

## ESSAY 1: Personal Happiness

**DIRECTIONS:** Compose a five-paragraph academic essay of approximately two to three pages (MLA style---which includes 12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, double-spaced) on the following: **What areas of your life contribute most to your happiness (and/or unhappiness)? Does research coincide with your experience?**

**Write a thesis that indicates your happiness (or unhappiness) with three circumstances and/or goals in your life.** **SAMPLE THESIS:** My family relationships and potential salary enhance my happiness, but the way I spend my money diminishes it.

Within the body of your essay, discuss **three specific circumstances and/or goals** in your life (one per body paragraph) and measure them against credible research. **Each body** paragraph should be approximately half personal examples and half credible, logos-based research that you found (not one of our readings). Here's a sample body paragraph (developing the second point in the above sample thesis) with my comments:

I anticipate that the salary of my future career will add to my happiness. *Notice that the topic sentence includes the specific life category (potential career salary) and indicates the writer's feeling about it (happiness).* I'm returning to college to pursue a degree in nursing because of my love for it, but money is still a concern. For me, having money makes me feel less anxious, safer, and, at times, carefree. Not only do I want enough to comfortably pay the bills on time, but I'd like to put some away in savings and take at least one vacation with my family each year. Beyond even that, I'd like to go to the grocery store without having to penny pinch, buy a nice outfit for my daughter if a special occasion comes up, and even treat myself to a mani/pedi once in a while. *(Notice how the student includes specific personal details to support the first part of the topic sentence---i.e., how money enhances her personal well-being).* Being free of worry and able to afford small luxuries like these enhances my happiness. That's why I was relieved to see that according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics, a median nurse's salary is more than \$68,000. That, along with my spouse's salary, would put us in the lifestyle that I like to lead. Money is not the most important aspect of my happiness by any means, but I know that to some extent, having it does enhance my happiness, and it turns out that some credible research coincides with my feelings. In daily telephone interviews with approximately 1,000 U.S. citizens in all fifty states during the entire year of 2009, Nobel-prize winning psychologist *mentioning these professional credentials is important to establishing the authority of this source* D. Mosley, Ph.D., discovered that, up to a certain amount (\$75,000 as of the study), money contributes to happiness, especially if it is spent on experiences *(Notice how the student includes specific details of the study---how many people, when it took place, and even, briefly, the method of gathering information. That makes the information more valid to readers. By the way, I changed the name of this source so that you would find your own research ☺)* With my nursing salary supplementing my spouse's salary, I will more than meet that \$75,000 point, which only confirms what I've already come to realize: A certain amount of money does add to my happiness. *See how paragraph includes personal commentary and research on the life category being discussed? Each body paragraph must include both to address the assignment].*

**TONE:** Because this is a personal essay, you must, obviously, use first-person point of view ("I"), but avoid superfluous phrases like "I believe," "I think," "I feel," etc.; instead, directly express your belief, thought, and feeling without using those phrases. This is the only shorter essay in which you will use

first-person point of view. Of course, avoid second-person point of view (i.e., “you” and any version of that word).

**SOURCES/CITING:** Please read the **MLA Citing** and **Easy Citing** handouts (see Unit 1 assignment sheet) to learn how to cite within your draft and on your Works Cited page. Click [here](#) for an example of how your alphabetized Works Cited page should look.

I’ll use the rubric under the Course Information folder to grade this essay, but I’ll be especially interested in how your essay shows me your skill with 1) academic essay structure (effective thesis, topic sentences); 2) choosing and incorporating information; 3) using credible, logos-based research; 4) citing.

**Purpose of this essay:** The primary purpose of this essay is to **inform** readers of how your experiences/attitudes in specific circumstances/goals in your life compare and/or contrast with credible research on happiness and those life categories.

**Audience for this essay:** Professors and other researchers of your topic