

OLYMPIADS SCHOOL – SAT PREP – HOMEWORK 4**NAME (FIRST AND LAST):**_____ **GRADE:**_____**DAY, TIME, TEACHER:**_____**Olympiads English SAT Prep/Essay Practice****PASSAGE A**

“Guns Are Our Shared Responsibility,” by Barack Obama. *New York Times*, Jan. 7, 2016. Reproduced for educational purposes only.

THE epidemic of gun violence in our country is a crisis. Gun deaths and injuries constitute one of the greatest threats to public health and to the safety of the American people. Every year, more than 30,000 Americans have their lives cut short by guns. Suicides. Domestic violence. Gang shootouts. Accidents. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have lost brothers and sisters, or buried their own children. We’re the only advanced nation on earth that sees this kind of mass violence with this frequency.

A national crisis like this demands a national response. Reducing gun violence will be hard. It’s clear that common-sense gun reform won’t happen during this Congress. It won’t happen during my presidency. Still, there are steps we can take now to save lives. And all of us — at every level of government, in the private sector and as citizens — have to do our part.

We all have a responsibility.

On Tuesday, I announced new steps I am taking within my legal authority to protect the American people and keep guns out of the hands of criminals and dangerous people. They include making sure that anybody engaged in the business of selling firearms conducts background checks, expanding access to mental health treatment and improving gun safety technology. These actions won’t prevent every act of violence, or save every life — but if even one life is spared, they will be well worth the effort.

Even as I continue to take every action possible as president, I will also take every action I can as a citizen. I will not campaign for, vote for or support any candidate, even in my own party, who does not support common-sense gun reform. And if the 90 percent of Americans who do support common-sense gun reforms join me, we will elect the leadership we deserve.

All of us have a role to play — including gun owners. We need the vast majority of responsible gun owners who grieve with us after every mass shooting, who support common-sense gun safety and who feel that their views are not being properly represented, to stand with us and demand that leaders heed the voices of the people they are supposed to represent.

The gun industry also needs to do its part. And that starts with manufacturers. As Americans, we hold consumer goods to high standards to keep our families and communities safe. Cars

have to meet safety and emissions requirements. Food has to be clean and safe. We will not end the cycle of gun violence until we demand that the gun industry take simple actions to make its products safer as well. If a child can't open a bottle of aspirin, we should also make sure she can't pull the trigger of a gun.

Yet today, the gun industry is almost entirely unaccountable. Thanks to the gun lobby's decades of efforts, Congress has blocked our consumer products safety experts from being able to require that firearms have even the most basic safety measures. They've made it harder for the government's public health experts to conduct research on gun violence. They've guaranteed that manufacturers enjoy virtual immunity from lawsuits, which means that they can sell lethal products and rarely face consequences. As parents, we wouldn't put up with this if we were talking about faulty car seats. Why should we tolerate it for products — guns — that kill so many children each year?

At a time when manufacturers are enjoying soaring profits, they should invest in research to make guns smarter and safer, like developing microstamping for ammunition, which can help trace bullets found at crime scenes to specific guns. And like all industries, gun manufacturers owe it to their customers to be better corporate citizens by selling weapons only to responsible actors.

Ultimately, this is about all of us. We are not asked to perform the heroism of 15-year-old Zaevion Dobson from Tennessee, who was killed before Christmas while shielding his friends from gunfire. We are not asked to display the grace of the countless victims' families who have dedicated themselves to ending this senseless violence. But we must find the courage and the will to mobilize, organize and do what a strong, sensible country does in response to a crisis like this one.

All of us need to demand leaders brave enough to stand up to the gun lobby's lies. All of us need to stand up and protect our fellow citizens. All of us need to demand that governors, mayors and our representatives in Congress do their part.

Change will be hard. It won't happen overnight. But securing a woman's right to vote didn't happen overnight. The liberation of African-Americans didn't happen overnight. Advancing the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans has taken decades' worth of work.

Those moments represent American democracy, and the American people, at our best. Meeting this crisis of gun violence will require the same relentless focus, over many years, at every level. If we can meet this moment with that same audacity, we will achieve the change we seek. And we will leave a stronger, safer country to our children.

Command of Evidence Questions

According to the College Board, “The Command of Evidence subscore on the SAT is based on questions from both the Reading Test and the Writing and Language Test. These questions are designed to see whether you **understand how authors make use of information and ideas to develop and support their claims and points**” (*Official SAT Study Guide*, 59).

