

A short, first person essay for why I believe that I do not need to finish High School.

What is secondary education useful for? It's a simple question, and the answers are also quite simple. It is useful for four things. One, it is useful for obtaining knowledge relevant and or necessary for a career in a particular field. Two, for preparation for continued education. Three, for general knowledge needed to function in society; for example, basic arithmetic, vocabulary, everyone should be able to locate Russia on a map, etc... Four, it can be useful for helping kids find out what they want to do with there lives by offering them a, while rather limited, variety of subjects and fields in which to dabble in until something piques there interest or they find they are rather adept at something. To recap, it is useful for career training, a stepping stone to college, general knowledge, and career selecting.

Above are the objective reasons that secondary education is valuable, below are the personal responses to those objective functions.

### 1) Career training

This semester I have taken biology, trigonometry, American history, Phy Ed., Spanish II, Theatre Performance II, and Modern Lit. Allow for me to deconstruct each of the classes varying degrees of personal uselessness:

Biology: I am not interested in the sciences, I will not become a scientist. Kudos to the future doctors and physicists of the world, but I am not one of you.

Trig.: If I need to find out the measurement of the third side of a triangle, I can just measure it. I am not going to be a mathematician.

Also, these are the tools I have to overcome day to day mathematical obstacles: Calculator, Google, Ruler, the ability to ask someone else, etc...

American History: I find this subject fairly interesting. However, most of what we do is read from a text book and watch history channel documentaries. Also, when was the last time you walked into a party and you say, "Oh, nice to meet you James. What do you do for a living?" "Oh, History. I'm a historian. I read books about history and people pay me for it..." That doesn't happen. Super interesting, but it doesn't pay unless you teach it.

Physical Education: I am not going to be a professional athlete and I already know how to throw a rubber ball at people. In fact I picked up on it quite quickly. It was almost as if I didn't need anyone to teach it to me... NEXT!

Spanish II: Yo no se por que yo necesito hablo in mas idiomas que uno. Yo vivo en Los Estados Unidos y yo no conosco muchas personas Latino Americanos. I'm not going to be a professional Spanish speaker. Does that job even exist? I guess there is translating, but I'm not interested in that. Also, I know enough Spanish to get by if I need to. Training complete.

Congratulations.

Theatre Performance II: This one of my favorite classes. It is a lot of fun, but that is really all it is- recreation.

Modern Literature: This is my favorite class. I actually really like to read and I've found a lot of new authors to read in the future. Also, I'm starting to even get into poetry. I like the ambiguity of it. However, the only reason that I would need to stay in school to study literature would be if I were to teach English, which I don't want to. I'm one of the best writers in my class, so I don't need anyone hovering over my shoulder to see if I'm doing it right. Also, I can (and do) read books at home. I don't need someone to assign it for me. IF I were to go to finish high school and go to college, it would be so I could study literature and writing, but I can't get past what a monumental waste of money it is to go to college to study any of the arts. A great author once wrote "write what you know". This seems like very apt advice that many young writers do not take. How can you write about what you know if you haven't experienced anything worth writing about? The general disregard of this advice has lead to a generation of bad fan-fiction and fantasy novels with underdeveloped characters written on legal pads shoved under twin mattresses across the country. I have to experience people and places and explore new ideas before I can write anything profound or worth while. Much more is learned by experience rather than mimicry which is why I feel that I would be stunting myself by limiting my experiences at such an early age by finishing high school, or college for that matter. Also, doesn't the idea of a 17 year old author who drops out of high school to travel the country and write about it sound like a good story? And if it turns out that it was a bad idea, in a few years I

can just spend a couple months getting my GED, then get a normal job and be like every one else. Shouldn't I at least try to be extraordinary? It's a shame how defeatist our culture is, where 16 year olds decide to be paralegals because of the job security and resign themselves to a life of mediocrity before they even get a chance to taste what an exceptional life might be like. When did our sense of adventure become metamorphosed into a paralyzing fear of risk?

I got a little off topic there. Let's get back to the essay.

## 2) Stepping Stone to College

My family falls into that odd category that many families fall into with regards to financing college. They make enough money to not qualify for financial aide, but they don't make nearly enough money to drop 120-160k over four years to send me to college. If I decided to go, we could find a way to do it, but it would end up meaning at least 80k in student loans that I would have to pay off for the rest of my life. And I'm not foolish. I know that writing doesn't pay that much usually, and I'm okay with that. It would just be irresponsible for me to take on a great load of debt to study thirty some credits of literature courses and eighty some credits of other stuff just to get a degree that I won't be able to pay off in my chosen career. The best way to learn how to write well is by reading works by great authors and developing a style that takes the best elements of the best writers and filters them through personal experience. I can do that very well by myself by reading and by experiencing the world first hand, not from behind a desk. Therefore, finishing high school as a stepping stone to college is not relevant to me, because going to college would be nothing more than an enjoyable, yet frivolous, expenditure.

### 3) General knowledge

I'm set in this category. And even if I were to finish high school, ten years from now I probably wouldn't be able to remember most of the little factoids that we learn in high school. Ask any 28 year old to name all of the vice presidents in order with the dates that they were in office and 99.9% of them will not have a clue. I'm not stupid, I'm actually pretty smart. That's why gaining general knowledge as a reason to stay in high school does not exactly apply to me.

### 4) Career selecting

This is one of the places that secondary education has served its purpose with me. I started taking more advanced English classes my freshman year because I thought it was fun and now I know that that is what I want to do for the rest of my life and I am willing to bet that I'm good enough that I can do it, that I can succeed in writing as a career. I know that's what I want to do, so why wait around for another year to start? If I had no idea what I wanted to do, I would be much more apt to stay, but I know what I want to do, so I don't think that I will.

I will leave you with a quote from Henry David Thoreau, an author who wrote his most famous work when he was only in his 20's.

“Men labor under a mistake. The better part of the man is soon plowed into the soil for compost. By a seeming fate, commonly called necessity, they are employed, as it says in an old book, laying up treasures which moth and rust will corrupt and thieves break through and steal.

It is a fool's life, as they will find when they get to the end of it, if not before.”

Thank you for your concern, Miss Johnson. If you feel the need to respond to this, I welcome any criticism. I don't mean for this to be arrogant or condescending, I just wanted to let you know that this is something that I have thought out. If I do leave high school, it is not out of laziness or boredom. I'm not lazy, I just want to get the most I can out of life rather than reading about specific parts of life from a text book.

Cheers,

Jeremy Barns