Middle School Items for Which One Doesn’t Belong?

Students select the option that provides backing for the claim.
Claim: Schools should be single gendered.

A. Students will be more focused if they attend single-gendered schools.

B. Girls will have more opportunities in school for clubs, sports, and school leadership roles.

C. In single-gendered schools, girls may be under less pressure to look a certain way.

D. Studies show that in co-ed classrooms, teachers are less likely to call on girls than boys (Good & Findley, 1985; Jones & Wheatley, 1990; Sadker & Sadker, 1995).
Claim: Schools should be single gendered.

A. Students will be more focused if they attend single-gendered schools.

B. Girls will have more opportunities in school for clubs, sports, and school leadership roles.

C. In single-gendered schools, girls may be under less pressure to look a certain way.

D. Studies show that in co-ed classrooms, teachers are less likely to call on girls than boys (Good & Findley, 1985; Jones & Wheatley, 1990; Sadker & Sadker, 1995).
Claim: Skateboarding should be allowed on public streets.

A. Not every community has a skate park. People will have no place to skateboard if the sport is not allowed in public and there is no access to a private skating facility.

B. According to a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (Thompson, Rivara, & Thompson, 1989), bicycle helmets can reduce the risk of head injury by 85 percent.

C. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (2008) reports that the highest number of sports-related injuries among children under fifteen occur on bicycles. There were about four times more bicycle injuries in 2006 than skateboard injuries.

D. More children are injured on bicycles than on skateboards, but bicycles are not banned.
Claim: Skateboarding should be allowed on public streets.

A. Not every community has a skate park. People will have no place to skateboard if the sport is not allowed in public and there is no access to a private skating facility.

B. According to a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (Thompson, Rivara, & Thompson, 1989), bicycle helmets can reduce the risk of head injury by 85 percent.

C. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (2008) reports that the highest number of sports-related injuries among children under fifteen occur on bicycles. There were about four times more bicycle injuries in 2006 than skateboard injuries.

D. More children are injured on bicycles than on skateboards, but bicycles are not banned.
Claim: The United States should ban the death penalty.

A. As of March 12, 2014, more than 144 prisoners have been freed from death row because they were found to be innocent (Death Penalty Information Center, 2014).

B. There is a race gap between criminals who get the death penalty and criminals who do not.

C. If a defendant cannot afford an experienced, successful lawyer, he or she may be more likely to get the death penalty.

D. A life prison sentence is a more reasonable and humane option than the death penalty.
Claim: The United States should ban the death penalty.

A. As of March 12, 2014, more than 144 prisoners have been freed from death row because they were found to be innocent (Death Penalty Information Center, 2014).

B. There is a race gap between criminals who get the death penalty and criminals who do not.

C. If a defendant cannot afford an experienced, successful lawyer, he or she may be more likely to get the death penalty.

D. A life prison sentence is a more reasonable and humane option than the death penalty.
Claim: Singer-songwriter Taylor Swift is a great musician.

A. She is extremely talented for her age.

B. Many legendary rock and country artists love her music and say she is talented, including Neil Young, Stevie Nicks, Jon Bon Jovi, and Dolly Parton (Bon Jovi, 2010; CMT Insider Interview, 2009; Nicks, 2010; Stromblad, 2011).

C. Taylor gives lots of money to charity.

D. Although Taylor writes some songs all on her own, expert pop producers co-wrote many of her hits, including “I Knew You Were Trouble” (Swift, Martin, & Shellback, 2012a, track 4) and “We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together” (Swift, Martin, & Shellback, 2012b, track 8).
**Claim:** Singer-songwriter Taylor Swift is a great musician.

A. She is extremely talented for her age.

B. Many legendary rock and country artists love her music and say she is talented, including Neil Young, Stevie Nicks, Jon Bon Jovi, and Dolly Parton (Bon Jovi, 2010; *CMT Insider Interview*, 2009; Nicks, 2010; Stromblad, 2011).

C. Taylor gives lots of money to charity.

D. Although Taylor writes some songs all on her own, expert pop producers co-wrote many of her hits, including “I Knew You Were Trouble” (Swift, Martin, & Shellback, 2012a, track 4) and “We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together” (Swift, Martin, & Shellback, 2012b, track 8).
Claim: Students should be allowed to wear headphones during standardized tests.

A. Students who are bad test takers may be relaxed by listening to their own music.

B. Studies have shown that students may perform better on tests after listening to classical music (Rauscher, Shaw, & Ky, 1993).

