



Supplementary Module for
[The Word Combination Card](#)

Essay Module: Describing the Benefits of Higher Education

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Level: High Intermediate to Low Advanced ESL

Overview: This unit consists of a series of exercises that lead to the writing of an essay on the benefits of higher education. Information used in the essay will come from the College Board’s report *College Pays 2016* (<https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/education-pays-2016-full-report.pdf>), containing written descriptions and charts with statistics and other data.

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1. Reading an Essay on Social Benefits of Higher Education

Instructions: The following essay contains four paragraphs. They are labelled: introductory paragraph, body paragraph 1 and 2, and concluding paragraph. Read the paragraph. Then, summarize the essay in a few paraphrased sentences.

Social Benefits of Higher Education

(Introductory Paragraph)

(1) Which do you think is more important: earning a higher income or living in a healthy social environment? (2) College **education** can lead to higher income for individuals with college **degrees**. (3) For example, according to *Education Pays 2016*, in 2015, the median income of women who have only high school diplomas was about 31,000 dollars. (4) In contrast, women with associate's degrees might earn over \$40,000, and the median income for those with master's degrees was approximately \$62,000. (5) However, in addition to higher income, there are important social benefits of college education. (6) Higher **rates** of health among citizens and more financial and social support for communities and are two important social benefits of higher **education**.

Hot Tip! The word "median" is a common word in studies with statistics. It is different from the word "average." "Average" means the result of taking a group of numbers and dividing them equally. For example, the average of 2, 6, and 7 is 5 ($2+6+7=15$ and $15\div 3=5$). "Median" is the middle number of a group of numbers, so the median of the numbers 2, 6, and 7 is 6, the middle number.

(Body Paragraph 1)

(7) Research shows that one benefit of a college **education** is fewer **health** problems in the population. (8) According to *Education Pays 2016*, 45 percent of women with less than a high school diploma are obese. (9) In contrast, only about 30 percent of women with bachelor's **degrees** or higher are significantly overweight. (10) Rates of smoking are lower among people who have college **degrees** than those with high school diplomas, and rates of **exercise** are higher among college-educated individuals than high school dropouts. (11) The report [Education Pays 2016](#) does not show specifically why this happens, but it is clear that people with more education know how important exercise is and what the effects of smoking are. (12) Moreover, college degrees can lead to higher income, and good salaries can allow those people to have healthier **diets** and lose **weight**.

(Body Paragraph 2)

(13) In addition to a healthier population, having larger numbers of people with college **degrees** can also help to contribute to the government and society. (14) First, when college-educated people have higher **incomes**, they pay more taxes to the government. (15) For example, people with high school diplomas might only contribute several thousand dollars in taxes a year,

while people with college degrees and higher **incomes** may pay twice as much in taxes annually (*Education Pays 2016*, p. 17). (16) As a result of these taxes, the government can have enough money to pay for public services, such as education, the police, roads, and support for people who need help. (17) Finally, more college education can result in more people who volunteer in education or social support activities. (18) People who have attended **universities** do unpaid services in their communities. (19) For example, even people who have studied in **college** but do not have college degrees are at least 20 percent more likely to volunteer for organizations, such as programs for the poor, than people who have never completed high school (*Education Pays 2016*, p. 16).



(Concluding Paragraph)

(20) It is important for a country to have an educated population. (21) Higher **education** leads to more money for taxes, but it can also create a population which is healthier and which contributes to society. (22) Therefore, it is important to support college education in all countries because everyone may benefit from it.

Source

Ma, Jennifer, et al. *Education Pays 2016* - College Board. The College Board, 2016.
<https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/education-pays-2016-full-report.pdf>

Summarize: In 5 to 7 sentences, write a paraphrased summary here. Include main points and a few sample details.

2. Noticing Thesis Statements, Topic Sentences, Cause-Effect Language, Hedging, and Collocations

Instructions: First, review the sections *Topic Sentences and Thesis Statements* and *Sentence Starters* in the **Word Combination Card**. Then, based on the essay, answer the following questions.

a. Which sentences are the thesis statement and topic sentences? Write the numbers on the lines.

- The thesis statement _____
Which thesis statement pattern is this in the **Word Combination Card**? _____
- The two topic sentences _____ _____

Hot Tip! A thesis is a single sentence that states the main idea of an entire essay, research paper, thesis, or even book. A topic sentence is the main idea of a single paragraph, and in essays, topic sentences should be connected to and provide support for thesis statements.

b. The essay describes two benefits of higher education. They are both mentioned in the thesis statement, and one is mentioned in each topic sentence. Notice that the writer paraphrased ideas from the thesis in the topic sentences rather than copying them. Write the phrases that refer to the two benefits in the thesis statement and then the same ideas in the topic sentences.

