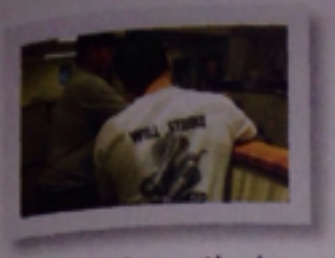

IN COLLEGE COURSES For a political science course, a student writes an essay arguing in favor of the controversial Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). She begins by explaining that the EFCA would reform current labor law by allowing workers to unionize if a majority simply signed a card requesting it; under current law, their employer can require a secret ballot. Those who oppose the new law claim that without a secret ballot, workers could be intimidated into voting for the union.

The student's essay argues that under existing law employers routinely make use of the time required to set up a secret ballot to dissuade workers from voting to unionize. To support her argument, she cites statistics from the National Labor Relations Board and other sources showing, among other things, that 88 percent of the unfair labor practice citations in 2006 and 2007 were against employers, not unions.

IN THE COMMUNITY In a letter to the school board, a group of parents writes a petition in favor of a proposal to institute a Peacemakers program at the local middle school. They begin with anecdotal reports of bullying at the school to underscore the need for action. They emphasize that the program's primary goal — teaching children not to avoid conflict but to manage conflict constructively — is one all parents could endorse, and they argue that those who oppose the program misunderstand it. They demonstrate parents' misunderstanding of the program's methods — for example, the ideas that students must keep their hands clasped behind their backs when walking down the halls and that students cannot play contact sports like basketball and football. To clarify the Peacemakers' actual methods, they briefly describe the negotiation procedure children are taught that involves articulating what they want, listening to what others want, and cooperatively inventing ways of resolving the conflict. They conclude by claiming that learning negotiation skills like these will help children throughout their lives.

IN THE WORKPLACE An executive in the financial industry defends American International Group (AIG) on a blog for paying out $165 million in bonuses after the company was saved from bankruptcy by taxpayers. The executive begins by acknowledging the justifiable public indignation. Nevertheless, he argues that AIG had no choice but to honor the bonus contracts. He claims that efforts by the government to void the contracts would set a dangerous precedent. He concludes by reminding his readers of what he assumes is a shared value: Not getting paid for work already performed is un-American.

To his surprise, his blog entry provokes nearly two hundred responses, most of which disagree with his defense of the bonuses, arguing that incompetence and greed should not be federally subsidized.

acknowledging that "some of the survey findings" are "disturbing." In fact, she calls it "crushing" that "one in four teens could not identify Adolf Hitler's role in world history." Not only does this concession allow her to express her strong feelings, but it is also a smart rhetorical strategy in that it shows readers that she shares their values about the kinds of knowledge that really are important for everyone to learn.

To analyze Goldwasser's counterargument, try the following:

- Reread paragraphs 4–5, where she tries to defend teenagers' use of the Internet against Doris Lessing's criticism.
- Notice that one of her strategies is to support her counterargument with the same Common Core survey that was used to attack teenagers' use of the Internet. How effective is this strategy likely to be for her readers? Ask yourself what these statistics allow Goldwasser to demonstrate.
- Write a few sentences describing what you have learned about Goldwasser's use of counterargument.

A Readable Plan

Writers of position essays sometimes repeat in the conclusion language or ideas introduced in the opening paragraphs of the essay. For example, Statsky comes back in the last paragraph to her concerns about "the excesses and dangers" of competitive sports, ideas she introduced in her first two paragraphs.

To analyze how Goldwasser uses this strategy, try the following:

- Reread the opening and closing paragraphs of Goldwasser's essay, and highlight any language or ideas that are repeated.
- Write a few sentences describing what you found and discussing whether you think this strategy of repeating material makes her essay more readable.

CONSIDERING TOPICS FOR YOUR OWN ESSAY

You could consider writing a position essay on some other aspect of contemporary culture and its effects on relationships, [illegible]

To analyze how Goldwasser tries to reframe the issue, try the following:

- Reread paragraph 7 to determine what story Goldwasser is telling about the generational divide. How does this story reframe the issue?
- Who are the *we* and the *they* in this paragraph? Assuming Goldwasser is addressing the *we*, how effective do you think this way of reframing the issue is likely to be for these particular readers?

A Well-Supported Position

In arguing for a position, writers may provide various kinds of supporting evidence, including facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, and quotes from authorities.

- **Facts** are statements that can be proven to be true. However, a statement that is not true or only partially true may be asserted as fact. Therefore, readers may need to be reassured that an asserted fact is reliable and comes from a trustworthy source.
- **Statistics** are sometimes mistaken for facts, but they are only interpretations or correlations of numerical data. Their reliability depends on how and by whom the information was collected and interpreted.
- **Examples** and **anecdotes** illustrate what may be true in certain situations; effective writers do not usually offer them as hard-and-fast evidence of the universal truth of their positions. Using them can, however, make an argument less abstract and enable readers to identify with those affected by the issue.
- **Quotes from authorities** can carry weight if readers see them as knowledgeable and trustworthy.

