

SEBASTIAN HIBBARD
CEDAR INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

FOURTH PRIZE, CLASS C
IN THE 2009 COMMONWEALTH ESSAY COMPETITION

SEPTIC TANK CLEANER – NO THANKS!

There are many things that I would like to do when I grow up, but when my teacher told me the assignment was about what I do not want to do, it really got me thinking. At first I thought of being a truck driver with all the noise and traffic and all, but after a while I thought it wouldn't be so bad. Then I thought about being a doctor. Most people wouldn't mind, but I wouldn't like to mend all those cuts and bruises. There is the money though, which is a big factor, so maybe I could live with it. Finally, I thought of the worst job in the world – being septic tank cleaner!

Firstly, cleaning septic tanks is one of the nastiest, smelliest jobs I can think of. Septic tank cleaners have to clean out other people's sewage systems which means they have to dispose of everything that goes down the drain and the toilet. Not very nice things go through the toilet or the drain! Everything is wet and soggy inside septic tanks, so there might be rats and other nasty creatures there. I would worry about my safety, because there are deadly germs everywhere. After work, you would have to make sure to take a bath with a lot of soap, and taking baths is not my favourite thing to do either.

Secondly, you probably wouldn't enjoy a great reputation as a septic tank cleaner. Would people really take you seriously if you cleaned up other people's waste? It's probably not a job you could talk about with family and friends. I don't know any septic tank cleaners personally, and maybe that's why. Thirdly, septic tank cleaners need a lot of equipment, and I'm not very adept with tools. And finally, sewage smells really bad and I can't stand horrible smells. I might vomit all over the place and then I would have to clean that up also.

It's important that we know our strengths and our limitations, and these vary greatly from person from person. For example I have several choices in my mind right now for when I grow up. I am a basketball player and dream of playing in the NBA someday. That's probably a long shot. I also like studying and working with arachnids, and many types of insects and reptiles. I'm sure that would be scary for some people. In choosing a job, you have to make sure that you love your work and that you can be good at it. It also helps if you're able to earn enough to support yourself.

In the end, whatever I might think about being a septic tank cleaner, I cannot deny that it is an important job and merits our respect (somebody has to do the dirty work!). It would be a far messier world if we didn't have people cleaning up for us. I hope someday that I will meet a septic tank cleaner so that I can learn what motivates these dedicated people to do their jobs. In the meantime, however, I think that being a septic tank cleaner will stay at the top of my "worst jobs" list.