

**Vail School District
5th Grade
Writing Benchmark #2
Argumentative**

DIRECTIONS:	Read the writing prompt and information below. Then use scratch paper for your prewriting/planning and your draft.
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PROMPT: Several states across the United States of America have taken steps to ban dodgeball in public schools in efforts to prevent bullying. Should dodgeball be banned in public schools?

Read the attached articles regarding dodgeball in public schools. Then write an argumentative essay defending your position. You'll need to gather evidence and present a well-reasoned argument.

Your writing should:

- include a thesis statement
- express ideas that are clear and directly related to the topic
- include interesting details (support and evidence)
- conclusion
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Increasingly, Schools Move To Restrict Dodgeball

Published: May 06, 2001

If students in Peter Heuberger's grade school gym class had their way, the weekly dodgeball game would be a daily event.

"We use dodgeball as an end-of-class activity," Mr. Heuberger, a physical education teacher at the Charlestown Elementary School in Cecil County, Md., said recently. "The kids love it. They would play it every day if they could."

But what was once shrugged off as a harmless game is now considered aggressive, unwholesome and a cause of injuries by some school administrators. So in school districts like Mr. Heuberger's, in the northeast corner of Maryland, officials have discouraged, limited or even banned the game.

Dodgeball pits teams of opposing players throwing balls at one another in a contest of

elimination. The last player to avoid being hit is the winner. Sometimes the game is called bombardment. And that bothers the critics.

"This is something that should not be used in today's classroom, especially in today's society," Diane Farr, a curriculum specialist in Austin, Tex., said. The Austin Independent School District, where Ms. Farr works, banned dodgeball more than two years ago.

Austin's school system may have been the first in the nation to ban dodgeball.

School districts in Fairfax County, Va.; Oslo, Fla.; and on Long Island, as well as a number of districts in Maine and Massachusetts, have formally or informally limited the kinds of games that students may play. In Mr. Heuberger's district in Maryland, officials have discouraged "human target" sports, including football, but not banned them.

As early as 1986, the journal *Physical Education, Recreation and Dance* published an article titled "Premeditated Murder: Let's Bump Off Killer Ball," which denounced sports of elimination. And in 1992, Neil F. Williams, now a physical education professor at Eastern Connecticut State University, placed dodgeball in the Physical Education Hall of Shame, a list of gym activities that he suggested could damage children emotionally. The list included duck-duck-goose and musical chairs.

Paula Kun, a spokeswoman for the National Association of Sport and Physical Education in Reston, Va., said: "There is a place in this world for dodgeball, like birthday parties and picnics. But we do not believe it belongs in a quality physical education program."

The game's advocates, however, are not waiting to be picked off. In Schaumburg, Ill., the National Amateur Dodgeball Association holds tournaments for youths and adults.

"To even question dodgeball is silly," Rick Hanetho, the association's director, said.

Kids Stand Up for Embattled Dodgeball

M E D I N A, Ohio, June 7

While educators in several states fight to have it banned, "dodgeball" is more popular than ever at one Ohio school, where kids delight in bouncing balls off each others' heads.

About 40 students at A.I. Root Middle School have formed a club in honor of the playground game that has been forbidden in Florida, Texas and other states.

"Oh yeah, it's just a gentle kids' game," principal Tom McKenna sarcastically told The

(Cleveland) Plain Dealer as he watched some of his students take aim.

‘Litigation Waiting to Happen’

In a recent article titled "The Physical Education Hall of Shame" and published in a teaching journal, Neil Williams, a physical education professor at Eastern Connecticut University, criticized the merits of dodgeball, which also is called sniper, bombardment and war ball.

"Generally speaking, the game is a litigation waiting to happen," he wrote.

In the game, kids split into teams and throw the ball at the other side. If you're hit by the ball, you're out.

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education, which represents more than 18,000 gym teachers and physical education professors, no longer advocates dodgeball.

Paula Keyes Kun, a spokeswoman for the Virginia-based education association, said dodgeball does not belong in gym classes any more than comic books belong in English classes.

She said the game encourages the strong to pick on the weak.

For Some Kids, It's a Way to Socialize

Cindy Meyer, a physical educator at Onaway Elementary School in Shaker Heights, described the activity as "totally inappropriate — the kind of game we need to get out of the schools."

"It devalues a person. You don't throw things at people," she told the paper.

Meyer, a gym teacher for 28 years, said some schools have tried to use softer balls and allow players who are hit to stay in the game.

"It appears to be fun," she said. "But there are too many other good things to do."

For seventh-grader Erik Steidl, there couldn't be anything better.

"Get out! It's just a game you don't have to be very good at to play and have fun," he said. "It's so sweet."

Dodgeball is not played in gym class at Root, and school officials monitor games. Students help by organizing and officiating themselves.

Remember to edit for spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization.