To analyze how Goldwasser supports her position, try the following:

- Reread the essay, and highlight at least two places where Goldwasser presents different kinds of supporting evidence. Examine each instance to determine how she uses the evidence to support her argument, and consider how effective the evidence is likely to be in convincing her readers.
- Write a few sentences explaining what you discovered about Goldwasser's use of supporting evidence in this essay.

An Effective Counterargument

Some position essays are essentially organized as a defense or refutation. This is the case with Goldwasser's essay. As she explains in the opening paragraph, it has become "fashionable" to "bash" teenagers, and her essay attempts to defend against this "latest takedown." One object of her counterargument is the Common Core phone survey, but she also counterargues the claims made by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and Doris Lessing in her Nobel Prize acceptance speech.

Before examining how Goldwasser tries to refute these authorities, however, look at one passage where she makes a concession. In paragraph 12, she begins by

We need to start trusting our kids to communicate as they will online — even when that comes with the risk that they'll spill the family secrets or campaign for a candidate who's not ours.

Once we stop regarding the Internet as a villain, stop presenting it as the enemy of history and literature and worldly knowledge, then our teenagers have the potential to become the next great voices of America. One of them, 70 years from now, might even get up there to accept the very award Lessing did — and thank the Internet for making him or her a writer and a thinker.

MAKING CONNECTIONS: THE INFORMATION AGE

It is often said that we live in an Age of Information. But, as Goldwasser suggests, there may now be a generational shift in the way information is thought of and accessed.

With two or three other students, discuss your own experience. Begin by taking turns listing the ways you use technology to transmit and retrieve information on a typical day. Then, together consider the following questions:

- Goldwasser reports that the National Endowment for the Arts laments "the diminished role of voluntary reading in American life" (par. 2). How much time do you spend reading in a typical day? What kinds of things do you read?
- What kinds of information do you typically look up in the course of a day? How do you most commonly look it up? Would your answers to these questions be different if you did not have easy access to the Internet?
- Goldwasser distinguishes between "concepts" (for example, "Adolf Hitler's role in world history" [par. 12] and "what 'To Kill a Mockingbird' is about" [par. 5]) and "copyrights" or "trivia" (for example, dates and author-to-book title matching [par. 11]). Why do you think she distinguishes between what you should know and what you could just as easily look up when you need it? What do you think about Goldwasser's distinction?

ANALYZING WRITING STRATEGIES

Basic Features

A Well-Presented Issue

Like the other writers in this chapter, Goldwasser tries to reframe the issue for her readers. Her title, "What's the Matter with Kids Today?," is the title of a song from *Bye Bye Birdie*, a late-1950s musical. The lyrics tell the story of how the issue has traditionally been framed:

Why can't they be like we were,
Perfect in every way?
What's the matter with kids today?

But this is also why it's dangerous, why we can't seem to recognize that it's just a medium. We're afraid. Our kids know things we don't. They drove the presidential debates onto YouTube and very well may determine the outcome of this election. They're texting at the dinner table and responsible for pretty much every enduring consumer cultural phenomenon: iPod, iTunes, iPhone; Harry Potter, "High School Musical"; large hot drinks with gingerbread flavoring. They can sell ads on their social network pages, and they essentially made MySpace worth $580 million and "Juno" an Oscar winner.

Besides, we're tired of having to ask them every time we need to find Season 2 of "Heroes," calculate a carbon footprint or upload photos to Facebook (now that we're allowed on).

Plus, they're blogging about us.

So we've made the Internet one more thing unknowable about the American teenager, when, really, it's one of the few revelations. We conduct these surveys and overgeneralize — labeling like the mean girls, driven by the same jealousy and insecurity.

Common Core drew its multiple-choice questions for teens from a test administered by the federal government in 1986. Twenty-plus years ago, high school students didn't have the Internet to store their trivia. Now they know that the specific dates and what-was-that-prince's-name will always be there; they can free their brains to go a little deeper into the concepts instead of the copyrights, step back and consider what Scout and Atticus were really fighting for. To criticize teenagers' author-to-book title matching on the spot, over the phone, is similar to cold-calling over-40s and claiming their long-division skills or date of "Jaws" recall is rusty. This is what we all rely on the Internet for.

That's not to say some of the survey findings aren't disturbing. It's crushing to hear that one in four teens could not identify Adolf Hitler's role in world history, for instance. But it's not because teenagers were online that they missed this. Had a parent introduced 20 minutes of researching the Holocaust to one month of their teen's Internet life, or a teacher assigned "The Diary of Anne Frank" (arguably a 13-year-old girl's blog) — if we worked with, rather than against, the way this generation voluntarily takes in information — we might not be able to pick up the phone and expose tragic pockets of ignorance.

