

Chapter 9: Essay

Do I Need to Take the Essay? Each college will provide one of three responses concerning the ACT® essay: required, optional, or not needed. Consider “optional” to be the same as “required” because optional means that the essay is weighed in the admissions process and may give you an advantage over those students who didn’t take the essay.

GRADING -

Each scoring criterion is given a score of 1-6 by each of the two readers. The total score of 2-12 for each criterion is the sum of the two readers’ scores. To obtain the final Writing score out of 12, the total scores from each of the four criterion are added, averaged, and rounded to the nearest integer.

Four Criteria for Essay

	<u>Grader #1</u>		<u>Grader #2</u>		
• Language Use and Conventions	___ / 6	+	___ / 6	=	___ / 12
• Development and Support	___ / 6	+	___ / 6	=	___ / 12
• Ideas and Analysis	___ / 6	+	___ / 6	=	___ / 12
• Organization	___ / 6	+	___ / 6	=	___ / 12

Interpreting Your Score. Having your score out of 12 instead of 36 can be difficult to understand. Many ask, “what is a good score?” Below is a breakdown of Writing test scores, the percentile rank, and what that percentile rank would be as a Composite score:

Writing Score	Percentile Rank	Composite Equivalent
12	99	36
11	99	35
10	99	34
9	96	32
8	90	29
7	66	23
6	50	21
5	27	16
4	14	14
3	5	12
2	2	10

← ****Note the steep drop-off at a writing score of 7****

The ACT® has very clearly stated that students should not make a direct comparison between their essay percentile rank and their composite percentile rank. With fewer data points and subjectivity to the scoring, it would not be unusual for a student to earn a mid-30 composite and an 8 on the essay.

FORMAT -

Timing. 40 minutes.

This includes the time to read the prompt, develop an outline, write the entire essay, and proof. Do NOT think that you can give yourself more time to write by not doing an outline. As we will see, the topics can easily get side-tracked, and an outline will increase the quality and efficiency of your writing.

Essay Format. This is NOT a persuasive essay. A persuasive paper would be like being in a debate offering only information that benefits your position. The essay is an “analytical” essay. For those not in AP Comp, an analytical essay means that you present an argument on both sides of an issue and provide a complication (or counter) for the arguments. Both sides are presented without bias, but the thesis and conclusion does take a position. This analytical paper is like being the unbiased judge of a debate, writing a summary of the points and counter points presented by the debaters, and offering your unbiased ruling.

General Tips.

- Spend 5 to 8 minutes reading, generating a position on the topic, and making an outline.
- Print writing instead of cursive is recommended. Essays are read off a scanned copy, and print is often easier to read.
 - Illegible essays may be downgraded.
- Do NOT skip lines between lines or paragraphs.
- Give yourself time to revise, or remember to revise as you go.
- Avoid being negative towards people. Examples of bad etiquette would be calling people lazy, dumb, or evil.
- Try to write 3 FULL pages or more. The top scoring ACT sample essays average 550 words, which for most handwriting sizes would equate to 3 pages.
 - If you normally write quite small, write larger. Word count matters less than page count. The ACT denies that page count affects the score, but our data proves otherwise.

Dispelling Misconceptions.

- You do not need to have prior knowledge of the topic, though it can help.
- You do not need to agree with any of the given perspectives, but they should be acknowledged.
- You do not need to argue the side you think the reader will like.
- You do not need to personally believe your argument. You can play devil’s advocate.

Vocabulary in This Chapter.

- **Prompt:** Though the prompt refers to the entire page of information the ACT® provides, we will use “prompt” to refer to just the paragraph below the title.
- **Central Topic:** This is a synthesis of the prompt and should be the focus of your essay
- **Position:** A side of the central topic. This is NOT why you are on that side. You should be able to simplify positions into _____ versus _____.
- **Argument:** This is a reason to hold that position.

READING THE PROMPT AND OUTLINING

STEP 1 – READ

Read the title. Sounds simple but is often missed and can be very helpful. Then read the FIRST paragraph and the *italic* sentence after it. DO NOT read the 3 perspectives yet.

The title, the last sentence of the paragraph, and what it says in the *italic* sentence after the phrase “Each suggests a particular way of thinking about...” will contain the central topic. This central topic MUST be the focus of the essay. UNDERLINE THIS in the *italic* section so you remember to connect each paragraph back to it.

STEP 2 – DEFINE THE CENTRAL TOPIC

The central topic will be written in general terms. The essay can get off track very quickly if these terms are not clearly defined within the prompt’s context.

Key Word. A key word is a vague word that is expanded or clarified by the context around it. Though a few essay prompts do not have a key word, a key word can center us by making us think “the benefits of what?” or “valuable to whom?” Key words can include:

Benefits	Effects	Importance	Role
Complications	Impact	Indication	Value
Conflicts	Implications	Rights	

- **Example:** [Last sentence of a paragraph weighing the financial cost to the benefits of going to college]
Given the rapidly increasing price, it is worth considering the value of education in our lives.

The key word in this sample is “value” and can mean financial benefit, moral correctness, or a useful/desirable trait. Immediately, there could be confusion in the essay because the passage was already detailing the costs of college. So, instead of the topic going into the benefit of education (the correct contextual meaning of “value”), the essay could mistakenly veer off onto a topic of how they plan to pay for college or what they could do with the money instead of going to college. So, more context is needed.

Vague Terms. With the given example, the key word is made clearer with the addition of “of education” and “in our lives,” but these are still vague and lack the context of the prompt. Read in isolation, the “value of education” could deviate into a discussion on public versus private schooling or the benefits of being a life-long learner. Defining these vague terms in the context of the prompt, we find that education means education after high school and astute students may even clarify that definition to include trade schools, community colleges, and universities.

Full Context. Adding to the context, the opening phrase of “Given the rapidly increasing price,” we can gain full understanding of the topic. This clarification avoids topics just on how college can benefit you but narrows it to a deliberation on the financial cost in respect to those benefits.

It may sound trivial or overdone to dissect a topic sentence this much, but it is 100% necessary to consistently score well on the essay.

In your future essay prompts, the full context may require more than a deep read of the last sentence of the paragraph. It is likely that you will need to add context from the paragraph without a vague term cuing you to read deeper.

Tricks. When the key word is “rights,” the essays tend to be black and white instead of a discussion of both positions. Do we have the right to privacy? Yes. Is healthcare a right? Not currently. But there is no discussion if the answer ends with a Yes/No. So, change the topic from “do we” to “should we.” This can shift away from an informative essay on constitutional rights and into a discussion on **why** we have those rights or **whether** we should have/maintain them.

The other trick is when the topic sentence is a question. This can change the italics sentence into a vague reference: “Each suggests a particular way of thinking about the above question.” It can also remove key words and rely on more contextual reading of the prompt.

Practice.

Social Media Consequences

Though social media provides many positives to society, there are many negatives as well. Because of the social disconnect of the internet, people can say and do things online they would not say or do publicly. This concerning behavior has extended into schools. Now, a student’s activity posted online can be a direct reflection on the school, and cyberbullying is a constantly growing threat to a student’s well-being. But is it the school’s responsibility if the activity was outside of the building and not connected to a school-related activity? Is it a violation of privacy rights or an overreach of power for a school to monitor, censor, or discipline online behavior? With a potential for legal issues on either side, it is worth considering the role schools should have with a student’s social media.