C. Students who finish early will have something to do besides reading a book.

D. Students might use iPods to play back prerecorded notes to use for cheating during tests.
Claim: Students should be allowed to wear headphones during standardized tests.

A. Students who are bad test takers may be relaxed by listening to their own music.

B. Studies have shown that students may perform better on tests after listening to classical music (Rauscher, Shaw, & Ky, 1993).

C. Students who finish early will have something to do besides reading a book.

D. Students might use iPods to play back prerecorded notes to use for cheating during tests.
Claim: The driving age should not be raised from sixteen to eighteen.

A. Research indicates that men are 78 percent more likely than women to be involved in car-related deaths, but no one is trying to stop men from driving cars (Fischbeck, Gengler, Gerard, & Weinberg, 2007).

B. Increasing the driving age will not lower the number of accidents. Instead, it will make eighteen-year-olds the inexperienced drivers (instead of sixteen-year-olds). Either way, there will be inexperienced drivers on the road.

C. Underage drinking is known to occur on college campuses. Sixteen-year-olds do not have as many opportunities to drink and drive as college-bound eighteen-year-olds.

D. Raising the driving age because of a few reckless teenagers unfairly punishes those who are safe.
Claim: The driving age should not be raised from sixteen to eighteen.

A. Research indicates that men are 78 percent more likely than women to be involved in car-related deaths, but no one is trying to stop men from driving cars (Fischbeck, Gengler, Gerard, & Weinberg, 2007).

B. Increasing the driving age will not lower the number of accidents. Instead, it will make eighteen-year-olds the inexperienced drivers (instead of sixteen-year-olds). Either way, there will be inexperienced drivers on the road.

C. Underage drinking is known to occur on college campuses. Sixteen-year-olds do not have as many opportunities to drink and drive as college-bound eighteen-year-olds.

D. Raising the driving age because of a few reckless teenagers unfairly punishes those who are safe.
Claim: Social media websites like Facebook should stop people from posting hate speech anonymously.

A. This is not a violation of free speech because the people at Facebook do not just delete hateful pages. Instead, they give the person who made the page a choice: either change the words on the page or reveal your identity. Facebook employee Jud Hoffman says that this system works in “the vast majority of cases” because “it requires [users] to take responsibility for [offensive] content” (cited in Henn, 2013).

B. Even though the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in Reno v. American Civil Liberties Union (1997) that Internet communication is protected under the First Amendment, Facebook does not count because it is a private company.

C. If Facebook does not get rid of hate speech, teens and other users will cyberbully people by creating pages that target certain people or groups.

D. Facebook users still have the right to protest and tell the company how they feel about the speech on the site. This means that users have a say in what is okay to post on Facebook and what is not.
Claim: Social media websites like Facebook should stop people from posting hate speech anonymously.

A. This is not a violation of free speech because the people at Facebook do not just delete hateful pages. Instead, they give the person who made the page a choice: either change the words on the page or reveal your identity. Facebook employee Jud Hoffman says that this system works in “the vast majority of cases” because “it requires [users] to take responsibility for [offensive] content” (cited in Henn, 2013).

B. Even though the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in Reno v. American Civil Liberties Union (1997) that Internet communication is protected under the First Amendment, Facebook does not count because it is a private company.

C. If Facebook does not get rid of hate speech, teens and other users will cyberbully people by creating pages that target certain people or groups.

D. Facebook users still have the right to protest and tell the company how they feel about the speech on the site. This means that users have a say in what is okay to post on Facebook and what is not.
Claim: Every state should pass the DREAM Act, which allows certain undocumented immigrants to live in the United States (kids who are brought to the United States by their parents, teens who graduate from U.S. high schools, or people who serve in the military).

A. This is not the first time that people who are not U.S. citizens have served in the military, and new DREAM Act recruits would only make the military stronger.

B. The DREAM Act will increase the ratio of college graduates in the United States, which will make the nation smarter and help it compete with other countries.

C. According to the Congressional Budget Office (2010), the DREAM Act would reduce the United States’ debt by $1.4 billion. Over ten years, it would earn $2.3 billion for the government.

D. In order to be admitted through the DREAM Act, immigrants cannot have any criminal record. This will help border security officials focus on deporting criminals and other people who are actually bad for the country.
Claim: Every state should pass the DREAM Act, which allows certain undocumented immigrants to live in the United States (kids who are brought to the United States by their parents, teens who graduate from U.S. high schools, or people who serve in the military).

