

# Argumentative Example Essays

## Grades 7-8

*Essay scores are produced for the following grade ranges: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, and 11-12. Thus a seventh grade essay is compared to models for both seventh and eighth grades.*

**Prompt for Essays 1-3:** *Your school's administration is considering having students be responsible for keeping the school clean. Students would be assigned on a rotating basis. Is this a good idea? In your essay, be sure to address the counter-claim.*

### Argumentative Essay 1: Don't Let Us Clean!

Okay, no. We do not need students to clean the school. Students need to be learning. We have custodians to clean the school. Us kids want to get through with school and then head to our friends or home to play games or watch tv. We DON'T want to do more work! Anyway, my mom gives me plenty to do at home. And who says kids would be good at doing it? I can see trash all over the place from sloppy kids spilling it when they empty it. Not good.

*Annotation: This essay does not include enough information to clearly support the author's claim. It also does not address the counter-claim.*

### Argumentative Essay 2: Don't Let Us Clean!

Clean? You're Scaring Me!

Knowing my fellow students, I understand that many of us wouldn't enjoy cleaning up the school. Most of us don't like cleaning at all. We'd rather watch a movie or play Xbox instead of picking up those germ-infested pop bottles off the lawn. Yuck!

Aren't we supposed to be learning during school? Aren't we supposed to be home after school? I think most teachers and students would agree with me that the answer is yes. I don't know a time we could do it. What if our teachers sent a permission slip home with us asking if we can stay after school? I must be honest that most likely I would accidentally-on-purpose forget to have it signed.

Even if you could somehow get us to be able to do it, we would probably need a supervisor. Who would do that? "Easy, teachers could be on duty." you might say. Well, do you know a teacher that would like to watch students clean? The teachers at my old school hated to be on duty even for recess!

Aren't custodians supposed to clean? Don't you think it would be just a tiny, tiny bit inconsiderate to give part of their job to students? They might think they're being insulted! It would be much easier to get a couple of custodians to do it than trying to get rowdy seventh-graders to mow lawns.

I want to conclude by saying that overall I don't know if it would be worth it. You'd have to go through permission slips, mad custodians, unwilling students and hiring supervisors. There might also be some law for working children that I don't know much about. Please ponder on what I have said and make your decision.

*Annotation: The writer of this essay uses reasons to support the claim, and has used an engaging style. However, it does not address the counter-claim, as required by the prompt.*

### Argumentative Essay 3: Don't Let Us Clean!

Clean? You're Scaring Me! I understand that some committee has suggested that kids be assigned to clean the school. What? I do not think this is a good idea at all. There are so many reasons that this is a bad idea, I hardly know where to start.

Aren't we supposed to be learning during school? Aren't we supposed to be home after school? I think most teachers and students would agree with me that the answer is yes. I don't know of a time we could fit it in to our already crazy schedules. Most of us have tons of homework to do at night, and we also have all kinds of activities, like sports, clubs, and lessons. Besides, how would it work? Would our teachers send home a permission slip home with us asking our parents if we could stay after school to clean it up? Would we be excused from our homework that night? I must be honest that most likely I would accidentally-on-purpose forget to have it signed, or read, for that matter. Let's say that you could somehow get us to be able to do it. Then we would probably need a supervisor. I mean, students need supervisors at lunch, in the hall, outside, on the bus - basically everywhere. So are you going to let them loose to clean the school without one? And so who would do that? "Easy, teachers could be on duty," you might say. Well, do you know a teacher who would like to watch students clean? Teachers already have plenty to do with grading, lunch duty, and meetings. I doubt they need to add something else to their days.

Knowing my fellow students, I know we would not exactly be thrilled to be cleaning the school. So I don't think we'd do a very good job of it. Most of us don't like cleaning at all. We'd rather watch a movie or play Xbox instead of picking up those germ-infested pop bottles off the lawn. Yuck! We also would not know how to operate the machinery. Custodians use those huge vacuums and floor sweepers. I wouldn't want to be responsible for that! And then there is the cafeteria, with its messy tables and floors. At my school, the custodians also have to fold up these really heavy tables that have hinges in the middle. A kid could get hurt doing that. I'm not going to even discuss the restrooms. Let's just say that kids and school cleaning are not a good match.

Aren't custodians supposed to clean? Don't you think it would be just a tiny, tiny bit inconsiderate to give part of their job to students? They might think they're being insulted! It would be much easier to get a couple of custodians to do it than trying to get rowdy seventh-graders to mow lawns or sweep the halls. Custodians are responsible adults, and they know what they are doing. I know that everyone at my school wants to be proud of the way it looks. Custodians can make sure that the floors are polished and the school grounds are attractive. They already do this, so there is no reason to change.

I want to conclude by saying that overall I don't know why we would change a system that already works. If money to pay custodians is the problem, we should find another answer, because we will waste more money by having kids clean up the school. Also, you'd have to go through permission slips, mad custodians, unwilling students and hiring supervisors. There might also be some law for working children that I don't know much about. Please ponder on what I have said and make your decision.

*Annotation: This essay expresses supported reasons and a clear style. The sentences are varied, making the essay more engaging. Addressing the counter-claim and more fully developing a conclusion would improve this essay.*

**Prompt for Essays 4-6:** Read the article and then write an essay in which you argue for or against serving flavored milk in school cafeterias. Use text evidence from the article to support your claim. Remember to refute the counter-claim as well.