What is the key word?

What vague terms are used and what is their contextual meaning?

What additional context helps narrow the central topic?

STEP 3 – CONSIDER READING THE PERSPECTIVES

There are good reasons to read them after steps 1 and 2 and good reasons to hold off until after the outline. You do NOT need to choose a single approach. You can wait to read the prompt on test day and make your decision then.

Waiting to Read. Waiting to read forces you to determine the two positions yourself (see step 5) and generate your own unique perspectives. This can shock the reader from the monotony of redundant essays and help you score higher in the Ideas and Analysis category. To make sure that you are addressing the given perspectives, you will read the perspectives after creating a rough outline and fit them in like a supporting fact for a research paper.

The negative of this approach is the challenge of creating unique ideas under a time constraint. You may not know much about residential zoning or vocational studies. However, you can switch to reading the perspectives if you can’t come up with your own points.

Reading Now. Students that have difficulty generating arguments may want to read the three perspectives. Some topics can be too difficult to understand or too big to narrow down. If you do use a perspective, you must avoid copy/pasting the perspective into your essay. So, as you read a perspective, underline key words that synthesize it. This will make it easier to mold it into your own idea. The goal is to understand how the perspectives relate to the central topic and to dive deeper into the arguments presented in the perspective.

The negative of this approach is that it can remove originality. When provided a perspective on school uniforms that they remove a students' sense of individuality and creativity, it can be difficult to dive deeper or think of your own perspective. This results in your essay sounding like everyone else's essay.

****If you plan to wait to read the perspectives, skip Step 4 and return to it after the outline is created.****

STEP 4 – READ AND APPLY PERSPECTIVES

If you read the perspectives initially, then this step can be skipped. If you haven't read them already, now is the time to read the three perspectives.

Perspective Analysis. You may notice that the perspectives often have a pattern. It is common that perspective one and three pose opposite arguments. This can offer insight if you are struggling to identify the two opposing positions from Step 5. Perspective Two is the odd-ball and can offer a third unique perspective, offer a blend of both sides, or offer a second argument in favor of one of the positions.

How to Use Perspectives. The perspectives should be used like quotes from a research article. Do this WITHOUT saying the phrase "According to perspective one." Instead, fold in the idea of the perspective without copying it directly. This will demonstrate more proficient writing. You can incorporate a perspective by using it to support your existing idea or as an opposing idea to counter.

- **Perspective One:** Having students unable to afford name-brand clothing leads to bullying and isolated social groups.
- **Supporting Argument:** School uniforms allow for better classroom and school discipline.
- **Statement Incorporating the Perspective:** Since school uniforms are required for all students, it can also ensure fewer disciplinary instances of a student bullying another for not wearing the latest fashion.
 - The entire supporting argument was not specifically on bullying and name-brand clothing. However, the perspective was clearly addressed within this one statement of the paragraph.

In the outline, you can shorthand where each perspective goes by writing P1, P2, and P3 under the argument or counter argument in which it will be incorporated. You should have a minimum of one perspective referenced in your essay, but more would be better.

Practice. Read the three perspectives below and underline key concepts from each to help synthesize the argument. How could each of these points be explored further?

Social Media Consequences

Perspective One

Online behavior is the responsibility of the parents. As long as the social media post was outside of school, then it is up to the parents to monitor and discipline.

Perspective Two

It is difficult for parents to keep up with rapidly changing technology. Parents and schools should work together to help protect students from themselves and each other.

Perspective Three

If a school does not address negative online behavior, they can be perceived as condoning it. Schools must have consequences for online behavior, or the reputation of the school will be damaged.

STEP 5 – IDENTIFY THE TWO POSITIONS

The central topic needs to be broken into two simple positions. You should be able to simplify them into a _____ VS _____ statement. Doing this step allows the points to be distinctive and prevents redundant arguments. You will be favoring one of these positions in your thesis and conclusion.

Some prompts lay out the two positions for you. If the two positions are not given, you can often find one of the positions in the title or the central topic itself.

Supportive Positions. One common mistake is that students make one position a negation of the other: school uniforms VS against school uniforms. The objective of the analytical paper is to present both sides and offer corresponding counters. If the opposing side is just a counter, you are doubling up on counters and missing a key component of the essay.

It may take either creative thinking or the use of the given perspectives, but both positions should be expressed as a positive position (supporting something). So, instead of “against school uniforms,” use the supportive position of “supporting free dress.” This allows for both sides to present arguments supporting their position.

- **Examples:**

BAD	FIXED
Innovation VS No innovation	Innovation VS Tradition
Tech-free time is good VS Tech-free time is bad	Tech-free time is good VS Embracing tech reliance
Celebrities should use their platform to affect change VS Celebrities should not do that	Celebrities should use their platform to affect change VS Informed leaders should affect change

Practice. Using the topic below, identify the two positive positions.

Social Media Consequences

Though social media provides many positives to society, there are many negatives as well. Because of the social disconnect of the internet, people can say and do things online they would not say or do publicly. This concerning behavior has extended into schools. Now, a student’s activity posted online can be a direct reflection on the school, and cyberbullying is a constantly growing threat to a student’s well-being. But is it the school’s responsibility if the activity was outside of the building and not connected to a school-related activity? Is it a violation of privacy rights or an overreach of power for a school to monitor, censor, or discipline online behavior? With a potential for legal issues on either side, it is worth considering the role schools should have with a student’s social media.

Read and carefully consider these perspectives. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about the role schools should have with a student’s social media.

Answer: _____ **VS** _____

***NOTE:** For use later in the outline, it is recommended to have the position you will agree with on the right side.

STEP 6 – ARGUMENTS

Pick One Argument. For each supportive position, you must give a reason WHY someone would hold that position. You only need to provide ONE very detailed reason why and make that the central argument defending that position. Do NOT list multiple reasons for holding that position.

If you are reading the perspective to help create your arguments, be sure that you don't directly use the given perspectives. You should dive deeper into the perspective(s) or reason against it. For example, a perspective could say that school uniforms improve school and classroom discipline. To avoid simply copying this idea directly, your supporting argument should dive deeper. Why would it help with discipline? Could it be that disciplining smaller infractions (uniform code) would make students apprehensive about committing a more egregious violation? This argument is deeper than the original, clearly connects to the given perspective, and can be supported with ample proof.

Proof. Though not required in the outline, you should think of how you will demonstrate your argument. Specific examples, personal experience, and even logical reasoning can prove the argument. However, stating a claim does NOT prove a claim. If you make the argument that school uniforms allow for better classroom discipline, this must be demonstrated. You can jot a word or two in the outline if you have time to remember your examples once you begin writing.

Remember that proving the opposition to be flawed does NOT necessarily demonstrate why someone would hold a position. If you have the argument that school uniforms allow for better classroom discipline, avoid proving this with examples of free dress causing problems.