A. This is not the first time that people who are not U.S. citizens have served in the military, and new DREAM Act recruits would only make the military stronger.

B. The DREAM Act will increase the ratio of college graduates in the United States, which will make the nation smarter and help it compete with other countries.

C. According to the Congressional Budget Office (2010), the DREAM Act would reduce the United States’ debt by $1.4 billion. Over ten years, it would earn $2.3 billion for the government.

D. In order to be admitted through the DREAM Act, immigrants cannot have any criminal record. This will help border security officials focus on deporting criminals and other people who are actually bad for the country.
Claim: Hollywood movie studios should stop using the Motion Picture Association of America’s (MPAA) age rating system for movies (such as G, PG, PG-13, R, NC-17, and so on).

A. The ratings do not work—kids can easily watch PG-13 or R-rated movies online or at friends’ houses.

B. Age is not always the same as maturity level. One fourteen-year-old may be able to handle the violence in a war movie, but a different person of the same age may not.

C. The MPAA claims to be fair, but it has rated movies unfairly in the past. For example, Bully (Lowen, Waitt, Warren, & Hirsch, 2011), a nonfiction movie about bullying in schools, received an R rating for swearing (director Lee Hirsch had to take out some of the words from the movie to get a lower rating), even though many other movies have used the same language and received a PG-13 rating (Roeper, 2012).

D. When a movie gets an NC-17 rating, producers can have a very hard time advertising and drawing crowds to see it. This means the MPAA’s ratings have the power to lower the profit the movie makes and even stop people from finding out about it at all. This is a type of censorship.
Claim: Hollywood movie studios should stop using the Motion Picture Association of America’s (MPAA) age rating system for movies (such as G, PG, PG-13, R, NC-17, and so on).

A. The ratings do not work—kids can easily watch PG-13 or R-rated movies online or at friends’ houses.

B. Age is not always the same as maturity level. One fourteen-year-old may be able to handle the violence in a war movie, but a different person of the same age may not.

C. The MPAA claims to be fair, but it has rated movies unfairly in the past. For example, Bully (Lowen, Waitt, Warren, & Hirsch, 2011), a nonfiction movie about bullying in schools, received an R rating for swearing (director Lee Hirsch had to take out some of the words from the movie to get a lower rating), even though many other movies have used the same language and received a PG-13 rating (Roeper, 2012).

D. When a movie gets an NC-17 rating, producers can have a very hard time advertising and drawing crowds to see it. This means the MPAA’s ratings have the power to lower the profit the movie makes and even stop people from finding out about it at all. This is a type of censorship.
Claim: Kids should only be allowed to watch television a few times per week.

A. Studies show that people who watch lots of television are at an increased risk for type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and death because they exercise less and eat more junk food (Grøntved & Hu, 2011).

B. Television is rarely educational for kids.

C. There is lots of violence on television, which may have a bad influence on kids.

D. Watching television does not teach kids to be social, but playing outside with friends or neighbors does.
Claim: Kids should only be allowed to watch television a few times per week.

A. Studies show that people who watch lots of television are at an increased risk for type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and death because they exercise less and eat more junk food (Grøntved & Hu, 2011).

B. Television is rarely educational for kids.

C. There is lots of violence on television, which may have a bad influence on kids.

D. Watching television does not teach kids to be social, but playing outside with friends or neighbors does.
Claim: To protect the environment, people should not drive cars anymore.

A. There are more than ten times as many cars and trucks on the road polluting the air as there were in 1950 (DaimlerChrysler, 2007).

B. People can use the bus instead.

C. Air pollution is only getting worse.

D. Riding a bike or walking is healthier than sitting in a car.
Claim: To protect the environment, people should not drive cars anymore.

A. There are more than ten times as many cars and trucks on the road polluting the air as there were in 1950 (DaimlerChrysler, 2007).

B. People can use the bus instead.

C. Air pollution is only getting worse.

D. Riding a bike or walking is healthier than sitting in a car.
Claim: Teachers and principals should be allowed to censor what students write in a school newspaper.

A. Teachers have a responsibility to protect students, so they need to make sure that hateful speech is not published.

B. In the case *Hazelwood School District et al. v. Kuhlmeier et al.* (1988), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that school newspapers can be censored because they are not the same as regular newspapers, which are protected by free speech.

