

- 7. The federal government should legalize marijuana use.
- 8. Government surveillance programs are vital for public safety.
- 9. Assisted suicide for the terminally ill is a humane practice in a civilized society.
- 10. Government surveillance programs are an offense to the United States Constitution.

Student Writing: Argumentation

MyWritingLab

Examine the following student argumentation paper, which includes annotations.

Wilson Davis

Say No to Drug Testing of School Athletes

Teenage drug use is a serious problem all over America. The nation's schools are a particularly at-risk area for drug sales, and many students have access to all kinds of illegal substances from pills that improve athletic performance to marijuana to ecstasy to cocaine and heroin. In an effort to curb drug use and set an example for other students, state and local authorities have relied on testing for drug use of those athletes involved in competitive sports. The federal government endorses these drug-testing programs with grants to schools. Although many people believe that mandatory drug testing for student athletes is a good idea, the practice is no credit to a democratic country and should be ended right away.

Supporters of mandatory drug testing in competitive school sports offer many arguments. They say that the government has a strong interest in preventing drug use, and testing can identify users before they turn into addicts. Drug addicts can threaten a society with crime and violence in the future. Find a drug user, and parents and school authorities can stop a drug user, supporters say. Another argument is that athletes who take drugs can hurt themselves on the playing field and are in danger of hurting others with careless play or violent acts to score points or win games. If by testing student athletes, the line of reasoning goes, we can get them to say no to drugs, other students will look up to them and not use drugs either.

Clever title connects with "Just Say No" anti-drug campaign.

Introduction builds to clearly stated thesis: stop mandatory drug testing of student athletes.

Opposing arguments fairly presented.

1

2

Transition refers back to the thesis; first sentence states topic of the paragraph.

Writer acknowledges opposing arguments (good transition), then states his own position.

3 Although these points seem valid, the arguments against drug testing are much stronger. The practice is unfair. The most important reason is that it violates the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution, which protects citizens from “unreasonable searches and seizures.” The Supreme Court in *Vernonia School District v. Acton* (1995) has ruled that student athletes are not entitled to the same privacy guaranteed by the “unreasonable searches” statement in the Constitution, but surely it is not fair to protect some citizens and not others. In our country, people are innocent until proven guilty. Forcing drug tests on athletes is unreasonable search. It says that school athletes are guilty until proven innocent.

Exact quote from Constitution needs no citation: general knowledge.

4 Aside from the privacy issue, Dr. Donald B. Louria, editor of the Healthful Life Project, raises the question of whether mandatory testing does any good at all. He says that “there is no persuasive evidence that mandatory drug testing reduces use of illicit drugs, and it certainly does not reduce alcohol (or tobacco) use among athletes” (Louria). In fact, a study in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* shows that at five high schools with required drug testing for athletes there is only a very small prevention effect (Goldberg). In other words, compulsory testing did not get athletes to reduce drug use.

Another citation helps solidify the point.

5 Finally, why pick on athletes as a group? Don’t some students in the band take drugs? Don’t some students in the Honor Society take drugs? Schools could just as well single out other groups, like boys with spike haircuts and girls who wear blue eye shadow, and test them for drugs. The law allows schools to drug-test students in any competitive extracurricular activity, but not many schools have chosen to test non-athletes. If they did, every student in an after-school program could be subject to compulsory drug tests! Imagine the cost of such large-scale testing, which even now, when limited to athletes, is very expensive because of laboratory procedures, required counseling, and administration. One must ask, Where will it stop? The *New York Times* reports, “Now, children in grades as low as middle school are being told that providing a urine sample is required to play sports” (Pilon).

6 Forcing school athletes to take drug tests violates a person’s civil rights. Those schools that spend money for mandatory drug testing rely on it almost exclusively and give very little support to drug education. The

Credentials of person being cited establishes some credibility.

Conclusion makes alternative recommendation for halting drug use.

schools would do much better to invest in powerful education programs about drugs than to take what looks like an easy way out by testing athletes only.

Works cited listings.

Works Cited

- Goldberg, Linn, et al. "Outcomes of a Prospective Trial of Student-Athlete Drug Testing: The Student Athlete Testing Using Random Notification (SATURN) Study." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 41.5 (2007): 421-42. Print.
- Louria, Donald B. "Drug Tests of Student Athletes and Other Students: It Appears to Do No Good, but That Probably Will Not Stop the Testing." *Healthful Life Project*. Oct. 2003. U of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. Web. 23 Jan. 2014.
- Pilon, Mary. "Middle Schools Add a Team Rule: Get a Drug Test." *New York Times*. New York Times, 22 Sept. 2013. Web. 23 Jan. 2014.

FOR WRITING OR DISCUSSION

MyWritingLab

1. What is the writer's thesis?
2. How does the introduction build to the thesis?
3. How has the writer used opposing arguments to advantage?
4. How does the first sentence in paragraph 2 serve as a transition? Paragraph 3? Paragraph 4?
5. Joseph Anderson in the last paragraph of "Getting Juiced" (Chapter 3) argues in favor of high school drug testing. Who makes the stronger point, Wilson Davis in "Say No to Drug Testing of School Athletes" or Joseph Anderson? Explain your answer.

Argumentation: Perspectives on Immigrants in America

In these selections about immigration—a speech, a Web site, a cartoon, and two student editorials from different college newspapers—note the argumentation strategies at play.