

301 Prompts for Argumentative Writing

TECHNOLOGY

Technology

1. Does Technology Make Us More Alone?
2. Are You Distracted by Technology?
3. Do Apps Help You or Just Waste Your Time?
4. Do You Spend Too Much Time on Smartphones Playing 'Stupid Games'?
5. Will Wearable Technology Ever Really Catch On?
6. Are Digital Photographs Too Plentiful to Be Meaningful?
7. Do You Worry We Are Filming Too Much?
8. Would You Want a Pair of Google's Computer Glasses?
9. What Role Will Robots Play in Our Future?
10. How Many Text Messages Are Too Many?

Internet and Social Media

11. Has Facebook Lost Its Edge?
12. Does Facebook Ever Make You Feel Bad?
13. Would You Consider Deleting Your Facebook Account?
14. Should What You Say on Facebook Be Grounds for Getting Fired?
15. Should People Be Allowed to Obscure Their Identities Online?
16. How Much Do You Trust Online Reviews?

Technology in Schools

17. Are the Web Filters at Your School Too Restrictive?
18. Do Your Teachers Use Technology Well?
19. Should Tablet Computers Become the Primary Way Students Learn in Class?
20. Can Cellphones Be Educational Tools?
21. Should Computer Games Be Used for Classroom Instruction?
22. Is Online Learning as Good as Face-to-Face Learning?
23. How Would You Feel About a Computer Grading Your Essays?

ART, FILM, BOOKS, VIDEO GAMES AND OTHER MEDIA

Movies, TV and Theater

24. Is TV Stronger Than Ever, or Becoming Obsolete?
25. Do TV Shows Like '16 and Pregnant' Promote or Discourage Teenage Pregnancy?
26. Does Reality TV Promote Dangerous Stereotypes?
27. Does TV Capture the Diversity of America Yet?
28. Is TV Too White?

29. Why Do We Like to Watch Rich People on TV and in the Movies?
30. What Makes a Good TV Show Finale?
31. What Makes a Good Commercial?
32. Why Did a Cheerios Ad Attract So Many Angry Comments Online?
33. What Were the Best Movies You Saw in the Past Year?
34. Does Live Theater Offer Something You Just Can't Get Watching Movies or TV?

Music

35. What Can You Predict About the Future of the Music Industry?
36. What Current Musicians Do You Think Will Stand the Test of Time?
37. What Artists or Bands of Today Are Destined for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame?
38. What Artists Do You Consider 'Sellouts'?
39. What Musician, Actor or Author Should Be a Superstar, but Hasn't Quite Made It Yet?
40. Who Does Hip-Hop Belong To?
41. Will Musical Training Make You More Successful?

Video Games

42. Should Video Games Be Considered a Sport?
43. Should Stores Sell Violent Video Games to Minors?
44. Do Violent Video Games Make People More Violent in Real Life?
45. When Should You Feel Guilty for Killing Zombies?
46. Can a Video Game Be a Work of Art?
47. What Game Would You Like to Redesign?
48. How Sexist Is the Gaming World?

Literature

49. Would You Trade Your Paper Books for Digital Versions?
50. Does Reading a Book Count More Than Listening to One?
51. To What Writer Would You Award a Prize?
52. Who Are the Characters That Authors Should Be Writing About?
53. Do You Prefer Your Children's Book Characters Obedient or Contrary?

Art

54. Can Graffiti Ever Be Considered Art?
55. Do We Need Art in Our Lives?
56. Does Pop Culture Deserve Serious Study?
57. Where Is the Line Between Truth and Fiction?



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58. Should Society Support Artists and Others Pursuing Creative Works?

