

Please enter the information at the right before beginning the Writing Test.

Use a soft lead pencil only. Do not use ink.

WRITING BOOKLET NUMBER

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WRITING TEST FORM

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Parents and educators are increasingly concerned about the trend toward inappropriate dress in our schools. They feel that clothing that is too tight or too revealing may distract students and interfere with learning. They believe that a dress code should be adopted which would set guidelines for what students should wear in the school building. Others feel that a dress code should not be enacted because it would restrict individual students' freedom of expression.

Freedom of expression is important, but when inappropriate attire begins to interfere with the educational process, something needs to be done. Allowing students to wear whatever they want is clearly not working. Too many teens today seek to emulate rock stars and pick up fashion tips from MTV. In a culture that is inundated with sexual innuendo or worse, it is not surprising that kids show up at school in suggestive clothing. The educators are right. Short skirts and spandex tops can be extremely distracting to a population group driven largely by hormones. Establishing a dress code could help improve the learning environment in the school; unfortunately, dress codes can be extremely arbitrary and difficult to enforce. What is the solution? I think the answer is school uniforms. This option would be far easier to enforce and has several advantages.

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From a financial perspective, school uniforms could help even the playing field between poor and rich students. We live in a materialistic world and, for some, it is all about the label. They think that if it's not Tommy, Levi, Gap, etc. that it is not good enough. Students can be cruel, and make fun of those who do not dress the same as they do. Wearing jeans with holes may be one student's form of expression but another's necessity. Mandating uniforms would dispense with this kind of discrimination. Purchasing a uniform would be far less expensive than a complete school wardrobe, and if there were some families that couldn't afford it, perhaps the school could provide one for them, or at least help defray the expense.

Another benefit of school uniforms is that they could help curb some of the gang-related violence in our schools. Gangs are associated with certain colors and members often hassle students who wear an opposing gang's color. Sporting the innocent-looking sweater Aunt Rose gave you for your birthday could be like waving a red flag in front of an angry bull. With uniforms, this problem would disappear.

From a personal perspective, I would enjoy the sheer effortlessness of not having to rummage through my closet each morning trying to decide what to wear. Some may enjoy selecting their outfit for the day, but not me! Having a school uniform would make my morning routine go much faster, and maybe even leave a little extra time to finish up yesterday's homework.

While uniforms in high schools promise many benefits, we should not expect that they are a cure-all. Uniforms

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alone will not raise student grades, confer equality, or make schools entirely safe for all students. Uniforms cannot learn math or earn high scores on state tests. Students must do these things for themselves. However, I do believe that uniforms in high schools can go a long way toward helping students succeed by providing a learning environment that supports achievement rather than one that is distracting, discriminating, and dangerous.

So, in conclusion, I strongly support not just a dress code, which would be difficult to enforce, but a resolution to adopt school uniforms for our entire district. Uniforms would not ~~only~~ solve the problems associated with inappropriate dress and create a better learning environment, but could also serve to end inequality, help curb gang violence, and make our mornings a little less hectic.

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with relevant examples. The paragraphs are each built around a subtopic that adds support to the author's response to the prompt. The essay reveals a depth of thought and creativity in raising potential arguments and dealing with them effectively. The vocabulary choices are appropriate and varied. This is a well-above-average essay.

Score of 6: *There are those who are concerned with the negative potential of the Internet. They cite the possibility of cheating or time wasting by students. Their concerns stem from the fact that the Internet and, more specifically, the World Wide Web, is a source of both good and bad information. It is true that there are sites that actually offer term papers for sale. Even students who do not go to that extreme may be tempted to plagiarize from legitimate web sites. Students may also find that e-mail is an efficient tool for sharing gossip and other information that does not contribute to their education. And, of course, the computers and the Internet are often used for playing games that usually have little to no educational value.*

However, all educational technology, from the pencil, to videotape, has the potential to be abused. Just because students have always used pencil and paper to write notes to, and about, each other, does not mean that classrooms would be better off without them. In fact, as technology improves it always finds its way into the learning environment. Take videotape, for example. At first videotape was for professionals only, and then Hollywood found a way to exploit the profit potential. Finally, the educational potential of the technology was unleashed when schools invested in VCR's and students were able to view educational programming on a flexible schedule. No one can deny that VCR's are a useful tool for educators.

Now is the time for schools to move forward and adopt the latest technology again. Computers are a fact of life and they are only becoming more prevalent. Schools did not turn their backs on videotape simply because some teachers could potentially have shirked their responsibilities by showing "movies" almost every day rather than actually teaching their classes. Nor, should schools turn their backs on the amazing potential of computers and the Internet simply because there are possibilities of abuse.

The advantages of computers are many. Instructors can use web sites as support for lectures, and students can use them as sources for information. E-mail can be a means of flexible communication that can keep students in touch with each other and their teachers. Electronic communication can save precious resources such as paper and ink and there is research that shows that students tend to stay on a task longer on the computer than on paper.

Also, we should consider the fact that some students come from homes with computers and some do not. If there are no Internet connections in the schools, then only some students will have Internet access; some students will be left behind simply because their families can't afford computers.

In conclusion, even though there are arguments against wiring schools for the Internet, it should be clear that it is the right thing to do for a number of reasons. The benefits outweigh the risks. The schools that do not have Internet connections should move forward and get online.

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Essay Checklist

1. The Introduction

Did you

- start with a topic sentence that paraphrases or restates the prompt?
- clearly state your position on the issue?

2. Body Paragraph 1

Did you

- start with a transition/topic sentence that discusses the opposing side of the argument?
- give an example of a reason that one might agree with the opposing side of the argument?
- clearly state that the opposing side of the argument is wrong or flawed?
- show what is wrong with the opposing side's example or position?

3. Body Paragraphs 2 and 3

Did you

- start with a transition/topic sentence that discusses your position on the prompt?
- give one example or reason to support your position?
- show the grader how your example supports your position?
- end the paragraph by restating your thesis?

4. Conclusion

Did you

- restate your position on the issue?
- end with a flourish?

5. Overall

Did you

- write neatly?
- avoid multiple spelling and grammar mistakes?
- try to vary your sentence structure?
- use a few impressive-sounding words?