

## Joining the Conversation

1. Gerald Graff begins his essay with the view that we generally associate “book smarts” with intellectualism and “street smarts” with anti-intellectualism. Graff then provides an extended example from his early life to counter this viewpoint. What do you think of his argument that boyhood conversations about sports provided a solid foundation for his later intellectual life? What support does he provide, and how persuasive is it?
2. Graff argues in paragraph 13 that the intellectual world is much like the world of team sports, with “rival texts . . . , rival theories . . . , and elaborate team competitions.” Can you think of any examples from your own experience that support this assertion? In what ways do you think “the real intellectual world” is different from the world of team sports?
3. Imagine a conversation between Graff and Antonia Peacocke (pp. 299–310) on how watching television shows like *Family Guy* can be “intellectual.”
4. So what? Who cares? Graff does not answer these questions explicitly. Do it for him: write a brief paragraph saying why his argument matters, and for whom.
5. Graff argues that schools should encourage students to think critically, read, and write about areas of personal interest such as cars, fashion, or music—as long as they do so in an intellectually serious way. What do you think? Write an essay considering the educational merits of such a proposal, taking Graff’s argument as a “they say.”