

Student Sample: Grade 12, Argument

This essay on dress codes was written for a university/college placement assessment. Two different perspectives on an issue (whether or not dress codes should be adopted in school) were provided in the prompt, and students were advised to either support one of the two points of view given or present a different point of view on the issue. The students were allowed thirty minutes to write.

I believe that it would be beneficial for our schools to adopt dress codes. Although some may argue that this action would restrict the individual student's freedom of expression, I do not agree. Our right to express ourselves is important, but in our society none of us has unrestricted freedom to do as we like at all times. We must all learn discipline, respect the feelings of others, and learn how to operate in the real world in order to be successful. Dress codes would not only create a better learning environment, but would also help prepare students for their futures.

Perhaps the most important benefit of adopting dress codes would be creating a better learning environment. Inappropriate clothing can be distracting to fellow students who are trying to concentrate. Short skirts, skimpy tops, and low pants are fine for after school, but not for the classroom. T-shirts with risky images or profanity may be offensive to certain groups. Students should express themselves through art or creative writing, not clothing. With fewer distractions, students can concentrate on getting a good education which can help them later on.

Another benefit of having a dress code is that it will prepare students to dress properly for different places. When you go to a party you do not wear the same clothes you wear to church. Likewise, when you dress for work you do not wear the same clothes you wear at the beach. Many professions even require uniforms. Having a dress code in high school will help students adjust to the real world.

Lastly, with all the peer pressure in school, many students worry about fitting in. If a dress code (or even uniforms) were required, there would be less emphasis on how you look, and more emphasis on learning.

In conclusion, there are many important reasons our schools should adopt dress codes. Getting an education is hard enough without being distracted by inappropriate t-shirts or tight pants. Learning to dress for particular occasions prepares us for the real world. And teens have enough pressure already without having to worry about what they are wearing.

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **introduces a precise, knowledgeable claim.**
 - *I believe that it would be beneficial for our schools to adopt dress codes.*
- **establishes the significance of the claim, distinguishing the claim from alternate or opposing claims.**
 - *Although some may argue that this action would restrict the individual student's freedom of expression, I do not agree. Our right to express ourselves is important, but in our society none of us has unrestricted freedom to do as we like at all times. We must all learn discipline, respect the feelings of others, and learn how to operate in the real world in order to be successful.*
- **creates an organization that logically sequences claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.**
 - *I believe that it would be beneficial for our schools to adopt dress codes. Although some may argue . . . Perhaps the most important benefit . . . Another benefit . . . Lastly . . . In conclusion . . .*
- **develops the claim and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both (though the evidence provided is limited by the constraints of an on-demand assessment).**
 - *Perhaps the most important benefit of adopting dress codes would be creating a better learning environment. Inappropriate clothing can be distracting to fellow students who are trying to concentrate.*

- *Another benefit of having a dress code is that it will prepare students to dress properly for different places. When you go to a party you do not wear the same clothes you wear to church.*
- *If a dress code (or even uniforms) were required, there would be less emphasis on how you look, and more emphasis on learning.*
- **develops the claim in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.**
 - The writer addresses an unknown adult audience likely to appreciate values such as *discipline, respect [for] the feelings of others, and the creation of a better learning environment.*
- **uses words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim and counterclaims.**
 - *Although some may argue . . . Perhaps the most important benefit . . . With fewer distractions . . . Another benefit . . . When . . . Likewise . . . If a dress code (or even uniforms) were required . . . Lastly . . . In conclusion . . .*
- **establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone.**
- **demonstrates good command of the conventions of standard written English (with occasional errors that do not interfere materially with the underlying message).**