In preparation for this essay, you will read a series of texts and participate in class discussions about the assignment. You will then use information from the texts and discussions as well as your own observations, critical thinking, and writing skills to try to get your audience to agree with you or at least see your point.

Audience

You have an academic audience for this paper. That means you are trying to persuade teachers and students.

**College Tuition Debate**

In American culture, policy makers often point to higher education as the best means for most Americans to achieve the American Dream. College enrollment trends reflect this widespread belief. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, undergraduate enrollment from 2000-2015 increased by 30 percent and is projected to continue growing. Following a national trend, Idaho’s State Board of Education set a self-described “ambitious” goal as part of the “Complete College Idaho” plan that 60 percent of Idahoans ages 25-34 will have a postsecondary degree or certificate by 2020.

However, college costs have also been rising at a pace that far exceeds income and inflation. According to The College Board, average tuition and fees for a public two-year community college like CWI more than doubled from 1987 to 2017, rising from $1,590 (using 2017 dollars) to $3,570. In contrast, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, median annual household income in 1987 was $52,000, and in 2016 was $59,000. While Pell Grants and scholarships cover some costs for some students, much of the financial burden of a college education falls on students and their families, who often turn to student loans to pay the bill. When students fail to complete their education, they may leave with significant debt, without the lifetime income increases associated with successful completion of a college degree.

The cost of college is a complex issue driving national conversations. One popular idea to address the problem is free college tuition, either in the form of grants to students or in increased funding directly to the institutions. Supporters believe free tuition could equalize access to college, improve student choice of degree or major, and decrease the debt burden for students, boosting the economy. Opponents believe that free tuition could reduce the value of a degree, result in income tax increases, or, depending on the funding model, force colleges to choose degree programs that are less expensive to operate.

Prompt

Using the given readings, in addition to your own experiences and observations, write an essay that argues your opinion on the question, “Should college tuition be free?”

Your thesis statement must assert more than “College tuition should/not be free;” it must include at least one reason why or otherwise narrow or specify your argument.

For example, you could explore arguments like those listed below:

* As long as the funding model for colleges remains based on student enrollment, college tuition should be free.
* College tuition should not be free because some students might take their coursework less seriously if they aren’t personally invested.
* Instead of making college free for everyone, tuition should be calculated on a sliding scale based on family or individual income. This would result in more equitable access.
* If college was tuition-free, students might be more likely to take risks and choose degrees based on interests rather than total cost.

Requirements

* Include a bibliography or works cited page in addition to at least four pages of text, in Times New Roman 12-point font.
* Cite at least two of the given sources. You should not do additional research for this assignment.
* Include at least six total in-text citations, which must include summary, paraphrase, and direct quotation from the two or more sources you choose.

Assessment Criteria

Readers will evaluate your essay based on the following English 101 course outcomes:

* Write thesis-driven, analytic essays for an academic audience
* Demonstrate rhetorical awareness through use of structure, paragraphing, voice, and tone
* Evaluate, analyze, synthesize own ideas and the ideas of others
* Read critically for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating
* Make basic but effective use of sources in an academic documentation format, including in-text citation and a bibliography
* Demonstrate awareness of grammar and usage conventions in academic writing

Sources

Below are the sources you may cite in your essay. You may not use any other outside sources in your essay.

*Background Sources*

* American Association of Community Colleges: “Fast Facts 2019” (infographic)

[https://www.aacc.nche.edu/research-trends/fast-facts/](about:blank)

* College Board: “Types of Colleges: The Basics” [https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/college-101/types-of-colleges-the-basics](about:blank)
* Federal Reserve Bank of New York: “Press Briefing on Household Debt, with Focus on Student Debt” [https://www.newyorkfed.org/medialibrary/media/press/pressbriefing-household-student-debt-april32017.pdf](about:blank)
* The College System of Tennessee: “Tennessee Promise Students at Community Colleges: The Fall 2015 Cohort after Five Semesters” [https://www.tbr.edu/sites/tbr.edu/files/media/2018/05/TBR\_TNPromise\_2015\_2.pdf](about:blank)
* Price, Tom. “Student Debt: Should College Tuition be Free?” [http://library.cqpress.com.cwi.idm.oclc.org/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrre2016111800&type=hitlist&num=2](about:blank).