The average teen chooses to spend an average of 16.7 hours a week reading and writing online. Yet the NEA report did not consider this to be "voluntary" reading and writing. Its findings also concluded that "literary reading declined significantly in a period of rising Internet use." The corollary is weak — this has as well been a period of rising franchises of frozen yogurt that doesn't taste like frozen yogurt, of global warming, of declining rates of pregnancy and illicit drug use among teenagers, and of girls sweeping the country's most prestigious high school science competition for the first time.

Teenagers today read and write for fun; it's part of their social lives. We need to start celebrating this unprecedented surge, incorporating it as an educational tool instead of meeting it with punishing pop quizzes and suspicion.

What's the Matter with Kids Today?

AMY GOLDWASSER

The other week was only the latest takedown of what has become a fashionable segment of the population to bash: the American teenager. A phone (land line!) survey of 1,200 17-year-olds, conducted by the research organization Common Core and released Feb. 26, found our young people to be living in "stunning ignorance" of history and literature.

This furthered the report that the National Endowment for the Arts came out with at the end of 2007, lamenting "the diminished role of voluntary reading in American life," particularly among 13-to-17-year-olds, and Doris Lessing's condemnation, in her acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize in literature, of "a fragmenting culture" in which "young men and women . . . have read nothing, knowing only some specialty or other, for instance, computers."

Kids today — we're telling you! — don't read, don't write, don't care about anything farther in front of them than their iPods. The Internet, according to 88-year-old Lessing (whose specialty is sturdy typewriters, or perhaps pens), has "seduced a whole generation into its inanities."

Or is it the older generation that the Internet has seduced — into the inanities of leveling charges based on fear, ignorance and old-media, multiple-choice testing? So much so that we can't see that the Internet is only a means of communication, and one that has created a generation, perhaps the first, of writers, activists, storytellers? When the world worked in hard copy, no parent or teacher ever begrudged teenagers who disappeared into their rooms to write letters to friends — or a movie review, or an editorial for the school paper on the first president they'll vote for. Even 15-year-old boys are sharing some part of their feelings with someone out there.

We're talking about 33 million Americans who are fluent in texting, e-mailing, blogging, IM'ing and constantly amending their profiles on social network sites — which, on average, 30 of their friends will visit every day, hanging out and writing for 20 minutes or so each. They're connected, they're collaborative, they're used to writing about themselves. In fact, they choose to write about themselves, on their own time, rather than its being a forced labor when a paper's due in school. Regularly, often late at night, they're generating a body of intimate written work. They appreciate the value of a good story and the power of a speech that moves: Ninety-seven percent of the teenagers in the Common Core survey connected "I have a dream" with its speaker — they can watch Dr. King deliver it on demand — and eight in 10 knew what "To Kill a Mockingbird" is about.

This is, of course, the kind of knowledge we should be encouraging. The Internet has turned teenagers into honest documentarians of their own lives — reporters embedded in their homes. their schools. their own heads.

- Skim the essay, and note in the margin where Etzioni supports his reasons.
- Write a couple of sentences indicating whether Etzioni's method of forecasting his reasons makes his argument easy to follow.

CONSIDERING TOPICS FOR YOUR OWN ESSAY

Etzioni focuses on a single kind of part-time work, takes a position on how worthwhile it is, and recommends against it. You could write a similar kind of essay. For example, you could take a position for or against students' participating in other kinds of part-time work or recreation during the high school or college academic year — for example, playing on an interscholastic or collegiate sports team, doing volunteer work, or taking an elective class. You might pursue a different argument, taking a position on students' doing a certain kind of work or recreation during the summer months — say, working or volunteering in a job related to a career they would like to pursue; focusing on learning something important to them, such as another language or a musical instrument; or participating in an exercise program. If you work to support yourself and pay for college, you could focus on why the job either strengthens or weakens you as a person, given your life and career goals. Writing for other students, you would either recommend the job or activity to them or discourage them from pursuing it, giving reasons and support for your position. Like Etzioni, you might enrich your argument by citing studies or by interviewing students who participate in the activity.

AMY GOLDWASSER is a writer and editor. Her writing has appeared in a wide array of journals and Web sites including the *New Yorker*, *Vogue*, and *Salon*, where this essay first appeared. She has served as the executive editor of *Elle* and *Seventeen*, features editor of *New York Magazine*, and staff editor at *Outside*. A volunteer at the Lower Eastside Girls Club in New York, Goldwasser founded a writing and blogging program that led to her editing a collection of essays called *Red: The Next Generation of American Writers — Teenage Girls — on What Fires Up Their Lives Today* (2007). "I came to realize," Goldwasser observed in an interview, "how much more excited I was about the writing I was getting from the girls than the writing I was getting from professional writers in my day job." You can learn about the book and the authors at www.redthebook.com.

