

Deconstructing Arguments

DIRECTIONS: Read the article. Then, on the next page, deconstruct the author's argument.

If you are looking for more than just a job, if you want to make a real and lasting difference in the world, have a high level of autonomy, and enjoy lots of free time on top of it, then consider becoming a teacher. You may protest that teachers are notoriously underpaid, but when considering a career path it's important to look at your overall quality of life, and not just at your paycheck. Consider the following.

As a teacher, you are making a real difference in the lives of your students, and you are doing your part to make the world a better place. You can see the results of your efforts every single day, while enjoying the ability to use your creativity and express your own unique personality. According to Janet Berns, who has taught science for 23 years at George Washington Elementary School in Houston, Texas, "There is no greater satisfaction than to be present at the moment that a student suddenly 'gets it.' I never get tired of witnessing that moment of discovery, nor do I get tired of riding the wave of excitement and enthusiasm that inevitably follows. I have been fortunate enough to have witnessed a number of young people discover their calling in my classroom. It's a profound and humbling experience."

Most people only work for a paycheck, and live for the weekends, when they can get back to their "real lives" for a couple of days. But what if life didn't have to be like that? What if you were happy and excited to get up and go to work every day, and money was the last thing on your mind? "I don't consider myself an employee," says Mark Stanton of Burke High School in Wilmington, Maryland. "I am a friend, a mentor, a guru. I love my work. I can't imagine doing anything else. Oh, and yeah, I get paid for it too."

Teaching offers endless variety, no two days are the same. And teachers are learners, too. "I learn new things every day," says Jean Kirkpatrick of Sunnyside Senior High in Dayton, Florida. "I'm always researching, preparing my lesson plans. The constant stream of new information keeps me young!"

And teachers are happy. In a study conducted in 2011, the Roessling Institute found that in a survey of 10,000 college graduates who had been in the same career field for 10 years or more, teachers reported the most sense of satisfaction. Teachers were also more likely to remain in the same job across the span of their careers.

One reason often cited for this high level of job satisfaction is the amount of independence a teacher enjoys. "I have to follow a curriculum," says Harold Kent of Royal Daughton High School in Kensington, Maryland, but how I choose to teach the material to my kids is up to me. I like to engage my kids from every possible angle. And teaching lets me get creative."

If you want to have a career and a family, teaching is a great fit there, too. Teachers have the same schedule as their students, meaning there is more time to spend with family. And you can't beat the vacation time. When you factor in all of the holidays, holiday breaks and summer, teachers can have as much as four months of the year to themselves to work other jobs, pursue their individual projects, or travel.

There are so many reasons to become a teacher. And one of the best ones is that you can teach the subjects that most interest you, thus pursuing your own interests at the same time that you are earning a living. So think beyond the salary when you're trying to decide what to do with your life, because the bottom line isn't money, it's quality of life.



Name _____ **Author's Point of View**

1. What is the author's claim? _____

2. List the reason and evidence the author uses to support the claim.



3. Is the argument convincing? Why or why not?