



Developing | Exemplar Essay

Bag Tax

Better Options than Taxing



Claim and Focus

The writer's position is discernible, but the claim is not maintained throughout the essay ("Charging someone extra...for bags"). A clear introduction is present, and though the writer remains focused on the topic (alternatives to single-use plastic bags), a specific claim about the 25-cent fee is not developed as the prompt demands.



Support and Evidence

The writer offers one piece of relevant reasoning (his mom would have to pay \$3 for twelve grocery bags), but does not clearly connect all other ideas back to the claim ("the Costco way," reusing bags, lowering the fee). The writer mentions an opposing perspective (plastic bags are convenient), but does not fully develop or dispel a counterclaim. The demands of the prompt are not fully met.



Organization

While the essay is appropriately formatted as a letter, the writer does not organize related ideas in a structured way. Transitions are minimal and simplistic ("Let's say") and do not make connections between ideas clear. A concluding section is present ("If it really matters that much to the government..."), but it does not adequately support the argument.



Language and Style

The writer employs an informal tone that is inappropriate for audience and task. The writer's syntax and word choice are simplistic throughout ("many," "a lot," "bad").



Using Exemplars in Your Lessons

Exemplar essays are tools to take abstract descriptions and make them more concrete for students. One way to use them is to print the clean copies of the essays and allow students to use the rubric to make notes or even find examples of important elements of an essay - thesis statements, introductions, evidence, conclusions, transitions, etc. Teachers can also use exemplars to illustrate what each score point within a trait 'looks like' in an authentic student essay. For additional ideas, please see "25 Ways to Use Exemplar Essays" by visiting the Curriculum Resources page in Help.

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Notes

Dear State Government,

I think this is all simply ridiculous. There are many ways to solve the problem of pollution. Charging someone extra for a plastic bag is uncalled for because some people can barely provide food for their families let alone pay more money for bags. Everyone uses plastic bags because of convenience. I know that plastic bags hurt the environment, so why not use the Costco way and not use bags at all? They use boxes that hold a lot more stuff. This is a better way to save on money, but also they can be reusable and can be used in many other ways. If this bag tax is approved they should lower the price to like 10 cents or even 1 cent per bag. Let's say my mom goes to the store and comes home with twelve grocery bags. She would have to pay an additional three dollars for bags! Three dollars may not seem like a lot, but what if she was going to use that to buy cookies from a Girl Scout to help them out? If bags were ten cents each then she would only pay a dollar and twenty cents. Plastic bags are bad for the environment but if we reuse them or dispose of them properly we will not have to worry about environmental issues like animals on land or in the water swallowing them or getting sick from them. I have a dog and I reuse bags all the time for his outside messes so I don't just throw mine away after I unpack the groceries. If it really matters that much to the government to get rid of plastic bags, then they make the tax less or they should pay people to use recyclable bags.

Sincerely,

Concerned Student