This position essay was occasioned by the publication of a 2008 survey called "Still at Risk: What Students Don't Know, Even Now," which is easily accessible at aei.org. As Goldwasser indicates, the report is the latest in a series of critiques of the Millennial or Google generation, as it is sometimes called. As you read, think about why Goldwasser uses the pronouns *we* and *they* repeatedly throughout the essay.

and shoulder muscles, sometimes resulting in lifelong injuries" (par. 3). Notice that Statsky uses the word *claims* to indicate that the statement's status as fact is not certain, and she also uses the words *may* and *sometimes* to emphasize that throwing a curve ball is not necessarily injurious. This is the kind of careful qualification of sources that readers deserve and academic audiences typically require.

To analyze how Etzioni uses **statistics**, numerical data about a given population sample, to support his position, try the following:

- Reread paragraphs 8–15, where Etzioni reports on two research studies. Both studies provide Etzioni with statistics. Underline the statistics, and note what each statistic is being used to illustrate or prove. Why do you think Etzioni relies on statistics?
- Write a few sentences reporting what you have learned about Etzioni's use of statistics to argue for his position on a controversial issue.

● An Effective Counterargument

At key points throughout his essay, Etzioni acknowledges readers' likely objections and then counterargues them. In paragraph 3, he acknowledges that some readers will believe that McDonald's-type jobs are good because they teach teenagers to become "self-reliant, work-ethic-driven, productive youngsters." Although he agrees with his readers that these are valuable objectives, Etzioni makes clear that he disagrees about how well fast-food jobs fulfill these goals.

To analyze how Etzioni counterargues, try the following activity:

- Examine how Etzioni refutes findings of the Charper-Fraser study — specifically, the claims that employees in McDonald's-type jobs develop many skills (pars. 8 and 9) and that they learn how to work under supervision (pars. 14–16). Highlight places where he presents the claims, and note how he asserts and supports his refutation.
- Write a couple of sentences explaining how Etzioni refutes the findings of this particular research study. Add another sentence assessing the effectiveness of Etzioni's counterargument.

● A Readable Plan

The *thesis statement* in a position essay is particularly important because it asserts the writer's position on the issue. Most writers also use the thesis statement to forecast the reasons they will develop and support in the essay. Jessica Statsky, for example, asserts her position in paragraph 1 and uses paragraph 2 to qualify and clarify the position and to forecast her three reasons for it.

To analyze how Etzioni forecasts his argument, try the following:

- Etzioni states his thesis in the opening sentence of paragraph 1. But he does not preview his reasons until paragraph 3. Find and underline the forecasting statement in which he does so.

ANALYZING WRITING STRATEGIES

A Well-Presented Issue

Basic Features

From the first sentence, it is clear that Etzioni's primary audience is parents of teenagers, rather than the teenagers themselves. Given his readers, it may seem fitting that Etzioni refers to "a longstanding American tradition that youngsters ought to get paying jobs" and what he calls the "folklore" associated with "the newspaper route and the sidewalk lemonade stand" (par. 4). In other words, Etzioni begins his essay by assuming the issue has already been *framed* for his audience through their associations and experience.

Writers frame issues (and reframe issues that have already been framed) to influence how readers think about the issue. **Framing** an issue is like putting a frame around a picture, or in digital terms, using an editing program to crop and resize a photograph to focus the viewer's eye on the part of the picture you think is most important. Framing, like cropping, cuts some parts out altogether or moves them to the margins. Framing an issue essentially does the same thing by focusing attention on a certain way of seeing the issue.

To get his readers to listen to his argument, Etzioni has to *reframe* the issue — to show that today's McDonald's-type jobs are not the same as the newspaper route and lemonade stand of yesteryear.

To analyze how Etzioni tries to reframe the issue, try the following:

- Reread paragraphs 1–7, highlighting the qualities — values and skills — associated with traditional jobs and with McDonald's-type jobs, at least according to Etzioni.
- Write a couple of sentences explaining how Etzioni tries to reframe the issue and whether you think the story he tells about McDonald's-type jobs compared to traditional jobs is likely to make his readers reconsider their assumption that McDonald's-type jobs are good for kids.

A Well-Supported Position

Writers may use various kinds of support for their arguments. Like Statsky, Etzioni cites authorities. For example, Statsky quotes the official Little League Web site, professors, journalists, and parents. She carefully identifies her sources by supplying their credentials — for example, "Thomas Tutko, a psychology professor at San Jose State University and coauthor of the book *Winning Is Everything and Other American Myths*" (par. 3).

While Statsky cites credible authorities and tends to present their evidence confidently, she also *qualifies* it where appropriate — that is, she presents it tentatively when there can be reasonable debate about whether it qualifies as fact. For example, she reports that "Leonard Koppett in *Sports Illusion, Sports Reality* claims that a twelve-year-old trying to throw a curve ball . . . may put abnormal strain on developing arm

apprentices learning a trade from a master contributed most, if not all, of their income to their parents' household. Today, the teen pay may be low by adult standards, but it is often, especially in the middle class, spent largely or wholly by the teens. That is, the youngsters live free at home ("after all, they are high school kids") and are left with very substantial sums of money.

