

English Language and Composition

Reading Time: 15 minutes

Suggested Writing Time: 40 minutes

Directions: The following prompt is based on the accompanying six sources.

This question requires you to integrate a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. Refer to the sources to support your position; avoid mere paraphrase or summary. Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument.

Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations.

Introduction

Some have argued that money brings happiness. Wealthy individuals are able to purchase more luxuries and as a result, live happier and more comfortable lives. How does affluence affect society? Does level of happiness correlate to level of wealth? Does money bring happiness?

Assignment

Read the following sources (including any introductory information) carefully. **Then, in an essay that synthesizes at least three of the sources for support, take a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim that wealth correlates with happiness.**

Refer to the sources as Source A, Source B, etc.; titles are included for your convenience.

Source A (Noonan)

Source B (Myers)

Source C (Johnson)

Source D (North)

Source E (Horowitz)

Source F (Beckman)

Source A: Noonan, Peggy. "There Is No Time, There Will Be Time." *The Wall Street Journal*, September 18, 2001.

The following passage is excerpted from an editorial in The Wall Street Journal.

All our splendor, our comfort, takes time to pay for. And affluence wants to increase; it carries within it an unspoken command: More! Affluence is like nature, which always moves toward new life. Nature does its job; affluence enlists *us* to do it. We hear the command for "More!" with immigrant ears that also hear "Do better!" or old American ears that hear, "Sutter is rich, there's gold in them hills, onward to California!" We carry California within us; that is what it is to be human, and American.

So we work. The more you have, the more you need, the more you work and plan. This is odd in part because of all the spare time we should have. We don't, after all, have to haul water from the crick. We don't have to kill an antelope for dinner. I can microwave a Lean Cuisine in four minutes and eat it in five. I should have a lot of extra time--more, say, than a cavewoman. And yet I feel I do not. And I think: That cavewoman watching the antelope turn on the spit, she was probably happily daydreaming about how shadows played on the walls of her cave. She had time.

It's not just work. We all know the applications of Parkinson's Law, that work expands to fill the time allotted to complete it. This isn't new. But this is: So many of us feel we have no time to cook and serve a lovely three-course dinner, to write the long, thoughtful letter, to ever so patiently tutor the child. But other generations, not so long ago, did. And we have more timesaving devices than they did.

Source B: Myers, David. "Wealth, Well-Being, and the New American Dream."

The following passage is excerpted from an online article written by a psychology professor and syndicated columnist.

Does money buy happiness? Not! Ah, but would a *little* more money make us a *little* happier? Many of us smirk and nod. There is, we believe, *some* connection between fiscal fitness and feeling fantastic. Most of us tell Gallup that, yes, we would like to be rich. Three in four entering American collegians - nearly double the 1970 proportion - now consider it "very important" or "essential" that they become "very well off financially." Money matters.

It's the old American dream: life, liberty, and the purchase of happiness. "*Of course* money buys happiness," writes Andrew Tobias. Wouldn't anyone be happier with the indulgences promised by the magazine sweepstakes: a 40 foot yacht, deluxe motor home, private housekeeper? Anyone who has seen *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* knows as much. "Whoever said money can't buy happiness isn't spending it right," proclaimed a Lexus ad.

Well, are rich people happier? Researchers have found that in poor countries, such as Bangladesh, being relatively well off does make for greater well-being. We *need* food, rest, shelter, social contact.

But a surprising fact of life is that in countries where nearly everyone can afford life's necessities, increasing affluence matters surprisingly little. The correlation between income and happiness is "surprisingly weak," observed University of Michigan researcher Ronald Inglehart in one 16-nation study of 170,000 people. Once comfortable, more money provides diminishing returns. The second piece of pie, or the second \$100,000, never tastes as good as the first.

Source C: Johnson, Samuel. "The Effect of Sudden Riches Upon the Manners." *Rambler* No. 172, November 9, 1751.

The following excerpted passage was written by Samuel Johnson, a famous essayist, poet, biographer, and lexicographer.

NOTHING has been longer observed, than that a change of fortune causes a change of manners; and that it is difficult to conjecture from the conduct of him whom we see in a low condition, how he would act, if wealth and power were put into his hands. But it is generally agreed, that few men are made better by affluence or exaltation; and that the powers of the mind, when they are unbound and expanded by the sunshine of felicity, more frequently luxuriate into follies, than blossom into goodness. . . .

Whoever rises above those who once pleased themselves with equality, will have many malevolent gazers at his eminence. To gain sooner than others that which all pursue with the same ardour, and to which all imagine themselves entitled, will for ever be a crime. When those who started with us in the race of life, leave us so far behind, that we have little hope to overtake them, we revenge our disappointment by remarks on the arts of supplantation by which they gained the advantage, or on the folly and arrogance with which they possess it. Of them, whose rise we could not hinder, we solace ourselves by prognosticating the fall...

Some indulgence is due to him whom a happy gale of fortune has suddenly transported into new regions, where unaccustomed lustre dazzles his eyes, and untasted delicacies solicit his appetite. Let him not be considered as lost in hopeless degeneracy, though he for a while forgets the regard due to others, to indulge the contemplation of himself, and in the extravagance of his first raptures expects that his eye should regulate the motions of all that approach him, and his opinion be received as decisive and oraculous. His intoxication will give way to time; the madness of joy will fume imperceptibly away; the sense of his insufficiency will soon return; he will remember that the co-operation of others is necessary to his happiness, and learn to conciliate their regard by reciprocal beneficence.

