

# Free essay on louis menand: why we have college

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## **Introduction**

In his famous article, *Live and Learn: Why we have college* Louis Menand examines the various conflicting and competing ideas about college education. He explores what college education is and also touches on its relevance in a modern day setting. What is indeed the purpose or value of a university degree? The main point or thesis in Menand's article is to develop more awareness about college. Menand discusses whether college is effective and whether it actually works. Menand however dances around his true point of view and does not really state his position explicitly. However, from the various points he brings out in the article, it is clear to see that what he is not stating explicitly is that the value of a university degree is rapidly declining and its purpose is becoming more and more undefined. However, the primary focus of this analysis will focus on Menand's implicit assumptions about the university degree and how the reader understands or digests them. To do this it is important that we first look at the main talking points in the essay.

One of the major talking points is the relatively high influx of students into colleges, depreciation of the bachelor's degree value, the level of knowledge retaining by college students, and the loss of motivation by college students towards studies. Menand however offers blurred answers to most of these questions and therefore fails to give an explicit answer. He uses a variety of sources and also states three theories in his attempt to answer these questions. The first theory states that every society needs to develop or design a mechanism that will be used to sort out more intelligent society members from those who are less intelligent. In addition, this theory adopts

an assumption that anyone who completed his college education has essentially passed what is referred to as the ' four year intelligence test' . The second theory stipulates that most people tend to indulge in careers that promise the highest financial rewards. In addition, if people were actually given a choice they would only learn what they think is important for that particular career. The third theory gives an explanation of the non-liberal subjects in the education sector. For example, as jobs become high tech, many employers are demanding for employees with specialized training. What Menand is actually trying to do here is to try to convince the reader that the value and purpose of college education has gone down rapidly. His main reasoning is drawn from all that information. It is crucial to notice that Menand does not express his reasoning directly. For example, he does not explicitly state that the value of education of education has gone down because of so and so. Rather, his statements just contain obvious answers to the question regarding college education and they are intended to remind or show readers what is actually true as drawn from facts. By using this, Menand is metaphorically stating that people come to college to just gain a degree and not useful knowledge. Readers of Menand's argument who may actually be familiar with the facts presented or who may not get his indirect references may not actually appreciate his argument. Simply put, they may not " get it".

## **Bibliography**

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