Essay 1:

It is often argued that studying overseas is overrated, and many brilliant scholars studied locally. It is not necessary to travel for a higher education. Do you agree?

Essay 2:

Some believe that the aim of education is a better life in the future, others consider self-improvement as the main focus. What is your opinion?

**What are the benefits of studying abroad? Stand out from the crowd with the unique perspectives, skills, and experience you gain when you study abroad.**

First off, why is studying abroad important?Earning a graduate management education abroad affords students numerous personal and [professional benefits](https://www.mba.com/~/link.aspx?_id=0AC4E0F362404281A1903BEC0BEBA3F5&_z=z). The unique experiences you gain as an international student will develop you as an individual and make you more attractive to companies that are eager to hire graduates who can help them excel in today’s truly global economy. No matter your study abroad goals, the advantages are universal.

## Benefit #1: Become a more well-rounded individual

By living and studying in a foreign country, you can gain a greater understanding of your personal heritage and values. Exposure to different outlooks, customs, and ways of life means your beliefs will be challenged. Some will change forever, while others will evolve or gain even stronger footing. Interacting with native populations and fellow international students also allow you to develop greater respect for other cultures, values, and norms. With greater perspective, worldviews, and tolerance, you can become a more independent, self-reliant, and confident individual in both your personal and professional life.

## Benefit #2: Develop marketable business skills

As an international student, you have the opportunity to participate in valuable life experiences and develop new skills that will benefit your resume. With an immersive study abroad experience, you can learn or master that country’s language at social, academic, and professional levels. In addition, leadership styles often differ from one culture or country to the next, and you can learn how to work with—and gain a better understanding of—different leadership and business styles.

In an international business school environment, you’ll gain valuable experience working with a diverse team and be able to apply those skills to the workplace to help you manage or work with people from all walks of life. Your exposure to a new culture affords you a broad and sophisticated worldview and diversifies your thoughts and values. As a result, it’ll be easier for you to form partnerships and work effectively when tackling global or multinational challenges.

## Benefit #3: Gain the competitive advantage

Students who study abroad often stand out from other job candidates with [skills that can only be gained from overseas experiences](https://www.mba.com/~/link.aspx?_id=49F90C3F92984FCAB19C9BF1223CD6D3&_z=z), such as strong cross-cultural communications, global perspective, and familiarity with international standards, laws, and regulations. As an international student, you’ll learn from and alongside people from diverse backgrounds and locations, which means that everyone will bring their unique solutions and point of view to b-school exercises, discussions, and case study analysis.

Additionally, if you study in a country with an emerging economy or challenging business climate, you can gain first-hand experience and learn to respond quickly and nimbly to unpredictable or uncomfortable situations. This adaptability and exposure to different points of view, makes you an attractive candidate and helps you differentiate yourself in an increasingly crowded job market..

Looking to stand out from the crowd? Find out why one Georgetown admissions representative thinks studying abroad is the answer.

## Benefit #4: Open international career opportunities

If your goal is to work or have a career abroad, it is advantageous to also study outside of your home country. Studying in the country or area where you want to eventually work abroad is beneficial, as the network you develop in business school often plays an important role in connecting you with job prospects and other local networking opportunities. In this scenario, you also experience the region’s people and culture first-hand which can help you assimilate and transition to a career in that country or area. But, regardless of whether you study abroad in the same region where you want to work, an international business school experience of any kind will open doors for you outside of your home country. The unique experiences you gain abroad will make you more attractive to companies looking for hires that are personable, effective, and comfortable in multicultural settings.

[Learn how studying abroad can introduce you to a variety of international job opportunities.](https://www.mba.com/~/link.aspx?_id=DA9F57B231614059A2818DFD52265A26&_z=z)

**Aim of Education**

Education reform is the great social justice cause of our times. If we are to deliver a fairer society, in which opportunity is shared more widely, we must secure the highest standards of education for all young people, regardless of their background.

This is the commitment which has been at the heart of the government’s programme of reform. It is a pleasure to speak at a conference today with so many dedicated professionals and experts who share this belief, and have guided and implemented the changes we have introduced.

