

HUNTER COLLEGE READING/WRITING CENTER  
**Writing across the Curriculum: The CPE Examination**  
Sample Summary 2

In his essay “Why Colleges Shower Their Students with A’s,” Brent Staples argues that over the past several years, the grading policies of many colleges have become lenient, because of the increase in student-consumers. This leniency has led to an increase in the amount of A’s that are distributed, and it has been caused by a few factors. Primarily, the prospect of easily earning a high grade ensures that poorly attended classes attain more students. Secondly, college officials often want students to get high grades, because this guarantees the presence of student consumers. In addition, when a professor does **not** give out high grades, (s)he might receive disapproving student evaluations, which could affect his/her tenure and salary.

Several dilemmas arise when students are relegated to consumers first, and scholars second. Among these problems, is the fact that colleges such as the University of Phoenix, which is merely concerned with making money at the expense of poorly educating its students thrive. Additionally, students who face high debts for their college loans require high grades in order to guarantee future employment to pay off their loans. Thus, grade appeal processes have become very lenient over the past several years, which weaken the ability of educators to issue fair grades.

As a solution to the increasing problem of grade inflation, Staples considers that more weight should be given to more difficult courses in calculating students grade point averages. Additionally, he shows that eliminating the advantages of taking easy courses would help ensure that students EARN their grades, and not just ask for them. However, the problem of supporting this solution then arises, because the students and faculty members who receive the advantage of the status quo do not want it modified. Staples concludes by stating that the significance of a college education is vanishing, as a result of grade inflation.