Good arguments connect with the central topic, and the proof should express the **BENEFIT** of the position. For example, if a topic was about "school uniforms shaping the learning environment," the following examples are good and bad arguments for supporting school uniforms:

- **BAD Argument:** School uniforms provide a cost savings.
 - Though this is a PRO uniform argument, this does not connect to the topic of "shaping the learning environment" and thus lost focus on the central topic.
- **BAD Argument:** Require school uniforms because free dress would create classroom distractions.
 - Though this is connected to the topic of a learning environment, it is why free dress is bad rather than the BENEFIT of a uniform.
- **GOOD Argument:** School uniforms provide minor disciplinary action to prevent major ones.
 - I could write a quick note like the word "demerit" to remind me of my personal experience that demerit systems make disciplinary actions out of small infractions (like a uniform violation), which makes students hesitant to commit larger discipline issues.

****Practice.*** Given the following opposing positions, what could be supporting arguments?

Social Media Consequences

Parent should monitor social media

VS

School should monitor social media

***Note:** Previous examples were written in long form so you could understand the arguments. It is highly recommended to use shorthand.

STEP 7 – COUNTER ARGUMENTS

Address the Argument. Be sure that your counter point is related to the previous argument. A common error is to bring up a new point rather than countering the given argument. THIS IS ESSENTIAL FOR A GOOD SCORE.

- **Argument:** School uniforms allow for better classroom and school discipline
- **BAD Counter:** Uniforms create a financial burden.
 - The point of costs is an opposing point, but it does NOT counter the existing point of discipline.
- **GOOD Counter:** Better Teacher/Parent relationships improve classroom discipline more effectively.

It can be difficult to think of counter arguments. To make this simple, we have listed four types of counters: **Flip, Throw, Exception, Assumption.**

Flip. With any given position, change what the results are. Do NOT think that “no it doesn’t” is a counter. It is not effective to prove that something doesn’t happen right after you have proven that it does.

To FLIP an argument, pick out the subject, action, or the conclusion from the supporting argument and FLIP it to another concept or its opposite and prove that this other thing DOES happen.

- **Example:** Supporting Argument: School uniforms create a productive learning environment.
 - **FLIP Subject:** Teachers create productive learning environments.
 - **FLIP Action:** School uniforms hinder a productive learning environment.
 - **FLIP Conclusion:** School uniforms create harmful learning environments.
 - This last example isn’t a good point, but it demonstrates the concept.

Throw. With any given position, THROW the idea into the future and detail the negative consequences. If a topic is school related, THROW it into the future and demonstrate how this change will affect your future success in college, getting a job, work life, parenting, etc. If the topic is not school related, THROW it into the future and demonstrate how this will later affect businesses or the community.

- **Example:** Supporting Argument: Industrial companies in residential areas will increase jobs.
 - **THROW:** In the future, residents would likely move away from industrial zones due to noise, fumes, or danger, leading to a decline in the local economy.

Exception. You can strengthen an opposing position by demonstrating an exception. This exception should not be a rare or unusual case. If you can imagine a situation where the argument is NOT true and that appears to be relatively common, then exposing this flaw can be helpful.

- **Example:** Supporting Argument: Technology has made our lives easier by making simple tasks more efficient.
 - **EXCEPTION:** This position fails to acknowledge the wasted time due to technology through gaming and social media. Now, previously straightforward tasks like a 15-minute homework assignment extends into an hour of unfocused work.

Assumption. An assumption is when an argument relies on something else to be true. Exposing an underlying assumption can range from assuming funding for a program to assuming the good nature of other people.

- **Example:** Supporting Argument: Social media allows for easy dissemination of important information.
 - **ASSUMPTION:** This assumes that individuals are sharing reliable information instead of the pervasive disinformation.

***Practice.** Given the following positions and supporting arguments, what could be counter arguments?

Social Media Consequences

Parent should monitor social media

Students would respond better to parental monitoring/discipline.

Proof: Parents have more options for reward and punishment (grounding, no cell phone, etc.)

VS

School should monitor social media

A school's role is to provide social education, which now includes social media.

Proof: Anti-bullying and anti-drug campaigns are taught in school

***Note:** Previous examples were written in long form so you could understand the arguments. It is highly recommended to use shorthand.

WHAT TO WRITE –

Pre-Outline. Do not forget to underline the central topic in the prompt. Then on the page in the Writing Test Booklet opposite the prompt, before you write the outline, write out a translation of that central topic with full context.

Outline. In the blank space below your translation of the central topic, draw a large box and divide it into a 2 X 2 table. It is recommended to shorthand your outline to give you more time to actually write.

- On top of the 2 X 2, write VS to make sure you clearly identify the two opposing positions. The position you do NOT favor will be in the left-hand column and the position you DO favor will be in the right-hand column.
- In the first row, place the supporting arguments.
- In the second row, place the counter points.
- If you skipped step 4, read the perspectives at this time.
- Lastly, insert the P1, P2, and P3 under a connected argument.

Translation: What responsibility does a school have in monitoring and disciplining inappropriate social media post by a student?

Parent should monitor social media

VS

School should monitor social media

Argument: Parental monitoring/discipline works better Proof: more options for reward and punishment P1	Argument: Schools provide social education Proof: Anti-bullying and anti-drug campaigns
Counter: Parents don't know their children online Proof: Too many media options P2	Counter: Schools provide academic education Proof: Campaigns raise awareness/knowledge, no consequences. P3

LANGUAGE USAGE AND CONVENTIONS

Readers judge language usage on whether the errors hinder a fluid reading or if the advanced usage improves the essay. You want to ensure that your language is correct, precise, varied, and uniquely toned.

Spelling Counts (sort of). Spelling is only a major issue if the errors distract the reading and detract from the essay itself. Don't fret over a word or two, but be sure to edit. You can choose to edit as you go by backtracking and proof reading while you think of your next line or you can save roughly three minutes at the end to proof the entire essay.

There is NO reason to abbreviate words like "and," "because," "without," or any other word. You want to fill the pages. Also, using this shorthand is too informal.

Vocabulary. Using a variety of vocabulary words can make the essay seem less repetitive. It is encouraged to use the vocabulary of the prompt, but throw in some synonyms to spice things up. For example, in the previous prompt, the title was "Social Media Consequences." Rather than repeating those three words dozens of times, you could name examples of social media and a synonym for consequences: "repercussions of Twitter."

If you can, use collegiate-level vocabulary, but it must blend with the essay. The fabrication of grandiloquent adoxography pretermits the adjudicator from the colloquy. (Translation: The creation of irritatingly elevated refined writing omits the grader from the conversation.) That wasn't fun to read was it? So, feel free to use advanced vocabulary; just avoid sounding pretentious.

Avoid Fluff. The goal of good language should be to be precise. Fluffy language fails in this respect. Fluff can occur at two levels: vague and fake. Vague language would include using words like "things" and "stuff" as well as vague pronouns.

- **Vague Example:** It could be that things go back to normal when they leave it alone. [WHAT!!!]

For "fake language," think of a comedy where two kids dress in a trench coat to fool someone that they are an adult. When students purposefully overwrite their essay to sound academic, it reads like the literary equivalent of those two kids. Using phrases like "hence forth" and "said individual" or including unnecessarily descriptive language ends up sounding "fake academic." Academic writing should be more concise.