Where this money goes is not quite clear. Some use it to support themselves, especially among the poor. More middle-class kids set some money aside to help pay for college, or save it for a major purchase — often a car. But large amounts seem to flow to pay for an early introduction into the most trite aspects of American consumerism: flimsy punk clothes, trinkets and whatever else is the last fast-moving teen craze.

One may say that this is only fair and square; they are being good American consumers and spend their money on what turns them on. At least, a cynic might add, these funds do not go into illicit drugs and booze. On the other hand, an educator might bemoan that these young, yet unformed individuals, so early in life driven to buy objects of no intrinsic educational, cultural or social merit, learn so quickly the dubious merit of keeping up with the Joneses in ever-changing fads, promoted by mass merchandising.

Many teens find the instant reward of money, and the youth status symbols it buys, much more alluring than credits in calculus courses, European history or foreign languages. No wonder quite a few would rather skip school — and certainly homework — and instead work longer at a Burger King. Thus, most teen work these days is not providing early lessons in the work ethic; it fosters escape from school and responsibilities, quick gratification and a short cut to the consumeristic aspects of adult life.

Thus, parents should look at teen employment not as automatically educational. It is an activity — like sports — that can be turned into an educational opportunity. But it can also easily be abused. Youngsters must learn to balance the quest for income with the needs to keep growing and pursue other endeavors that do not pay off instantly — above all education.

Go back to school.

MAKING CONNECTIONS: JOB SKILLS

Etzioni argues that fast-food jobs do not qualify as meaningful work experience because they do not teach young people the skills and habits they will need for fulfilling careers: "entrepreneurship . . . self-discipline, self-supervision and self-scheduling" (par. 6).

With two or three other students, discuss what you have learned from your summer and after-school jobs. Begin by taking turns briefly describing the various jobs you have held. If you have never held a job, describe other significant activities you have participated in that required time and effort. Then, together consider the following questions:

- Which, if any, of the skills and habits Etzioni lists as important did you practice at your job or through the activities in which you participated?
- Why do you think these skills and habits are worth learning? If you think other skills and habits are as important or even more important, explain what they are and why you think so.

9 What does it matter if you spend 20 minutes to learn to use a cash register, and then — "operate" it? What "skill" have you acquired? It is a long way from learning to work with a lathe or carpenter tools in the olden days or to program computers in the modern age.

10 A 1980 study by A. V. Harrell and P. W. Wirtz found that, among those students who worked at least 25 hours per week while in school, their unemployment rate four years later was half of that of seniors who did not work. This is an impressive statistic. It must be seen, though, together with the finding that many who begin as part-time employees in fast-food chains drop out of high school and are gobbled up in the world of low-skill jobs.

11 Some say that while these jobs are rather unsuited for college-bound, white, middle-class youngsters, they are "ideal" for lower-class, "non-academic," minority youngsters. Indeed, minorities are "over-represented" in these jobs (21 percent of fast-food employees). While it is true that these places provide income, work and even some training to such youngsters, they also tend to perpetuate their disadvantaged status. They provide no career ladders, few marketable skills, and undermine school attendance and involvement.

12 The hours are often long. Among those 14 to 17, a third of fast-food employees (including some school dropouts) labor more than 30 hours per week, according to the Charper-Fraser study. Only 20 percent work 15 hours or less. The rest: between 15 and 30 hours.

13 Often the stores close late, and after closing one must clean up and tally up. In affluent Montgomery County, Md., where child labor would not seem to be a widespread economic necessity, 24 percent of the seniors at one high school in 1985 worked as much as five to seven days a week; 27 percent, three to five. There is just no way such amounts of work will not interfere with school work, especially homework. In an informal survey published in the most recent yearbook of the high school, 58 percent of seniors acknowledged that their jobs interfere with their school work.

14 The Charper-Fraser study sees merit in learning teamwork and working under supervision. The authors have a point here. However, it must be noted that such learning is not automatically educational or wholesome. For example, much of the supervision in fast-food places leans toward teaching one the wrong kinds of compliance: blind obedience, or shared alienation with the "boss."

15 Supervision is often both tight and woefully inappropriate. Today, fast-food chains and other such places of work (record shops, bowling alleys) keep costs down by having teens supervise teens with often no adult on the premises.

16 There is no father or mother figure with which to identify, to emulate, to provide a role model and guidance. The work-culture varies from one place to another: Sometimes it is a tightly run shop (must keep the cash registers ringing); sometimes a rather loose pot party interrupted by customers. However, only rarely is there a master to learn from, or much worth learning. Indeed, far from being places where solid adult work values are being transmitted, these are places where all too often delinquent teen values dominate. Typically, when my son Oren was dishing out ice cream for Baskin Robbins in upper Manhattan, his fellow teen-workers considered him a sucker for not helping himself to the till. Most youngsters felt they were entitled to $50 severance "pay" on their last day on the job.

