

## Grade 7, Prompt for Argument Writing

### Common Core Standard W.CCR.1

Many people believe that television violence has a negative effect on society because it promotes violence, especially among children. Some researchers argue that the more violent media we consume, generally speaking, the more likely we are to behave aggressively in the real world. But other researchers disagree pointing out that many hundreds of millions of people watch violent television without developing the slightest urge to be violent themselves. Do you agree or disagree?

Choose a position on this topic and write an argument essay clearly stating your position. Using the following “Pro” and “Con” articles on the topic as your resource, cite evidence from the articles to explaining your position. Begin by reading the articles and making a “pro” and “con” list. Your list may have additional ideas that are not in the articles.

For the essay, your Focusing Question is:

Many people believe that television violence has a negative effect on society because it promotes violence, especially among children. Do you agree or disagree?

Remember, a strong and effective piece of argument writing:

- *Takes the audience into account*
- *Has a clear introduction*
- *States a focus/position statement clearly, precisely, and thoughtfully*
- *Uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support and develop the position, and explains that evidence logically*
- *Takes into account what people who disagree with you might think and tries to respond to that*
- *Concludes effectively*
- *Uses precise language*
- *Shows control over conventions*

You will have three class periods to complete this reading/thinking/writing task. The essay will have a single draft, and you may want to take some time to plan your writing before you begin work. When you have finished, be sure to proofread.

# Argument Writing

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### *Teacher Directions*

- The student has been give directions to make lists before reading the texts. The teacher may need to brainstorm a couple of ideas for each list to help the student get started. However, the lists should be created mostly by the student.
- The texts provide the information needed to address the prompt, and students should independently read the texts carefully before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing and to take notes, and to mark up the text as much as is helpful to them. **IMPORTANT:** When a student does this kind of writing for the first time, it should be a joint project between student and parent teacher, with the parent teacher modeling how to take notes and how to determine which information is important enough to deserve highlighting.
- Students should be given three sessions for the prompt. Allow approximately 45 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given as much time as needed to plan, write, and proofread.
- The writing should be done with limited help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing.
  - Be sure students have paper to take notes or do whatever pre-planning they might choose to do.
  - If students are writing by hand, provide lined paper for writing. If they are using a digital device, make sure they save their work so it can be accessed the next day.
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

## **Yes, television causes an increase in violence in children.**

There has been overwhelming evidence that suggests viewing violent and aggressive behavior on television, does indeed directly affect children. Children are great imitators. Imaginary play and modeling their favorite characters are commonplace among the young.

Children can and readily do imitate what they see. Just ask any parent whose child has learned their ABC's by watching Sesame Street. They will all tell you that their child watched Big Bird, Ernie and the other characters reciting the alphabet over and over. After repeated viewing, their child began reciting their ABCs from memory. This act alone reinforces the idea that through imitation and repeated exposure children can learn.

Learning violence is no exception. It can be imitated and learned in the same manner as how the alphabet was committed to memory. The only difference is when children watch negative behavior, it is that negativity that they learn and mimic. It is not something as harmless as the ABCs.

Authorities on child behavior agree that what a child watches does indeed affect their behavior. According to The American Academy of Child and Adolescence Psychiatry, "Extensive viewing of television violence by children causes greater aggressiveness." Young children see violence on television and they have a difficult time differentiating between what is real or what is make believe, thus they imitate all that they see equally. Studies show that children who watch too much violence on TV appear to be more unwilling to cooperate and are less patient with both their peers and adults.

When one person was asked if TV taught violence to children, a high school student responded, "When I was little, society was simpler, but now my little brother is hitting and cursing at the age of six. This doesn't happen in my house, but everyone knows where he gets it from. The TV!"

All information taken from:

<http://www.debate.org/opinions/is-television-the-leading-cause-of-violence-in-todays-society>

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-gail-gross/violence-on-tv-children\\_b\\_3734764.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-gail-gross/violence-on-tv-children_b_3734764.html)

## **Of course not; television does not cause an increase of violence in children.**

Violent television does not lead to violent children. Virtually everyone in our society watches television, yet we don't have rampant violent crime rates. Violent crime rates have actually dropped over time.

Violence has existed long before the media and although the scope of it has changed, the causes cannot be attributed to media. Humans have been here long before television was invented and violence still happened then. Suggesting that violence would be virtually non-existent if we had no media entertainment completely negates the witness of human history which is filled with violence.

Research shows that some children are more aggressive in general than others and that the more aggressive children prefer violent television, watch and play more aggressive games, and act more aggressively themselves. In other words their viewing choices are driven by their personalities not the other way around.

“All babies are born with violent tendencies, which most kids learn to control as they grow older,” says Richard Tremblay, a University of Montreal professor who has spent more than 20 years studying 35,000 Canadian children. “Those who don’t or can’t learn are the ones who become violent. It’s a natural behavior. It’s surprising that the idea that children and adolescents learn aggression from the media is still relevant.”

All information taken from:

<http://variety.com/2007/digital/news/tv-not-to-blame-for-violence-study-says-1117974404/>

[http://www.slj.com/2007/05/students/tv-violence-doesnt-lead-to-aggressive-kids-study-says/#\\_](http://www.slj.com/2007/05/students/tv-violence-doesnt-lead-to-aggressive-kids-study-says/#_)

<http://www.debate.org/opinions/is-television-the-leading-cause-of-violence-in-todays-society>



# Writing Scoring Guide (Rubric)

(for Opinion/Argument writing)	<i>Great!</i>	<i>O.K.</i>	<i>Needs Help</i>
<b>Critical Components</b>			
Demonstrates clear understanding of purpose			
Provides specific textual examples and factual information			
Links opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses			
<b>Style</b> (lively, engaging and appropriate use of language)			
Precise words			
Strong, active verbs			
Includes a variety of sentence types and structures			
Maintains a consistent point of view and focus			
<b>Organization</b>			
Contains clearly presented central idea with supporting evidence			
Logical and orderly sequence of ideas			
Flows well-easy to understand-including use of transitional words			
Begins with strong introductory paragraph clearly stating thesis			
Has a defined conclusion			
<b>Conventions</b> (accepted practice established by usage)			
<b>Usage:</b>			
Correct use of pronouns			
Clear pronoun reference			
Subject/Verb agreement			
Correct word choice			
<b>Mechanics:</b>			
Ending punctuation			
Proper capitalization			
Correct use of commas			
Complete sentence formation (no fragments or run-ons)			
Quotation marks used appropriately			
<b>Spelling:</b>			
Words spelled correctly			