GENDER AND RELATIONSHIPS

Gender Issues

59. Do Parents Have Different Hopes and Standards for Their Sons Than for Their Daughters?
60. Is School Designed More for Girls Than Boys?
61. Is There Too Much Pressure on Girls to Have 'Perfect' Bodies?
62. How Much Pressure Do Boys Face to Have the Perfect Body?
63. Do Photoshopped Images Make You Feel Bad About Your Own Looks?
64. Doctored Photos: O.K. or Not?
65. Is It O.K. for Men and Boys to Comment on Women and Girls on the Street?
66. Do We Need New Ways to Identify Gender and Sexuality?
67. What Should We Do to Fight Sexual Violence Against Young Women?
68. How Do You Feel About Rihanna and Chris Brown Getting Back Together?
69. Why Aren't There More Girls in Leadership Roles?
70. Why Aren't More Girls Choosing to Pursue Careers in Math and Science?
71. Should Women Be Allowed to Fight on the Front Lines Alongside Men?
72. Do You Believe in Equal Rights for Women and Men?
73. Are Women Better at Compromising and Collaborating?
74. Do Boys Have Less Intense Friendships Than Girls?
75. Can a Boy Wear a Skirt to School?
76. Is It O.K. to Refuse to Serve Same-Sex Couples Based on Religious Beliefs?

Dating and Sex

77. Should Birth Control Pills Be Available to Teenage Girls Without a Prescription?
78. Should the Morning-After Pill Be Sold Over the Counter to People Under 17?
79. How Should Children Be Taught About Puberty and Sex?
80. Is Dating a Thing of the Past?
81. Is Hookup Culture Leaving Your Generation Unhappy and Unprepared for Love?
82. Should Couples Live Together Before Marriage?
83. Could Following These Directions Make You Fall in Love With a Stranger?

84. How Should Educators and Legislators Deal With Minors Who 'Sext'?

85. How Should Parents Address Internet Pornography?

SPORTS AND ATHLETICS

Football

86. If Football Is So Dangerous to Players, Should We Be Watching It?
87. Should Parents Let Their Children Play Football?
88. Should College Football Players Get Paid?
89. Is It Offensive for Sports Teams to Use Native American Names and Mascots?

Sportsmanship

90. Are Some Youth Sports Too Intense?
91. Should There Be Stricter Rules About How Coaches Treat Their Players?
92. Do Sports Teams Have a Responsibility to Hold Players to a Standard for Their Personal Conduct?
93. Should Athletes Who Dope Have to Forfeit Their Titles and Medals?
94. Do Fans Put Too Much Pressure on Their Favorite Professional Athletes?
95. Does a Championship Game Always Need to Have a Winner (and a Loser)?
96. Should Sports Betting Be Legal Everywhere?
97. Should Colleges Fund Wellness Programs Instead of Sports?
98. Where Should Colleges and Sports Teams Draw the Line in Selling Naming Rights?

Other Sports

99. Has Baseball Lost Its Cool?
100. Is Cheerleading a Sport?
101. How Big a Deal Is It That an N.B.A. Player Came Out as Gay?
102. Would You Want a Bike Share Program for Your Community?
103. How Young Is Too Young to Climb Mount Everest?

POLITICS AND POLICY

Government

104. Do You Trust Your Government?
105. If You Were Governor of Your State, How Would You Spend a Budget Surplus?
106. What Local Problems Do You Think Your Mayor Should Try to Solve?



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107. Should Rich People Have to Pay More Taxes?
108. What Is More Important: Our Privacy or National Security?

Leadership and Politics

109. Do Leaders Have Moral Obligations?
110. Do Great Leaders Have to Be Outgoing?
111. Is It Principled, or Irresponsible, for Politicians to Threaten a Shutdown?

International Relations

112. Should the U.S. Be Spying on Its Friends?
113. When Is the Use of Military Force Justified?
114. Should Countries Pay Ransoms to Free Hostages Held by Terrorists?

Police, Prisons and Justice System

115. Should the United States Stop Using the Death Penalty?
116. When Should Juvenile Offenders Receive Life Sentences?
117. What Do You Think of the Police Tactic of Stop-and-Frisk?
118. Do Rich People Get Off Easier When They Break the Law?
119. Should All Police Officers Wear Body Cameras?
120. Will What Happened in Ferguson Change Anything?
121. Should Felons Be Allowed to Vote After They Have Served Their Time?

