

English 1A, LPC, Cole

Essay 3

Preparing for the In-Class Essay

Following is a list of possible essay questions based on those you handed in. I will choose three questions for the in-class essay. I suggest preparing your answers ahead of time. You may not bring notes to class, but you should bring in the readings (and you may write notes on your readings).

You will have sixty minutes to write the essay. Come to class prepared to write, having either a blue book or stapled paper and all of the needed texts.

Objectives:

In writing this essay, you will practice the following:

- Formulating study questions;
- Working in study groups;
- Extracting information from readings;
- Discussing the ideas and / or presenting information from these readings accurately;
- Accurately attributing ideas and / or quotations from the readings;
- Synthesizing the texts read in class;
- Addressing a writing prompt;
- Completing a timed writing task.

Guidelines:

Write down the number of the essay question you choose.

Be sure to address the whole writing prompt in your essay.

Assume your reader is only vaguely familiar with the texts; therefore, you should introduce each reading, briefly summarizing it (naming the author, the title, and main event / thesis).

In your answer, include information from Nickel and Dimed and any other text referenced in the prompt. (However, you may also include information from other sources and / or your own experience as appropriate.)

After each quotation or specific reference to the text, include a page number in parentheses. (For examples of this, see writing prompts numbered 3 & 4.)

Form and Content Requirements:

As with your take-home essays, your paper will be graded on the strength of the following characteristics. However, since this is a timed writing, the point values differ somewhat from the last two essays.

There are 100 points possible.

Focus / Cohesion: 30 points

- The essay has a clear thesis that addresses the writing prompt;
- The body paragraphs have clear points that develop the thesis and each other;
- All of the information in the essay relates to and / or develops the thesis.

Development: 45 points

- The writer has fully addressed the writing prompt;
- The writer has drawn on Nickel and Dimed to address the writing prompt;
- The thesis and body paragraph points are supported with information from the texts;
- The ideas, quotations, paraphrases, and summaries are accurate;

All information from the texts (including the television show) are accurately attributed the appropriate source;
There are explanations of how the information supports the points as needed.

Organization: 10 points
The paragraphing is logical;
The order of ideas is logical;
The paragraphs have transitions.

Style: 5 points
The word choice is appropriate;
The sentence structure is smooth.

Mechanics: 10 points
The sentences are clear and easy to read;
The sentences are properly constructed, with no grammar or usage errors;
The punctuation is correct.

Possible Essay Questions:

According to Harlon L. Dalton in “Horatio Alger,” what are the “three basic messages” conveyed by the Horatio Alger myth? How does Barbara Ehrenreich’s experience and observations in Nickel and Dimed confirm or refute the messages described by Dalton? (Optional: You may refer to other sources and / or your own experience as well.) What, if any, are the consequences of believing in these messages?

Describe “Myth 1” as explained by Gregory Mantsios in “Class in America: Myths and Realities (2000).” How does Barbara Ehrenreich’s experience and observations in Nickel and Dimed support or dispel the myth as described by Mantsios? (Optional: You may refer to other sources and / or your own experience as well.) What, if any, are the consequences of believing in this myth?

Harlon L. Dalton in “Horatio Alger,” quotes social psychologist Shelley Taylor to describe how it is possible to subscribe to a myth and know it’s false:

[T]he normal human mind is oriented toward mental health and . . . at every turn it construes events in a manner that promotes benign fictions about the self, the world, and the future. The mind is, with some significant exceptions, intrinsically adaptive, oriented toward overcoming rather than succumbing to the adverse events of life . . . At one level, it construes beneficent interpretations of threatening events that raise self-esteem and promote motivation; yet at another level, it recognizes the threat or challenge that is posed by these events. (308)

How accurately does this description apply to the workers that Barbara Ehrenreich describes in Nickel and Dimed? (Optional: How accurately does this describe workers whom you’ve observed?) How might (or might not) this mental tendency be a factor in the exploitation of workers?

In Nickel and Dimed, Barbara Ehrenreich claims that “wages are too low and rents too high” (199). Having read Nickel and Dimed and Gregory Mantsios’ “Class in America: Myths and Realities (2000),” do you agree? Why or why not? Support your position with evidence taken from Ehrenreich’s and Mantsios’ texts (optional: you may also draw on evidence from your experience or other sources.) Finally, explain how reading these texts has affected your view of working for minimum wage and / or class issues in the United States.

Describe “Reality 4” as explained by Gregory Mantsios in “Class in America: Myths and Realities (2000).” Drawing on Barbara Ehrenreich’s Nickel and Dimed defend or refute this statement. (Optional: You may refer to other sources and / or your own experience as well.) Support your position with at least three examples (one of which must be from Nickel and Dimed). Finally,

explain how reading these texts has affected your view of working for minimum wage and / or class issues in the United States.

Describe “Reality 5” as explained by Gregory Mantsios in “Class in America: Myths and Realities (2000).” Drawing on Barbara Ehrenreich’s Nickel and Dimed defend or refute this statement. (Optional: You may refer to other sources and / or your own experience as well.) Support your position with at least three examples (one of which must be from Nickel and Dimed). Finally, explain how reading these texts has affected your view of working for minimum wage and / or class issues in the United States.

Preparing for the In-Class Essay:

Study Group Guidelines

Working with a study group can be very helpful. Each person in the group should do an equal amount of work. For example, you might divide the questions and research the answers, looking up supporting evidence and noting page numbers. Then it is a good idea to discuss your answers and share your perspectives. However, do not share the exact words you will use to write the essay; this would compromise the integrity of the study group.

In-Class Essay Preparation Suggestions:

Analyze how many questions you really need to prepare to answer to feel comfortable with your choices. Also, you will notice overlap in the answers; this is fine.

For each question, write an outline and a thesis statement, and select appropriate textual evidence (also note personal evidence if you plan to use it). Note page numbers of the textual evidence. Write all of this information in your book.

Annotate the readings for quick reference while you are writing the essay.

Reread the requirements and prepare accordingly.

Get plenty of sleep the night before you write the in-class essay and come to class having eaten.

English 1A, Cole, LPC

Name:

Final Draft Evaluation Sheet: In-Class Essay
100 Points possible.

Focus / Cohesion: 30 points / Points Earned _____

The essay has a clear thesis that addresses the writing prompt;
The body paragraphs have clear points that develop the thesis and each other;
All of the information in the essay relates to and / or develops the thesis.

Notes:

Development: 45 points / Points Earned _____

The writer has fully addressed the writing prompt;
The writer has drawn on Nickel and Dimed to address the writing prompt;
The thesis and body paragraph points are supported with information from the texts;
The ideas, quotations, paraphrases, and summaries are accurate;
All information from the texts (including the television show) are accurately attributed the appropriate source;
There are explanations of how the information supports the points as needed.

Notes:

Organization: 10 points / Points Earned _____

The paragraphing is logical;
The order of ideas is logical;
The paragraphs have transitions.

Notes:

Style: 5 points / Points Earned _____

The word choice is appropriate;
The sentence structure is smooth.

Notes:

Mechanics: 10 points / Points Earned _____

The sentences are clear and easy to read;
The sentences are properly constructed, with no grammar or usage errors;
The punctuation is correct.

Notes:

Strengths:

Points for Essay:

Areas to Focus on: