouldn't hold ourselves to any moral accountability and the world would be very crazy. Staying honest and keeping yourself in the light really makes a difference on your outlook on life because you're keeping yourself in a positive place.

In the poem 'The Road Not Taken' by Robert Frost we follow a narrator walking on a path when it splits. He chooses the path that looks less worn. The point of the poem is to highlight what would the narrator's life be like if he had taken the other more traveled on path. "I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference." He chose the path less traveled for himself and it makes the journey he's walking more special. Because the two roads diverged it gave the narrator a choice to do something and choose his own path. We all need an experience choosing our own path so we can be put into perspective and see how our decisions affect our own lives.

Living life is something all of us do everyday and how we choose to live it determines the good or bad of it. Learning how to be a good person and taking on challenges head on makes you a good person because you experience life in a different way than a person who is negative all the time. It is important to live doing what you are passionate about because you're doing something that benefits you and keeps you happy. That is what living a good life means to me.