

Essay Prompt: Higher Education and Your Career Path

Everyone has an opinion about what you should study. Parents push practical degrees. Friends question your choices. Career advisors hand you salary charts. People on TV, the Internet, and social media tell you to "follow your passion" or, just as loudly, to "be realistic."

In a **1,000-word essay**, enter that conversation.

Your task is to write a **thesis-driven argument** that examines the relationship between your current program of study, your major, or a course you are taking and your career goals. You are not simply describing what you study or what you want to do — you are making a **claim** about *why* that connection matters and defending it against the doubts, assumptions, or misconceptions others might hold about your path.

Your essay must:

- Open by establishing a **"they say"** — identify a common assumption, skepticism, or piece of conventional wisdom that surrounds your field of study or career goal. This might be something people assume about your major, a doubt others have expressed, or a widespread belief about what kind of work is "worth it."
- Develop a clear **thesis** that responds to that "they say" with your own informed, specific claim about the relationship between what you are studying and where you want to go.
- Use **concrete details** — specific courses, skills, experiences, or knowledge from your program — as evidence for your argument.
- Acknowledge and respond to **at least one counterargument**. What might a skeptic say in response to your thesis, and how do you answer them?
- Close with a reflection on why this argument matters beyond you personally — what does your path suggest about education, work, or what it means to be prepared for a career?

A note on your thesis: A strong thesis here is not "I am studying nursing because I want to help people." That is a statement of fact and feeling, not an argument. Push further. What do *you* claim about the relationship between your studies and your goals that someone could reasonably disagree with?

Audience: Write for a reader who is intelligent and curious but genuinely skeptical — someone who might raise an eyebrow at your chosen path and need to be convinced.

Evaluation criteria: Your essay will be assessed on the clarity and arguability of your thesis, the specificity of your evidence, the fairness and strength of your engagement with counterarguments, and the coherence of your overall argument.

Format:

Length: approximately 1,000 words.

No outside research is required — your own knowledge, experience, and reasoning are your primary sources.

Due dates:

07/01: Drafting session

07/03: Paper due (by midnight). [Please upload to this folder](#)