- **Fake Academic Example:** One could conclude that the use of various forms of social media, whether that be Facebook yesteryear or TikTok of today's youth, can result in individuals engaging in less than appropriate behavior, which could result in said individual being punished by their academic institution rather than by the people with which said individual resides.
- **Fixed Example:** Social Media, ranging from Facebook to TikTok, can result in student engaging in inappropriate behavior, which can be disciplined by the schools instead of the parents.

Sentence Variety. Some sentences should be complex. This allows the reader to see that you have the ability to write at an advanced level by showcasing advanced sentence structure. However, you do not need to overwrite. (Note the sentence variety contained in this paragraph.) Writing with this dynamic creates a reading rhythm and allows the reader to process and retain more of your essay.

Voice. Using first or second person is allowable, but use it sparingly. This is not a personal essay. However, it is acceptable to use personal experience as your proof. Occasional self-references can provide a good change of tone. Too much can sound elementary.

You especially want to avoid using “I think” or “I believe” in the thesis. Most of the time, if you write a thesis using one of those phrases, you can simply omit it without effecting the sentence structure.

Tone. Use semi-formal tone throughout the essay. Informal/casual tone would reflect how you would write to a friend and introduces abbreviations, limits vocabulary, and adopts slang phrasing. A formal tone would reflect the tone of a research paper or legal document and can sound artificial and stuffy. Semi-formal tone would allow you to be genuine without being casual. Think of how you would communicate with your principal or grandparents. This tone should have advanced vocabulary and structure but can include a touch of humor, sarcasm, or other writing elements unique to your voice.

- **Casual Example:** Schools & parents should just figure things out together.
- **Formal Example:** Academic institutions as well as students’ parents should collaborate on potential solutions as to who should conduct the discipline of social media.
- **Semi-Formal Example:** It is about time that school and parents worked together to determine who is responsible for students that post inappropriately on their Instagram.

Avoid Rhetorical Questions. Rhetorical questions can be a useful device and act as a good transition of thought. However, rhetorical questions are often unresolved. For example, saying “who wouldn’t want the newest iPhone?” requires the reader to assume information rather than being provided proof. Therefore, it is recommended to avoid rhetorical questions.

DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

Every claim needs evidence to prove it. Assume nothing! Instead, explain the why or how and assume nothing. All arguments must have a specific example to prove the argument. The graders are looking for the proof to show your deep understanding of the topic, to offer a unique insight, and to provide demonstration of potential complications. In short, give examples, be original, and provide counters.

GENERAL TIPS –

Never Assume. Always explain how an example or an anecdote proves the argument you are making. NEVER use the phrase “it is obvious to see” because that is merely assuming, not proving.

Details. Specific examples will strengthen most points. It is much better to provide specific examples of vague terms to anchor the idea.

Instead of...	Say this instead
Major social media influencers ...	Social media influencers like Tyler Oakley ...
Shop class can teach life skills.	Shop class can teach woodworking and automotive repair.
Learning sign language can help in the long run.	Learning sign language can help solidify a job position by knowing another language, allow you to communicate if you or a loved one suffers an accident rendering someone deaf, or keep a conversation secret from nosey people that don't know how to sign.*

*NOTE: The use of mild humor in the last example can be very beneficial. Just be sure not turn the essay into a comedy routine.

Arguments Need Support. When constructing your outline, you created two supporting arguments and counter arguments for each. A common issue is for a student to repeat the argument in different words rather than providing support.

- **Redundant Example:**

- **Argument:** Parents should be responsible for disciplining their child for inappropriate online posts because their methods of discipline are more effective than the school's.
- **Bad Proof:** A school can't discipline like a parent can. It simply won't change the student's behavior. Meanwhile, parents can make a real difference. This is why they should be responsible for disciplining when their kids post something they shouldn't.

You can see from the bad proof, that nothing was added. The first two sentences merely take the argument that parents' method of discipline is more effective and rephrase it as schools are less effective than parents. The last sentence merely concluded by repeating the argument as if it were proven to be true.

- **Good Proof:** A school is limited in its discipline. They can give a detention or an in-school or at-home suspension. For many, detentions are a good time to do homework and suspensions are like mini vacations. However, parents can remove phone privileges, set parental restrictions on the computer, take away TV time, ground them, take away the car, and so on. It would be difficult to see these punishments positively. With a greater variety of escalating and meaningful punishments, it is easier for a parent to affect behavior.

PROOF –

Personal Examples. When you prove a point in a research paper, you would normally provide research. Without research, you are limited to your personal experiences. Most topics used by the ACT are topics to which most students can relate. This is an opportunity to use your own observations, your own life experience, or a life experience of someone you know that you pass off as your own. (Luckily, the graders can't call your family to confirm your life experiences. However, this isn't the time to make up far-fetched stories.)

Real World Examples. Drawing a comparison to the topic of the prompt and a historical event can be helpful. For example, you could connect a topic about social media censorship to current internet censorship in China or even prohibition. However, do not assume those connections are self-explanatory. You must detail how they are connected events and will likely have similar outcomes.

It can also be helpful to name-drop. Do you know garage bands that made it big because of SoundCloud? Name them. Do you know celebrities that don't use social media? Name them. Do you know companies that don't have a strict dress code? Name them. This takes your argument from being hypothetical to real and helps demonstrate to the reader that you deeply understand the topic.

A common question is whether you can or should make up statistics. We do NOT recommend making up information. It is unlikely that a student would randomly have statistical information memorized for this one specific prompt. It is also impossible to know the background of the reader. If you fabricate data they know to be false, it could impact your score because you lost their trust. However, as previously mentioned, if you directly know of someone's personal experience and you present it as your own, the reader would have no way of knowing the truth.

Reasoning Examples. Another way to prove your point is through a series of logical conclusions. This means building on true/accepted statements until the argument becomes the inevitable last step. This often takes up a lot of space because you must walk the reader to the conclusion without taking logical leaps.

Example: Argument: Binge watching leads do a less healthy society.

Reasoning: Watching television used to be in small doses. All the good shows would only be on weekly during "prime time." Boredom while waiting for a show used to be a reason to go play outside. Now, applications like Hulu and Netflix stream every episode without waiting. Because good entertainment is always available, there is less incentive to play.

Consequence: Therefore, the prevalence of "binge watching" will teach the youth to be less active and live a less healthy life.

Consequences. A major grading component is to show the long-term effects. This can be the consequence of the overall argument and act as the paragraph's conclusion or further illustrate an example.

Good detail	With added consequence
Shop class can teach woodworking and automotive repair.	Shop class can teach woodworking and automotive repair, saving you thousands over the life of your car.
Children look up to internet personalities like Jake and Logan Paul.	Children look up to internet personalities like Jake and Logan Paul who perform pranks and property destruction, acts that may be copied by their impressionable audience.

IDEAS AND ANALYSIS

The readers are looking for creativity and insight of multiple perspectives (which can include your own perspective) and whether you reflect on both sides of the issue by addressing the flaws of the arguments (i.e. counters).

IDEA GENERATION –

Forecasting. Showing good judgment requires looking beyond the now and into the future. The benefits or consequences of a position could project into the future.

