

Essay 1

Some people prefer to plan all their vacation activities while others prefer to be spontaneous. Which do you prefer? Why?

A vacation should always be an enjoyable time, but not everyone plans them the same way. Although I see the romance of being **spontaneous** with tourist activities, it is **not my style**. Firstly, some of the best activities are ones you must make reservations for. If, for example, I would want to go whale watching, I might not be able to if I don't sign up early. Secondly, plans can still be **altered** if needed. When a better option spontaneously **emerges**, I have no issue with **pivoting** to the new, better option. In conclusion, planning for a vacation allows me to reserve popular activities while not **prohibiting** flexibility.

Word Count: 108

High Scoring Vocabulary & Phrases

- 1. spontaneous:** Happening naturally, without planning or effort.
- 2. not my style:** Not something I usually like or do.
- 3. altered:** Changed from the original form.
- 4. emerge:** To come out from somewhere or appear.
- 5. pivoting:** Changing direction or strategy quickly.
- 6. prohibiting:** Stopping or not allowing something to happen.

Advanced Grammar

1. If, for example, I would want to go whale watching, I might not be able to if I don't sign up early.
2. Although I see the romance of being spontaneous with tourist activities, it is not my style.
3. When a better option spontaneously emerges, I have no issue with pivoting to the new, better option.



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Essay 2

Why is music so important to so many different people? Give specific reasons for your answer.

Music has had an **unquestionable** effect on nearly all the world's cultures, no matter where they are located. One reason for this **phenomenon** could be the cultural value music brings. Many songs are based on ancient cultural **tales** and stories that connect the listener with their past through lyrics and dance. Another reason is that music improves our mental health. For many, music is more than an interest; it is how they cope with depression, anger and anxiety. In conclusion, the cultural and **psychological** aspects have made music essential to people from all **four corners of the world**.

Word Count: 98

High Scoring Vocabulary & Phrases

- 1. unquestionable:** Sure and certain; cannot be doubted.
- 2. phenomenon:** Something that happens or exists and is noticed by people.
- 3. tales:** Stories, often about adventures or imaginary events.
- 4. psychological:** Related to the mind or the way people think and feel.
- 5. four corners of the world:** Everywhere on Earth; all over the world.

Advanced Grammar

1. Music has had an unquestionable effect on nearly all the world's cultures, no matter where they are located.
2. Many songs are based on ancient cultural tales and stories that connect the listener with their past through lyrics and dance.
3. For many, music is more than an interest; it is how they cope with depression, anger, and anxiety.



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Essay 3

Beside a lot of advantages, some people believe that the internet creates many problems. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Although the internet does create some issues in society, I believe that it results in more advantages for two reasons. Firstly, it allows us to connect with friends and family no matter how far away they are. Growing up, my parents always felt guilty about being unable to **regularly** see my grandparents, who lived far away. **Nowadays**, we can even see our loved ones through video calls. Secondly, we can work from home, which is great for the environment. **Previously**, all workers had to drive to their workplace, which caused a **significant** amount of pollution each day. In conclusion, even though problems like screen addiction are an issue, the internet has been an overall benefit for the world.

Word Count: 118

High Scoring Vocabulary & Phrases

- 1. although:** A word used to introduce a statement that shows a contrast or surprise when compared to another statement.
- 2. regularly:** How often something happens, usually many times.
- 3. nowadays:** Refers to the current time or these days, different from the past.
- 4. previously:** Refers to a time before now.
- 5. significant:** A word used to describe something that is big enough to be important or noticed.

Advanced Grammar

1. Although the internet does create some issues in society, I believe that it results in more advantages for two reasons.
2. In conclusion, even though problems like screen addiction are an issue, the internet has been an overall benefit for the world.
3. Growing up, my parents always felt guilty about being unable to regularly see my grandparents, who lived far away.



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Essay 4

Describe the climate in your city and explain how the climate has affected the city's culture.

