

A.P. Economics
Mr. Bradley

Freakonomics assignment

Hi!

I hope the summer has been as replenishing as it has been busy. Thank you for your patience. We finally have enough books. The edition you possess is an expanded edition from the one I originally read. On the next page is assignment for *Freakonomics*. I strongly suggest that you read a chapter and leave it for a day or so you can mull the ideas around. It is a mind twister at times. I think you will enjoy it.

I am certain that you are busy and that this is not the only AP or Honors class you're taking or reading for. There are five questions. I shall leave it to you to choose which three to do. Please e-mail them to me. I must have them by Friday, September 5.

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Remember these fundamental ideas:

- ❖ Incentives are the corner stone of modern life.
- ❖ The conventional wisdom is often wrong.
- ❖ Dramatic effects often have distant, even subtle, causes.
- ❖ “Expert”—from criminologists to real-estate agents—use their informational advantage to serve their own agenda.
- ❖ Knowing what to measure and how to measure it makes a complicated world much less so.

1. Identify the incentives your peers have for cheating. Include positive incentives and negative (disincentives) for cheating. This can be regarding academic, athletic, social, or in the workplace. Propose an incentive (positive and/or negative) to curtail the cheating you have identified. You may propose more than one.
2. Illustrate how a college or university could use their informational advantage to serve their own agenda, in their selecting a freshman class. Identify their informational advantage and conversely the incoming freshman’s disadvantage. Explain how their agenda delineates from that of the freshman’s. Explain how it could be used to pursue their interests at the cost of the freshman’s interests.
3. Describe the incentives for acquiring an education, culminating in getting a PhD. Discuss whether it is always beneficial to pursue such a degree, identifying the costs of the pursuit. Explain why if everyone achieved a PhD. It would have negative effects.
4. Our school has, as many others have since 9/11, taken several steps to make the school more secure. Discuss what data one would need to determine if we are more “secure.” Identify the challenges in the investigation. Take a position for or against: “Pinelands Regional is decisively more secure than it was prior to 9/11.”
5. Based upon the eight factors that did correlate and the eight that did not correlate to school test scores in the ECLS study, explain if you believe whether or not they apply to the population at Pinelands. You don’t have the data, but if you could do you think it would bear out the conclusion, for parents, that what you are and not what you do is more influential in academic success?