- **Example:** School uniforms → Accustomed to professional attire in the workplace.
- **Example:** Learning to drive → Buying a car and paying for gas and upkeep teaches fiscal responsibility needed for home ownership.

Insight. Use examples, benefits, or consequences not mentioned in the prompt. The readers will have read hundreds of essays likely using those same examples, so be different. This is why so much time was spent on the outline, either generating your own perspectives or expanding on the given perspectives.

Point of View. Look at the effect beyond just one point of view. The sample topic (Social Media Consequences) lends itself to focusing on yourself and your friends at school. This is too one-dimensional. Consider other points of view when analyzing the topic.

- **Adults** – Parents, teachers, co-workers
 - Checking for misbehavior and following through with consequences would be an additional burden for schools and parents.
- **Community** – Businesses, school systems, police
 - The internet never forgets, so poor behavior as a teenager can impact who a company can/should hire for fear of a public backlash.
- **Society** – Public safety, public welfare, public health, ethics
 - If social media is unchecked, cyberbullying can result in an increase in depression and anxiety.

Generation Gap. Many of the essay topics deal with a concept that demonstrates a difference in thinking between your younger generation and previous generations. This can range from the value of professional attire to the value of technology and social media.

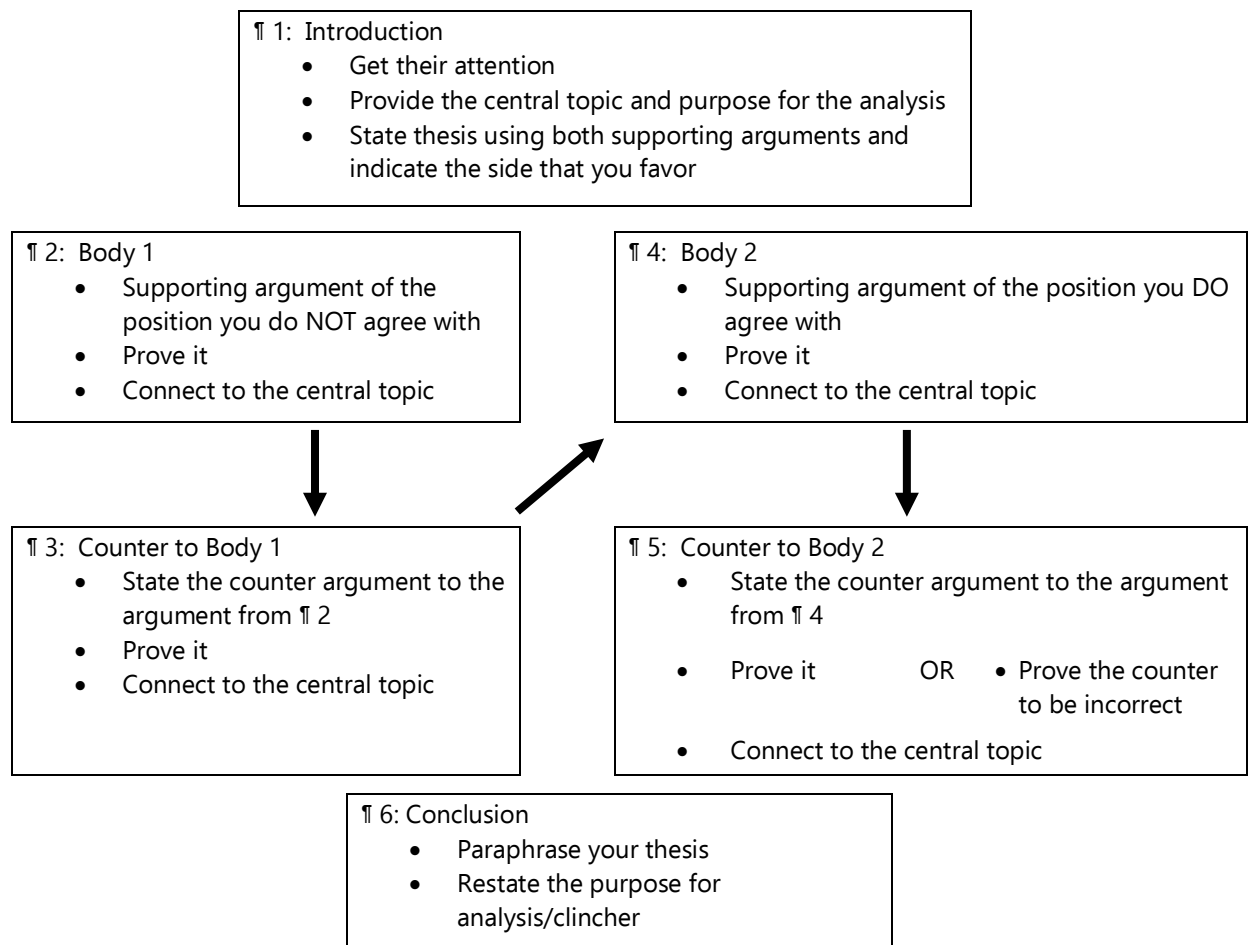
This awareness can help you develop the opposition’s argument if you imagine the arguments your parents or grandparents would make. This generation gap and the need to acknowledge and accept that difference can be a great purpose statement for the essay.

Topic	Typically Older Perspective	Typically Younger Perspective
Professional attire in the workplace	Dress for the job you want, not the one you have	Judge a person on their performance, not what they wear
Adults playing kids’ games	Adults should act their age	People should find what makes them happy
Buying the newest technology	If it’s not broken, don’t fix it	New products mean new features to increase entertainment or productivity
Face-to-face communication	Calling or meeting is better socially	Why call when you can text?

ORGANIZATION

Essays are graded on a student's ability to follow essay organizational conventions. The outline provided below will help you in that task. The following is a rough structure of a 6 ¶ (paragraph) paper. It is structured and formulaic. On the plus side, it is easy to replicate and use consistently without need to spend precious time on the essay's organization. On the negative side, a formulaic essay can be...formulaic. This means the essay format may not be deemed "strategic," meaning the topic dictated the organization rather than the other way around. However, this negative can be mitigated by having good transition phrases, finding a way for ¶ 4 to blend, and creating a subtle motif.

A motif is a repeated idea that acts as a common thread stitching all the paragraphs together. In the sample essay, a possible motif could have been the concept of a "burden." This was not fully explored, which is reflected in the score.



Refutation. Paragraph 5 has two alternate paths. After stating the counter argument for the position you agree with, you can prove that counter argument as you did in ¶ 3. However, a more advanced method would be to state the counter argument and then disprove that counter argument. This would clearly demonstrate which side of the argument you favor, show a high level of understanding of the topic, and flow better into the conclusion.

Essay Template

¶ 1: INTRODUCTION –

Attention getter. This should be a short sentence or two. The purpose of this line is to initiate the conversation, NOT to jump into the thesis. Blend into the conversation with something relating to the overall idea. It is very common for a student to overwrite the attention getter and run out of time to finish the essay.

The attention getter can establish the motif of the essay, the reoccurring reference that unifies the paragraphs.