Today, thanks to the hard work of thousands of teachers, 100,000 more 6-year-olds are on track to become confident readers as a result of our focus on phonics. 200,000 fewer pupils are persistently absent from school compared to 5 years ago. And over a million more children now attend a ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ school than in 2010. But too many children still do not receive the standard of education to which they are entitled. In this new Parliament, we will continue to support teachers to raise standards and challenge under-performance.

**Purpose of education**

Today, though, I would like to take a step back from the details of our reforms and turn to a broader question: what is the purpose of education?

Education is the engine of our economy, it is the foundation of our culture, and it’s an essential preparation for adult life. Delivering on our commitment to social justice requires us to place these 3 objectives at the heart of our education system.

We all have a responsibility to educate the next generation of informed citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said, and instilling in them a love of knowledge and culture for their own sake. But education is also about the practical business of ensuring that young people receive the preparation they need to secure a good job and a fulfilling career, and have the resilience and moral character to overcome challenges and succeed.

**Economy**

The government’s economic record is strong. Last year, GDP grew by 3% - the strongest growth since 2006, and the fastest in the G7. At the end of 2014, employment was at its highest-ever level, with 1.85 million more people in work since the coalition government entered office. Business investment has increased by 25.6% since the first quarter of 2010.

But the data on productivity has been mixed. In line with other advanced economies, productivity fell in the financial crisis, though it has since been increasing steadily. The UK does, however, have a long-term productivity challenge. Output per hour in the UK was 17 percentage points below the G7 average in 2013. We are addressing this gap, by re-balancing our economy, investing in our infrastructure, and building a competitive tax system.

But perhaps most important of all, we must ensure that more people have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in a demanding economy. Here too, our long-term performance has lagged behind those of our international competitors. Our 15-year-olds are on average 3 years behind their peers in Shanghai in mathematics and we are the only OECD country whose young people do not have better levels of literacy or numeracy than their grandparents’ generation.

**Culture**

Equipping young people with the knowledge and skills they need to secure a place at a good university, start an apprenticeship, or find their first job, is a fundamental responsibility of all of us working in education. But the purpose of education is, of course, far broader.

As we all know, education has an intrinsic value as the hallmark of a civilized society and the foundation of our culture. Matthew Arnold was a great education reformer of the 19th century. He is best remembered now as a cultural critic, but he also spent 35 years as an HMI, the last 2 of which as Chief Inspector. In ‘Culture and Anarchy’, his best-known work, he articulated the liberal ideal of a high-quality education for all, which:seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been known and thought in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely, - nourished, and not bound by them.

Mark Twain wrote: I have never let my schooling interfere with my education.

We must resist attempts to divide culture from knowledge, or to suggest that a focus on a core academic curriculum in school makes it more difficult to develop our young people into creative, engaged citizens.

The core academic subjects at school are the primary colors of an educated person’s palette, enabling them to read more, not just within those subjects but also the subjects that emanate from them: history and maths underpin economics; the study of English links to drama; paleontology combines chemistry and biology.

We have also continued to champion the importance of the arts in schools. Music and art and design are statutory subjects in the national curriculum for 5- to 14-year-olds and the national curriculum also ensures that pupils study drama and dance.

Over the 2012 to 2016 period we have spent over £460 million in a diverse portfolio of music and arts education programs designed to improve access to the arts for all children regardless of their background and to develop talent across the country. These include support for: [music education hubs](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-importance-of-music-a-national-plan-for-music-education), the Sorrell Foundation’s National Art and Design Saturday Clubs, the British Film Institute’s ‘Film Academy’, Music for Youth’s School Proms, the National Youth Dance Company, and support for the Shakespeare Schools Festival.

The [Music and Dance Scheme](https://www.gov.uk/music-dance-scheme), funded by the department, enables our most talented young people to receive a world-class education in our top music and dance schools. This year we are spending £29 million to ensure that the children who are able to benefit from this specialist education are those with the most talent, not those whose parents can afford to pay the fees. Just last week, I had the privilege to attend the Royal Ballet School’s End of Year Performance, and the virtuosity on display was astonishing.