- Benefit 1 in the thesis statement: _____
- Benefit 1 in the first topic sentence: _____
- Benefit 2 in the thesis statement: _____
- Benefit 1 in the second topic sentence: _____

c. First, review the *Cause-Effect* and *Degrees of Certainty and Frequency* sections in the **Word Combination Card**. Then, find samples of these two types of expressions in the essay. Write the words and the sentence numbers (e.g., (1), (2), etc.) they occur in. Some samples have been done for you.

- **Cause-effect words and expressions**

<i>lead to</i> (2)	<i>therefore</i> (22)

- **Hedging words and expressions**

<i>can</i> (2)	<i>at least</i> (19)

- d. First, review the sections *Education*, *Business*, and *Health* in the **Word Combination Card**. Then, look in the essay at the **bolded** nouns and write the collocations (word partners) that go before or after these nouns. Some of the words appear more than once. Two samples have been done for you.

<i>higher</i>	education	
	education	
	incomes	
	rates	
	degrees	
	degrees	
<i>fewer</i>	health	<i>problems</i>
	exercise	
	diets	
	weight	
	universities	

3. Writing Sentences with Cause-Effect Language

Instructions: First, review the *Cause-Effect* section of the **Word Combination Card**. Notice the six patterns of sentences and two types of connective words and phrases. Then, write sentences which use the cause “*college education*,” the receiver “*rates of volunteering*,” and the effect “*an increase in rates of volunteering*” by using the six patterns in the **WCC**. You may choose any words from the samples in the card, and you may change or add words in the phrases, such as “*positive/positively*” or “*higher*.” A sample has been done for you.

- a. **Pattern 1** (cause and receiver)

Pattern 1A: *College education positively affects rates of*
volunteering.

Pattern 1B: _____



- b. **Pattern 2** (receiver and cause)

- c. **Pattern 3** (cause and receiver)

- d. **Pattern 4** (cause and effect)

- e. **Pattern 5** (effect and cause)

- f. **Pattern 6** (cause and receiver and action)

- g. **Connective Words and Phrases**

Pattern A: (effect and cause)

Pattern B: (cause and effect)

4. Answering Questions with Quantity Expressions

Instructions: First, review *Expressing Quantity/Additional Nouns of Quantity* and *Comparison-Contrast* sections of the **Word Combination Card**. Then, answer the questions below in one or two sentences each. Use the indicated page from the [report](#) to help you. You must use the words in parentheses (...). The first one has been done as an example.

1. [See page 21, Figure 2.4.] Compare the income of women with high school diplomas and those with some college education but no degree in 2015. (Use "median".)

In 2015, the median income of women with high school diplomas was \$26,900. In contrast, the median of women with some college education was \$38,400.

2. [See page 24 at the bottom.] Among people ages 25 to 29, compare the percentage of workers with less than high school diplomas versus those with bachelor's degrees in terms of whether or not they work full-time all year in the years 2010 to 2014. (Use "percentage" and "percent".)

3. [See page 28 the table on the bottom.] In 2015, compare the number of civilians age 25 to 64 with less than a high school diploma versus those with bachelor's degrees or higher. (Use "million" and "number".)

4. [See page 34, Figure 2.16A.] In 2015, compare the rates of poverty among people with less than a high school diploma and those with some college education but no degree. (Use "rate".)

5. Reporting Information

Instructions: First, review the *Reporting Information* and *Prepositions for Academic Writing* sections of the **Word Combination Card**. Then, based on the statistics in the figure from *Education Pays 2016*, write sentences using the words and phrases in parentheses to report the information provided. A sample has been done for you.

Table 1: The Levels of Physical Activity among Individuals Age 25 and Older by Education Level, in 2014

Those with less than high school diplomas
Inactive - 52%
Insufficiently active - 17%
Sufficiently active - 31%
Those with high school diplomas
Inactive - 40%
Insufficiently active - 21%
Sufficiently active - 40%
Those with some college education or associate's degrees
Inactive - 29%
Insufficiently active - 22%
Sufficiently active - 49%
Those with bachelor's degrees or higher
Inactive - 18%
Insufficiently active - 21%
Sufficiently active - 62%



Source: Adapted from *Education Pays 2016*, page 37

1. *(in)*

In Table 1, the author reports that over 60 percent of people with bachelor's degrees or higher do sufficient aerobic activity, while only about 40 percent of those with high school diplomas do.

