

1. How is the opening sentence an effective introduction to the author's argument? (1 mark)

| From passage | Paraphrase/ Inference |
|---|--|
| On the surface, universities are a nice idea | [Function] He is preparing us for his argument OR introducing his argument [Context] that universities might not be as helpful as they seem/only helpful in theory. |

2. How does the author support her assertion that 'many people find the benefits of higher education underwhelming' (line 8-9)? UYOWAFAP (3 marks)

| From passage | Paraphrase/ Inference |
|--|---|
| <p>People go in, pick a subject they like, learn from the experts, and leave (A) being job-ready and future-ready young adults. This is why so many people decide to go to college, even if it means making (C) big financial and personal sacrifices.</p> <p>Yet just because so many people are doing it does not mean it is necessarily a good thing to do. In fact, while there is generally a cost—in terms of employment prospects— of not having a college degree, there are (D) not always clear competitive advantages in having one, particularly if (E) almost half of the population has one. The reality is that many people today find the benefits of higher education underwhelming.</p> | <p>[Expectation] A. People expect that college will prepare them to succeed in their careers/ lives</p> <p>[Reality] B. However, they may end up being disappointed as... [underwhelming]</p> <p>C. not only does it cost a lot,</p> <p>D. having a college degree may not give them benefits that others do not have/ an edge over others,</p> <p>E. especially since a lot of people now have college degrees.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">1-2 points: 1 mark 3 points: 2 marks 4-5 points: 3 marks</p> |

3. What contrasts does the author draw between university graduates' experience in college and their experience of entering the labour market in paragraph 2?

UYOWAFAP (2 marks)

| From passage | Paraphrase/ Inference |
|---|--|
| <p>Most university graduates have (A1) very fond memories of their years in college. Unfortunately, most graduates also have memories—more recent and (A2) significantly less fond—of the challenges they face when they enter the labour market and the frustrations employers express when dealing with them and finding them (B2) unprepared for the workplace despite being (B1) successful in the classroom.</p> | <p>A1 & A2. The years in college are <u>pleasant</u>, unlike their experience of entering the workforce.</p> <p>B2. They may struggle to cope in their new jobs, unlike</p> <p>B1. Their experience in college where they may have done very well.</p> |

4. Using material from paragraphs 3-4 only (lines 18-45), summarise what the author has to say about what students expect from a university degree and why it sometimes falls short.

Write your summary in **no more than 120 words**, not counting the opening words which are printed below.

UYOWAFAP

Students' expectations from a university degree are...

