

Real World Graduation: Introduction

Edward D. Duvall
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Congratulations, all you young people who have finished your formal education. Welcome to the real world. No more lectures, no more books, no more teachers' dirty looks.

But there are a lot of things they don't teach in the schools, especially in the public schools. The most important omission in the formal education these days is the lack of "critical thinking", which is just a fancy phrase for applying facts and logic to a certain situation to determine rational options. Back in the bad old days, this was called "common sense". "Common sense" is now an outdated concept, since the schools have consistently taught that it is best to rely on the opinion and analysis of "experts". There is nothing wrong with "experts", but that should not imply that you, the citizen, are obligated to follow their advice or embrace their opinions as fact. A citizen of a free society must be able to think for themselves.

This little series of essays is designed to present a set of practical questions, most of which deal with the kind of choices you will have to make for the rest of your life, but were not taught in school. Many of you I trust had parents who instilled this type of practical thinking, and if so, these questions should be fairly easy.

In our politicized culture, the media and influential people are attempting to convince you of the "right choices" based on their political views, even if the issue at hand is not inherently political. I believe that this large-scale indoctrination (which used to be called brainwashing) is corrosive to the nation, since it tends to eliminate debate. When once we had debates in which issues were discussed using facts and logic, we are now frequently subjected to shouting matches about "talking points", or reversion back to good old name-calling (like it was in first-grade recess). But those only occur when any opposing viewpoints are even tolerated.

So here then are a set of "practical questions", designed to represent an exit-exam graduation day into adulthood. Hopefully they will dispel any illusions you picked up in school, and they will likely address some things never discussed in school. The idea is to tune up your intuition and common sense such that you don't get fooled when faced with important decisions in the future.

To make it more interesting, I have eliminated the essay format, and have instead adopted a multiple-choice question format. (We used to call them "multiple guess".) All of them are "word" problems, which is the kind you will have to solve in your adult life.

All you have to do is choose the correct answer from the options listed, and the answer is provided on the second page. Good luck.