- **Examples:**

Topic	Possible attention getters
Professional attire in the workplace	Steve Jobs wore jeans and a black turtleneck every day to work.
Adults playing kids' games	After school, I sit down in front of my TV and Xbox and savor my last few moments of my youth before I become an adult and am expected to play an adult game like shuffleboard or Mahjong.
Buying the newest technology	"No mom. You can't download the text message Aunt Theresa sent: your flip phone can't receive GIFs."
Face-to-face communication	I have certainly been guilty of letting my phone ring and go to voicemail so I can text back and avoid actual conversation.

Importance. Answer why the conversation is important to have. Avoid simply phrasings like "this is important because..." and the reason for the essay can NOT be "to discuss."

Potential Concepts for an Essay's Purpose	
Positive	Negative
Create generational understanding	Distinguishing generations
Counter a stereotype	Creates a stereotype
Benefit society	Harms society
Best way to do _____	Not as efficient as _____
Unify two groups	Creates a wider separation between _____
Redefine	Define

As previously mentioned it is common for the ACT® to compare older generations and today's generation.

- **Examples:** Communication, entertainment, fashion, child rearing, transportation, robotics, education, work environment, safety, technology, etc.

Thesis. This is where you state the central idea of the essay and the arguments proving the two supporting positions. Note that this should contain the arguments, not merely the two positions. The thesis should NOT include counter arguments because the counter argument is exposing an issue with the previous point, not making a unique point on its own.

It is also VERY important that this is simplified to a single sentence. It is also important to avoid phrases like "I think" or "I believe" and any direct references to any of the given perspectives. These lack advanced writing skill.

- **Examples:** The following examples highlight the central idea in **bold**, underline the argument of the disagreed position, and *italicized* the argument of the agreed position.

Potential Thesis Construction	Example Using the Construction
Though (Central Idea) do/does (<u>Disagreed Argument</u>), (<i>Agreed Argument</i>).	Though school uniforms do <u>provide discipline in the classroom</u> , <i>the benefit of independence and individuality is greater.</i>
(Central Idea) because of (<u>Disagreed Argument</u>), it does not outweigh (<i>Agreed Argument</i>)	Society has shifted its thinking on artificial intelligence (A.I.) because of <u>the lower cost of business and resultant savings to customers</u> , but it does not outweigh <i>the adaptability of human workers.</i>
Some may argue (Central Idea) (<u>Disagreed Argument</u>), but (<i>Agreed Argument</i>).	Some may argue that casual attire <u>emphasizes performance and personality</u> , but <i>the formal attire is an indication of respect and a higher form of professionalism.</i>
(<i>Agreed Argument</i>) helps/hurts (Central Idea) more than (<u>Disagreed Argument</u>) helps/hurts	<i>Having advanced academic pacing</i> is a good reason to have year-round schooling and outweighs the <u>mental "recharging" summer provides.</u>

¶ 2: BODY 1 -

Transition Phrase. Helps a reader blend into the paragraph. It is meant to be joined with the next sentence.

Potential Phrasing		
Proponents believe...	Some would say...	It could be argued...

Supporting Disagreed Argument. State the argument of the supporting position for the side you are NOT in favor of. Structuring the essay in this order allows you to blend more fluidly into the conclusion. More importantly, this is the argument you will likely struggle with writing because it is not your own position. This can be helpful because starting with a position you agree with can result in overwriting the paragraph and not leaving enough time to write the other paragraphs. Also, once the difficult paragraph is complete, the rest should be easy to fill in, even if under a time crunch.

***Optional* Significance.** This can help anchor your essay by connecting the argument to the central topic. This line can often be folded into or understood from the argument itself, which is why it is optional.

Potential Phrasing	
This is significant because...	This is important because...

Proof. Be sure to provide supporting evidence. Remember to incorporate one of the Perspectives without a direct reference while proving the argument for the opposing side.

Potential Phrasing		
This is seen with...	For instance...	For example...

Conclusion. Providing an example is only the start. You must further that thought by detailing how that example supports the argument.

Potential Phrasing		
This shows...	This is because...	Thus demonstrating...

¶ 3: COUNTER TO BODY 1 -

Transition Phrase. Helps a reader blend into the paragraph. It is meant to be joined with the next sentence.

Potential Phrasing	
However, opponents believe...	Others would contend...

Counter Argument. From the point you just demonstrated, state the counter argument. Be sure that it addresses the previous argument and doesn't make a new point.

Proof. Similar to providing an explanation for the opposing argument, now you provide evidence supporting the counter argument. Remember to incorporate one of the Perspectives while proving a flaw in the argument.

Conclusion. Further that thought by detailing how that example supports the argument.

¶ 4: BODY 2 -

Transition Phrase. Helps a reader blend into the paragraph. It is meant to be joined with the next sentence.

Potential Phrasing		
Proponents believe...	Some would say...	It could be argued...

Supporting Agreed Argument. State the argument created from Step 5 for the side you ARE in favor of.

***Optional* Significance.** This can help anchor your essay by connecting the argument to the central topic. This line can often be folded into or understood from the argument itself, which is why it is optional.

Proof. Be sure to provide supporting evidence. Remember to incorporate one of the Perspectives without a direct reference while proving the argument for the agreed side.

Conclusion: Further that thought by detailing how that example supports the argument.

¶ 5: COUNTER TO BODY 2 -

Transition Phrase. Helps a reader blend into the paragraph. It is meant to be joined with the next sentence.

Potential Phrasing	
However, opponents believe...	Others would contend...

Counter Argument. From the point you just demonstrated, state the counter argument. Be sure that it addresses the previous argument and doesn't make a new point.

EITHER: Prove it. Similar to providing an explanation for the argument for your side, now you provide evidence supporting the counter argument

OR: Refute the Counter: Rather than prove the flaw true as you did in ¶3, you disprove or discredit the proposed counter argument.

Conclusion: Further that thought by detailing how that example supports or refutes the counter argument.

¶ 6: CONCLUSION –

Conclusion Transition. Give a callback to the introduction. This can be summarizing/restating a detail from the attention getter, the significance of the discussion, or the topic itself.

Restate Thesis. Paraphrase your original thesis statement which mentioned the two supporting arguments.

Potential Phrasing	
Positive	Negative
Therefore	However
So	But
This is why	It does not prove
Because _____, _____	Though _____, _____.

- **Example:** Even though classroom discipline is aided by school uniforms, that benefit is far outweighed by the need to develop independence and individuality in students.

Restate Significance: By restating the overall purpose of the essay and even expanding upon it, it will remind the reader of the importance of the topic and serve as the essay's clincher/dissolve.

ACT SAMPLE ESSAY

1:1 Technology in the Classroom

As technology changes, schools must adapt to keep pace. Schools have seen the benefits of technology through collaborative document sharing, interactive learning apps, and information access with Wikipedia and online databases. This is why many schools are choosing to go 1:1, a system in which each student is either provided with or brings a laptop or tablet into the classroom. However, educators debate what students lose due to 1:1 usage. What will happen to basic grammar in writing, memorization (rather than Googling), and students' ability to learn from traditional lectures when the presentation isn't "gamified" with a learning application? It is worth examining the implications of 1:1 technology in the classroom.

