

## Sample of an essay score 5

When I left my hometown of Stockton, CA for SJSU I was expecting to live in a place not that different from home. Stockton is no shrinking violet of a town; we have malls and traffic, a community college and Costco, a greyhound bus station and senior housing. You might be able to see why I was anxious to seek my fame and fortune, or at least my college degree in the Bay Area.

I had visions of weekends in San Francisco dangling from a cable car or sucking up shrimp on the Wharf, or maybe a jog through Golden Gate park in those plastic, nylon shirts that look like hell after ten minutes. But I was in the Campus Village for only one week when I discovered there would be no glamorous weekends in San Francisco. Instead, I found myself buried under the rubble of homework hell: papers to write, textbooks to read, labs, classes, lectures, presentations, a veritable endless parade of assignments. And the weekends were there to catch up, and unfortunately not on sleep.

My uncomfortable situation was college itself. My world had well-defined boundaries: the dining commons, the library, business classrooms, and occasionally when the parents felt generous and sent some money, a brunch at Peanuts, the local greasy spoon on San Fernando Street.

My instructors were strict task masters who expected students to be on the time with our textbooks front and center and our cell phones stowed and turned off until we “arrived back at the gate,” if you catch my drift. They also had tough grading standards compared to community college. You couldn’t just slap something together on the bus or try to sneak in a paper late. No, this is the big time. Less hand holding here and more “that’s your tough luck, kid,” perhaps not said, but you can see it in their stern eyes.

I decided the way to survive and learn stuff was to make friends with the egg heads and avoid the goof offs. We have fun but we also get the work done. When we have a study group, we really do work, and later we can chill out with cheap hotdogs from Costco while we watch dumb TV shows.

I think I am facing the challenge of being a new student in a new place. My gang of brainy friends and I plan to take the train to S.F. during winter break. Freed from homework for a few weeks, we can really shrimp out.

## **Reader response**

This writer shows a lively writing voice with sentence variety and appropriate diction choices. This paper has details, effectively presented, that illustrate a mature voice. This paper lacks the maturity of thought of the essay score of six paper, but this writer reveals clear competence in writing.