

High School (A) Items for Which One Doesn't Belong?

Students select the option that provides a qualifier for the claim.

- Claim:** Professional and college sports teams should eliminate American Indian references from their mascots.
- A. Team names like *Braves* or *Redskins* can be very offensive to American Indians, a historically marginalized social group.
 - B. In the past fifty years, many sports teams have successfully changed their mascots to eliminate American Indian stereotypes and become more socially appropriate.
 - C. The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI, 2013) “strongly opposes the use of derogatory Native sports mascots” because they “present a misleading image of Indian people and feed the historic myths that have been used to whitewash a history of oppression.”
 - D. Despite its general opposition to American Indian sports mascots, the NCAI points out that in special cases, such team names can be acceptable. For instance, the NCAI (2013) “respects the right of individual tribal nations to work with universities and athletic programs to decide how to protect and celebrate their respective tribal heritage.”

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Claim: Students should attend school year-round.

- A. Year-round education has been shown to lower schools' expenses, particularly schedules that use the school building all year and divide students into multiple tracks with rotating attendance (one group goes to school while the other is on vacation; Daneshvary & Clauretie, 2001). Despite this benefit, other year-round models maintain or even raise costs for schools, such as schedules that keep all students in one group and provide everyone with the same breaks (Dossett & Munoz, 2000).
- B. Data show that low-income students at year-round schools sometimes score higher than low-income students at traditional schools (Cooper, Valentine, Charlton, & Melson, 2003).
- C. Teachers can devote more time to introducing new academic content instead of reviewing material that students have already learned.
- D. Year-round schooling provides more frequent breaks instead of one long summer vacation, giving more review time to students who have fallen behind.

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Claim: Whale hunting (whaling) should be banned internationally.

- A. Certain species of whale contain harmful contaminants (such as mercury) and are not safe to eat, particularly in excess and by high-risk people (Simmonds et al., 2002).
- B. In a 2008 study in *Marine Policy*, fewer than one in five whales were killed immediately by the harpoons used by whalers. The study showed that the harpoons took an average of ten minutes to actually kill a whale. Sometimes this process can even take a period of hours (Gales, Leaper, & Papastavrou, 2008).
- C. Some whale species have been found to possess spindle neurons, a type of brain cell that is only found in highly intelligent creatures like humans, certain apes, and bottlenose dolphins (Hof & Van der Gucht, 2007). Despite this finding, the existence of intelligent animals without the spindle neuron (such as pigs) does make it difficult to determine which animals are morally acceptable to kill.
- D. Whaling could be bad for tourist industries—such as whale watching—because the types of whales that typically approach boats may also be the easiest to hunt.

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Claim: France should allow Muslim women to wear a niqab (a full-face veil) in public places.

- A. The majority of French Muslim women reported that they choose to wear the niqab. They were not forced or pressured by parents, husbands, or orthodox Muslim groups (Open Society Foundations, 2011).
- B. If Muslim women cannot wear the niqab in public, many of them might decide to leave work and school in order to stay at home, where they are still allowed to wear the niqab. This could alienate Muslim women from the rest of French society.
- C. Some feminists believe that the niqab degrades women, but not all. Many other feminists believe that a federal ban of the garment is worse because it is antidemocratic. They point out that banning the niqab is a way for men to legislate the way women dress and exercise control over women's bodies.
- D. The French government argues that the ban is a matter of national security in public spaces (such as airports, banks, and state buildings). However, French Muslim women report that they would be willing to show their faces for identification purposes when asked by a state official in such a location (Open Society Foundations, 2011).

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- Claim:** Fast food and soft drink companies should not be allowed to sponsor the Olympics.
- A. Tobacco companies are not allowed to sponsor Olympic events because cigarettes are unhealthy. The same logic can be applied to fast food and soft drink companies.
 - B. Jacques Rogge, president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), raised concerns that dropping sponsors may cause financial trouble for the Games (“IOC Chief Jacques Rogge Admits ‘Question Mark,’” 2012).
 - C. Dr. Tony Jewell, chief medical officer for Wales, opposes sponsors like McDonald’s and Coca-Cola. He said, “There is much to do to tackle obesity, and stating clearly that fast food has no place in sport sends a clear message” (cited in McWatt, 2012).
 - D. The addictive potential of fast food—especially among vulnerable populations—may make it tougher for people to select healthier options (Garber & Lustig, 2011). Granting this point, individuals should still be encouraged to take personal responsibility for their health.

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Claim: English should not be made the official language of the United States.

- A. Americans who speak little or no English would be disadvantaged if English were to become the official language because they might have to pay to take classes to learn the language.
- B. A government with an official language may not issue notifications in multiple languages during emergencies (such as natural disasters or medical pandemics), making life more dangerous for Spanish-speaking Americans.
- C. To be fair, all immigrants to the United States probably should make an effort to learn English for their own benefit, even if it does not become the official language.
- D. The United States prides itself on being a nation of immigrants. Making English the official language may jeopardize the melting pot identity of the nation.

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Claim: The NBA should drop its minimum-age requirement for players and allow high school athletes to be included in the draft.

