



Proficient | Exemplar Essay

Letter to Your Principal: Cell Phones

A Call for Banning Cell Phones



Claim and Focus

The writer introduces a clear and specific claim (“We should ban cell phones at school because it improves test grades during the test, creates the risk of cyberbullying and also for cheating”) and stays focused on developing it throughout the essay. A more precise or better-crafted claim would move this to a 4. The response thoroughly addresses the demands of the prompt.



Support and Evidence

Appropriate evidence is provided in support of the claim and explanations are provided. Explanations are slightly surface-level (“That was the amazing thing, how students with failing grades improved by 50 percent, just by banning mobile phones”), but are still able to demonstrate a proficient understanding of the topic and texts. A counterclaim is generally addressed, but not clearly distinguished from the claim (“Other reasons might be given to say that kids should be able to use phones, but they aren’t as strong as these reasons”).



Organization

This essay demonstrates a reasonable organizational structure with a clear use of transitional words and phrases (“I also think...,” “In general”). A clear introduction and conclusion are present, but both simply list the ideas that were covered in the body, rather than attempting a more thoughtful discussion of the topic (“And that’s why we’re going to ban school cell phones, because of better test scores, cyberbullying, and cheating”).



Language and Style

The essay maintains a generally formal style with a few exceptions (“That was the amazing thing,” “...is a rundown”). The author attempts to keep the reader’s attention with interesting word choice and varying sentence structure and displays a general command of conventions throughout the response.



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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Dear Mrs. Maxwell,

My thoughts on cell phones are that they should be banned, because when cell phones are on campus it is pretty bad. Students improve when distraction is not present. I also think that when the children are on their phones, they get cyberbullied. Cell phones on the school campus also give students the chance to use their cell phones for cheating during the test. I feel like we should ban cell phones at school because it improves test grades during the test, creates the risk of cyberbullying and also for cheating.

I think we need to ban cell phones because it increases test scores. Source 2 talks about how children's grades increase a lot when mobile phones are banned. It talked about how students with poor test grades went up by 50 percent when cell phones were banned. That was the amazing thing, how students with failing grades improved by 50 percent, just by banning mobile phones. I think there's a valid argument why we would ban mobile phones.

I also feel that it will increase the risk of students getting cyberbullied since there is no way that teachers can always watch what the students are doing online. Source 3 says cell phones cause "bullying or harrassing other students with unwanted voice or text messages." Take the example of Amanda Todd, the girl who killed herself because of cyberbullying. Her school had no idea that she was getting bullied because it was the internet and it was anonymous. There was no way to track the people down legally. That's also why we should ban cell phones at school.

The last reason why I think we should ban cell phones at school is because there could very well be a chance of cheating. Students might use their cell phones to find answers during the test. All they have to do is google the question, and the answers will show up. Source 3 provides a rundown of why cell phones should be banned at school. They're providing a great source of knowledge about how taking a phone to school can lead to issues. This can involve cheating, that's why we're supposed to ban mobile phones at school.

So, in general, there are a lot of reasons why we need to ban cell phones at school. There is one, which is that banning phones increases test scores. Students with low grades improved by 50 percent according to Source 2. There is cyberbullying, too. There was a girl who killed herself after being abused by people on the Internet, and lastly there's cheating. Since students can hide their phones and google their questions from the test, they can find the answers easily. Other reasons might be given to say that kids should be able to use phones, but they aren't as strong as these reasons. And that's why we're going to ban school cell phones, because of better test scores, cyberbullying, and cheating.

From a Student at your school