

# PERSUASIVE ESSAY TOPICS

## Education

1. Is cheating getting worse?
2. Should students be able to grade their teachers?
3. Does your school hand out too many As?
4. Should middle school students be drug tested?
5. Should reading and math be taught in gym class too?
6. How seriously should we take standardized tests?
7. How well do you think standardized tests measure your abilities?
8. Do you spend too much time preparing for standardized tests?
9. Should schools offer cash bonuses for good test scores?
10. Should we rethink how long students spend in high school?
11. Do schools provide students with enough opportunities to be creative?
12. What are you really learning at school?
13. How important is arts education?
14. Does gym help students perform better in all their classes?
15. Who should be able to see students' records?
16. Are children of illegal immigrants entitled to a public education?
17. What is the right amount of group work in school?
18. Is your school day too short?
19. Do you think a longer school calendar is a good idea?
20. Should the dropout age be raised?
21. Should students be allowed to skip senior year of high school?
22. How does your school deal with students who misbehave?
23. Should schools be allowed to use corporal punishment?
24. How big a problem is bullying/cyberbullying in your school?
25. How should schools address bullying?
26. Should schools put tracking devices in students' ID cards?
27. What do you think of grouping students by ability in schools?
28. Does class size matter?
29. Should all students get equal space in a yearbook?
30. How important are parent-teacher conferences?
31. Should all children be able to go to preschool?
32. Should colleges use admissions criteria other than SAT scores and grades?
33. What criteria should be used in awarding scholarships for college?
34. Do you support affirmative action?
35. Do college rankings matter?
36. How necessary is a college education?

## Technology

37. Are the web filters at your school too restrictive?
38. Does technology make us more alone?
39. Are you distracted by technology?
40. Do apps help you or just waste your time?
41. Do you spend too much time on smart phones playing stupid games?

42. Has Facebook lost its "edge"?
43. Does Facebook ever make you feel bad?
44. Should what you say on Facebook be grounds for getting fired?
45. Should people be allowed to obscure their identities online?
46. What should the punishment be for acts of cyberbullying?
47. Is online learning as good as face-to-face learning?
48. Do your teachers use technology well?
49. Should tablet computers become the primary way students learn in class?
50. Can cell phones be educational tools?
51. Should computer games be used for classroom instruction?
52. How young is too young for an iPhone?
53. Should companies collect information about you?
54. Would you trade your paper books for digital versions?
55. Are digital photographs too plentiful to be meaningful?
56. Do you worry we are filming too much?
57. How would you feel about a computer grading your essays?
58. What role will robots play in our future?
59. How many text messages are too many?
60. How much do you trust online reviews?

### **Arts and Media**

61. Why do we like to watch rich people on TV and in movies?
62. Do TV shows like *16 and Pregnant* promote or discourage teenage pregnancy?
63. Does TV capture the diversity of America yet?
64. Is TV too white?
65. Is TV stronger than ever, or becoming obsolete?
66. Does reality TV promote dangerous stereotypes?
67. What current musicians do you think will stand the test of time?
68. What artists or bands of today are destined for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame?
69. What musician, actor, or author should be a superstar, but hasn't quite made it yet?
70. Will musical training make you more successful?
71. Should video games be considered a sport?
72. Should stores sell violent video games to minors?
73. Can a video game be a work of art?
74. Do violent video games make people more violent in real life?
75. When should you feel guilty for killing zombies?
76. What game would you like to see redesigned?
77. What were the best movies you saw in the past year?
78. To what writer would you award a prize?
79. Do you prefer your children's book characters obedient or contrary?
80. Where is the line between truth and fiction?
81. Can graffiti ever be considered art?
82. Do we need art in our lives?
83. What makes a good commercial?

84. Does pop culture deserve serious study?

## **Gender**

- 85. Do parents have different standards for their sons than for their daughters?
- 86. Is school designed more for girls than boys?
- 87. Is there too much pressure on girls to have perfect bodies?
- 88. How much pressure do boys face to have the perfect body?
- 89. Do photoshopped images make people feel bad about their own looks?
- 90. Is it okay for men and boys to comment on females on the street?
- 91. Why aren't there more girls in leadership roles?
- 92. Why aren't more girls choosing to pursue careers in math and science?
- 93. Should women be allowed to fight on the front lines alongside men?
- 94. Do you believe in equal rights for women and men?
- 95. Are women better at compromising and collaborating?
- 96. Do boys have less intense friendships than girls?