Read and carefully consider these perspectives. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about the 1:1 technology in the classroom.

Perspective One

The 1:1 environment makes everything from grades to answers instantaneous and no longer requires patience or hard work. This will negatively impact students' success outside of school.

Perspective Two

Technology is constantly changing, and 1:1 devices and applications quickly become outdated. The classroom time and technological cost would be better spent on more traditional forms of education.

Perspective Three

Classroom technology helps students overcome learning issues by providing students with limitless learning resources and access to the best and newest material and instruction.

Essay Task

Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on the 1:1 technology in the classroom. In your essay, be sure to:

- clearly state your own perspective on the issue and analyze the relationship between your perspective and at least one other perspective
- develop and support your ideas with reasoning and examples
- organize your ideas clearly and logically
- communicate your ideas effectively in standard written English

Your perspective may be in full agreement with any of the others, in partial agreement, or completely different.

Translation: How does every student having a device impact classroom learning?

1:1 instruction

VS

Traditional instruction

<p>Argument: Bridging the economic education gap Proof: Online test prep, tech may not be at home. P3</p>	<p>Argument: Learning the learning process Proof: Conducting research, learning a trade. P1</p>
<p>Counter: The funding will not be sufficient Proof: Building already in disrepair P2</p>	<p>Counter: Depend on teacher quality Proof: So does a 1:1 teacher</p>

I remember watching my brother pack his backpack for school. It must have weighed forty pounds. I myself carry a light tablet and a pen, just in case. It is a much lighter load to carry, but educators are questioning if my burden will be more consequential than early onset back problems. The long-term impacts of 1:1 classroom technology are unknown because the generation using it hasn't grown into adulthood yet. With 1:1 technology helping students bridge the education gap, it is no wonder that people overlook the benefits of traditional instruction.

Supporters of 1:1 would point to the struggling education system and the number of underserved underprivileged students. 1:1 has the potential of leveling the playing field. Not all parents can help their child with homework or afford the newest technology. Now with the internet at their fingertips, they can use Khan Academy instead of a thirty-year-old textbook, re-watch class recordings instead of relying on unreliable notes from peers, and never worry about forgetting a book in their locker. With 1:1, underserved students can access learning resources to supplement what they may have lacked in the past.

However, opponents of 1:1 would merely point to the current state of the school system. A system that can't maintain its buildings or handle overcrowding can't (or shouldn't) afford the newest technology and keep it updated. Even if a low-income school received devices, it would only take a few years until the technology failed to keep up with the new programs. Imagine trying to attend a Zoom class on a laptop from 2014. Your RAM would spike, and you would lag out of the class, losing that learning opportunity. Traditional learning wouldn't have this issue.

The defenders of traditional learning would go further and say that learning how to learn is more important than the benefits of 1:1. When all learning is rewarded with fun and games, it removes the reward of the knowledge itself. Traditional classrooms spend time in textbooks, preparing students to read technical manuals for a future in trade school. Traditional classrooms focus on handwritten work to prepare students to write corporate emails without relying on autocorrect. Traditional classrooms spend more time in physical libraries to prepare for field research. But each of these skills requires time and patience: two things not learned on an app.

However, others would object to this return to traditionalism because it is reliant on the quality of the teacher. This critique is also true of a teacher in a 1:1 classroom because a 1:1 teacher would need to know how to properly implement the technology in the class. A 1:1 classroom has the potential to make a good teacher into a glorified babysitter hitting the play button on Hank Green's Youtube Crash Course videos. This would be a waste of a vital figure in adolescent development.

My brother may have had a forty-pound backpack, but his teachers helped him carry that load. Though 1:1 could help bridge the education gap, it isn't worth sacrificing the love of learning. The teachers that have made the biggest impression on me so far aren't the "fun" teachers. They are the ones that challenged me to do more. I wouldn't want the next generation to lose out on that opportunity.

Essay Breakdown

INTRODUCTION –

I remember watching my brother pack his backpack for school. It must have weighed forty pounds. I myself carry a light tablet and a pen, just in case. It is a much lighter load to carry, but educators are questioning if my burden will be more consequential than early onset back problems. The long-term impacts of 1:1 classroom technology are unknown because the generation using it hasn't grown into adulthood yet. With 1:1 technology helping students bridge the education gap, it is no wonder that people overlook the benefits of traditional instruction.

Author

Attention getter: Only hinting at the topic of 1:1 with my tablet. Also, the phrase “just in case” offers a hint as to the tone of the essay.

Author

Blending from attention getter to the topic while using a play on words with the double meaning of “burden.”

Author

Importance: Unknown consequences of 1:1 is the reason to explore the topic.

Author

Thesis: Note the thesis is ONE SENTENCE in the format of topic, disagreed with argument, agreed with argument.

BODY 1 – Supporting argument to which I disagree

Supporters of 1:1 would point to the struggling education system and the number of underserved underprivileged students. 1:1 has the potential of leveling the playing field. Not all parents can help their child with homework or afford the newest technology. Now with the internet at their fingertips they can use Khan Academy instead of a thirty-year-old textbook, re-watch class recordings instead of relying on unreliable notes from peers, and never worry about forgetting a book in their locker. With 1:1, underserved students can access learning resources to supplement what they may have lacked in the past.

Author

Transition Phrase: Clearly indicating what side of the topic the paragraph will be on.

Author

Supporting Disagreed Argument: This is acting as the topic sentence and giving a central claim that needs proving. “Leveling the playing field” is intentionally vague to allow the examples to expand.

Author

Optional Significance: This is highlighting the challenges of the underprivileged and includes another point of view: the parents.

Author

Proof: Detailed examples anchor the benefits by providing specific uses and even name-dropping Khan Academy. It is then contrasted against traditional education providing context for the reader.

Author

Conclusion: The connection unites the evidence to the argument as well as passively referencing Perspective Three.

BODY 2 – Counter argument to Body 1

However, opponents of 1:1 would merely point to the current state of the school system. A system that can't maintain its buildings or handle overcrowding can't (or shouldn't) afford the newest technology and keep it updated. Even if a low-income school received devices, it would only take a few years until the technology failed to keep up with the new programs. Imagine trying to attend a Zoom class on a laptop from 2014. Your RAM would spike, and you would lag out of the class, losing that learning opportunity. Traditional learning wouldn't have this issue.

Author

Transition Phrase: Showing a clear break with the supporting argument and uses more than a single word.

Author

This is more directly connected to Perspective Two, but the argument went further by referencing the lack of priorities: disregarding building repair and class size for 1:1 devices.

Author

Counter Argument: Throwing the topic into the future to demonstrate the potential issues.

Author

Proof: The proof uses outside knowledge to offer a technical reason why old devices won't be effective while staying on topic of education by ending with the learning opportunity.

Author

Conclusion: This connects to the topic of traditional education and relates it to this current point in a very simple way. No need to overwrite.

BODY 3 – Supporting argument to which I agree

The defenders of traditional learning would go further and say that learning how to learn is more important than the benefits of 1:1. When all learning is rewarded with fun and games, it removes the reward of the knowledge itself. Traditional classrooms spend time in textbooks, preparing students to read technical manuals for a future in trade school. Traditional classrooms focus on handwritten work to prepare students to write corporate emails without relying on autocorrect. Traditional classrooms spend more time in physical libraries to prepare for field research. But each of these skills requires time and patience, two things not learned on an app.