The weather of my city, Pittsburgh, has surely affected its culture for a couple of reasons. **First and foremost**, the snowy winters have made my city's **numerous** hills quite dangerous to drive on. As a result, many people invest in cars with all-wheel drive, making sure we can all get to work and school safely. Secondly, the high number of cloudy days makes the summer days more **tolerable**, helping make our community more active. Although the sun can be **brutal** while exercising, it loses its power behind the **cloud cover**. In conclusion, the climate has made my city dependent on all-wheel drive vehicles while also giving its citizens **reprieve** from sunlight.

Word Count: 111

High Scoring Vocabulary & Phrases

- 1. first and foremost:** The most important thing to consider or mention.
- 2. numerous:** Many; a lot of.
- 3. tolerable:** Okay or acceptable, but not great.
- 4. brutal:** Very harsh, cruel, or severe.
- 5. cloud cover:** The amount of the sky covered by clouds.
- 6. reprieve:** A temporary relief or delay, especially from something unpleasant.

Advanced Grammar

- Secondly, the high number of cloudy days makes the summer days more tolerable, helping make our community more active.
- Although the sun can be brutal while exercising, it loses its power behind the cloud cover.
- In conclusion, the climate has made my city dependent on all-wheel drive vehicles while also giving its citizens reprieve from sunlight.



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Essay 5

Describe a time when someone was treated unfairly. What happened? Include specific details in your answer.

One of the clearest examples of someone being treated unfairly was when my brother lost his job at a restaurant because an injury **slowed him down**. Even though the leg he had broken six months before had not completely **healed** yet, it would have healed shortly, and his **performance** would have been **as good as before**. As a result, the restaurant reduced his hours until my brother was forced to look for something different. In the end, he has **moved on** to bigger and better jobs, but this was definitely a moment when he was treated unfairly.

Word Count: 97

High Scoring Vocabulary & Phrases

1. **slowed one down:** Made someone move or act more slowly.
2. **healed:** Got better or made better, especially from an injury or sickness.
3. **as good as before:** Just like it used to be; unchanged in quality or state.
4. **performance:** How well someone or something does a task or activity.
5. **moved on:** Continued forward or made progress; also, to leave something in the past.

Advanced Grammar

1. Even though the leg he had broken six months before had not completely healed yet, it would have healed shortly, and his performance would have been as good as before.
2. the restaurant reduced his hours until my brother was forced to look for something different.



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Essay 6

Many students choose to attend schools or universities outside their home countries. Why do so many students study abroad? Include specific reasons.

Being able to study in a foreign country is a **privilege** few would **turn down** if given the opportunity. Firstly, by searching for schools internationally, it gives the student more options to find the **optimal** fit. As areas of study become more **specialized**, this benefit will only become more important. Secondly, the new culture can offer a refreshing environment. When a student has studied their **entire life** in the same place, it might get boring, making the excitement of a new setting a source of motivation. In conclusion, students study abroad to have more options and feel **reenergized**.

Word Count: 98

High Scoring Vocabulary & Phrases

1. **privilege:** A special right or advantage given to a certain person or group.
2. **turn down:** To reject or say no to something.
3. **optimal:** The best or most favorable condition or level.
4. **specialized:** Focused on a specific subject or skill; not general.
5. **entire life:** All the time from birth to the present moment or until one's death.
6. **reenergized:** Got energy or enthusiasm back after feeling tired or uninterested.

Advanced Grammar

1. As areas of study become more specialized, this benefit will only become more important.
2. When a student has studied their entire life in the same place, it might get boring, making the excitement of a new setting a source of motivation.



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Essay 7

Some people are content with what they have, while others are never satisfied. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of these two attitudes.

Finding satisfaction in one's **possessions** varies between individuals. On one hand, being **content** allows the person to focus what they have. Without the **desire** to possess more, one can relax and enjoy **assets** such as their house in greater detail without the distractions of future wants. On the other hand, those who are never satisfied receive the benefit of always moving forward. If one must always have more, they have no choice but to progress their career, perhaps building long-term **stability** for the future. In conclusion, these two approaches to life both have upsides worth considering.