With this in mind, answer the following questions based on the previous passage. Use the lines provided to guide the length of your responses.

1. What is the author’s central claim?

2. What evidence does the author provide to support his claim? Quote three sentences from the passage that represent the three best pieces of evidence.

- i.

- i.

- ii.

3. Is the author’s evidence primarily *empirical* (can it be measured?), *philosophical* (reasoned through logical argument), *emotional* – or some combination of these?

4. What is the best (i.e. most persuasive) piece of evidence the author provides? Why?

5. Is the author's point persuasive? (Answer only after having read both pieces.) Why or why not?

PASSAGE B

“A Look at the Facts on Gun-Free Zones,” John R. Lott, Jr. *National Review*, October 20, 2015. Reproduced for educational purposes only.

Some have a hard time accepting that criminals can be deterred from committing crimes. They don’t believe that potential mass shooters have second thoughts when faced with the prospect of armed citizens who can fight back. They seem to think that everyday Americans can’t help stop attacks.

But it is getting hard to ignore that mass public shooters keep choosing to attack locations where victims can’t defend themselves. It’s little wonder that gun-control advocates resort to desperate tactics.

There have been a series of articles from Politico, the Huffington Post, Slate, and the New York Daily News with similar titles meant to cast doubt on defensive gun use, such as “the myth of the good guy with the gun.”

Since at least 1950, all but two public mass shootings in America have taken place where general citizens are banned from carrying guns. In Europe, there have been no exceptions. Every mass public shooting — and there have been plenty of mass shooting in Europe — has occurred in a gun-free zone. In addition, they have had three of the six worst K–12 school shootings, and Europe experienced by far the worst mass public shooting perpetrated by a single individual (Norway in 2011, which from the shooting alone left 67 people dead and 110 wounded).

Mass killers have even explicitly talked about their desire to attack gun-free zones. The Charleston, S.C., church shooting in June was instead almost a college shooting. But that killer changed his plans after realizing that the College of Charleston had armed guards.

The diary of the “Dark Knight” movie-theater killer, James Holmes, was finally released just a few months ago. Holmes decided not to attack an airport because of what he described in his diary as its “substantial security.” Out of seven theaters showing the Batman movie premiere within 20 minutes of the suspect’s apartment, only one theater banned permitted concealed handguns. That’s the one he attacked.

Or take two cases from last year. Elliot Rodger, who fatally shot three people in Santa Barbara, Calif., explained his reasoning in his 141-page “manifesto.” He ruled out various targets because he worried that someone with a gun would stop his killing spree. Justin Bourque shot to death three people in Canada. On Facebook, Bourque posted a picture of a defenseless victim explaining to killers that guns are prohibited.

Shooters have good reason to be concerned. Here are some examples from the past few years.

- Conyers, Ga., May 31, 2015: A permit holder was walking by a store when he heard shots ring out. Two people were killed. The permit holder started firing, and the killer ran out of the store.
- Rockdale County Sheriff Eric Levett said: “I believe that if Mr. Scott did not return fire at the suspect, then more of those customers would have [been] hit by a gun[shot]. . . . So, in my opinion he saved other lives in that store.”
- Chicago, April 2015: An Uber driver who had just dropped off a fare “shot and wounded a gunman [Everardo Custodio] who opened fire on a crowd of people.” Assistant State’s Attorney Barry Quinn praised the driver for “acting in self-defense and in the defense of others.”

- Philadelphia, Pa., March 2015: A permit holder was walking by a barber shop when he heard shots fired. He quickly ran into the shop and shot the gunman to death. Police Captain Frank Llewellyn said, "I guess he saved a lot of people in there."
- Darby, Pa., July 2014: Convicted felon Richard Plotts killed a hospital caseworker and shot the psychiatrist that he was scheduled to meet with. Fortunately, the psychiatrist was a concealed-handgun permit holder and was able to critically wound Plotts. Plotts was still carrying 39 bullets and could have shot many other people.
- Chicago, July 2014: Three gang members fired on four people who had just left a party. Fortunately, one of these four was a military serviceman with a concealed-handgun permit. He was able to return fire and wound the main attacker while keeping the others at bay. The UK's Daily Mail reported, "The night might have had a very different outcome had the incident occurred a year earlier [before Illinois's concealed-handgun law was passed]."
- Plymouth, Pa., September 2012: William Allabaugh critically wounded one man inside a restaurant and murdered a second man on the street outside. Luzerne County Assistant District Attorney Jarrett Ferentino said that without the concealed-handgun permit holder who wounded Allabaugh, "we believe that it could have been much worse that night."
- Spartanburg, S.C., March 2012: Armed with a shotgun, Jesse Gates kicked in a door to his church. Concealed-carry permit holder Aaron Guyton drew his gun and held Gates at gun point, enabling other parishioners to disarm Gates. Spartanburg County Sheriff Chuck Wright called the churchgoers heroes. Though Gates was stopped before anyone was harmed, he was still charged with one count of kidnapping and three counts of pointing and presenting a firearm.