Gun Policy

122. How Should We Prevent Future Mass Shootings?
123. Would You Feel Safer With Armed Guards Patrolling Your School?
124. What Is Your Relationship With Guns?
125. Where Do You Stand on Unconcealed Handguns?
126. Should Guns Be Permitted on College Campuses?
127. Did a Newspaper Act Irresponsibly by Publishing the Addresses of Gun Owners?

Immigration

128. Should Millions of Undocumented Immigrants Be Allowed to Live in the U.S. Without Fear of Getting Deported?
129. Are Children of Illegal Immigrants Entitled to a Public Education?

PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Parenting and Childhood

130. How Much Freedom Should Parents Give Their Children?
131. How Should Parents Discipline Their Kids?
132. When Does Discipline Become Child Abuse?
133. Do 'Shame and Blame' Work to Change Teenage Behavior?
134. Do We Give Children Too Many Trophies?
135. Are Adults Hurting Young Children by Pushing Them to Achieve?
136. Is Modern Culture Ruining Childhood?
137. How, and by Whom, Should Children Be Taught Appropriate Behavior?
138. Are 'Dark' Movies O.K. for Kids?
139. Should Halloween Costumes Portray Only 'Positive Images'?
140. Are Parents Violating Their Children's Privacy When They Share Photos and Videos of Them Online?
141. Should Children Be Allowed to Compete on TV?
142. How Young Is Too Young for an iPhone?
143. Should Parents Limit How Much Time Children Spend on Tech Devices?

Parents and School

144. How Should Parents Handle a Bad Report Card?
145. How Important Are Parent-Teacher Conferences?
146. Who Should Be Able to See Students' Records?
147. Would You Want to Be Home-Schooled?
148. Should All Children Be Able to Go to Preschool?

House and Home

149. How Important Is Keeping a Clean House?
150. Does Keeping a Messy Desk Make People More Creative?

Millennial Generation

151. What Can Older People Learn From Your Generation?
152. Does Your Generation Have Too Much Self-Esteem?
153. Is Your Generation Really 'Postracial'?

Becoming an Adult

154. When Do You Become an Adult?
155. When Should You Be Able to Buy Cigarettes, Drink Alcohol, Vote, Drive and Fight in Wars?



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156. When You Are Old Enough to Vote, Will You?

CHARACTER AND MORALITY

Personal Character

- 157. Can Money Buy You Happiness?
- 158. Does Buying and Accumulating More and More Stuff Make Us Happier?
- 159. Are We Losing the Art of Listening?
- 160. Do People Complain Too Much?
- 161. Which Is More Important: Talent or Hard Work?
- 162. How Important Is Keeping Your Cool?
- 163. When Should You Compromise?
- 164. Is Your Generation More Self-Centered Than Earlier Generations?

Religion and Spirituality

- 165. Do You Believe That Everything Happens for a Reason?
- 166. How Much Control Do You Think You Have Over Your Fate?
- 167. Can You Be Good Without God?
- 168. How Important Do You Think It Is to Marry Someone With the Same Religion?

Morality and Personal Responsibility

- 169. Does Suffering Make Us Stronger and Lead to Success?
- 170. Do Bystanders Have a Responsibility to Intervene When There is Trouble?
- 171. When Is Looting Morally O.K.?
- 172. Can Kindness Become Cool?

Language and Standards

- 173. Have Curse Words Become So Common They Have Lost Their Shock Value?
- 174. What Words or Phrases Do You Think Are Overused?
- 175. What Words or Phrases Should Be Retired?
- 176. Do Laws That Ban Offensive Words Make the World a Better Place?
- 177. Should Newspapers Reprint Cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad That Some Deem Offensive?
- 178. Is It Wrong for a Newspaper to Publish a Front-Page Photo of a Man About to Die?

