

Essay Assignment 1—Illustration response to “Class in America”

Assignment: Choose a passage, statistic, statement, reality, myth, or other aspect or detail of Greg Mantsios’s essay, and respond to it using *examples* of real people you have known (including yourself). First, explain clearly the part of the essay you are responding to so readers will know where it came from and why he said it. Then state your opinion clearly, and use examples to show why you feel as you do.

- For instance, if you want to agree with Mantsios that the myths (or a particular myth) of the American class system *aren’t* true, then you’ll state why then give examples of people, possibly including yourself, whose experience supports your belief.
- Or if you want to agree with a portion of his essay—say, the fact that women on the job are still discriminated against—tell the story of someone you know who has fallen victim to that discrimination.
- Or, for instance, if you’ve worked on a job with people who seem to be moving up on the career ladder, then they may be proof that the dream can be realized.
- Or, for instance, if you’ve worked dead-end jobs with dead-end people, then you may find the opposite to be true. If you have personally been discriminated against, or if someone in your family has succeeded or failed, the details of those examples will provide evidence to prove/show your position.

Feel free to use the stories and essays (Ragged Dick and Looking for Work) we’ve read, and the people in the Wal Mart movie, as examples to help illustrate your point.

The essay should include:

1. a clear thesis sentence/idea. That is, you have a point you are making which you will then set out to convince your readers to be true. Examples:
 - a. “In spite of Mantsios’s numbers that seem to show otherwise, I believe that Americans have an equal chance at succeeding if they want to.”
 - b. “An individual’s class does not necessarily determine whether or not that person will get good grades.” (quote Mantsios’s passage on SAT scores and social class and then write.)
 - c. “As the only female working in the service department of a car dealership, I have experienced first-hand the discrimination that Mantsios describes.” (quote Mantsios, and give.)
2. reference to the essay. First, give proper introduction to the source and then use both direct quote and/or indirect quote (paraphrase) correctly.
3. One or more examples that support your opinion. For instance, you might use:
 - The story of a single person who overcame the odds to achieve success.
 - Examples of several people who have succeeded in spite of the odds.
 - The story of someone who achieved academic success (or failure, on the opposite end)
 - First-hand experience, how your own story shows Mantsios’s points to be true or false.
4. Strong detail. As you’re telling the stories of individuals, be sure to give your readers enough information to understand how the person fits your point. Include, as appropriate, dialogue, sense detail, physical description, color, and so on.
5. Closing paragraph that brings your thoughts together—what is your point in saying all you’ve said? How does what you’ve said relate back to Mantsios? To America?
6. MLA heading (four lines, top left), 1” margins. Introduce Mantsios and any other outside source you use, such as your updated statistics, completely, giving name of author, title of article or site, and any other useful information. You do not need to have a Works Cited page if you do this.

Note: to save paper, you may 1 ½ space between lines if you wish.

First draft due in class: Wed., Sept. 9

In-class/critique draft due: Mon., Sept. 14

Final draft due: Wed. Sept. 16