17 The pay, oddly, is the part of the teen work-world that is most difficult to evaluate. The lemonade stand or paper route money was for your allowance. In the old days,

Working at McDonald's

AMITAI ETZIONI

McDonald's is bad for your kids. I do not mean the flat patties and the white-flour buns; I refer to the jobs teen-agers undertake, mass-producing these choice items. 1

As many as two-thirds of America's high school juniors and seniors now hold down part-time paying jobs, according to studies. Many of these are in fast-food chains, of which McDonald's is the pioneer, trend-setter and symbol. 2

At first, such jobs may seem right out of the Founding Fathers' educational manual for how to bring up self-reliant, work-ethic-driven, productive youngsters. But in fact, these jobs undermine school attendance and involvement, impart few skills that will be useful in later life, and simultaneously skew the values of teen-agers — especially their ideas about the worth of a dollar. 3

It has been a longstanding American tradition that youngsters ought to get paying jobs. In folklore, few pursuits are more deeply revered than the newspaper route and the sidewalk lemonade stand. Here the youngsters are to learn how sweet are the fruits of labor and self-discipline (papers are delivered early in the morning, rain or shine), and the ways of trade (if you price your lemonade too high or too low . . .). 4

Roy Rogers, Baskin Robbins, Kentucky Fried Chicken, *et al.* may at first seem nothing but a vast extension of the lemonade stand. They provide very large numbers of teen jobs, provide regular employment, pay quite well compared to many other teen jobs and, in the modern equivalent of toiling over a hot stove, test one's stamina. 5

Closer examination, however, finds the McDonald's kind of job highly uneducational in several ways. Far from providing opportunities for entrepreneurship (the lemonade stand) or self-discipline, self-supervision and self-scheduling (the paper route), most teen jobs these days are highly structured — what social scientists call "highly routinized." 6

True, you still have to have the gumption to get yourself over to the hamburger stand, but once you don the prescribed uniform, your task is spelled out in minute detail. The franchise prescribes the shape of the coffee cups; the weight, size, shape and color of the patties; and the texture of the napkins (if any). Fresh coffee is to be made every eight minutes. And so on. There is no room for initiative, creativity, or even elementary rearrangements. These are breeding grounds for robots working for yesterday's assembly lines, not tomorrow's high-tech posts. 7

There are very few studies on the matter. One of the few is a 1984 study by Ivan Charper and Bryan Shore Fraser. The study relies mainly on what teen-agers write in response to questionnaires rather than actual observations of fast-food jobs. The authors argue that the employees develop many skills such as how to operate a food-preparation machine and a cash register. However, little attention is paid to how long it takes to acquire such a skill, or what its significance is. 8

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CONSIDERING TOPICS FOR YOUR OWN ESSAY

List some issues that involve what you believe to be unfair treatment of any group. For example, should a law be passed to make English the official language in this country, requiring that election ballots and drivers' tests be printed only in English? Should teenagers be required to get their parents' permission to obtain birth-control information and contraception? What is affirmative action, and should it be used in college admissions for underrepresented groups? Should schools create and enforce guidelines to protect individuals from bullying and discrimination? Should everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, be allowed to marry?

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The following essay was originally published in the *Miami Herald*. The original headnote identifies Etzioni as the father of five sons, including three teenagers, and points out that his son Dari helped Etzioni write this essay — although it does not say what Dari contributed.

As you read, think about what you learned from the various summer and school-year jobs you have held.

Many people are ready for such an emphasis. In 1988, one New York Little League official who had attended the Adelphi workshop tried to ban scoring from six- to eight-year-olds' games — but parents wouldn't support him (Schmitt). An innovative children's sports program in New York City, City Sports for Kids, emphasizes fitness, self-esteem, and sportsmanship. In this program's basketball games, every member on a team plays at least two of six eight-minute periods. The basket is seven feet from the floor, rather than ten feet, and a player can score a point just by hitting the rim (Bloch). I believe this kind of local program should replace overly competitive programs like Peewee Football and Little League Baseball. As one coach explains, significant improvements can result from a few simple rule changes, such as including every player in the batting order and giving every player, regardless of age or ability, the opportunity to play at least four innings a game (Frank).

How effectively does Statsky conclude her argument?

Authorities have clearly documented the excesses and dangers of many competitive sports programs for children. It would seem that few children benefit from these programs and that those who do would benefit even more from programs emphasizing fitness, cooperation, sportsmanship, and individual performance. Thirteen- and fourteen-year-olds may be eager for competition, but few younger children are. These younger children deserve sports programs designed specifically for their needs and abilities.

Works Cited

Are Statsky's sources adequate to support her position, in number and kind? Has she documented them clearly and accurately?

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absorbed in living out their own fantasies than in enhancing the quality of the experience for children (Smith, Smith, and Smoll 9). Recent newspaper articles on children's sports contain plenty of horror stories. *Los Angeles Times* reporter Rich Tosches, for example, tells the story of a brawl among seventy-five parents following a Peewee Football game (A33). As a result of the brawl, which began when a parent from one team confronted a player from the other team, the teams are now thinking of hiring security guards for future games. Another example is provided by a *Los Angeles Times* editorial about a Little League manager who intimidated the opposing team by setting fire to one of their team's jerseys on the pitcher's mound before the game began. As the editorial writer commented, the manager showed his young team that "intimidation could substitute for playing well" ("The Bad News").