C. Students still have control of their speech—they can express their opinions online on Facebook or Twitter.

D. Without censorship, students might publish untrue rumors or gossip in the paper.
Claim: Teachers and principals should be allowed to censor what students write in a school newspaper.

A. Teachers have a responsibility to protect students, so they need to make sure that hateful speech is not published.

B. In the case *Hazelwood School District et al. v. Kuhlmeier et al.* (1988), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that school newspapers can be censored because they are not the same as regular newspapers, which are protected by free speech.

C. Students still have control of their speech—they can express their opinions online on Facebook or Twitter.

D. Without censorship, students might publish untrue rumors or gossip in the paper.
Claim: Sea animal amusement parks like SeaWorld are cruel and should be shut down.

A. Giant whales are locked in tiny tanks at SeaWorld when they should be swimming freely and getting plenty of exercise in the ocean.

B. In the book *Death at SeaWorld*, journalist David Kirby (2013) reports on a study that found that yearly death rates of captive orcas are two-and-a-half times higher than the death rate of wild orcas.

C. When orcas are aggressive toward one another in the ocean, they have thousands of miles to swim away and get some space, but an orca can’t escape from a fight in a small SeaWorld tank.

D. Sometimes SeaWorld splits up orca calves from their mothers, even though wild orcas stay together for life.
Claim: Sea animal amusement parks like SeaWorld are cruel and should be shut down.

A. Giant whales are locked in tiny tanks at SeaWorld when they should be swimming freely and getting plenty of exercise in the ocean.

B. In the book *Death at SeaWorld*, journalist David Kirby (2013) reports on a study that found that yearly death rates of captive orcas are two-and-a-half times higher than the death rate of wild orcas.

C. When orcas are aggressive toward one another in the ocean, they have thousands of miles to swim away and get some space, but an orca can’t escape from a fight in a small SeaWorld tank.

D. Sometimes SeaWorld splits up orca calves from their mothers, even though wild orcas stay together for life.
Claim: Hollywood movies have a trend of being sexist.

A. Blockbusters often make women seem stupid, conceited, or obsessed with finding love.

B. Film editors can change the appearance of people in their movies to make them seem more attractive, which is misleading.

C. Female actresses who are age forty or older often cannot find work because movies only want young actresses. However, older men are in movies all the time.

D. In 2011, only 11 percent of the main characters in the top hundred best-selling movies were women, even though women make up about half of the population (Lauzen, 2012).
Claim: Hollywood movies have a trend of being sexist.

A. Blockbusters often make women seem stupid, conceited, or obsessed with finding love.

B. Film editors can change the appearance of people in their movies to make them seem more attractive, which is misleading.

C. Female actresses who are age forty or older often cannot find work because movies only want young actresses. However, older men are in movies all the time.

D. In 2011, only 11 percent of the main characters in the top hundred best-selling movies were women, even though women make up about half of the population (Lauzen, 2012).
Claim: Field trips should always be educational in some way.

A. Kids who visit museums learn critical thinking skills, according to a study of ten thousand students who toured an Arkansas art museum (Greene, Kisida, & Bowen, 2014).

B. Field trips allow students to participate in projects that they would not be able to do in a classroom (such as hands-on science projects at a nature preserve).

C. Some families cannot afford to see a play in the theater or pay to visit a museum—field trips make it possible for everyone to have these opportunities.

D. Educational field trips can combine fun and learning!
Claim: Field trips should always be educational in some way.

A. Kids who visit museums learn critical thinking skills, according to a study of ten thousand students who toured an Arkansas art museum (Greene, Kisida, & Bowen, 2014).

B. Field trips allow students to participate in projects that they would not be able to do in a classroom (such as hands-on science projects at a nature preserve).

C. Some families cannot afford to see a play in the theater or pay to visit a museum—field trips make it possible for everyone to have these opportunities.

D. Educational field trips can combine fun and learning!
Claim: Students should be allowed to chew gum in school.

A. On its website, the American Dental Association (2013) states, “Chewing sugarless gum has been shown to increase the flow of saliva, thereby reducing plaque acid, strengthening the teeth and reducing tooth decay.”

B. Kids who do not stick used gum underneath desks should not be punished because of kids who do!

C. Many teachers do not find gum distracting during class.

D. Gum can increase concentration and help kids do better on tests!
Claim: Students should be allowed to chew gum in school.

