

Vail School District
8thGrade
Writing Benchmark #2
Argumentative

DIRECTIONS: Read the information and writing prompt below. Then use scratch paper for your prewriting/planning and your draft.

Teenagers' Work Can Have Downsides

Jerald G. Bachman is a distinguished senior research scientist at the Institute for Social Research and a research professor at the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan.

APRIL 1, 2013

Questions about whether teenagers should be employed during the school year have interested social scientists for many decades. In 1975, when my colleagues and I began the “Monitoring the Future” project, our nationwide long-term study of the lifestyles and values of youth, we made it a point to include questions about such employment as well as possible consequences. Over the years we and other researchers have consistently found that high school students who work long hours in jobs during the school year tend to have poorer academic performance and are more likely to be involved in a variety of problem behaviors, including delinquency, cigarette use and other drug use; in general, these findings are clear for white and Asian American students, but weaker for Hispanics and still weaker for African Americans.

But a question always remained: Are the poor outcomes consequences of the jobs, or merely symptoms of other prior and more fundamental difficulties? There is broad agreement that at least some of the connections between long work hours and problem behaviors are symptoms of issues like poor adjustment to school and greater interest in short-term gratification. Yet even after doing our best to take account of these prior differences, we and many others have found some residual links with problem behaviors that seem attributable to the work itself.

Does this mean that all paid employment during the school year is a bad thing? Not at all. The research also shows that students who hold jobs requiring only modest hours per week are actually better off, on average, than those without jobs. Why? Because some unemployed youth are in areas that offer few job opportunities, and some just are not very successful in getting or holding a job.

So what is the “sweet spot” in terms of teenage work? The ideal seems to be a job that requires relatively few hours per week during the school year. For some outcomes, such as substance use, the fewer hours the better. Our own longitudinal research has shown that college

completion rates are highest among those who worked 15 hours a week or less when they were high school seniors.

So what should students do, and what should parents encourage? A starting point is that research clearly shows it is fine to get a job, as long as you can hold the number of hours down to 15, 10 or less per week during the school year.

I would offer two additional suggestions: First, try for a job where you can learn some useful skills, but in any case tell your supervisor right at the start that you want to have written evaluations of your performance. That will help both you and your supervisor take more seriously the developmental opportunities the job affords. Second, be sure to set aside significant portions of your earnings for college and other long-term expenses rather than treating most of your earnings as just “spending money.” That will avoid the risk of what I have called “premature affluence” – the risk of teenagers developing discretionary spending habits that they cannot sustain as young adults in college or newly in the full-time work force.

Teens learn responsibility through work

By JOCK | *April 1, 2013 | 5:12 pm*

“Some kids take things for granted,” said Patricia Muschette, a Durham parent. “They need to learn responsibility.”

Muschette said this is the reason local teens need to work.

Most teens try to find a part-time job for after school so they can start to earn their own money. Many teens may hate asking parents for money and sometimes they won't give it to them if they do.

Some parents make their kids get a job if nothing else but to learn responsibility and life.

Part-time jobs can teach teenagers life-long work skills like hard work but can also teach them responsibility and money management. They can also get a taste of the real world and an added bonus is that jobs can keep them out of trouble.

Some teens may take advantage of the fact that their parents give them money. This might cause parents to want their child to get a job to learn how to handle their own money and realize how much things really cost.

Unemployment rates for teens for the past few years have been poor. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, nationwide, total unemployment for February was 7.7 percent. But unemployment for teens is much worse.

Unemployment for teens breaks down as follows:

- 16 to 19 years old: 25.1 percent
- Males 16 to 19 years old: 28.4 percent
- Females 16 to 19 years old: 21.9 percent
- Whites 16 to 19 years old: 22.8 percent
- Blacks 16 to 19 years old: 42.3 percent

According to the BLS, teens 16 to 19 years old make up almost 13 percent of the population.

Many teens have expenses like gas, car insurance and phone bills. Unemployment rates like these can make them nervous and cause them to miss out on learning adult responsibility.

But a few teens have had work opportunities come their way.

Cairo Livingston is a senior at Hillside New Tech High School. She has been working at Aeropastle for the last 10 months and said teens should be patient when looking for work.

“Teens need to be patient because they never know when they are going to get the job,” she said.

One big way teens find jobs is through word-of-mouth. One of Livingston’s friends gave her an application for the job and she filled it out as soon as she could.

Livingston said she needs money like anyone else.

“I needed money for food, college applications and SATs,” said Livingston.

One of her responsibilities at her job is helping customers find clothes and then checking them out at the register.

Livingston said that her job has taught her to take on her own responsibilities. She now has added home responsibilities like helping her mom pay for gas and household items.

“I’m learning time management too,” said Livingston. “I have to make sure that my work tasks are done each day.”

Livingston said that working is making her more mature because she is learning that you can’t joke around all the time.

It is a responsibility that 16-year-old Derwin Galloway shares. Galloway works the cash register and washes dishes for a local Kentucky Fried Chicken. He works about three nights a week and has had the job a little more than a month.

Like Livingston, he landed his job through a friend.

“A friend told me they were hiring and needed help,” Galloway said.

He said he enjoys making money and sometimes helps buy groceries for home – a responsibility he said he would need to know when he finally leaves his parents’ house.

Galloway had better luck than some teens finding work. He said he applied and went back after two days and he had his interview.

Muschette said fast food places, cashier jobs and babysitting are the sorts of jobs teens should go for.

“When they get their money, teens should open up a bank account,” she said. “They should save their money for what they need and not what they want because they will learn how to take better care of it.”

Muschette said she thinks teens can truly learn from having a good job.

“They learn responsibility on how to save money,” she said. “You can’t spend what you don’t have and it teaches you how to handle your business.”

PROMPT: Some people believe that teenagers should be employed in order to learn responsibility. Others feel that there are negative side effects to teenagers having a job. Present an argument to your local government on whether or not teenagers should hold a job. Use specific evidence from the text to support your argument. Use the writing guide as a tool to help you.

Your essay should:

- clearly state your position
- provide reasons and supporting details
- include a counterclaim

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