Source D: North, Richard. "Rich is Beautiful." Cato Policy Report. November/December 2005.

The following passage is excerpted from an article written by Richard D. North, media fellow of the Institute of Economic Affairs in London, former columnist for the Independent and the Sunday Times and the author of Rich Is Beautiful: A Very Personal Defence of Mass Affluence.

Wealth, lots of it and widely available, is lovely and good. Mass affluence has been desired for centuries and is desired now, where and when we have it, and even more when and where we don't. Yet it has few defenders. Most right-wingers take it as self-evident that wealth is good and haven't bothered with the idea that it might be a problem. The left used just to dislike the way wealth was created and spread but has now outflanked the right with new charges. A recent spate of leftish books, and the Zeitgeist of liberal opinion, has it that capitalism has invaded our minds and made us live a life that is driving us half mad. Capitalism is, of course, trying to get us to be avid consumers, but the real harm caused to modern people stems from the "anxiety industry" and its new branch office, the "status anxiety industry." Those industries come from a pseudo-dissident culture, which denigrates nearly everything that is valuable, including mass affluence, wealth creation, and the political and legal structures that help create wealth and preserve many other important liberties. . . .

Westerners are richer than any people in history, by a long way. Their wealth has produced, and been the product of, extraordinary human advances in nearly every area that previous generations ever dreamed of, and in some areas they could not have conceived of. There is a problem with this affluence and these advances, and it is not often pointed out. For a couple of generations now, rather few people have faced any sort of moral challenge. Or better: rather few people have been aware that they face a moral challenge.

Mass affluence has many attractive features. And it is one of its merits—not a demerit—that it has democratized some very teasing problems about how to behave when one has advantages. Life is a Vanity Fair. As people's opportunities increase, they become more interesting. Mass affluence has democratized the range of mistakes that people can make. They can do more good, be more creative, more generous—and they can be the opposite of all that on a larger scale. My defense is characteristically right wing in the sense that it does not expect people to be good or even perfectible. It does not altogether give up on the possibility of humans maturing, but reformation is perhaps too strong a word for what might happen to them.

Source E: Horowitz, Rick. "Better to Be Rich, Study Suggests."

The following passage is excerpted from an online article by a syndicated columnist, TV commentator, writing coach, and public speaker. The article was posted March 15, 2001.

SOMEPLACE IMPORTANT, SOMETIME SOON -- Researchers at one of the country's leading think tanks have uncovered evidence suggesting that wealthy people have more influence on government officials and government policies than other people do. . . .

"No two ways about it," concludes J. Francis Klamm, senior fellow at the Dogbites Institute. "Rich folks have more clout than the rest of us."

A team of 17 analysts spent more than eight months poring over data, examining voting records and conducting extensive interviews nationwide, attempting to discover what role, if any, money plays in the political process.

"The correlation is really quite remarkable," says Klamm. "If you were to plot it on a graph, it would just jump out at you: Very wealthy people have more influence than somewhat wealthy people, who have more influence than middle-income people. And poor people have hardly any influence at all."

Those with large sums of money at their disposal exercise that influence in a variety of ways, Klamm and his colleagues found, including large donations to politicians, extensive media crusades and well-financed lobbying efforts, all designed to build official support for actions of particular interest to the well-to-do.

"Most poor people don't have the expertise to put together a really powerful ad campaign," Klamm explains. "And they'd rather spend the money they do have on food and clothing, rather than on hiring lobbyists." . . .

"We've collected plenty of anecdotal evidence that rich people are more likely to get government officials to return their calls," Klamm notes. "Our leaders are typically very busy, and if they have time to respond to only one phone message, they'll frequently choose the wealthy constituent over the 'average Joe.'"

As a result, Klamm now believes, the concerns of ordinary people seldom make it "behind closed doors," where much of the nation's most important business gets conducted, officially and otherwise. Klamm and his fellow researchers, for instance, studied the guest lists for presidential "state dinners" dating back to the early 1980s.

"We saw very few poor people attending these events," Klamm says. "They really missed out on an excellent chance to chat with the particular individuals who make the big decisions."

Source F: Beckman, Mary. "When Money Matters."

The following passage is excerpted from SAGECrossroads, an online public forum on the ethics, politics, and economics of aging research and longevity science. It was posted on August 1, 2005.

The man in the TV commercial wins the lottery, then he shouts and dances and, presumably, laughs all the way to his bank. But his elation won't last long, say experts, because money can't buy happiness, at least for most people.

Financial windfalls might not lead to cheerier futures, but a new study suggests that when confronted with a serious health crisis, having a sizable nest egg can keep people from becoming lonely and sad. Whether feelings of contentment can guarantee everyone better health or longer life, however, is not yet clear. After years of studying how bad feelings dampen vitality, researchers are just beginning to turn their attention to the potential benefits of a sunny disposition. If health, wealth, and happiness are somehow connected, the road to physical and emotional well-being could be paved by sound financial planning and government programs that serve as a safety net for the poor and disabled.