In criticizing some parents' behavior in pars. 8–9, Statsky risks alienating her readers. How effective is this part of her argument?

6

Although not all parents or coaches behave so inappropriately, the seriousness of the problem is illustrated by the fact that Adelphi University in Garden City, New York, offers a sports psychology workshop for Little League coaches, designed to balance their "animal instincts" with "educational theory" in hopes of reducing the "screaming and hollering," in the words of Harold Weisman, manager of sixteen Little Leagues in New York City (Schmitt). In a three-and-one-half-hour Sunday morning workshop, coaches learn how to make practices more fun, treat injuries, deal with irate parents, and be "more sensitive to their young players' fears, emotional frailties, and need for recognition." Little League is to be credited with recognizing the need for such workshops.

9

How effective is Statsky's use of concession and refutation here?

10

Some parents would no doubt argue that children cannot start too soon preparing to live in a competitive free-market economy. After all, secondary schools and colleges require students to compete for grades, and college admission is extremely competitive. And it is perfectly obvious how important competitive skills are in finding a job. Yet the ability to cooperate is also important for success in life. Before children are psychologically ready for competition, maybe we should emphasize cooperation and individual performance in team sports rather than winning.

children. Their goals should be having fun, learning, and being with friends. Although winning does add to the fun, too many adults lose sight of what matters and make winning the most important goal. Several studies have shown that when children are asked whether they would rather be warming the bench on a winning team or playing regularly on a losing team, about 90 percent choose the latter (Smith, Smith, and Smoll 11).

How does Statsky try to refute this objection?

Winning and losing may be an inevitable part of adult life, but they should not be part of childhood. Too much competition too early in life can affect a child's development. Children are easily influenced, and when they sense that their competence and worth are based on their ability to live up to their parents' and coaches' high expectations — and on their ability to win — they can become discouraged and depressed. Little League advises parents to "keep winning in perspective" ("Your Role"), noting that the most common reasons children give for quitting, aside from change in interest, are lack of playing time, failure and fear of failure, disapproval by significant others, and psychological stress ("What about My Child?"). According to Dr. Glyn C. Roberts, a professor of kinesiology at the Institute of Child Behavior and Development at the University of Illinois, 80 to 90 percent of children who play competitive sports at a young age drop out by sixteen (Kutner).

How effective do you think Statsky's argument in par. 7 is? Why?

This statistic illustrates another reason I oppose competitive sports for children: because they are so highly selective, very few children get to participate. Far too soon, a few children are singled out for their athletic promise, while many others, who may be on the verge of developing the necessary strength and ability, are screened out and discouraged from trying out again. Like adults, children fear failure, and so even those with good physical skills may stay away because they lack self-confidence. Consequently, teams lose many promising players who with some encouragement and experience might have become stars. The problem is that many parent-sponsored, out-of-school programs give more importance to having a winning team than to developing children's physical skills and self-esteem.

Indeed, it is no secret that too often scorekeeping, league standings, and the drive to win bring out the worst in adults who are more

professor at San Jose State University and coauthor of the book *Winning Is Everything and Other American Myths*, writes:

> I am strongly opposed to young kids playing tackle football. It is not the right stage of development for them to be taught to crash into other kids. Kids under the age of fourteen are not by nature physical. Their main concern is self-preservation. They don't want to meet head on and slam into each other. But tackle football absolutely requires that they try to hit each other as hard as they can. And it is too traumatic for young kids. (qtd. in Tosches A1)

Why do you think she uses block quotations instead of integrating these quotes into her own sentences?

As Tutko indicates, even when children are not injured, fear of being hurt detracts from their enjoyment of the sport. The Little League Web site ranks fear of injury as the seventh of seven reasons children quit ("What about My Child?"). One mother of an eight-year-old Peewee Football player explained, "The kids get so scared. They get hit once and they don't want anything to do with football anymore. They'll sit on the bench and pretend their leg hurts . . ." (qtd. in Tosches A1). Some children are driven to even more desperate measures. For example, in one Peewee Football game, a reporter watched the following scene as a player took himself out of the game:

> "Coach, my tummy hurts. I can't play," he said. The coach told the player to get back onto the field. "There's nothing wrong with your stomach," he said. When the coach turned his head the seven-year-old stuck a finger down his throat and made himself vomit. When the coach turned back, the boy pointed to the ground and told him, "Yes there is, coach. See?" (Tosches A33)

Besides physical hazards and anxieties, competitive sports pose psychological dangers for children. Martin Rablovsky, a former sports editor for the *New York Times*, says that in all his years of watching young children play organized sports, he has noticed very few of them smiling. "I've seen children enjoying a spontaneous pre-practice scrimmage become somber and serious when the coach's whistle blows," Rablovsky says. "The spirit of play suddenly disappears, and sport becomes joblike" (qtd. in Coakley 94). The primary goal of a professional athlete — winning — is not appropriate for

Basic Features

- A Well-Presented Issue
- A Well-Supported Position
- An Effective Counterargument
- A Readable Plan

Children Need to Play, Not Compete

Jessica Statsky

Over the past three decades, organized sports for children have increased dramatically in the United States. And though many adults regard Little League Baseball and Peewee Football as a basic part of childhood, the games are not always joyous ones. When overzealous parents and coaches impose adult standards on children's sports, the result can be activities that are neither satisfying nor beneficial to children.