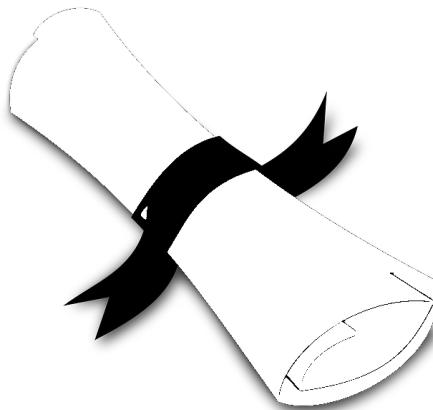
2. *(The statistics in the table show that)*

3. *(The table describes)*

4. *(The main point of the table is that)*

5. *(It has been reported that)*

6. *(According to)*



6. Adding Hedging Language: Possibility, Certainty, Frequency, Quantity

Instructions: First, review the *Degrees of Frequency and Certainty (Hedging)* section of the **Word Combination Card**. Then, rewrite the sentences below and add logical hedging words and phrases. Look in the two subsections “Possibility/Certainty” and “Frequency/Quantity” for expressions. Look at the information in parentheses (...) in order to help you write with logical hedging expressions. Some samples have been done for you.

- a. College graduates all have high incomes, while high school graduates do not. (*Income of \$100,000 and over: Bachelor's degree holders - 25%, High School Graduates - 5%*)

College graduates **are much more likely than** high school graduates to have high incomes. OR **A much higher percentage of** college graduates have high incomes **than** high school graduates do.

- b. Children of parents with high school diplomas do not go to libraries. On the other hand, children of parents with bachelor's degrees go to libraries once a month.

- c. In 2015, people with college degrees had health insurance provided by their jobs, while those without high school diplomas did not. (*Bachelor's degree holders - 66%; People with less than a high school diploma - 38%*)

- d. People with less than high school diplomas need Medicaid to pay for medical treatments, but those with bachelor's degrees do not. (see page 35, Figure 2.17)

e. People who drop out of high school smoke. (see page 36, Figure 2.18A)

f. In 2015, the rate unemployment among high school graduates was 5.4 percent.

In 2015, the rate unemployment among high school graduates was **over** 5 percent.

Quantity Expressions

g. Between 2011 and 2014, women with college degrees were not obese. (see page 38, Figure 2.20A)

Between 2011 and 2014, **a majority of** women with college degrees were not obese

h. In the year 2015, 2.6 percent of those with bachelor’s degrees were unemployed.

i. People with less than high school diplomas live in households in poverty. (see page 34, Figure 2.16A)

j. While college graduates vote, high school dropouts do not. (see page 41, Figure 2.23B)

7. Writing an Essay on the Benefits of Higher Education

A. Instructions: In this assignment, you will write an essay which answers this question.

“Other than higher income, what are two primary benefits of higher education?”

Important: “Other than” means that you may NOT use higher income as a main point in your thesis statement or topic sentences. However, income may be used as a supporting detail.

B. Focusing on Topics: In your answer, (a) describe the two benefits that you choose, (b) provide relevant statistics and other facts from the report *Education Pays 2016: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society*, and (c) explain why having a college education can lead to those two benefits. You may consider two of the main topics below, or you may think of other categories based on the facts and statistics in the report.

Main Topics and Issues to Consider for Body Paragraphs

- *Support for the government* (taxes, public assistance programs, voting, etc.)
- *Support for the next generation* (benefits for children, social mobility, etc.)
- *Better health* (smoking, exercise, obesity, health insurance, etc.)
- *Financial stability* (employment, insurance, retirement plans, poverty rates, etc.)

C. Using a Source: To answer the question, you must use facts that you find in *Education Pays 2016*. You must acknowledge that reading, first, by mentioning it in multiple places in your essay (See *Reporting Information* in the **Word Combination Card**) and, second, by listing the title and organization of the webpage after the essay. You must take notes, including words, numbers, and phrases in the notes box in Part D on the next page. Do not copy sentences or long phrases: you must only write nouns, numbers, and other small details. That way, you will write the essay based on your own English without any copying or “parroting.”

- *Education Pays 2016: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society*
<https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/education-pays-2016-full-report.pdf>
(or use a browser, such as Google Chrome, Firefox, Microsoft Edge, or another to find it.)

Tip on Finding Information in a PDF: The report is a PDF file, which opens in *Adobe Acrobat Reader*. In that software, you can type the page number in the page box at the top of the screen to view that page. Also, in the *Table of Contents* on pages 5 and 6, you can click with your mouse on a page and go directly to that page.