## **Sports**

- 97. If football is so dangerous to players, should we be watching it?
- 98. Should parents let their children play football?
- 99. Should college athletes get paid?
- 100. When do pranks cross the line to become bullying?
- 101. Are some youth sports too intense?
- 102. Is it offensive for sports teams to use Native American names and mascots?
- 103. Is cheerleading a sport?
- 104. Should there be stricter rules about how coaches treat their players?
- 105. Should athletes who take drugs have to forfeit their titles and medals?
- 106. Should home-schoolers be allowed to play public school sports?

## **Politics**

- 107. What local problems do you think your mayor should try to solve?
- 108. When is the use of military force justified?
- 109. What is more important: our privacy or national security?
- 110. Should the U.S. be spying on its friends?
- 111. Do you trust your government?
- 112. Do rich people get off easier when they break the law?
- 113. Should rich people have to pay more taxes?
- 114. Do laws that ban offensive words make the world a better place?
- 115. Do leaders have moral obligations?
- 116. Do great leaders have to be outgoing?
- 117. How should we prevent future mass shootings?
- 118. Should guns be permitted on college campus?
- 119. Would you feel safer with armed guards patrolling your school?
- 120. Do you support or oppose the death penalty?
- 121. When should juvenile offenders receive life sentences?

## Parenting

122. Do we give children too many trophies?
123. When do you become an adult?
124. When should you be able to buy cigarettes, drink alcohol, vote, drive, and fight in wars?
125. Is modern culture ruining childhood?
126. Are adults hurting young children by pushing them to achieve?
127. How, and by whom, should children be taught appropriate behavior?
128. What can older people learn from your generation?
129. How and when should children be taught about puberty?
130. How should parents handle a bad report card?
131. Should children be allowed to wear whatever they want?

## Health

132. Is smoking still a problem among teenagers?
133. Are antismoking ads effective?
134. Do you think a healthier school lunch program is a lost cause?
135. How concerned are you about where your food comes from?
136. Is it ethical to eat meat?
137. Should the government limit the size of sugar drinks?
138. Should marijuana be legal?
139. Should students be required to take drug tests?

## Values

140. Do bystanders have a responsibility to intervene when there is trouble?
141. Should you care about the health and safety of those making your clothing?
142. Can money buy you happiness?
143. Does buying and accumulating more and more stuff make us happier?
144. Are we losing the art of listening?
145. Do people complain too much?
146. Can kindness become cool?
147. Which is more important: talent or hard work?
148. How important is keeping your cool?
149. When should you compromise?
150. Is your generation more self-centered than earlier generations?
151. Can you be good without religion?
152. How curse words become so common they have lost their shock value?
153. What words or phrases should be retired in 2014?
154. What words or phrases do you think are overused?

## Random

155. How long is it okay to linger in a café or restaurant?

156. Does keeping a messy desk make people more creative?
157. How important is keeping a clean house?
158. Should scientists try to help people beat old age so we can live loner lives?
159. Given unlimited resources, what scientific or medical problem would you investigate?
160. When is it okay to replace human limbs with technology?
161. Do you think life exists—or has ever existed—somewhere besides earth?
162. How concerned are you about climate change?
163. Is it wrong for a newspaper to publish a front-page photo of a man about to die?
164. What causes should philanthropic groups finance?
165. Is it wrong for a newspaper to publish a front-page photo of a man about to die?
166. What causes should philanthropic groups finance?
167. Should charities focus more on America?
168. Should the private lives of famous people be off limits?
169. Did a newspaper act irresponsibly by publishing the addresses of gun owners?
170. Would you rather work from home or in an office?
171. What time should Black Friday sales start?
172. Do you shop locally owned businesses?
173. How much does your neighborhood define who you are?