

Essay 4 Prompt

Defining an American Concept: What is "Equal Opportunity?"

This essay is your opportunity (no pun intended) to utilize the rhetorical skills and strategies that we have studied and practiced this semester. It requires that you investigate the existing interpretations and/or representations of the social concept of "equal opportunity" and reflect on how those definitions serve or hinder us as people.

The purpose of this essay is to understand and possibly redefine a term that we, as Americans, are all familiar with to some degree. In this paper, you will analyze ideas about the concept of "equal opportunity" while asserting your own ideas about equality and opportunity in America. As you plan your essay, be sure to include your response to the documentary film "The One Percent" as well as the reading: "What Ever Happened to Upward Mobility." In addition to those sources, you must utilize at least two additional outside sources to support your argument.

Consider the following questions as you plan your essay:

1. What does it mean to be "equal" in America?
2. Do we all have the same opportunities for success?
3. What factors determine or contribute to the possibility for upward mobility?
4. How does higher education respond to the question of equality?
5. Do you see education as any kind of a solution to social injustice in America? If so, in what ways? What are the possible limitations? (this might be a good opportunity to use personal testimony as a rhetorical device since you are a college student)

As you incorporate information and perspectives from the film, the essay, and your sources, be careful to ensure that your argument or perspective is your own. Don't simply relay information that you have gathered; use it to support what you have to say about equal opportunity in America.

Essay guidelines:

- 5-7 pages in length
- A minimum of two outside sources (not counting the film or the reading mentioned above)
- MLA formatting and documentation (this one should look really good!)
- Working thesis due Monday, 11/17
- Rough draft due Monday, 12/1
- Final draft due Monday 12/8 (on Titanium)