

Sample of an essay score 4

I had to deal with a new environment when I became a student at SJSU last spring semester. I transferred from a local community college in a small town. I had no idea what to expect in a big city like San Jose and a university with thousands of students. Since I am a junior, I can live off campus with roommates instead of paying what I think are high rates for a dorm room and dining commons food. Living with roommates is another challenge in addition to being at school.

First, my classes are much harder than in Lodi. I have four classes and must study 30 hours a week. I learned to plan my day each week so everything gets done on time. By doing this, I can leave some time on Friday afternoon to relax or go out with friends.

Second, my apartment is very small, so my roommate and I must show consideration for each other. We try to clean up dishes and pots, we put our clothes away, and we can't afford cable TV, so the place is pretty quiet. My mom is not here to do laundry or cook meals. I really miss that now. I even miss my little sister, who has always been a tag along.

Third, I have to get used to all the traffic, the cars and the no parking, and the street people, and the garbage in the gutter. Back home we had more cows hanging around than street people. There's also more crime here. You have to make sure your laptop and backpack don't get stolen. You also have to be careful at night and not walk around alone.

I think this new situation for me is a good thing overall because I can finally start to grow up and become more independent. I can find out what I can really accomplish without my parents always there just in case. I can see the difference in myself when I go back home. There everything is comfortable and familiar, but it's also predictable and not that exciting. At SJSU I can meet a girl from Egypt wrapped in a head scarf and long skirt, a guy from Finland, or just a student from Alaska. After being in class with them, I no longer think they are so mysterious or weird. At SJSU, my home cooking may not be getting better, but I'm growing every day.

Reader response

This writer accomplishes the task adequately but not thoroughly. There are some details, but the sentences are safely correct or reveal minor errors. The writer might try more variety in his/her sentence patterns and develop ideas with more depth in order to write a more developed essay.