| From passage | Paraphrase/ Inference – 24 points |
|--|---|
| Students have (A) unrealistic (but (B) understandable) demands of college. They enter college with the (repeat A) blind faith that having a university degree give them a (C) better chance of succeeding in life . After all, irrespective of their global ranking, all universities market themselves as an (D) engine of growth , (E) employability , and (Repeat C) success , and a college education is still a (F) promise to upgrade someone's talent . | Students' expectations from a university degree are... (A) too idealistic/ high (B) even though we can see/ know why. (C) Students believe they are <u>more likely</u> to do well in the future (D) as universities say they are pivotal for economic development, (E) getting jobs, (F) and improving competencies. |
| This inevitably (G) sets a high bar that is just (H) not feasible to fulfil at scale . (I) Not everyone can be a leader, a CEO, a manager, or a highly sought-after knowledge worker . By any objective measure, we have come a long way in the past 100 years, transitioning from monotonous assembly lines and routine jobs to flexible and meaningful careers. But let us not forget that (J) it is just not possible to give everyone their dream job . If (K) our career aspirations surpass the available opportunities and (L) our self-perceived talents exceed our actual talents , we are surely destined to be (M) miserable at work . Perhaps this explains the prevalence of (N) | But the system falls short as (G) our expectations to succeed are unrealistic (H) and impossible to achieve for everyone/ en masse (I) since most are merely average/ cannot all be great (J) We <u>cannot all</u> to have their ideal careers (K) When there are <u>insufficient</u> dream jobs and (L) we are over-confident about our abilities, |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>low employee engagement ratings (O) despite more emphasis on worker well-being. The equivalent in our personal lives would be if everyone aspired to date movie stars: the result would be (P) a flood of (Repeat M) dissatisfied people.</p> | <p>(M) we become sad and (N) less passionate at the workplace (O) despite companies paying more attention to staff welfare. (P) The result is many unhappy people</p> |
| <p><i>But at the end of the day,</i> students (Q) want jobs. The number one reason students have for investing so much time and money into a college education is to get a (Repeat Q) good job, with two thirds of them seeing (R) ‘financial stability’ as the primary goal. That is not an unreasonable expectation to have. And yet, despite record low unemployment, (S) under-employment is extremely common, with as many as 40% of college graduates working in jobs that do not actually require their qualifications. (T) In fact, one in every five graduates is still not working in a degree-demanding job even 10 years post-graduation. And for all the kerfuffle about (U) education for its own sake, it is also unlikely that students’ main motivation for going to college is their desire to engage (V) in the actual process of learning — or absorbing knowledge — as much as the (W) actual degree they receive at the end. Anyone who says otherwise should be asked the following question: would they rather attend a top university without receiving a degree, or obtain a degree from a top university without the education?</p> | <p>(Q) Fundamentally, people desire employment and (R) prioritise monetary security/ having regular salaries/ income (S) So almost half of graduates end up in occupations that do not need graduate degrees and (T) for a minority, this stayed true for a decade after graduation. (U) So, for all the hype/ hurly-burly about the intrinsic value of learning, (V) students do not value mastering concepts, (W) and just want paper qualifications.</p> |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|-------|------|
| Points | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-6 | 7-8 | 9-10 | 11-13 | 14-17 | 18 + |
| Marks | 1m | 2m | 3m | 4m | 5m | 6m | 7m | 8m |

Students' expectations from a university degree are too idealistic, but we can see why. Students think they will excel in the future as universities claim they drive economic development, help get jobs, and improve competencies. But the system falls short as we expect too much, and it is impossible to achieve en masse, when most are merely average. With insufficient ideal jobs and over-confidence in our abilities, employees become sad and disengaged, despite employers paying more attention to staff welfare. The labour force becomes unmotivated. Fundamentally, people just need employment and steady incomes. Almost half of graduates have non-graduate occupations. For some, this stayed true for a decade after graduation. Despite our fuss over education's intrinsic value, students would rather have the extrinsic benefits of paper qualifications. (120 words) (23 points)

5. What reasons does the author give in paragraph 5 for the forecasted plateauing of student enrolment in universities (lines 55-56)? UYOWAFAP (3 marks)

| From passage | Paraphrase/ Inference |
|--|---|
| <p>Students are (A) paying more and more to (B) get less and less: other than healthcare, nothing has (A) risen as much as the cost of higher education. (C) Student debt has reached an all-time-high in America, higher than credit card debt and higher than car financing debt. Believe it or not, some people have managed to accumulate \$1 million in student debt. To be sure, there is still a return on investment to most college degrees, and people are generally better off having one than not having one. However, for every prestigious degree that generates a positive return on investment, there are (D) many less prestigious colleges and careers where the balance is negative. It is also true that (E) the more graduates a nation produces, the less value-add there is in being a graduate. All these explain the forecast that college enrolment should plateau in the next two or three years.</p> | <p>A. University tuition fees are increasing, B. even as the benefits of going to university are decreasing. C. Students end up owing <u>a lot of</u> money. D. <u>If you go to a lousy/ less elite college,</u> you may end up paying more than you get. (2 parts) E. <u>As more people have university degrees,</u> the comparative advantage of having a degree decreases OR it becomes less beneficial to you to have a degree. (2 parts)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> 1-2 points: 1 mark 3 points: 2 marks 4-5 points: 3 marks </p> <p>Points A and B need the comparison for the mark</p> |

