

English Placement Test Sample Essay Topic

Margaret Mead Passage

DIRECTIONS: You will have 45 minutes to plan and write an essay on the topic assigned below. Before you begin writing, read the passage carefully and plan what you will say. Your essay should be as well organized and as carefully written as you can make it.

“For many Americans, the concept of success is a source of confusion. As a people, we Americans greatly prize success. We are taught to celebrate and admire the one who gets the highest grades, the one voted most attractive or most likely to succeed. But while we often rejoice in the success of people far removed from ourselves—people who work in another profession, live in another community, or are endowed with a talent that we do not especially want for ourselves—we tend to regard the success of people close at hand, within our own small group, as a threat.”

Adapted from Margaret Mead, *The Egalitarian Error*

Explain Mead’s argument and discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with her analysis. Support your position, providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Source: *Focus on English*