EDUCATION

Teaching and Learning

- 179. Do Teachers Assign Too Much Homework?
- 180. Does Your Homework Help You Learn?
- 181. What Are You Really Learning at School?
- 182. Does Class Size Matter?
- 183. Do We Need a New Way to Teach Math?
- 184. Does Gym Help Students Perform Better in All Their Classes?
- 185. Should Reading and Math Be Taught in Gym Class Too?
- 186. What Are the Best Ways to Learn About History?
- 187. What Is the Right Amount of Group Work in School?
- 188. What Do You Think of Grouping Students by Ability in Schools?
- 189. How Important Is Arts Education?
- 190. Do Schools Provide Students With Enough Opportunities to Be Creative?
- 191. Does the Way Your Classroom Is Decorated Affect Your Learning?

Discipline and School Rules

- 192. What Are the Best Teaching Methods for Getting Students to Behave Well in Class?
- 193. How Does Your School Deal With Students Who Misbehave?
- 194. Should Schools Be Allowed to Use Corporal Punishment?
- 195. Is Cheating Getting Worse?
- 196. Should Schools Put Tracking Devices in Students' ID Cards?
- 197. Should Middle School Students Be Drug Tested?
- 198. Should Students Be Barred From Taking Cellphones to School?

Bullying

- 199. How Big a Problem Is Bullying or Cyberbullying in Your School or Community?
- 200. How Should Schools Address Bullying?
- 201. How Should Schools Address Cyberbullying?
- 202. What Should the Punishment Be for Acts of Cyberbullying?
- 203. When Do Pranks Cross the Line to Become Bullying?
- 204. How Should Schools Respond to Hazing Incidents?

Time in School

- 205. Should the School Day Start Later?



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- 206. Is Your School Day Too Short?
- 207. Do You Think a Longer School Calendar Is a Good Idea?
- 208. Should the Dropout Age Be Raised?
- 209. Should We Rethink How Long Students Spend in High School?
- 210. Should Students Be Allowed to Skip Senior Year of High School?
- 211. Should Kids Head to College Early?
- 212. Class Time + Substitute = Waste?
- 213. Do Kids Need Recess?

Grading

- 214. Should Students Be Able to Grade Their Teachers?
- 215. Does Your School Hand Out Too Many A's?
- 216. Do Girls Get Better Grades Than Boys in Your School?
- 217. Does Separating Boys and Girls Help Students Perform Better in School?
- 218. Why Do Boys Lag Behind Girls in Reading?
- 219. Should Discomfort Excuse Students From Having to Complete an Assignment?

Standardized Tests

- 220. How Well Do You Think Standardized Tests Measure Your Abilities?
- 221. How Seriously Should We Take Standardized Tests?
- 222. Do You Spend Too Much Time Preparing for Standardized Tests?
- 223. Should Schools Offer Cash Bonuses for Good Test Scores?

School Life

- 224. Would You Rather Attend a Public or a Private High School?
- 225. How Much Does It Matter to You Which High School You Attend?
- 226. Are Small Schools More Effective Than Large Schools?
- 227. Should Home-Schoolers Be Allowed to Play Public School Sports?
- 228. Should All Students Get Equal Space in a Yearbook?
- 229. Should School Newspapers Be Subject to Prior Review?
- 230. Is Prom Worth It?
- 231. Is Prom Just an Excuse to Drink?

COLLEGE AND CAREER

College

- 232. How Necessary Is a College Education?
- 233. Is College Overrated?
- 234. Should a College Education be Free?
- 235. What Is the Perfect Number of College Applications to Send?
- 236. Should Colleges Find a Better Way to Admit Students?
- 237. Should Colleges Use Admissions Criteria Other Than SAT Scores and Grades?
- 238. Do You Support Affirmative Action in College Admissions?
- 239. Does It Matter Where You Go to College?
- 240. Do College Rankings Matter?
- 241. What Criteria Should Be Used in Awarding Scholarships for College?
- 242. Should Engineers Pay Less for College Than English Majors?
- 243. Do Fraternities Promote Misogyny?
- 244. Should Colleges Ban Fraternities?