A. On its website, the American Dental Association (2013) states, “Chewing sugarless gum has been shown to increase the flow of saliva, thereby reducing plaque acid, strengthening the teeth and reducing tooth decay.”

B. Kids who do not stick used gum underneath desks should not be punished because of kids who do!

C. Many teachers do not find gum distracting during class.

D. Gum can increase concentration and help kids do better on tests!
Claim: Standardized tests are not good for students.

A. Teachers are under a lot of pressure to teach the things that they know will be on the test and might not have time to teach students other things they should know.

B. Computers are sometimes used to grade standardized test essays. Les Perelman, director of writing at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has tested these computerized grading systems and believes they will make students worse writers (TIME for Kids Staff, 2013).

C. Some schools are getting rid of music and art programs so that they can spend even more time teaching reading and math to prepare for standardized tests.

D. Standardized tests are not very good at measuring students’ creativity.
Claim: Standardized tests are not good for students.

A. Teachers are under a lot of pressure to teach the things that they know will be on the test and might not have time to teach students other things they should know.

B. Computers are sometimes used to grade standardized test essays. Les Perelman, director of writing at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has tested these computerized grading systems and believes they will make students worse writers (TIME for Kids Staff, 2013).

C. Some schools are getting rid of music and art programs so that they can spend even more time teaching reading and math to prepare for standardized tests.

D. Standardized tests are not very good at measuring students’ creativity.
Claim: Companies should be allowed to put advertisements on school lockers and buses.

A. Ads on school buses can help earn money for districts that are facing budget cuts.

B. Ads for things like beer, cigarettes, or politicians might be inappropriate for kids.

C. District 11 in Colorado Springs, Colorado, earned $15,000 in 2012 from companies that used their buses for advertising (McGraw, 2013).

D. Companies are going to be paying for advertising anyway, so the money might as well be going to a good cause (like schools).
Claim: Companies should be allowed to put advertisements on school lockers and buses.

A. Ads on school buses can help earn money for districts that are facing budget cuts.

B. Ads for things like beer, cigarettes, or politicians might be inappropriate for kids.

C. District 11 in Colorado Springs, Colorado, earned $15,000 in 2012 from companies that used their buses for advertising (McGraw, 2013).

D. Companies are going to be paying for advertising anyway, so the money might as well be going to a good cause (like schools).
**Claim:** The government should not put a high tax on soda.

A. People should be free to make their own decisions about what they eat and drink.

B. It is true that there are high taxes on other unhealthy substances (like cigarettes), but unlike people who smoke cigarettes, people who drink soda do not harm others around them—they are only harming themselves.

C. Harvard economist N. Gregory Mankiw (2010) worried that a tax on soda allows the government to decide what is best for citizens and could lead to taxes on things such as “fried foods” or “mindless television shows.”

D. A tax is not going to stop people from drinking soda.
Claim: The government should not put a high tax on soda.

A. People should be free to make their own decisions about what they eat and drink.

B. It is true that there are high taxes on other unhealthy substances (like cigarettes), but unlike people who smoke cigarettes, people who drink soda do not harm others around them—they are only harming themselves.

C. Harvard economist N. Gregory Mankiw (2010) worried that a tax on soda allows the government to decide what is best for citizens and could lead to taxes on things such as “fried foods” or “mindless television shows.”

D. A tax is not going to stop people from drinking soda.
Claim: Physical contact games (like tackle football and dodgeball) should be banned in physical education classes.

A. Neil Williams, professor of physical education, says that the game of dodgeball “allows the stronger kids to pick on and target the weaker kids” (as quoted in TIME for Kids Staff, 2011).

B. Many school districts in the United States have already banned dodgeball and tackle football in gym classes.

C. Kids who get eliminated right away from games like dodgeball do not get very much exercise, which is the whole point of gym class.

D. Kids can learn all the athletic skills they need from other games.
Claim: Physical contact games (like tackle football and dodgeball) should be banned in physical education classes.

A. Neil Williams, professor of physical education, says that the game of dodgeball “allows the stronger kids to pick on and target the weaker kids” (as quoted in TIME for Kids Staff, 2011).

B. Many school districts in the United States have already banned dodgeball and tackle football in gym classes.

C. Kids who get eliminated right away from games like dodgeball do not get very much exercise, which is the whole point of gym class.

D. Kids can learn all the athletic skills they need from other games.