Word Count: 96

High Scoring Vocabulary & Phrases

- 1. possessions:** Things that someone owns.
- 2. content:** Happy and satisfied with what one has.
- 3. desire:** A strong wish or want for something.
- 4. assets:** Valuable things or properties owned by a person or company.
- 5. stability:** The state of being steady and not easily changed or shaken.

Advanced Grammar

1. Without the desire to possess more, one can relax and enjoy assets such as their house in greater detail without the distractions of future wants.
2. If one must always have more, they have no choice but to progress their career, perhaps building long-term stability for the future.



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Essay 8

Nowadays, customers can shop online and write reviews of the products they have purchased. Describe some of the ways this affects consumers' decisions.

For many years, one of the biggest issues in everyday life has been which products are worth purchasing. While this problem has not yet been solved, online reviews have surely **transformed** this decision process. On one hand, the large number of reviews available, even for a simple desk lamp, offers consumers plenty of data for making smart decisions. On the other hand, paying attention to customer reviews might **mislead** readers because most customers are not professional reviewers **specializing** in the industry. Overall, public reviews by customers have **caught everyone's attention for better or worse**.

Word Count: 94

High Scoring Vocabulary & Phrases

1. **transformed:** Changed in form, appearance, or nature.
2. **mislead:** To cause someone to believe something that is not true.
3. **specializing:** Focusing on a specific subject or skill.
4. **caught one's attention:** Made someone interested or notice something.
5. **for better or worse:** Accepting both the good and bad outcomes or changes.

Advanced Grammar

1. While this problem has not yet been solved, online reviews have surely transformed this decision process.
2. Overall, public reviews by customers have caught everyone's attention for better or worse.



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Essay 9

People often do things not because they want to but because other people want them to. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Give specific reasons for your answer.

Many people feel that instead of doing what they want to do, they do what others want them to do. Overall, I agree with this for couple of reasons, most significantly being that pleasing others can be **beneficial** to ourselves. Although not everyone has **returned my favors**, many have, and this has given me a **network** I can rely on. Additionally, many cultures have considered saying “no” to be rude **for millennia**, leading to numerous promises that might **overwhelm** an individual. To conclude, people mostly do things others want to build a strong network as well as for cultural reasons.

Word Count: 100

High Scoring Vocabulary & Phrases

- 1. beneficial:** Helpful or good for someone or something.
- 2. return a favor:** To do something nice for someone because they did something nice for you.
- 3. network:** A group of people or things that are connected.
- 4. for millennia:** For thousands of years.
- 5. overwhelm:** To affect someone very strongly or to have too much of something to deal with.

Advanced Grammar

- Although not everyone has returned my favors, many have, and this has given me a network I can rely on.
- Additionally, many cultures have considered saying “no” to be rude for millennia, leading to numerous promises that might overwhelm an individual.



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Essay 10

It is easier to prepare food today compared to 100 years ago. Has this change improved our lives? Why or why not?

Technology has **facilitated** food preparation to where our lives are significantly better. Firstly, we now have an **abundance** of free time to spend how we want. The **advent** of the microwave has made cooking dinner faster than ever, saving us at least thirty minutes each meal. Secondly, the number of healthy food options are now **substantially higher**. Even though junk food can be found everywhere, anyone who wishes to eat fresh vegetables from around the world could do so, even on a budget. In conclusion, efficiency and **accessibility** to nutritious food have granted us much improved lives.

Word Count: 97

High Scoring Vocabulary & Phrases

- 1. facilitated:** Made something easier or helped it happen.
- 2. abundance:** A large amount of something.
- 3. advent:** The arrival or beginning of something important.
- 4. substantially higher:** Much greater in amount or level.
- 5. accessibility:** The quality of being easy to use or reach.

Advanced Grammar

1. Technology has facilitated food preparation to where our lives are significantly better.
2. Even though junk food can be found everywhere, anyone who wishes to eat fresh vegetables from around the world could do so, even on a budget.



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