Jobs and Careers

- 245. Would You Quit if Your Values Did Not Match Your Employer's?
- 246. Should Employers Be Able to Review Job Applicants' SAT Scores?
- 247. Do You Worry Colleges or Employers Might Read Your Social Media Posts Someday?
- 248. Would You Rather Work From Home or in an Office?
- 249. Is 'Doing Nothing' a Good Use of Your Time?

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Drugs, Cigarettes and Alcohol

- 250. Is Smoking Still a Problem Among Teenagers?
- 251. Are Antismoking Ads Effective?
- 252. Is Drinking and Driving Still a Problem for Teenagers?
- 253. Should Marijuana Be Legal?
- 254. Should Students Be Required to Take Drug Tests?
- 255. Why Is Binge Drinking So Common Among Young People in the United States?

Nutrition and Food

- 256. Do You Think a Healthier School Lunch Program Is a Lost Cause?



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- 257. Should French Fries and Pizza Sauce Count as Vegetables?
- 258. How Concerned Are You About Where Your Food Comes From?
- 259. Is It Ethical to Eat Meat?
- 260. Is Breakfast Really the Most Important Meal of the Day?
- 261. Do You Prefer Your Tacos 'Authentic' or 'Appropriated'?
- 262. Should Sugary Drinks Be Taxed?
- 263. Should the Government Limit the Size of Sugary Drinks?

Health Issues

- 264. How Should Schools Handle Unvaccinated Students?
- 265. Should Physician-Assisted Suicide Be Legal in Every State?
- 266. Should Texting While Driving Be Illegal in Every State?
- 267. Should Terminally Ill Patients Be Allowed to Die on Their Own Terms?

Appearance and Fashion

- 268. Should Children Be Allowed to Wear Whatever They Want?
- 269. What Are Your Opinions on Cosmetic Surgery?
- 270. Do 'Saggy Pants' Mean Disrespect?
- 271. Should You Care About the Health and Safety of Those Making Your Clothing?

SCIENCE TOPICS

Science and the Environment

- 272. How Concerned Are You About Climate Change?
- 273. How Should Nations and Individuals Address Climate Change?
- 274. Should Developers Be Allowed to Build in and Near the Grand Canyon?
- 275. Should Scientists Try to Help People Beat Old Age So We Can Live Longer Lives?
- 276. Given Unlimited Resources, What Scientific or Medical Problem Would You Investigate?
- 277. When Is It O.K. to Replace Human Limbs With Technology?
- 278. Should Fertilized Eggs Be Given Legal 'Personhood'?

Outer Space

- 279. Do You Think Life Exists — or Has Ever Existed — Somewhere Besides Earth?
- 280. Do You Believe in Intelligent Alien Life?
- 281. Will Humans Live on Mars Someday?
- 282. Would You Want to Be a Space Tourist?

Animals

- 283. Should Certain Animals Have Some of the Same Legal Rights As People?
- 284. Is It Unethical for a Zoo to Kill a Healthy Giraffe?
- 285. Should You Go to Jail for Kicking a Cat?
- 286. Should You Feel Guilty About Killing Spiders, Ants or Other Bugs?
- 287. How Do You Think Dinosaurs Went Extinct?

MISCELLANEOUS

Rich and Famous

- 288. Should the Private Lives of Famous People Be Off Limits?
- 289. Do You Think Child Stars Have It Rough?

American Dream

- 290. Should the United States Care That It's Not No. 1?
- 291. Is It Possible to Start Out Poor in This Country, Work Hard and Become Well-Off?
- 292. Do Poor People 'Have It Easy'?
- 293. How Much Does Your Neighborhood Define Who You Are?

Charity and Philanthropy

- 294. Should Charities Focus More on America?
- 295. What Causes Should Philanthropic Groups Finance?
- 296. Is Teenage 'Voluntourism' Wrong?

Shopping

- 297. Do You Shop at Locally Owned Businesses?
- 298. Is Amazon Becoming Too Powerful?
- 299. Should Companies Collect Information About You?
- 300. What Time Should Black Friday Sales Start?
- 301. How Long Is It O.K. to Linger in a Cafe or Restaurant?

