

Persuasive Writing Prompts

1. Many people believe that television violence has a negative effect on society because it promotes violence. Do you agree or disagree? Use specific reasons and examples to support your response.

2. According to some people, elderly drivers should be required to reapply for their driving licenses because with age comes diminished vision, hearing, and reaction time. How do you feel about this issue? Explain what you think should be done and why.

3. Medical researchers, cosmetic companies, and others often perform experiments on animals. Many people feel that experimentation on animals is wrong and should be stopped immediately because animals do feel pain, and there are other alternatives. How do you feel? State your position and explain your reasons.

4. In order to save money, your principal is thinking about canceling all field trips for the remainder of the year. Write an essay persuading him or her to allow students to continue attending field trips. Use specific reasons and examples to support your response.

6. Since the cloning of the sheep Dolly, there has been much debate over whether or not human beings should be cloned. Many people feel this is a violation of the natural order of things and that all research in the area of human cloning should be banned. Others feel that this is a natural progression of science and human evolution and that research in the area of human cloning should be a priority. How do you feel about this issue? Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

8. Many people volunteer their time to help others, either through non-profit organizations, churches, or other charitable venues.

Write an essay convincing readers to find a charity and volunteer their time.

9. All-girl schools have been gaining popularity in recent years because of the belief that girls learn better when they aren't competing with or intimidated by boys, who statistically get more attention in the classroom. Do you think single-sex schools are a good idea? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

13. Most states allow people to get a driver's license at the age of 16. Some people feel that 16 is much too young for the responsibility that comes with driving a car and that teenagers should not be allowed to drive until the age of 18. In your opinion, at what age should people be allowed to drive, and why?

14. As part of the "war on drugs" and in reaction to an increase in school violence, many schools across the nation now conduct targeted searches of student lockers and backpacks. Although the Supreme Court has ruled that public school officials have the right to search students' persons and property when they have reasonable cause to suspect weapons or drugs, many people feel this is a gross violation of students' right to privacy. Others feel that since school officials are responsible for the well-being of students while they are in the building, they have the right to search for drugs or weapons at any time. How do you feel about this issue? State your position and explain your reasons with specific examples.

16. In many countries, citizens are required to serve in the military for a year or more. Do you believe the United States should institute a similar practice? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

18. Many of us spend hours in front of our computers and communicate more by e-mail or instant-messaging than in person. Some people believe that this is good because it helps shy people communicate more openly with others. Others believe that

computer communication prevents us from developing interpersonal skills and limits our ability to have meaningful relationships with others. How do you feel about this issue? Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

19. Some companies offer a paternity leave that allows fathers to stay home with their newborns for several weeks while still earning partial pay and benefits. Do you think this is a good policy? Why or why not? Explain your answer.

22. A few decades ago, many families had half a dozen or more children. Nowadays, more and more families are choosing to have only one or two children. Are smaller families better than larger ones? Why or why not? State your position and support it with specific reasons and examples.

24. Good habits improve our physical, emotional, and/or financial health. Select one of your good habits and write an essay persuading readers to make that habit a part of their lives.

26. Today, there are more and more reality shows on television. Do these shows make good television? Why or why not? Explain your answer using specific reasons and examples.

27. Is “an eye for an eye” a good basis for determining an appropriate punishment? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your position.

41. Today’s top professional athletes often have salaries and bonuses in the tens of millions of dollars. Do you think these athletes deserve such high compensation? Why or why not? Explain your position and use specific reasons and examples.

49. It has often been said, “Ignorance is bliss,” and “What you don’t know won’t hurt you.” Do you agree with these statements? Why or why not?

58. Some people think that school cafeterias should be required

to provide low-fat and/or vegetarian lunch options to accommodate the eating habits of all students. Do you agree or disagree? Explain your position and use specific reasons and examples as support.

59. Elementary and secondary schools around the country are beginning to actively address the problem of bullies. In your opinion, is bullying an issue that should be addressed by schools or left to parents? Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

60. Most private schools require students to wear uniforms. Should public school students wear uniforms too? Argue for or against school uniforms for public school students. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

62. Many people believe that honesty is the best policy. In your opinion, is it ever okay to lie? Explain your answer using specific reasons and examples.

72. Is a good education a right or a privilege? Why do you think so? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your answer.

77. Many people feel that the use of surveillance cameras in public places, such as parking lots, is a good idea that can help ensure our safety. Others worry that too many cameras violate our right to privacy and give law enforcement officials too much power. In your opinion, should we install more surveillance cameras in public places? Why or why not? Support your position with specific reasons and examples.

78. It has often been said, “a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.” Do you agree? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your answer.

80. All across the country, state laws require drivers to wear seatbelts.

Not everyone believes the use of seatbelts should be mandatory. What do you think? Make a case for or against mandatory seatbelt use. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

85. Every year, millions of people visit zoos around the world. But some people believe that zoos are inhumane and that animals should not be kept in captivity. Do you agree? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

87. Students who don't want to do their homework can find dozens of sites on the Internet that offer essays for sale. Do you think this is a legitimate business, or should these enterprises be shut down? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

89. It has often been said that we can lie with silence as well as with words. Do you agree? Why or why not? Explain your answer.

90. Many students complain about having to learn history. Why do we need knowledge of the past? Write an essay convincing skeptics that learning about the past is important.

91. Woodrow Wilson once said, "Friendship is the only cement that will hold the world together." Do you agree? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your answer.

92. Charles Simmons said, "Live only for today, and you ruin tomorrow." Do you agree? Why or why not? Explain your answer.

94. Many of us are fond of music that speaks to our particular generation. Write an essay that convinces others not in your generation that your music is worth listening to.

97. For decades, elementary school children across the country had been required to stand and say the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag every school-day morning. That practice has recently been called into question, and standing and reciting the pledge is now voluntary. In your opinion, should students be required to say the pledge, should it remain voluntary, or should the practice be completely abandoned? State your position and use

specific reasons and examples to support it.

100. The writer Thomas Mann said, “War is only a cowardly escape from the problems of peace.” Do you agree with this claim? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

101. Activist Jeannette Rankin once said, “You can no more win a war than you can win an earthquake.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

105. Many albums and CDs now contain stickers warning parents that the lyrics of some of the songs may not be suitable for children. Some people argue that simply putting a sticker on a label is not enough. What do you think the record industry should do to warn parents about inappropriate lyrics? Explain what you think should be done and why.

108. The inventor and statesman Benjamin Franklin said, “Money never made a man happy yet, nor will it. There is nothing in its nature to produce happiness.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

109. Some states have now made it illegal to drive while talking on a hand-held cellular phone. Do you think this is a good law that should be passed in other states as well? Why or why not? Explain your answer.

110. The poet W. H. Auden wrote, “Machines are beneficial to the degree that they eliminate the need for labor, harmful to the degree that they eliminate the need for skill.” Do you agree? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your answer.

112. According to an old Greek proverb, “All things good to know are difficult to learn.” Do you agree? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your answer.

116. According to a Czechoslovakian proverb, “Better a lie that soothes than a truth that hurts.” Do you agree? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your answer.

122. During the Christmas holiday season, images of Santa Claus are everywhere, and young children often line up to take pictures with adults dressed as Santa. Some people feel that children should not be led to believe that Santa Claus is real. Do you agree? Why or why not? Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.