

Persuasive Essay Collection

Writing Prompt Scoring Rubric 

MCAS Scoring Guide (Grade 6-8) 

MCAS Scoring Guide (Grade 4-5) 

0. **[Improve Your School]** The local school committee is seeking ideas to improve your school. These ideas will be discussed during meetings with students, teachers, parents, administrators, and other interested parties. The changes proposed by students will be seriously considered since students are the reason for the schools existence. Choose one change that might improve your school for all students. Write a persuasive essay explaining why your suggested change is an improvement. Give at least three reasons to support your suggestion.

1. **[School Uniforms]** Write a persuasive essay stating whether or not the students at your school should be required to wear uniforms to school. Give at least three reasons to support your position. Remember, you must argue in such a convincing manner that others will agree with you.

2. **[Locker Searches/Personal Searches]** The principal at your school has instituted random locker and backpack/bookbag searches to check for guns, knives, and other weapons. Anyone caught with these weapons will be immediately suspended. The principal argues that the random searches will not only guard against illegal weapons at school but will also will help students feel safer. What is your position on this issue? Write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper stating your position and supporting it with three convincing reasons.

3. **[Censorship]** Write a persuasive essay stating whether certain television programs that are considered to be unsuitable should be censored for children under 16 in your community. Give at least three reasons to support your position.

4. **[Censorship]** Your local public library has come under criticism for allowing patrons under the age of 18 to check out books considered unacceptable. The books are either explicit, describe graphic violence, or use questionable language. What is your position on this issue? Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper stating your position and supporting it with three convincing reasons.

5. **[Too Much Homework]** Some of the parents at your school have started a campaign to limit the homework that teachers can assign to students. Teachers at your school have argued that the homework is necessary. What is your position? Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper stating your position and supporting it with three convincing arguments.

6. **[Field Trips]** In order to save money, your principal is thinking about canceling all field trips for the remainder of the year! Write a letter to your principal persuading him or her to allow students to continue attending field trips. Give at least three reasons to support your position.

7. **[Online Schools]** The state department of education has provided funding for an experimental online school. All the classes will take place on the Internet, using email, online chat, and the world wide web. The students taking classes at this new online school will never meet each other face-to-face. They will only interact online with each other and with their teachers. The state is hoping this program will provide fairer educational access to students in outlying, rural areas. Opponents of the program argue that because of their lack of interaction with other students in a traditional classroom, the students who attend this online school will not develop the social skills that should be a component of their education. What is your position on this issue? Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper stating your position on this issue and supporting it with three convincing reasons.

8. **[Computers in the Classroom]** As part of a new technology initiative, your local school district is increasing the number of computers in every school. The district plan provides for two computers in every classroom. Teachers at your school are lobbying instead to place all the computers together, creating two computer-based classrooms so that all students in a class can work at the computers together, rather than only one or two students at a time. The district is worried about the additional cost of creating and maintaining these special classrooms and is concerned about how access to the classrooms can be provided fairly and efficiently. What is your position on this issue? Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper stating your point of view and supporting it with three convincing reasons.

9. **[Bilingual Education]** As part of a proposed educational initiative in your state, local school districts are responsible for providing required courses in both English language and Spanish language in order to increase the success of their programs. Because your state has a large population of Spanish speakers, the state education department believes that teaching these students in their first language will help them learn better and more quickly. Because of the limited budget, however, the local school board is concerned that they may not be able to provide the additional teachers

or training needed for this program. They fear that they will lose state funding and accreditation even though 90% of the district's students pass their achievement tests on the first try. What is your position on this issue? Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper stating your point of view and supporting it with three convincing reasons.

10. **[Grade Scale Change]** One of the biology teachers at your school has decided to change from a ten-point grade scale (100 to 90 is an A, 89 to 80 is a B, etc.) to a seven-point grade scale (100 to 93 is an A, 92 to 85 is a B, etc.). The teacher is trying to encourage students to put more effort into their classes by raising the requirements. What is your position on this issue? Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper stating your position and supporting it with convincing reasons.

11. **[New Highway Exit]** The state has created a plan to add a second highway exit to help shoppers access a busy shopping mall. The only problem is that the new exit will move the access road 500 yards closer to a near-by elementary school. Teachers and parents at the school complain that moving the road closer will increase noise at the school and provide unnecessary distractions. The state planners have included privacy fences to help cut down on the problems, but the protesters are unsatisfied. What is your position on this issue? Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper stating your position and supporting it with convincing reasons.

12. **[Litter]** A litter problem has developed on your school's campus. Students are throwing trash on the ground, leaving empty soda cans and bottles outside on benches, and dropping napkins and other trash on the cafeteria floor rather than carrying them to the trash can. Your principal has asked students to take more care, but the litter problem persists. The principal has reacted by cancelling all after-school activities until the problem is taken care of. What is your position on this issue? Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper stating your position and supporting it with convincing reasons.

13. **[75 Hours Community Service]** Write a persuasive essay telling whether you feel students should be required to complete 75 hours of community service as part of their graduation requirements. Give at least three reasons to support your position. The way in which you present your argument could decide whether you will be required to do 75 hours of community service before you graduate from high school.

14. **[Curfew]** The mayor of your city is trying to decide if a 7:00p.m. curfew for children under the age of 16 is needed. What do you think? Write a persuasive essay to the mayor [Mr. Thomas Menino] to convince him to enact or not to enact, the curfew. Give at least three reasons to support your position.

15. **[Moving]** Your family is getting ready to move to a new home and your parents have given you two choices: in a neighborhood outside a city or on a farm in the country. Where would you like to live? Write a letter to your family persuading them to live either outside the city or on a farm. Give at least three reasons to support your choice.

16. **[Extended School Day]** Write a persuasive essay stating whether the school day should be lengthened by two hours so that all students can get help with homework. Give at least two reasons to support your position. Remember you must argue in such a convincing manner that others will agree with you.

17. **[Helmets]** Write a persuasive essay stating whether children under the age of 16 should be required to wear helmets while biking, scooting, skateboarding, rollerblading, and skiing. Give at least two reasons to support your position. Remember, you must argue in such a convincing manner that others will agree with you. The outcome of the state legislature's vote on helmets could be decided by your essay.

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