- A. Former high school draft picks like Kobe Bryant, Kevin Garnett, and Jermaine O'Neal have become extremely successful basketball superstars.
- B. Baseball and hockey do not have minimum-age requirements for drafted players. Basketball should not be any different.
- C. A study by legal sports analyst Michael McCann (2005) shows that of eighty-four NBA players with arrest records, only 4 percent had never been to college.
- D. Even though they are few and far between, there have been careers of high school draftees that do not end successfully.

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Claim: Assault weapons like AK-47s should be banned in the United States.

- A. Even if most gun-related crimes in the United States are carried out with handguns rather than assault weapons, this is not a reason for the government to ignore the deaths and dangers caused by assault weapons (Leshner, Altevogt, Lee, McCoy, & Kelley, 2013).
- B. The United States no longer depends on state and federal militias for defense. Therefore, the right to own an assault weapon is not protected by the Second Amendment, which states, “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed” (U.S. Const. amend. II).
- C. The majority of the sixty-two mass murders that occurred between 1982 and 2013 in the United States involved legally obtained guns (Follman, Aronsen, & Pan, 2012).
- D. Evidence from the Harvard Injury Control Research Center suggests that nations with higher gun availability also have higher rates of homicide (Hepburn & Hemenway, 2004).

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- Claim:** Colleges and universities should abolish early-admission programs for prospective students.
- A. Still, it is a valid point that early acceptance can assuage some stress for a high school senior.
 - B. William Fitzsimmons, dean of admissions at Harvard College, says, “Students who apply early are more likely to be affluent, savvy about the process, and attend high schools with resources to help them assemble their college applications” (Fitzsimmons, 2007).
 - C. Low-income students depend on the opportunity to compare the different offers they receive for financial aid, which early-admission programs may prevent. If these students cannot participate in early-admission programs, they cannot compete with applicants who do.
 - D. Early-admission programs may encourage students to make hasty decisions about college, which ought to be a carefully considered process.

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Claim: The United States should close the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay.

- A. Some prisoners at Guantánamo have not been tried in federal court.
- B. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU, n.d.) has openly called for the closing of Guantánamo, calling it a “shameful episode in American history” and “a catastrophic failure on every front.”
- C. Many prisoners at Guantánamo have decided to go on hunger strikes and are being forcibly fed by prison officials as a result, which is a form of torture.
- D. It is true that many Americans who advocate for closing Guantánamo do not know the specific details about the terrorist detainees and may not truly understand the danger that they pose to national security.

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Claim: The United States government should reverse its amendment to Title IX and ban single-sex education (all boys or all girls).

- A. Some single-sex schools, such as Girls Athletic Leadership School (GALS) in Denver, have been successful in helping their students grow and improve academically.
- B. The idea that girls learn best by sitting still in quiet classrooms and boys learn best by moving around in noisier classrooms has been debunked by scientists (Halpern et al., 2011).
- C. Men and women often collaborate in the workforce, so schools should be preparing students to work together with students of other genders.
- D. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU, 2013) has stated that single-sex education programs teach kids dangerous stereotypes about gender.

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Claim: Video games are not to blame for acts of youth violence.

- A. Game theorists argue that kids can tell the difference between play and reality, so a child who plays violent video games may not necessarily be violent in real life (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004).
- B. The Office of the U.S. Surgeon General (2001) reported that risk factors for school shootings related most strongly to mental health and home life, not exposure to violent media.
- C. To be fair, the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General (2001) also reported that kids who were exposed to violent media did demonstrate a short-term increase in physical aggression.
- D. The majority of Americans play video games (Entertainment Software Association, 2013b), so the fact that someone who commits violent acts is also a gamer does not prove much.

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- Claim:** U.S. high schools should not block the video-sharing website YouTube on school computers.
- A. It is true that YouTube has come under fire in the past for being used as a tool for cyberbullying.
 - B. Students can create videos or tutorials about academic content and use YouTube to share them with their classmates.
 - C. Teachers also benefit from being able to access YouTube at school—they can show videos that enhance their lessons.
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- Claim:** All high school students should be required to take courses in the arts (such as music, theater, film, and so on).
- A. Research shows that high schools that offer students education in the arts have higher graduation rates than those that do not (Israel, 2009).
 - B. Of course, supplies and materials for arts classes are often expensive—they can consume a lot of money from the school.
 - C. Students in Japan, Hungary, and the Netherlands receive mandatory music education and consistently have among the highest test scores in math and science (Ponter, 1999).
 - D. If students are not required to take courses in the arts, they may miss out on opportunities they may not have chosen to take themselves.

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Claim: Homework should be banned in public schools.

- A. Out-of-class assignments can teach students valuable lessons in time management and independence.
- B. Some students' parents are able to help them with their homework, but not everyone has this opportunity—some students' parents do not speak English or have to work during the evenings and are unable to offer help.
- C. Schoolwork should be completed in school so that time after school and in the evenings can be reserved for participation in athletics, arts, and clubs.
- D. Teens who stay up late in order to study are more likely to have problems in school the next day (Gillen-O'Neel, Huynh, & Fuligni, 2013).

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