None of these stories received national news coverage. Many received only one or two local news stories. Yet, if a permit holder hadn't stopped these attacks, these cases would surely have received national attention.

There are some other older cases in which permit holders saved the day in remarkable fashion and gained national attention. In December 2007, permit holder and former police officer Jeanne Assam defended her church from Matthew Murray who had just killed four people; Murray carried more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition. Assam was being stalked by an ex at the time and had asked her pastor if she could carry her permitted concealed handgun. The pastor accommodated her request by allowing her and other permit holders to act as volunteer security guards.

The recent Politico article "The Myth of the Good Guy with the Gun," by Matt Valentine, not only misses these cases, but mischaracterizes other ones. In the case from Pearl, Miss., where Assistant Principal Joel Myrick stopped the shooter, Politico notes that the killer was leaving the high school but fails to mention where he was headed. In fact, the killer was heading across the street to the middle school. Politico makes it sound as though stopping the attack at that point did not save lives. Concerning the Wilcox case in Nevada, the article omits the fact that while Wilcox didn't stop the killers, his intervention gave Walmart customers time to flee from the shooting.

But the deterrent and life-saving effects of concealed-handgun laws on mass public shootings aren't just anecdotal. Bill Landes of the University of Chicago and I gathered data on mass public shootings from 1977 to 1999. We studied 13 different types of gun-control laws as well as the impact of law enforcement, but the only law that had a statistically significant impact on mass public shootings was the passage of right-to-carry laws. Right-to-carry laws reduced both the

frequency and the severity of mass public shootings; and to the extent to which mass shootings still occurred, they took place in those tiny areas in the states where permitted handguns were not allowed.

Umpqua Community College, scene of a recent mass shooting, was yet another gun-free zone. Oregon law allows permitted concealed handguns on university property, but public educators have undermined the law by putting bans in faculty and student handbooks. For students and faculty, the threat of expulsion or termination is surely threat enough. Faculty members may lose not only their jobs but also their career.

Students are unlikely to ever be admitted to another school and must live with the fact that they will never get the college degree that they were working on.

In Oregon, students and faculty are prohibited from carrying firearms on public university campuses. Only people unaffiliated with the college are allowed to carry. But even they are subject to a 2011 Oregon appeals-court decision that allows schools to ban guns in their buildings.

This ensured that no one — students, faculty, or unaffiliated bystanders — was able to defend against that deadly shooting.

As evidence that the school wasn't a gun-free zone, some have pointed out that one student, a veteran, still carried his gun despite the college's warnings. Unfortunately, the student was far removed from the attack.

But to appreciate the impact of the school rules, you have to realize how exceptionally law-abiding most permit holders are. Permit-holder firearms violations are quite literally one in a million occurrences. Indeed, it is hard to think of any other group that is anywhere near as law-abiding — not even the police. And yet, Matt Valentine in Politico would have us believe that “you're more likely to get shot by an ordinary gun owner who loses his temper than by a mass murderer.”

If you're going to shoot people, why bother going through the process of getting a permit for a concealed handgun?

Obviously, gun-control advocates don't think that deterrence works. Despite statements from the killers themselves, they don't think that rampage shooters factor the presence of guns into their plans. Most of these shooters want to go out with a bang and take a lot of people with them. They tend to be antisocial, attention-starved people. They want their names to be remembered.

These killers know that the more people they murder, the more media attention they will get. And they also know that the longer it takes for someone with a gun to appear on the scene, the more people they can kill.

If you still agree with gun-control advocates about deterrence, ask yourself if you would post a sign on your home announcing it was a gun-free zone. So why do we post these signs at public locations? There's simply no good reason for it.

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10. Is the author's point persuasive? (Answer only after having read both pieces.) Why or why not?

THE END