

Sample Formal Assignment

Mambo vijana, Congratulations all of you for being accepted to different prestigious colleges in the USA. I know how excited all of you are right now, I was once in your shoes. All of you have worked tirelessly to be able to reach this point, Hapa Kazi tuu! My speech today is not meant to push grey clouds over your current giddy feelings. It is meant to make you all aware of what to expect in these colleges. I hope after you all are aware of this issue I am going to talk about, the transition to life in the USA will be much easier.

As some of you may already know, I went to a prestigious college in USA. I had always known that Africa has always been associated with famine, poverty, diseases, tribal conflict and flora fauna by western powers. However, I was under the impression that due to the immense flow of information everyone knew that the labels put across the face of Africa were false. I wish someone would have told me before going off to college that, “kijana usijidanganye” (Boy, don’t fool yourself). Do you have a lion as a pet”? “Is Tanzania plagued by wars”? “Are all people in Tanzania poor”? How comes you speak such fluent English? These are some of the ridiculous questions I had to answer in my first few weeks in college. To me what made these questions baffling is the fact that the individuals asking these questions had genuine intentions. That is, they were not asking these questions with any malice intended but because they genuinely want to find out answers to their questions. For a period of time, I was genuinely confused. This level of ignorance was not what I expected.. For many nights, I was plagued with the question of why? Why do these misconceptions still exist in the age of information we are living in? How many of you have a smartphone right now? As I thought, almost all of you own a smartphone. We all have smartphones with access to the internet. Thus we are able to pull up information about

anything at any time. Then, if this Houdini like device is present, why do people still know very little about our continent. Thus, I decided to conduct a short research on this matter. I embarked on an expedition of finding the common misconceptions about Africa. Then from here, figuring out why these misconceptions still exist. Finally analyzing out what effects it has caused to the African continent and its people.

The data collection techniques which were used to acquire information for this research paper were interviews and questioners. 4 members from PASA (Pan-African Students Association) were interviewed by this paper. PASA is an African student led organization in the college I attended. PASA organizes events in campus with the sole aim of promoting the diverse culture in Africa. Furthermore, it conducts weekly meetings which are meant to bring students across the entire African continent together. Thus PASA is a sanctuary for African students in campus. Data from non-African students was collected from questioners handed out, 15 questioners were handed out. These questioners were given to a non-African student living in Susan B Anthony 6TH Floor at the University of Rochester. Then the non-African student handed them around to other students living in this floor-snowball sampling, the questions on the questioners were open ended.

The common misconceptions concerning Africa that the paper discovered were that many domestic students believed Africans could not speak English. Well, ladies and gentlemen I am here standing in front of this congregation speaking English. I could have spoken Swahili to all of you. However, I am not going to let the West have the last laugh. Ladies and Gentlemen when someone asks you why you speak English? Tell them, about how our beloved nation has invested in education in the country. As it was the dream of Julius Kambarage Nyerere to see all

Tanzanians having access to education. English as the language of the world was thus part of the education system Mwalimu Nyerere had. In this why my fellow comrades, you will educate your friends about our nation without antagonizing them.

Another common misconception domestic students have concerning Africa is that the continent is only filled up with deserts, savannahs and grasslands. Every PASA participant told tales of domestic students telling them that views of building were different to what the PASA members were accustomed to. One member was asked if in Africa there was Doritos and canned soda. This individual is clearly under the impression we all sit outside and wait for rain water to quench our thirst. They are currently picturing us having this congregation under a tree in the middle of the tropical jungle with no food or water. If they only knew we are currently sharing this moment in this monumental building. Take as many pictures of this building as possible! Trust me you will need these pictures. As they say a picture is worth a thousand words. In this situation a picture is worth a humble pie.

Finally another common misconceptions domestic students have concerning Africa is that Africans live in huts. Be prepared to be asked, what type of houses do you live in? Go, take picture of your homes right after I am done with this talk. Trust me you will find yourself in a situation of having to show to your friends pictures of your home. Many domestic students do not know that we live in the same houses that they live in and some time in homes with bigger compounds than they do. However since Africa is considered to be infested with poverty this scenario of Africans affording to live in houses similar to them is heresy.

I go back to my initial question of why? Why do you all think all these misconceptions concerning Africa still exist? Why do these classmates of ours think very little of us? From the

research I conducted the answers to the questions were not that much surprising to me. The research pointed out to misrepresentation by the media, lack of education about Africa in USA colleges and cognitive inertia.

Cognitive inertia is when an individual believes something and it is very difficult to change their perspective on this viewpoint. As we all know a lot of what people learn comes from their parents. However, what we don't know is that it is very hard to change someone's views on an issue if they have been so accustomed to this thinking. In many cases these domestic students have been fed these misconceptions by their parents. Thus have grown up being told all these nasty things about Africa. We have all been told that the Chagga people are very greedy with money by our parents. To this very day I still believe this to be true. This is how strong the force of cognitive inertia is. Furthermore due to rhetoric of Trump at the moment, our parents have told us to be careful of USA citizens when we are in college. Comrades, if we do this we end up making the same mistakes our fellow comrades have made. I want you all to go to your colleges with an open mindset. Never forget the Ujama and Bantu mindset that is synonymous with all Tanzanian. That is we should treat everyone like they were our family members.

You might think that the research I conducted was flawed. The findings I am currently bombarding you all with are false and if true are very circumstantial. This is belief you all might have is only natural. One man's or woman's college experience might not be the same with another one. However the findings I am preaching here today have also been analyzed by other similar researches done by numerous individuals. You all should immediately try and find Egerten Osunde's study known as "Persisting and common stereotypes in U.S. students. The study involved dissemination of questioners to students and teachers in Pennsylvania. Long story

short this study found that the common beliefs when it came to Africa among USA students were that Africa was filled with wild natives who live in huts. Furthermore wild animals wander everywhere around the continent. Moreover respondents believed that there were more wild animals in Africa than any other part of the world. Another notable misconception the respondents had was that Africa was a country and not a continent. Furthermore 93% of the respondents believed that there were more cases of diseases in Africa than Asia and South America. What we can clearly see is the lack knowledge about Africa not only by the students but also by the teachers. This my fellow Tanzanians should be cause for concern to all of you. Since there is a good chance you might be hit with a stereotypic statement from your teacher.

What I advise you all my fellow comrades is that you join African organization in campus just like those in PASA. Furthermore, one of the PASA member I interviewed stressed the need for Africans to educate others about the continent. Thus, every time your friends make a stereotypic comment, it your job to correct them. We cannot rely on CNN to correct these individuals, since they are partly to blame for this problem existing. Also this member urged Africans to not always turn a blind eye on the good things taking place in the continent. Currently every Tanzanian is horrified at the autocratic nature of Magufuli's regime. What has happened is that our president's battle conquest against corruption are being forgotten. Thus if us as Tanzanians are only talking about the demise of democracy, those echoes will be heard by the west. They will quickly look upon Tanzania as a nation failing to abide with its constitution. I urge you all to always be positive in your characterizations of our beloved nation. You all are now ambassadors of this beautiful nation. Julius Nyerere fought for independence so that we all can be able to touch the sky. Mungu awabariki, Mungu ibariki Tanzania.