

Handout Number 34

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Sample Argumentative Essay

To Tell or Not To Tell

Introduction

I remember that when I was in elementary school, there was always one student who would tell the teacher every little thing that anyone of us ever did; if one of us had brought candy to school and were sharing it while class was going on, or if one of us had taken a look at the teacher's grade book when she went out of the class for a moment. I also remember that I was never that student, and I vowed that I never would become a "snitch", the term used by intelligence services worldwide. Then I joined university and found that many students were getting by in classes that required term papers, for example, by buying them, or "renting" them from people who had taken the class before. The same students didn't seem to study as much as I did, yet during the finals they often did better than I and the other more studious members of my class.

Claim

I admit that I was tempted to report on students whose papers were bought, but I never did, and I believe I was right.

Argument One

I happen to believe in the old adage that says, "Mind your own business." My objective as a student was to learn as much as I could so that I would succeed when I graduated and left undergraduate studies. If the information that I learnt (**specific instances**), English, French, Math, Nutrition could be applied to my profession later, then I need not worry if someone else had cheated. As far as minding my own business, who am I to know what is going on in the head of my neighbor in an exam hall? Perhaps he has been working all night, and was not able to study; perhaps one of his parents is sick or even worse, perhaps he or she is sick. The point is, I should not judge.

Argument Two

There are those who believe that God will judge in the long term; I don't mean that as a threat, but I do believe that there is justice in the long run. I had a friend, **personal experience**, George who had not only bought one term paper, but who had never written one paper during his university career. When he was finally hired for his first job, he was asked to write an analytical report for his supervisor. As he had absolutely no idea, he could not do it, and had no one to cheat from; he had to tell the supervisor he was not able to do the work. He lost his job. According to *Fortune Magazine*, **testimony**, employees are promoted more often if they are capable writers. My friend, Sandy, **personal experience** had cheated on several university course assignments. Her GPA was not low however and she thought she could get a job easily. During three consecutive interviews she had with hotels in Scotland, the trained personnel directors

could see that she lacked communication skills, and she found great difficulty finding work.

Counterargument

Some people still may say that we have a moral obligation to report a criminal. Some others say that we must report a cheater because they are cheating us out of our rights. I believe that we may have a moral obligation to report a crime to the police if we see someone physically injured, or a car being stolen.

Rebuttal

But at a university, who are the police? Also, in this life, our rights are hard to define; many times we will be cheated, but we must learn to cope.

Conclusion

Today, I am sitting at my desk writing this essay. I have a job; I feel competent in what I do. For me, it is reason enough not to have reported on anyone I may have seen cheating in my own university life, and to discourage others from doing so either.