D. Taking Notes: In the table below, write details about the following topics. Page numbers are indicated in parentheses (...). You do not need to find details for all of them, but you should find as many as possible to help you focus on the two topics you choose. Also, you may want to collect more notes in order to decide what topics to select.

Opening Ideas to Use in the Introductory Paragraph

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College education by race and gender (p. 11)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational attainment (p. 14)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational attainment by race and gender (p. 15)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earnings by college major (p. 26)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, earnings (annual), and tax payments (p. 17)

Benefits for Main Points in Body Paragraphs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment (p. 28) and unemployment (p. 29)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retirement plans (p. 31)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health insurance (p. 32)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social mobility (p. 33)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty (p. 34)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public assistance programs (p. 35)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoking (p. 36)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise (p. 37)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obesity (p. 38)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and children (p. 39)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic involvement (p. 40)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voting (p. 41)

E. Organizing Ideas: Next, you must select main points and details. **First**, carefully reread the original question. **Then**, review your notes in Part D and select two main topics. It may be possible to use one benefit for an entire body paragraph, but you should also consider combining two or more benefits in one category. **Finally**, in the outline below, provide the main points and details from your notes (just words and phrases, not complete sentences) as well as your own ideas to use in paragraphs in your essay. There are instructions in the outline for you to follow. Write a variety of main points and specific details that you want to use when you write your essay.

Note on logically combining ideas: Sometimes, a single benefit might not be enough for an entire body paragraph. Therefore, you may need to combine benefits in the notes in Part D as supporting points under larger main topics. For example, civic involvement and voting are related and could be in the same body paragraph about contributing to society. Consider which of the issues are related so that you can organize your ideas logically and have enough support in the body paragraphs.

<p>Introductory Paragraph: (a) a couple of interesting background sentences about higher education and (b) a thesis statement which answers the question completely</p>
<p>Body Paragraph 1: (a) a topic sentence which is related to one of the two points in the thesis statement and (b) 4 or more sentences of useful description and logical explanation with details from the report combined with your own ideas</p>

Body Paragraph 2: (a) a topic sentence which is related to one of the two points in the thesis statement and (b) 4 or more sentences of useful description and logical explanation with details from the report combined with your own ideas

Concluding Paragraph: (a) one or two sentences which paraphrase the thesis statement and (b) one or two sentences which give a prediction or a suggestion

F. Write the essay: Here are tips to help you write more effectively.

- a. **Understand the question:** Carefully reread the original question to answer and make sure that your outline has logical ideas and details to use in the essay. As you write, answer questions, including *what, who, why, how, how much, when*, and so on.
- b. **Use essential sentences effectively:** Review *Topic Sentences and Thesis Statements* in the **Word Combination Card** to produce an accurate, clear, and complete thesis statement and topic sentences.
- c. **Writing from the outline:** Write your essay based on the questions in point a. above and your outline, and add main points and details as you write. Useful sections in the Word Combination Card include *Cause-Effect, Comparison-Contrast, Expressing Quantity, and Expressing Degrees of Certainty and Frequency*.
- d. **Paraphrase:** You may not copy any sentences. Use essential details from *Education Pays 2016*, but all the sentences must be your own.
- e. **Mention the source:** When you use numbers and scientific facts (at least one per body paragraph), mention the *Education Pays 2016* as the source of information. Review *Reporting Information* and *Academic Prepositions* in the **Word Combination Card** to do this.
- f. **Edit:** Check nouns, verbs, sentences, and collocations carefully.

G. Formatting: Format your essay as follows.

- a. **Identification:** On your essay in the upper-left corner, type your name, the course, the date, and your professor's name.
- b. **Title:** For the title, use a few key words and phrases, capitalize the words properly, underline it (shortcut key: ctrl+u), and center it (shortcut key: ctrl+e).
- c. **Paragraphs:** Make sure the four paragraphs are indented and double spaced (shortcut key: ctrl+2) and have proper margins.
- d. **Sources:** At the end of the essay, type the webpage title, the organization, the date you visited the website, and the word "Web." The URL is optional. You may also search for a citation tool online to create the reference.

