

WRITING THROUGH THE RHETORICAL MODES

SECTION 1: A RHETORICAL MODES READER

Chapter Two: The Expository Mode

Division, Classification, and Definition: Reading 1

Louis Menand, “Live and Learn: Why We Have College”

Louis Menand is an American cultural critic, essayist, and professor of English and American Literature and Language at Harvard University. He also writes for the The New Yorker and The New York Review of Books.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/06/06/live-and-learn-louis-menand>

Questions for Reading and Discussion

- 1) What are Menand’s three theories of why we have college? Which theory of college is closest to your own reason for attending college?
- 2) One of Menand’s answers to the college student’s question, “Why do we have to read these books?” is “because they teach you things about the world and yourself that, if you do not learn them in college, you are unlikely to learn anywhere else.” What are some examples of things you are currently learning in college that either teach you about yourself or that you are unlikely to learn outside of college? Does learning these things have value? If so, what is that value?
- 3) Is college supposed to be hard? Why or why not?

Questions for Writing and Research

- 1) Look up New York City College of Technology’s Mission Statement on the college website. Which of the three theories of why we have college does it support? Write a statement in which you explain your answer, being sure to quote both Menand’s article and NYCCT’s Mission Statement to support your claims.
- 2) Menand’s article contains a review of two books—*Academically Adrift* by Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, and *In the Basement of the Ivory Tower* by the anonymous “Professor X”—each of which argues that “American-style” college is failing to teach its students. What does Menand mean by “American-style” college? What other “styles” or approaches to higher education do other countries practice? Write a research paper in which you compare the higher education systems of this country and another country.

Features to consider as you conduct your research are tuition costs, methods of funding, public access, degree programs, and average education levels of the adult population. Which country's colleges would you prefer to attend, and why?



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