

# HISSET Writing Samples

## **Article 1: The Benefits of Online Education**

***By Samantha Price, Education Today, January 2023***

In recent years, online education has become increasingly popular due to its flexibility and accessibility. According to a 2023 report by the National Center for Education Statistics, over 35% of all students in the United States enrolled in at least one online course in 2022, a significant increase from previous years. Many students are now able to take classes from the comfort of their homes, saving time and money on transportation. Online education also allows students to work at their own pace, which can be especially beneficial for those who need extra time to understand the material. A study conducted by the Online Learning Consortium found that 60% of online students reported a higher level of satisfaction with their ability to manage their coursework compared to traditional students.

Moreover, online education has been shown to increase student engagement. Virtual discussions and group projects can create a sense of community, while students have the opportunity to interact with peers and instructors in meaningful ways. According to a 2022 survey by Educause, 70% of students in online programs feel that their virtual classrooms foster strong connections with classmates, even though they are not physically together. For those living in rural or remote areas, online education provides access to high-quality instruction that may not be available locally. With these advantages, online education is proving to be a valuable option for students seeking a more flexible and personalized learning experience.

## **Article 2: The Limitations of Online Education**

***By Robert Thompson, The Educational Review, March 2023***

While online education offers convenience, it also has significant drawbacks that cannot be ignored. One of the most notable issues is the lack of in-person interaction, which can lead to feelings of isolation and a lack of motivation. A 2023 survey conducted by the American Council on Education revealed that 55% of online students reported feeling disconnected from their classmates and instructors, a challenge that traditional classrooms do not face. Face-to-face learning provides opportunities for spontaneous discussions and social engagement, which are critical for developing communication skills and building relationships with classmates and teachers.

Additionally, online education can be more challenging for students who do not have access to the necessary technology or a stable internet connection. A 2021 study by the Pew Research Center found that 14% of Americans living in rural areas lack reliable broadband access, creating a digital divide that disadvantages these students in online learning environments. In some cases, students may struggle to stay organized and keep up with assignments without the structure of a traditional classroom. Furthermore, some subjects require hands-on experiences or lab work that cannot be replicated online, making it difficult for students to gain a full understanding of the material.

In summary, while online education has its benefits, it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. The lack of in-person interaction, technological barriers, and the inability to offer certain types of learning experiences make it less effective for some students.

**Prompt:**

The two articles above discuss different perspectives on online education. One article supports online education, highlighting its flexibility, accessibility, and ability to cater to different learning styles. The other article points out the drawbacks of online learning, including the lack of in-person interaction, technological challenges, and limitations for certain subjects.

**Write a persuasive essay in which you support one of these viewpoints. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.**

**Sample Response (Supporting the Benefits of Online Education):**

In today's fast-paced world, online education has proven to be a transformative tool, providing flexibility, accessibility, and personalized learning experiences. While some critics argue that online learning lacks the in-person interactions that help students develop social and communication skills, the numerous advantages it offers—particularly its flexibility, customization, and wide reach—make it an invaluable resource for students worldwide.

First, the flexibility of online education is one of its most significant benefits. According to Samantha Price, author of *Education Today*, "Over 35% of U.S. students are now enrolled in online courses, a statistic that highlights the growing popularity of this mode of learning". This flexibility allows students to learn at their own pace, work from anywhere, and balance their studies with other commitments, such as jobs or family responsibilities. For example, a working parent can pursue a degree without having to leave their job or rearrange their schedule to accommodate a traditional classroom. This is a particularly important advantage for those who face financial or logistical barriers to attending in-person classes.

Moreover, online education offers a variety of learning tools and formats that cater to different learning styles. The Online Learning Consortium found that "60% of online students felt that online courses allowed them to better manage their coursework". The ability to access video lectures, interactive quizzes, discussion boards, and other resources means students can engage with the material in ways that best suit their needs. For instance, visual learners may benefit from video content, while auditory learners can listen to podcasts or recorded lectures. This variety helps ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed, no matter their preferred learning method.

Finally, online education has made high-quality learning accessible to a broader range of students, especially those in rural or underserved areas. According to a 2022 survey by Educause, "70% of online students reported strong connections with their peers and instructors despite not meeting face-to-face". For students who may not have access to top-tier universities in their local area, online education provides the opportunity to learn from prestigious institutions without the need to relocate. This is an important step toward creating educational equity and allowing students from diverse backgrounds to pursue their academic goals.

Despite these advantages, critics argue that online education lacks the personal connection found in traditional classrooms. Robert Thompson, author of *The Educational Review*, notes that "55% of online students feel disconnected from their peers and instructors". While it's true that face-to-face interaction can help build a sense of community, this doesn't mean that online education is inherently inferior. Online

learning platforms offer discussion forums, video meetings, and other virtual tools that can foster meaningful connections. Furthermore, in many cases, students can form close-knit communities with classmates through online group projects or extracurricular activities, proving that virtual relationships can be just as impactful as in-person ones.

In conclusion, while there are legitimate concerns regarding the isolation that may come with online education, its benefits far outweigh these drawbacks. The flexibility, accessibility, and personalized learning it provides make online education a powerful tool for students who seek to balance their academic pursuits with other responsibilities. As technology continues to improve, online education will likely become an even more effective and valuable option for learners everywhere.