**Preparation for adult life**

These 2 purposes of education - to grow our economy and nurture our culture - are vital. But I believe there is a third, very practical purpose to education. Adult life today is complicated, and we owe it to young people to ensure that they have the character and sense of moral purpose to succeed.

There is now very clear evidence that schools can make a significant contribution to their pupils’ achievement by finding opportunities to instil key character traits, including persistence, grit, optimism and curiosity.

This is not about vague notions of ‘learning how to learn’ or ‘therapeutic education’, and we will not return to the failed approaches of the past. In 2005, the then-government promoted and funded a strategy to schools named ‘[social and emotional aspects of learning](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-and-emotional-aspects-of-learning-seal-programme-in-secondary-schools-national-evaluation)’. This was a well-meaning attempt to ensure children received a broader education. But it failed, because it was part of a wider retreat from the importance of knowledge-based curriculum in schools. Its evaluation found that SEAL was in fact associated with declining respect for teachers and enjoyment of school.

We have recognized that a broader education - including character and values - can only succeed when it is underpinned by the highest standards of academic rigour.

The [Knowledge is Power Programme](http://www.kipp.org/) schools - KIPP -are one of the earliest and best groups of charter schools in the United States. Their first school opened in Houston, Texas in 1999. They now have 162 schools educating 60,000 pupils throughout the USA, 87% of whom come from low income families.

The first pupils to graduate from KIPP schools left with academic records which no-one had previously dared to expect from young people growing up in the neighborhoods from which they came. More than 94% of KIPP middle school students have graduated high school, and more than 82% of KIPP alumni have gone on to college.

But while these students from disadvantaged backgrounds were entering colleges in greater numbers than ever before, it soon became clear that they were much more likely to drop out than their more advantaged peers.

The American academic ED Hirsch has made a persuasive case that an important reason for this gap is a deficit of vocabulary and knowledge. KIPP charters are middle schools - so children enter aged 11 or 12. Even the excellent education they receive after they arrive cannot overcome the disadvantage which they have already experienced. Building vocabulary and knowledge simply takes too long. Once in college, without the intensive support provided by KIPP, some are falling behind.

I have no doubt that this explanation is correct. But I am convinced that that these pupils struggled in college for another reason, too. Recent research - particularly the work of Angela Duckworth and the Nobel Laureate James Heckman - has examined the impact of character on under-performance. They have found that key attributes including resilience, self-control and social intelligence are powerful predictors of achievement in education and success in adult life.

Robert Putnam, a Harvard Professor of Public Policy, recently published ‘Our Kids’, an account of the decline of social mobility in the United States over the past half-century. He places part of the blame on unequal access which disadvantaged children have to extracurricular activities, compared to the greater opportunities open to children in better-off circumstances.

If we are to deliver on our commitment to social justice, breaking the cycle of disadvantage so that every child reaches their potential, we must therefore ensure that all pupils benefit from an education based on these values.

Character education is already a part of the ethos and culture of many good schools. In the United States, KIPP schools now focus on developing grit, resilience and self-confidence in their pupils, and this work is showing results. As of spring 2015, 45% of KIPP pupils have gained a college degree, compared to a national average of 34%, and just 9% from low-income families.

Building on this evidence, we launched a national awards scheme to reward and showcase schools and organisations who demonstrated their commitment to building character in young people aged 5 to 16.

We are also providing £3.5 million to fund 14 projects to build and better understand what works and share the good practice with all schools.

Premier Rugby Limited and 14 professional rugby clubs are leading one of these projects, in the year that the Rugby World Cup comes to England. Building on the core rugby values of respect, teamwork, enjoyment, discipline and sportsmanship, the programme will deliver classroom based and physical activity character building programs to 17,250 pupils. An additional programme funded by Premier Rugby and its partnerships will offer an intensive 33 week programme to 480 16- to 18-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training. These vulnerable young people will benefit from character building activities, qualifications and work experience, setting them up for a more successful future.

A further project will be led by Floreat Education, a trust with 2 new free schools. They will receive funding to develop and pilot a character virtue development programme for reception, year 1 and year 2 in its 2 new free schools, from September. The project will also provide significant resources and support for other schools, helping to spread the impact of their work more widely.