



ACT

Essay Prompts

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Athletics' Place in Schools

Today's obesity crisis has brought to the forefront, more than ever, the importance of keeping kids active. Most schools today require some sort of participation in athletics from a very young age, and school offerings for physical fitness range from recess kickball games and in class weight lifting to varsity team sports such as basketball or softball. In fact, many children would not receive an exposure to athletics if they did not attend school. But schools also face budget crises and often must choose between supporting athletics and improving academics. Mandatory athletics in educational institutions serve to benefit students; however, they come with a cost. Given the public concerns over fitness and a struggling education system, it is important to consider the role of athletics in education.

Read and carefully consider these perspectives. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about the role of athletics in schools.

Perspective One

Children who play sports learn important life concepts such as teamwork and sportsmanship, which are essential to human character. Physical education in schools is as important as academic education.

Perspective Two

The pressing issues of childhood and adulthood obesity negatively affect millions, but have nothing to do with academics. Parents and community organizations, not schools, should be responsible for keeping kids fit.

Perspective Three

Schools should prioritize academic success. Athletics divert money away from departments that need funds, and they can be a distraction from academic achievement.

Essay Task

Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on the role of athletics in schools. In your essay, be sure to:

- analyze and evaluate the perspectives given
- state and develop your own perspective on the issue
- explain the relationship between your perspective and those given

Your perspective may be in full agreement with any of the others, in partial agreement, or wholly different. Whatever the case, support your ideas with logical reasoning and detailed, persuasive examples.

Skill

It has been reported that it takes ninety minutes of practice a day, every day, for twenty years to become a master at a specific skill. Altogether, that's 10,000 hours of practice to become a master pilot, speaker of a second language, or snowboarder. Those hours take up time that could be put into easier skills with quicker rewards. At times, given the fast pace with which our society changes, many times people invest in developing mastery of a skill, only to find that it is no longer relevant in society. Since mastering a skill requires an immense investment of time and effort, the worth of attempting such a goal should be carefully considered.

Read and carefully consider these perspectives. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about the value of developing a skill.

Perspective One

Committing such a great amount of time towards a goal creates a person who is strong and self-motivated. By working persistently towards a goal, one gains a purpose and life stability.

Perspective Two

Some find it worthwhile to fully master a skill, however most need a more varied routine. Being adequate at multiple things and spontaneous are qualities should be valued in society.

Perspective Three

One will easily gain mastery of a skill that they practice and can perform well. Truly mastering a skill simply requires time, more a matter of focus than effort.

Essay Task

Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on the value of developing a skill. In your essay, be sure to:

- analyze and evaluate the perspectives given
- state and develop your own perspective on the issue
- explain the relationship between your perspective and those given

Your perspective may be in full agreement with any of the others, in partial agreement, or wholly different. Whatever the case, support your ideas with logical reasoning and detailed, persuasive examples.

Personal Freedom and the Environment (public health)

Each person contributes to the enormous amount of waste and greenhouse gases—from the food packaging we discard to the toxic fumes from our oil paints. This waste is commonly known to be responsible for the current accelerating and dangerous change in the Earth's climate. To combat this, many countries have created restrictions on the amount or type of waste generated by their people, whether SMOG testing vehicles and requiring they emit low amounts of carbon, mandating curbside recycling, or outlawing plastic bags. These restrictions sometimes conflict with the daily habits of citizens, or require a special change in behavior. But to what extent do such laws infringe on personal freedom? Is it a citizen's right to water his lawn when he desires, to freely choose what type of light bulbs she wants to use, or car she wants to drive? Considering the importance of climate change, it is valuable to consider the balance between personal freedom and environmental preservation.

Read and carefully consider these perspectives. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about the balance between personal freedom and environmental preservation.

Perspective One

Every person benefits from the environment, so any decisions made should try to benefit the highest number of people. Even if one person's freedom must be sacrificed, society should help the environment for all people.

Perspective Two

Freedom in society is what is most valuable and cannot be lost. Our society would lose too much if our individual freedom were sacrificed in the name of the environment.

Perspective Three

Society should allow some harm to the environment: if all we do is protect the future, how can we enjoy the present?

Essay Task

Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on the balance between personal freedom and environmental preservation. In your essay, be sure to:

- analyze and evaluate the perspectives given
- state and develop your own perspective on the issue
- explain the relationship between your perspective and those given

Your perspective may be in full agreement with any of the others, in partial agreement, or wholly different. Whatever the case, support your ideas with logical reasoning and detailed, persuasive examples.

Public Figures as Role Models

Often public figures, whether presidential candidates, sports stars, or famous actors, live under constant media surveillance, their actions displayed for all to criticize or analyze. Behavior that could be deemed forgivable or may even go unnoticed by a common citizen, whether making a rude comment, saying a “bad” word, or breaking a rule of ethics or law, is not forgotten in the case of celebrities. Is such scrutiny fair, or are we holding those in the spotlight to an impossible standard? At the same time, should public figures have a responsibility to live their lives with integrity, as examples for our children? Could a lying politician give license to a young person to deceive her parents, or illicit actions from a rock star inspire teenagers to break the law? If so, who should be held responsible for these effects? Considering the influence of public figures in our society, it’s worth considering the extent to which they should aspire to and the public should consider them to be role models.

Read and carefully consider these perspectives. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about whether public figures should be considered role models.

Perspective One

Public figures are not role models and we shouldn’t expect them to be. They are just as imperfect as everyone else.

Perspective Two

Those in the spotlight have a responsibility to act appropriately. When we allow them to be disrespectful of our social values or above “the law,” their actions inspire further immoral behavior and compromise our society’s ethical core.

Perspective Three

Public figures are examples to all of us of both the good and the bad of humanity. We learn not only from their flaws, but also from their virtues.

Essay Task

Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on whether public figures should be considered role models. In your essay, be sure to:

- analyze and evaluate the perspectives given
- state and develop your own perspective on the issue
- explain the relationship between your perspective and those given

Your perspective may be in full agreement with any of the others, in partial agreement, or wholly different. Whatever the case, support your ideas with logical reasoning and detailed, persuasive examples.

Social Media

Much of the information and news we read daily comes from our social media feed rather than television or print media. We read “headlines” from our friend’s latest accomplishments, look at articles posted by people we know, and watch silly cat videos liked by our relatives. Many of our social interactions are also mediated through these platforms, as we comment on other people’s personal troubles, trade political ideas in response to articles, and tag each other in photographs. Unlike newspapers or television, social media allows for interactivity, a benefit generally seen as a sign of progress, but does our culture’s move to social media also have drawbacks? Given the accelerating variety and prevalence of social media, it is worth examining the implications and meaning of its presence in our lives.

Read and carefully consider these perspectives. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about the increasing presence of social media.

Perspective One

When communicating online, we lose an important sense of connection with each other, as our interactions become more superficial. The result is often a dangerous oversimplification of issues and a decrease in interpersonal connections.

Perspective Two

Social media allows for a more democratic world. When people can like and share content and opinions, they speak to others in a way that has a far more profound effect than impersonal media, inspiring a greater level of tolerance and equality in our society.

Perspective Three

Social media challenges our assumptions about what human relationships are or can be. This is good because it pushes humans toward new ways of interacting that deepen our human experience.

Essay Task

Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on the increasing presence of social media. In your essay, be sure to:

- analyze and evaluate the perspectives given
- state and develop your own perspective on the issue
- explain the relationship between your perspective and those given

Your perspective may be in full agreement with any of the others, in partial agreement, or wholly different. Whatever the case, support your ideas with logical reasoning and detailed, persuasive examples.