*Note: This source will require you to first log in to the CWI library using CWI credentials. If this link will not work, follow this click sequence: Navigate to the CWI Library Homepage:* [http://cwi.edu/current-students/library](about:blank)*> Click “Databases” under “Find It” > Click “CQ Researcher” in the alphabetical list > type “Student Debt,” including quotation marks, into the “Search” field > Click the first article, “Student Debt,” dated 11/18/2016.*

*Discussion Sources*

* Bruenig, Matt. “The Case Against Free College”

[https://newrepublic.com/article/123022/case-against-free-college](about:blank)

* Douglas-Gabriel, Danielle. “Minorities and Poor College Students are Shouldering the Most Student Debt” [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/05/19/minorities-and-poor-college-students-are-shouldering-the-most-student-debt/?utm\_term=.2785ceb84aaa](about:blank)
* Edgecombe, Nikki. “Aid Low-Income Students and Colleges that Serve Them” [https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2016/01/20/should-college-be-free/aid-low-income-students-and-colleges-that-serve-them](about:blank)
* Ellison, Keith. “The Argument for Tuition-Free College” [https://prospect.org/article/argument-tuition-free-college](about:blank)
* Goldrick-Rab, Sara. “The Economy Needs More Workers with Associate Degrees” [http://educationnext.org/economy-needs-more-workers-with-associate-degrees-forum-community-college/](about:blank)
* Gordon, Larry. “National college dropout rates are a scandal, UC author says” [https://edsource.org/2019/national-college-dropout-rates-are-a-scandal-uc-author-says/616248](about:blank)
* Harris, Adam. “The Little College Where Tuition is Free and Every Student is Given a Job.” [https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2018/10/how-berea-college-makes-tuition-free-with-its-endowment/572644/](about:blank)
* Hartocollis, Anemona. “Elizabeth Warren Wants to Cancel Student Loans. Critics Wonder if That’s the Right Solution” [https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/26/us/warren-student-loans-college.html](about:blank)
* Kelly, Andrew. “Tuition is not the Main Obstacle to Student Success” [http://educationnext.org/tuition-is-not-the-main-obstacle-to-student-success-forum-community-college/](about:blank)
* Mitchell, Michael, et. al. “Funding Down, Tuition Up: State Cuts to Higher Education Threaten Quality and Affordability at Public Colleges”

[https://www.cbpp.org/research/state-budget-and-tax/funding-down-tuition-up](about:blank)

* Murphy, Richard J. et. al. “Lessons from the End of Free College in England”

[https://www.brookings.edu/research/lessons-from-the-end-of-free-college-in-england/](about:blank)

* McQuarters, Nash. “Can Tuition-Free College Change a Community?” TEDx Talk. [https://youtu.be/fy7Pw9-J4Lo](about:blank)
* Nguyen, Viet Thanh. “College Admissions are Corrupt Because Universities Are. Here’s How to Fix Them*.”* [https://vietnguyen.info/2019/college-admissions-are-corrupt-because-universities-are-heres-how-to-fix-them](about:blank)
* Quinton, Sophie. “Free College is Increasingly Popular—and Complicated for States”

[https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2019/03/05/free-college-is-increasingly-popular-and-complicated-for-states](about:blank)

* Rawlings, Hunter. “College is not a commodity. Stop treating it like one.” [https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/06/09/college-is-not-a-commodity-stop-treating-it-like-one/?utm\_term=.0b9f3f44f19a](about:blank)
* Santiago, Deborah. “Free Tuition can Boost Latinos’ College Access and Completion Rates.” [https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2016/01/20/should-college-be-free/free-tuition-can-boost-latinos-college-access-and-completion-rates](about:blank)
* Smith, Ashley A. “Free-College Realities” [https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/09/26/free-college-proposals-shift-fit-state-needs-and-emulate-successful-examples](about:blank)