Author

Transition Phrase: Clearly indicating to the reader which position is being discussed.

Author

Supporting Agreed Argument: The initial argument is a bit cliché, but the following sentence clarifies the meaning of this argument.

Author

Proof: Examples offer detailed examples. Note that rather than generically stating that these tasks will give them "skills for the future," it is offering potential applications of the skills. Also, the purposeful repetition is a rhetorical device.

Author

Conclusion: The conclusion wraps up the paragraph while also making a not-so-subtle reference to Perspective One.

BODY 4 – Counter argument to Body 3

However, others would object to this return to traditionalism because it is reliant on the quality of the teacher. This critique is also true of a teacher in a 1:1 classroom because a 1:1 teacher would need to know how to properly implement the technology in the class. A 1:1 classroom has the potential to make a good teacher into a glorified babysitter hitting the play button on Hank Green's Youtube Crash Course videos. This would be a waste of a vital figure in adolescent development.

Author

Transition Phrase: Another clear sign that the argument shifted and not continuing the same thought.

Author

Counter Argument: Exposing an assumption that the argument relies on being true: all teachers teaching in a traditional way are high quality, engaging teachers.

Author

Refuting the Counter: Rather than proving this point, the valid counter point was exposed as being hypocritical.

Author

Proof: Because many have had a similar experience, it is easy to use a series of conclusions to create logical reasoning. The specific details of Hank Green anchor it even further. Notice the switch to the teacher's point of view.

Author

Conclusion: Bringing the paragraph back to the central topic.

CONCLUSION –

My brother may have had a forty-pound backpack, but his teachers helped him carry that load. Though 1:1 could help bridge the education gap, it isn't worth sacrificing the love of learning. The teachers that have made the biggest impression on me so far aren't the "fun" teachers. They are the ones that challenged me to do more. I wouldn't want the next generation to lose out on that opportunity.

Author

Conclusion Transition: Making a callback to the attention getter and continuing the play on the word "burden," just in a different way.

Author

Restate Thesis: Maintaining the basic wording with a few minor changes.

Author

Restate Significance: It is clear which side the author agrees with and offers a final note to the reader.

GRADING –

The following represent a likely assessment and grade of the previous essay. The grade represents the score from a single grader. As you may recall, there are two graders whose grade would be added together and averaged to get a score out of 12. Assuming the second grader had the same assessment, this essay would have scored an 11.

Scoring Category	Comments	Grade
Language Use and Conventions	<p>The tone was consistently semi-formal with tasteful use of directly addressing the reader. The play on words and rhetorical repetition demonstrated skill and control of language.</p> <p>Many long complex sentences made reading a bit heavy. It would have significantly improved if the “burden” concept had been a continuing motif.</p>	5/6
Development and Support	<p>The support was detailed and effectively conveyed the significance of the argument. The evidence in the counter arguments clearly demonstrated a complication with its corresponding argument.</p> <p>The listing of examples was good once but became repetitive using the same technique twice.</p>	6/6
Ideas and Analysis	<p>Multiple perspectives were engaged. The thesis clearly outlined the arguments. The arguments were insightful takes on the given information and provided depth by analyzing both sides of the topic and fully examining their counters.</p> <p>By broadly covering classroom technology, which is not necessarily 1:1, some points blurred the concept of 1:1.</p>	6/6
Organization	<p>The organization was unified, well structured, and clearly delineated. Clear transition phrases and conclusions made the reading easier. The change between the two positions was mostly smooth.</p> <p>The organization didn’t seem to have a particular strategy but followed a formulaic approach. The overall essay was missing a common thread or theme to strengthen the relationship between the paragraphs.</p>	5/6

Outcome. It is likely that this essay would receive a 10, 11, or 12. The essay is a bit wordy, which is the normal tone of the author (that’s me) who can be a bit pretentious, and the formulaic organization is a willing sacrifice to have a consistent strategy. These could be minor issues to some readers, which is why it is possible that the essay earns a 12. The more likely grade would be a 10 or 11 due to the lack of a motif holding the paragraphs together.

¶ 2 BODY 1 -

Transition Phrase: _____

Supporting Disagreed Argument _____

Proof: _____

Conclusion: _____

¶ 3 Counter to Body 1 -

Transition Phrase: _____

Counter Argument: _____

Proof: _____

Conclusion: _____

¶ 4 BODY 2 -

Transition Phrase: _____

Supporting Agreed Argument _____

Proof: _____

Conclusion: _____

¶ 5 Counter to Body 2 -

Transition Phrase: _____

Counter Argument: _____

Prove or Refute the Counter: _____

Conclusion: _____

¶ 6 CONCLUSION -

Conclusion Transition: _____

Restate Thesis: _____

Restate Significance: _____

ACT SAMPLE ESSAY

Ordering Online

Just about anything can be ordered online. Clothes, food, and cars can be purchased online and delivered directly to your door. This demand not only created Amazon, but it also created the food and grocery delivery services and saved the post office from collapsing. Customers are also seeing a benefit as they can easily shop for the lowest price and buy directly from the manufacturer without the hassle of walking the store and waiting in a checkout line. However, convenience and savings come at a cost. Clothing, electronic, and toy stores around the country are shutting down because people are choosing to surf online instead of driving to a store. There is no need for stockers, cashiers, or managers if there is no one in the store. How do we balance the demand for online shopping with the economic harm it causes?

Read and carefully consider these perspectives. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about the impact of ordering online.

Perspective One

Small businesses and retail stores are needed for local economies. Online retailers have order fulfillment centers in select cities and ship around the world. Cities without a fulfillment center would struggle economically.

Perspective Two

Entry level jobs are needed for teenagers to gain workplace experience and build savings. It is much more difficult for a teenager to get a job created by online ordering which will delay their financial independence.

Perspective Three

Online ordering boosts the economy by lowering prices for goods. This gives the consumer more money to spend on other products, boosting the demand for other companies' goods.

Essay Task

Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on the impact of ordering online. In your essay, be sure to:

- clearly state your own perspective on the issue and analyze the relationship between your perspective and at least one other perspective
- develop and support your ideas with reasoning and examples
- organize your ideas clearly and logically
- communicate your ideas effectively in standard written English

Your perspective may be in full agreement with any of the others, in partial agreement, or completely different.

¶ 2 BODY 1 -

Transition Phrase: _____

Supporting Disagreed Argument _____

Proof: _____

Conclusion: _____

¶ 3 Counter to Body 1 -

Transition Phrase: _____

Counter Argument: _____

Proof: _____

Conclusion: _____

¶ 4 BODY 2 -

Transition Phrase: _____

Supporting Agreed Argument _____

Proof: _____

Conclusion: _____

¶ 5 Counter to Body 2 -

Transition Phrase: _____

Counter Argument: _____

Prove or Refute the Counter: _____

Conclusion: _____

¶ 6 CONCLUSION -

Conclusion Transition: _____

Restate Thesis: _____

Restate Significance: _____