#### **Argumentative Essay 4: Chocolate Milk at School?**

Some people say kids shouldn't drink chocolate milk at school for lunch. Why shouldn't kids get to drink chocolate milk at school? Why don't people want them to? Some people want to make the rules for kids for everything. Kids have rights. Kids should get to drink chocolate milk. They can eat some fun stuff at school. One reason is milk is good for kids. It is even healthy. Babies live on milk and they grow. So it has to be good for people and kids.

Another reason is chocolate milk tastes better than white. So kids might drink more. Then they would be healthy.

*Annotation:* The writer of this essay needs to create an organizational structure and then fully develop the reasons in support of the claim.

#### **Argumentative Essay 5: Chocolate Milk at School?**

I do not agree with the idea that chocolate milk should be taken out of school cafeterias. Chocolate Milk in School Cafeterias? says that people think that the sugar in chocolate milk is not healthy. They want to take it out of the cafeterias. This is not a good idea.

Kids who buy the lunches in the cafeteria don't have many choices. There might be only one thing they can have for a main dish or vegetable. Then they can choose chocolate milk instead of white. If they can't choose, they might eat more potato chips, cookies, donuts and other junk food. Plenty of kids buy only junk food for lunch. Chocolate milk is better than soda or Gatorade. Kids who bring lunch need to buy a drink and these kids could bring a sugary drink instead of buying milk.

Even though chocolate milk has some sugar in it, it is still better than other things to drink. It has vitamins and minerals, so that's still a good thing. I think it is better for kids to at least drink some milk than not to drink milk at all, and some kids just don't like white milk. This is what they say at the American Heart Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, and I agree!

*Annotation:* This essay has a better organization structure and includes some text evidence. However, it does not have strong development nor does it address the counter-claim, as required by the prompt.

#### **Argumentative Essay 6: Chocolate Milk at School?**

Do you prefer chocolate or strawberry milk to regular milk? If so, you need to be aware that some educators and health experts want to stop school cafeterias from providing chocolate or other-flavored milk to students. The article "Chocolate Milk in School Cafeterias?" explains that this group of people are concerned that the extra sugar added to chocolate milk, or other flavored milk, is unhealthy. While excess sugar is certainly unhealthy, I think it would be unwise to take chocolate milk out of cafeterias. The result of taking chocolate, or other flavored milk, out of the cafeterias would be worse than the little bit of extra sugar kids consume.

Kids who buy the lunches in the cafeteria have very few choices. In my elementary school, there might be a choice between two main dishes, two vegetables, and two kinds of milk. That makes for a very limited lunch! In middle school we have more choices, but they include potato chips, cookies, donuts and other snack foods. In fact, I know plenty of kids who buy nothing but junk food for lunch, but even kids who are trying to eat a well-balanced diet still have just a few choices. It seems to me that choosing milk, any kind of milk, is better than choosing soda or other sugary drinks. Kids who bring their lunches often need to buy a beverage to go with it. These kids could choose to bring a sugary drink instead of buying milk. Giving them a variety of great-tasting milks seems like a smart way to get them to make a healthy choice.

It is true that the sugar kids eat is a big concern. According to the American Heart Association, more than two thirds of American children are overweight to the point of obesity. Sugar is one of the causes. Strawberry-flavored milk has 27 grams of sugar, and that is about the same as a coke. People who are fighting to pull chocolate milk out of cafeterias think that that means drinking flavored milk is just like drinking a soft drink or eating candy. But that is not so. Milk, whether white, chocolate, or strawberry, contains calcium, vitamin D, and protein, which are all necessary for growing kids. In addition, milk has many other vitamins and minerals that kids need. In fact, only five percent of the total added sugar in kids' diets is from flavored milk! Not only that, but one study showed that drinking flavored milk did not make kids any more overweight than other kids. On the other hand, soft drinks are artificial and offer nothing nutritional, and candy is almost all sugar. Even so, no one would argue that strawberry milk is the same as a lollipop!

Even though nutritionists and other experts don't agree on this issue, it seems clear that it is better for kids to drink milk of any kind rather than to not drink milk at all. Taking flavored milk out of the cafeteria almost guarantees that there will be many students who will go through each day with no milk at all. Many parents claim that their kids will not drink white milk, even if it is the only kind offered. Their kids would rather go without, and going without milk means going without the wonderful benefits of milk. I know many kids who hate white milk, but like chocolate or strawberry milk very much. Even with the sugar concerns, it is better to have some of the benefits of milk, rather than none. Even experts from both the American Heart Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics also think it is better for kids to drink flavored milk than no milk at all. They agree that the benefits of flavored milk outweigh its disadvantages. I think school officials need to listen to the experts, the parents and the students and continue to serve milk in school cafeterias. The benefits of drinking milk clearly outweigh the drawbacks. Keep the milks in the schools so that students will be able to make choices and still get the calcium and vitamins they need.

*Annotation: The writer of this essay has well-developed reasons with effective supporting text evidence.*

*For more examples of student essays, see the Common Core State Standards Initiative site, which includes samples of actual student essays for all three writing genres and for all grades. Each essay includes helpful notes and explanations. The first set of essays is from an on-demand writing assignment. The second set shows a range of writing, usually with one or more short essays and one or more longer ones.*

*Link: <http://achievethecore.org/page/505/common-core-narrative-writing>*