

Language Arts — 8th-Grade Writing Assignment

Persuasive Composition (A)

Objective: Students will be able to write an effective, persuasive essay. (Standards W2.3, W2.4)

Prompt 1: School starts each day at 8 a.m. and ends at 2:56 p.m.; studies have shown, however, that middle-school students operate with a different biological clock than adults — and that middle-school students would be better served by starting later. Now the school board is considering changing the school day hours; the new start time would be 9 p.m., the new ending time would be 3:56 p.m. There are other advantages to starting later, but there are also disadvantages. Would you or would you not support the change?

Write an article (persuasive composition or essay) for your school newspaper wherein you try to convince others to adopt your position. You cannot suggest a compromise, like starting at 8:30 a.m. — you must choose either 8 a.m. or 9 a.m. as the starting time.

Prompt 2: Obesity is a problem in American society, even among children. In order to help fight obesity, a new tax has been proposed on sugars and fats, and there would be no exemptions. Depending on the size of the can, bottle, or cup, the tax would add 25 to 50 cents to each can, bottle, or cup purchased; the price of a typical hamburger would increase by 50 to 75 cents; and the price of a candy bar could almost double: these are just a few examples of the impact of the new tax. The theory is that if you charge more, people will consume less. Would you or would you not support the tax? Write an article (persuasive composition or essay) for your school newspaper wherein you try to convince others to adopt your position.

Prompt 3: In an effort to control drugs, weapons, and other contraband, the principal is considering random backpack searches once or twice a week. These searches would not be announced in advance, and the students selected — 10 to 15 at a time — would be determined by lottery. Would you or would you not support the searches? Write an article (persuasive composition or essay) for your school newspaper wherein you try to convince others to adopt your position.

Assignment: Be sure to write to one, specific prompt; do NOT wander off topic. Regardless of the prompt chosen, you are to anticipate and address at least one counter argument. Also remember to use specific details, examples, and sound, logical reasons to support your proposition (thesis) and claims, and be sure they support directly your proposition and its associated claims. When centering or indenting, DO NOT USE the space bar; if you don't know how to correctly center and indent, then ASK ... there are to be no exceptions. This assignment is due on _____ .

Specs:

- Format:** Standard Composition
- Margins:** 1 inch, top, bottom, left, right
- Alignment:** Left or fully justified
- Indents:** .5 inches for paragraphs
- Line Spacing:** 1.5 or double
- Font:** Times New Roman, Arial; 12-pt.
- Title:** YES
- Turn in all parts of process:** YES

- Citations Page:** NO
- Name, period, date placement:** Upper right corner
- Name, period, date line spacing:** Single
- Illustrations / pictures:** Not required
- Extra space between paragraphs:** NO
- Save copies on your flash drive:** YES
- Title Specs:** Assigned fonts; 14- or 16-pt.; centered
- Title Note:** 1 or 2 blank lines between title and body
- How to turn in:** Hard copies only