

4. My fear of flying (or whatever) prevents me from living a normal life.
5. The willingness to undertake adventure is a necessary part of a happy life.
6. Doing good deeds can backfire.
7. Complaining can produce unforeseen results.
8. Travel can be the best medicine.
9. Consumers are often at the mercy of unscrupulous companies.
10. Visits to the doctor/dentist/vet often prove more traumatic than the illness.
11. Failure to keep my mouth shut (or some other bad habit) gets me into trouble.
12. Success involves sacrifice.
13. Modern technology often produces more inconvenience than convenience.
14. Job hunting today is a difficult process.
15. Science fiction writers often accurately predict the future.
16. My hometown was a terrible/wonderful place to grow up.
17. Many required courses are/are not relevant to a student's education.
18. My high school did/did not adequately prepare me for college.
19. The most popular attitude among students today is "I'm apathetic, and I don't care."
20. Fad diets can have harmful results.

### ***Sample Student Essay***

Study the use of specific examples in the brief student essay that follows. See if you can identify the transition devices that help move the reader from point to point and from example to example.

#### **RIVER RAFTING TEACHES WORTHWHILE LESSONS**

Introduction: A description

Sun-warmed water slaps you in the face, the blazing sun beats down on your shoulders, and canyon walls speed by as you race down rolling waves of water. No experience can equal that of river rafting. Along with being fun and exciting, rafting has many educational advantages as well, especially for those involved in school-sponsored rafting trips. River trips teach students how to prevent some of the environmental destruction that concerns the park officials and, in addition, river trips also teach students to work together in a way few other experiences can.

Thesis

Essay map

Topic sentence one:  
Trip teaches respect  
for environment

Two examples of  
respect:  
1. cleaning up trash  
2. foregoing suds  
in river

Topic sentence two:  
The trip teaches  
cooperation

Two examples of  
noncooperation:  
1. difficulties in  
paddling raft  
2. a near accident

The most important lesson a rafting trip teaches students is respect for the environment. When students are exposed to the outdoors, they can better learn to appreciate its beauty and feel the need to preserve it. For example, I went on a rafting trip three summers ago with the biology department at my high school. Our trip lasted seven days down the Green River through the isolated Desolation Canyon in Utah. After the first day of rafting, I found myself surrounded by steep canyon walls and saw virtually no evidence of human life. The starkly beautiful, unspoiled atmosphere soon became a major influence on us during the trip. By the second day I saw classmates, whom I had previously seen fill an entire room with candy wrappers and empty soda cans, voluntarily inspecting our campsite for trash. And when twenty-four high school students sacrifice washing their hair for the sake of a sudless and thus healthier river, some new, better attitudes about the environment have definitely been established.

In addition to the respect for nature a rafting trip encourages, it also teaches the importance of group cooperation. Since school-associated trips put students in command of the raft, the students find that in order to stay in control each member must be reliable, able to do his or her own part, and alert to the actions of others. These skills are quickly learned when students see the consequences of noncooperation. Usually this occurs the first day, when the left side of the raft paddles in one direction, and the right the other way, and half the crew ends up seasick from going in circles. An even better illustration is another experience I had on my river trip. Because an upcoming rapid was usually not too rough, our instructor said a few of us could jump out and swim in it. Instead of deciding as a group who should go, though, five eager swimmers bailed out. This left me, an angry instructor, and another student to steer the raft. As it turned out, the rapid was fairly rough, and we soon found ourselves heading straight for a huge hole (a hole is formed from swirling funnel-like currents and can pull a raft under). The combined effort of the three of us was not enough to get the raft completely clear of the hole, and the raft tipped up vertically on its side, spilling us into the river. Luckily, no one was hurt, and the raft did not topple over, but the near loss of our food rations for the next five days, not to mention the raft itself, was enough to make us all more willing to work as a group in the future.

Conclusion:                   Despite the obvious benefits rafting offers, the number  
Importance of lessons   of river permits issued to school groups continues to  
                                     decline because of financial cutbacks. It is a shame that  
                                     those in charge of these cutbacks do not realize that in addi-  
                                     tion to having fun and learning about themselves, students  
                                     are learning valuable lessons through rafting trips—lessons  
                                     that may help preserve the rivers for future rafters.

### *Professional Essay*

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## SO WHAT'S SO BAD ABOUT BEING SO-SO?

*Lisa Wilson Strick*

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THE OTHER AFTERNOON I was playing the piano when my seven-year-old walked 1  
in. He stopped and listened awhile, then said: "Gee, Mom, you don't play that thing  
very well, do you?"

No, I don't. I am a piano lesson dropout. The fine points of fingering totally 2  
escape me. I play everything at half-speed, with many errant notes. My perfor-  
mance would make any serious music student wince, but I don't care. I've enjoyed  
playing the piano badly for years.

I also enjoy singing badly and drawing badly. (I used to enjoy sewing badly, but 3  
I've been doing that so long that I finally got pretty good at it.) I'm not ashamed of  
my incompetence in these areas. I do one or two other things well and that should  
be enough for anybody. But it gets boring doing the same things over and over.  
Every now and then it's fun to try something new.

Unfortunately, doing things badly has gone out of style. It used to be a mark 4  
of class if a lady or a gentleman sang a little, painted a little, played the violin a  
little. You didn't have to be *good* at it; the point was to be fortunate enough to  
have the leisure time for such pursuits. But in today's competitive world we have  
to be "experts"—even in our hobbies. You can't tone up your body by pulling on  
your sneakers and slogging around the block a couple of times anymore. Why?  
Because you'll be laughed off the street by the "serious" runners—the ones who  
log twenty-plus miles a week in their headbands, sixty-dollar running suits and fancy  
shoes. The shoes are really a big deal. If you say you're thinking about taking up  
almost any sport, the first thing the aficionados will ask is what you plan to do  
about shoes. Leather or canvas? What type of soles? Which brand? This is not the  
time to mention that the gym shoes you wore in high school are still in pretty good  
shape. As far as sports enthusiasts are concerned, if you don't have the latest shoes  
you are hopelessly committed to mediocrity.