Sample Responses

2. Noticing Thesis Statements, Topic Sentences, Cause-Effect Language, Hedging, and Collocations

- a. the Thesis statement (6)
Sentence Pattern #1 in the *Thesis Statements* of the **WCC**
The two topic sentences (7) and (13)

- b.
- Benefit 1 in the thesis statement *better health among citizens*
 - Benefit 1 in the first topic sentence *fewer health problems in the population*
 - Benefit 2 in the thesis statement *more support for the government*
 - Benefit 1 in the second topic sentence *contribute to the government and society*

- c.
- **Cause-effect words and expressions**

<i>lead to (2), (12), (21)</i>	<i>as a result of (16)</i>
<i>benefits of (5) and (6)</i>	<i>allow those people to have (12)</i>
<i>help (13)</i>	<i>result in (17)</i>
<i>create (12)</i>	<i>benefit from (22)</i>
<i>Therefore (22)</i>	

- **Hedging words and expressions**

<i>can (2), (12), (13), (16), (17), and (21)</i>	<i>at least (19)</i>
<i>about (3) and (9)</i>	<i>approximately (4)</i>
<i>over (4)</i>	<i>might (15)</i>
<i>may (15) and (22)</i>	<i>more likely to (19)</i>

Note: Comparative words such as “fewer,” “lower,” and “higher” are also kinds of hedging. They are not extreme statements. Compare “no health problems” with “fewer health problems.” College educated individuals still become sick, of course, but statistically, the number of health problems they have is smaller than those with less education.

d.

<i>higher</i>	education	
<i>college</i>	education	
<i>higher</i>	incomes	
<i>Higher</i>	rates	<i>of health</i>
<i>college</i>	degrees	
<i>bachelor's</i>	degrees	
<i>better</i>	health	

	health	<i>problems</i>
<i>rates of</i>	exercise	
<i>healthier</i>	diets	
<i>lose</i>	weight	
<i>attended</i>	universities	

3. Writing Sentences with Cause-Effect Language

Below are sample responses. See the **Word Combination Card** for more possibilities.

- a. **Pattern 1 (cause and receiver)**
 Type 1 - *College education positively affects rates of volunteering*
 Type 2 - *College education can have a positive effect on rates of volunteering.*
- b. **Pattern 2 (receiver and cause)**
Rates of volunteering are positively impacted by college education.
- c. **Pattern 3 (cause and receiver)**
College education is beneficial to rates of volunteering.
- d. **Pattern 4 (cause and effect)**
College education can result in higher rates of volunteering.
- e. **Pattern 5 (effect and cause)**
Higher rates of volunteering result from college education.
- f. **Pattern 6 (cause and receiver and action)**
College education can cause rates of volunteering to increase.
- g. **Connective Words and Phrases**
 Type 1 (effect and cause) - *Rates of volunteering increase due to college education.*
 Type 2 (cause and effect) - *Some people attend college. As a result, rates of volunteering may increase.*

4. Answering Questions with Quantity Expressions

Answers will vary. Below are sample responses. See the **Word Combination Card** for more possibilities.

2. *Among people ages 25 to 29, only about 50 percent of workers with less than high school diplomas worked full-time all year in the years 2010 to 2014. In contrast, the percentage of those with bachelor's degrees is 20 percent higher.*
3. *In 2015, the number of civilians age 25 to 64 with less than a high school diploma was about 17 million. In contrast, there were over 57 million people with bachelor's degrees or higher.*
4. *In 2015, the rate of people among people with less than a high school diploma was 26 percent, while the rate among those with some college education but no degree was only 11 percent.*

5. Reporting Information

2. *The statistics in the figure show that...*
3. *The figure describes how often people exercise according to how much education they have.*
4. *The main point of the figure is that the more education people have, the more exercise they do.*
5. *It has been reported that over half of people with less than a high school diploma are inactive or insufficiently active.*
6. *According to Figure 2.19B, those with college education are more physically active than those with high diplomas or less.*

6. Adding Hedging Language: Possibility, Certainty, Frequency, and Quantity

Answers will vary. Below are sample responses. See the *Degrees of Certainty* in **Word Combination Card** for more possibilities.

Possibility/Certainty/Frequency

- b. Children of parents with high school diplomas ~~do not~~ go to libraries **less often**. On the other hand, children of parents with bachelor's degrees **are more likely to** go to libraries once a month.
- c. People with college degrees **tend to** have health insurance, while those without high school diplomas **might not**. (page 32).
- d. People with less than a high school diplomas **typically** need Medicaid, but those with bachelor's degrees or higher ~~do~~ **might not**. (page 35)
- e. People who drop out of high school smoke **more often**.
...**are more likely to** smoke.

Quantity Expressions

- h. In the year 2015, **approximately** 2.6 percent of those with bachelor's degrees were unemployed.
- i. **A large number of** people with less than high school diplomas live in households in poverty. (page 34)
- j. While **a majority of** college graduates vote, **a minority of** high school dropouts do ~~not~~. (page 41)