6. Why does the author describe college admissions scandals as ‘ironic’ (line 65).
UYOWAFAP. (2 marks)

| From passage | Paraphrase/ Inference |
|---|--|
| <p>The (A) value-add of a university degree is inversely related to a student’s socio-economic status—while (C) those who already have wealth, privilege, and contacts will enjoy high levels of career success anyway, the significance of the degree for those born with less cannot be understated. This is what makes the college admissions scandals in countries like China and the U.S. so ironic: (B) the people who could afford to pay such high bribes were the ones who needed to do this the least— (C) their wealth, privilege, and contacts virtually guaranteed that they would land in a good place in life regardless of whether or where they attended college.</p> | <p>(A) Attending college benefits poorer students more than richer students,</p> <p>(B) but it is only the rich who have the money to get in the backdoor,</p> <p>(C) when they do not actually need a university degree to succeed in the future.</p> <p>Either (A) + (B) or (B) + (C) for full mark</p> |

7. Suggest a reason why the author uses the phrase ‘for the rest of us’ (lines 72-73)?
(1 mark)

| From passage | Paraphrase/ Inference |
|--|---|
| <p>Unless <u>you</u> are lucky enough to be born in a place like Denmark, where, on top of free tuition, university students enjoy state support to the tune of almost a thousand dollars a month to cover their living expenses, higher education exacts a cost. For the rest of us, there are debilitating tuition fees as well as invisible costs. These</p> | <p>The author is (A) <u>siding</u> with (B) <u>the majority</u> who do not have the privilege of being supported by the state.</p> <p>The author is (A) <u>appealing to an audience</u> whom he assumes (B) <u>do not have the privilege of being supported by the state</u>.</p> <p>(A) Effect of the use of inclusive pronoun (B) Context of “rest of us”</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| costs, negligible for some, becomes more painful the less you have. | <i>Any combination of (A) and (B) for full marks</i> |
|---|--|

8. Explain the author's use of the phrase 'even when' twice in lines 78 and 80. (1 mark)

| From passage | Paraphrase/ Inference |
|---|--|
| And that is assuming everyone has an equal opportunity to qualify for higher education in the first place. Even when elite universities focus on enrolling minorities, they tend to prioritize what he calls the "privileged poor," such as Black or Hispanic people from higher socio-economic status. Even when low-income students are admitted, many experience culture shock upon entering highly selective campuses.... | <p>The author repeats the phrase "even when" twice to highlight/ emphasise how extremely difficult it is for low-income students to get into university,</p> <p>OR</p> <p>how efforts by universities to combat inequality is insufficient.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Either for 1 mark 0m if answer is vague about context</i></p> |

9. Suggest how 'differences in possessions and experiences' (line 82) worsen culture shock for low-income students. (2 marks)

| From passage | Paraphrase/ Inference |
|--|--|
| Even when low-income students are admitted, many experience culture shock upon entering highly selective campuses, which is intensified by (A) differences in possessions and (B) experiences during the fall, winter, spring and summer breaks. | <p>Low-income students realise that</p> <p>A. (<i>inferred</i>) other students have a lot more things than them, and that</p> <p>B. (<i>inferred</i>) they have seen much less of the world/ they lack cultural capital.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>2 points for 2 marks 1 mark for a broad answer that covers both A and B (e.g. luxuries).</i></p> |

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| | 0m for just paraphrasing |
|--|--------------------------|

10. According to the author in para 8, how do universities fail to help low-income students that they admit? UYOWAFAP (2 marks)

| From passage | Paraphrase/ Inference |
|--|--|
| <p>(A) Inadequate advising and mentoring also fail to provide the direction needed to (B) navigate an unfamiliar environment, especially when many students (C) lack familiarity with the terminology, academic expectations and “hidden curriculum” found at highly selective institutions.</p> | <p>Universities (A) do not provide <u>enough</u> guidance (B) to manoeuvre in a <u>strange</u> setting, especially considering that (C) students do not know the nomenclature/ language/ culture/ norms</p> <p>1-2 points: 1 mark 3 points: 2 marks</p> |