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English 9A

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Necessity of a College Degree In America

Is a college degree necessary in America? Parents and teachers often say that a college degree is important to be successful in the future - to obtain a better job and a better life. A college degree is an accomplishment award given by a college to students attending and completing a higher learning institution rigor in specific areas of study ("What is COLLEGE"). People often get college degrees to get a better job, have better and greater opportunities, and to live a better life. Conclusively, a college degree is necessary in America because of the better opportunities a person can experience than a person who is working in a job that doesn't require a college degree.

There are different kinds of college degrees that a student can obtain. There is an Associate's degree, an accomplishment award given to students who has been going to college for two years. There is also a Bachelor's degree, an accomplishment awarded to students who has been going to college for four years. While a Bachelor's degree is considered the average degree to be obtained by students, there is also a Master's degree - given to students who has been attending college for six years - and a Doctorate Degree - awarded to students who has been attending college for 8 years or more. A Doctorate degree is the highest level of education, usually for jobs with a higher salary. For example, doctors, surgeons, nurses, and other kind of jobs in the medical field usually require a Doctorate Degree.

One of the most obvious reasons to earn a college degree is to increase one's earning potential. *Study.com*, a website that helps students and teachers with their college and career decisions, states:

“While employees with a high school education may secure jobs with good benefits, college graduates typically fare better, entering higher-level careers with greater salaries” (“How Important”, par. 1).

A data gathered by the United States Census Bureau showed a positive correlation between degree level and earning potential. Workers who obtained a PhD, Doctoral degree earned a median weekly salary of \$1,664, with the annual salary being approximately \$84,496. Employers who obtained a Bachelor's degree earned \$1,156 a week, the annual salary being about \$59,124. Even employers with an Associate's degree earned a weekly salary of \$819, an annual salary of \$41,496. Meanwhile, employers with a high school diploma only earned a median weekly salary of only \$692, with the annual salary being only \$35,256. Even worse, employers who obtained an education level of less than a high school diploma earned \$504 a week, with the annual salary only being \$25,636 (Beckstead, par. 2; U.S Census Bureau). In *The College Payoff - Education, Occupations, Lifetime Earnings*, it also shows importance of the level of education obtained by stating:

“Even within the same occupation, more education gets workers more money. Truck drivers with less than high school make \$1.3 million over a lifetime, compared to \$1.5 million for truck drivers with a high school diploma. Elementary and middle school teachers with a Bachelor's degree make \$1.8 million over a lifetime, compared with \$2.2 million for those with a Master's degree” (Anthony, Stephen, and Ban 2).

A college degree also leads to stronger job stability. The positions that are usually the first to get cut are usually those at the bottom of the totem pole – positions requiring unskilled labor (Beckstead, par. 14). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, having an Associate's degree has an unemployment rate of 3.6%. By earning a Bachelor's or Master's degree, this same data suggests that the unemployment rates are 2.4-2.7%. Unemployment rates by earning a Doctoral degree or Professional degree were both 1.6%. However, the unemployment rate for those who achieved less than a highschool diploma was 7.4%, nearly double the unemployment rate with those who have an Associate's degree.

Businessinsider.com writes that some of the high paying jobs are Anesthesiologist, Physician, Research and development manager, and attorneys. One example of a high paying job and benefits of studying for this career is a doctor. All physicians and surgeons are considered "doctors." Doctors invest a lot of time in school studying and preparing for this career, "10-17 years at times," says *work.chron.com* (Imani, par. 1). Some benefits for this time invested on college studying and getting prepared are being recognized and honored for saving a life; as most doctors are viewed as life savers (Imani, par. 4). Doctors build bonds with family or family's loved one for treating them with medicine or for helping those in need (Imani, par. 2). Another benefit is being stable in their job. As long as there are sick people in need of help or in need of medical attention, doctors are well needed. A survey took in the U.S Department of Labor has shown that 691,000 doctors were employed in 2010, and predict 24% increase in that number within years on 2010 - 2020; an increase of 168,300 jobs. Another benefit that comes from studying and preparing for this career is the high salary and being able to support their loved ones, starting at \$90 per hour and earning \$187,199 annually, a doctor employed at a hospital is

also automatically provided with health insurance for themselves and their entire household (Imani, par. 3).

Another well paid job could be a lawyer, attorney, or prosecutor - or really any kind of law enforcement job in this field. According to Sally Kane, lawyers are among one of the highest paid professional in the legal industry, and most attorneys earn well above the national average. According to the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, lawyers earned a median annual salary of \$118,160 in 2016 and world's top lawyers often make up to millions of dollars (Arbuckle, par. 7; Kane, par. 2). Lawyers have the opportunity to be honored and recognized by helping individuals, groups, or organizations with legal problems as well. Also, lawyers have the flexibility to choose their hours of work, clients, along with the areas they want to master in (Kane, pars. 4-10). A Master's degree is needed to follow the career of becoming a lawyer, being honored and earning the high salary for one's own (Arbuckle).

Research recorded by *Collegiatlas.org* has shown that a college degree is necessary not only in 2017, but in everyone's life for a wealthier and good future. College degrees are beneficial for more job opportunities, employment benefits, job stability, and even high salary rates. Rachel Beckstead stated that college degrees increase the range of opportunities for high career options given to students. Those who only have an education to a high school diploma are most likely not able to stay stable in one job because of unskilled labor (Beckstead). So not only does a college degree give different job opportunities, but it also helps obtain job stability.

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