

“SAMPLE WRITING PROFICIENCY TOPIC”
Tarleton State University
Fall 2009

Your response to the following **Sample WPE Question** should reflect your ability as an academic writer. Do your best to develop your essay clearly and thoughtfully. You will be given a different question to answer on the day of the exam based on the same article.

The Preparation:

The article “In Debt Before You Start” discusses problems that college students are experiencing with finances. The author states that years of rising college costs and shrinking financial aid are causing students to get deeper into debt than ever before. Other causes of this increased debt are a poor job market after graduation and the pressure for students to seek advanced degrees. However, the long-term value of a college degree is still strong and college students can use grants, federal aid, and scholarships to control their college debt.

Sample Writing Assignment:

Write a three to four page essay explaining your opinion on the topic below. Use relevant reasons and/or examples for support.

The article “In Debt Before You Start” states “College students face a miserable set of financial circumstances as they enroll in college this year.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

NOTE: The topic will be different the day of the exam. The topic stated above is just for practice. However, the topic will be based on the same article.

In order to develop your essay, you will need to include clear support for your argument. Your examples should be detailed and should reflect your understanding of the topic. In addition, the essay should be effectively organized and easy to follow.

Evaluation Criteria: The readers will use the following criteria in order to evaluate your essay

1. Content – Does the essay answer the question in the prompt and make sense as a whole? Does the essay make points that are logical? Are those points adequately developed?
2. Organization – Does the essay have a clear pattern of arrangement and maintain organizational clarity at lower levels of text as well as paragraph to paragraph?
3. Style – Does the essay contain sentences that are clear, readable, and idiomatic? Is the tone appropriate for an academic reader?
4. Mechanics – Does the essay maintain a suitable level of control over conventions of punctuation, spelling, grammar, and usage?

For a more detailed explanation of Evaluation Criteria, consult the TSU Writing Center website:
<http://www.tarleton.edu/~writingcenter/wpecriteria.html>