How does Statsky present the issue in a way that prepares readers for her argument?

I am concerned about all organized sports activities for children between the ages of six and twelve. The damage I see results from noncontact as well as contact sports, from sports organized locally as well as those organized nationally. Highly organized competitive sports such as Peewee Football and Little League Baseball are too often played to adult standards, which are developmentally inappropriate for children and can be both physically and psychologically harmful. Furthermore, because they eliminate many children from organized sports before they are ready to compete, they are actually counterproductive for developing either future players or fans. Finally, because they emphasize competition and winning, they unfortunately provide occasions for some parents and coaches to place their own fantasies and needs ahead of children's welfare.

How does she qualify her position in par. 2?

What reasons does she forecast here, and in which paragraphs does she discuss each reason?

One readily understandable danger of overly competitive sports is that they entice children into physical actions that are bad for growing bodies. Although the official Little League Web site acknowledges that children do risk injury playing baseball, it insists that "severe injuries . . . are infrequent," the risk "far less than the risk of riding a skateboard, a bicycle, or even the school bus" ("What about My Child?"). Nevertheless, Leonard Koppett in *Sports Illusion, Sports Reality* claims that a twelve-year-old trying to throw a curve ball, for example, may put abnormal strain on developing arm and shoulder muscles, sometimes resulting in lifelong injuries (294). Contact sports like football can be even more hazardous. Thomas Tutko, a psychology

How does Statsky try to establish the credibility of her sources in pars. 3–5?

Purpose and Audience

People sometimes write position essays to clarify their own reasons for taking a particular position, but most position essays are written to influence readers' thinking on the issue. *As you read essays arguing a position, ask yourself what seems to be the writer's* ***purpose*** *in writing.* For example, does the writer seem to be writing

- to change readers' minds?
- to confirm readers' opinions?
- to supply readers with reasons and evidence to support the writer's position?
- to convince readers to look at the issue in a new way?
- to move readers to take action?
- to establish common ground on which people might be able to agree?
- to win readers' respect for a different point of view?

As you read, also try to guess what the writer assumes about the ***audience.*** For example, does the writer assume readers will

- be only mildly interested or know little about the issue?
- care deeply about the issue and have strong convictions?
- oppose or be skeptical of the writer's position?
- have their own position on the issue?
- have serious objections to the writer's argument?

Readings

JESSICA STATSKY wrote the following essay about children's competitive sports for her college composition course. Before reading, recall your own experiences as an elementary student playing competitive sports, either in or out of school. If you were not actively involved yourself, did you know anyone who was? Looking back, do you think that winning was unduly emphasized? What value was placed on having a good time? On learning to get along with others? On developing athletic skills and confidence?

As you read, consider the questions in the margin. Your instructor may ask you to post your answers or bring them to class.

A Well-Supported Position

Find where the essay states and supports the writer's position on the issue. Very often, writers declare their position in a thesis statement early in the essay. If you cannot at first find a direct statement of the writer's position, consider the title and the first and last paragraphs, and then read the entire essay through. Once you have decided what position the author is arguing, determine whether the argument is plausible by assessing whether the supporting reasons and evidence clearly back up the writer's claims and come from trustworthy sources. For example, consider the following questions:

- Are statements asserted to be *facts* widely accepted as true and complete?
- Are *examples* and *anecdotes* representative or idiosyncratic, and are they illustrative or manipulative?
- Are cited *authorities* credible and trustworthy?
- Are *statistics* taken from reliable sources and representative population samples?

An Effective Counterargument

Read also to see how the writer responds to possible objections readers might raise as well as to opposing positions. Writers may counterargue in one or more of the following ways:

- by acknowledging readers' concerns and points of view
- by conceding an objection and modifying the argument to accommodate it
- by refuting readers' objections or by arguing against opposing positions

A Readable Plan

Finally, examine the essay to see whether the writer provides a readable plan. Essays arguing a position need to explain the issue, provide a reasoned argument for the position, and counterargue objections and alternative positions, backing everything up with solid support and clear citations. Therefore, it is especially important to have a readable plan that helps readers follow the twists and turns of the argument.

To make their essays easy to read, writers usually include some or all of the following:

- a forecast of the argument
- key words introduced in the thesis and forecasting statement
- topic sentences introducing paragraphs or groups of paragraphs
- repeated use of key words and synonyms throughout the essay, particularly in topic sentences
- clear transitional words and phrases

Part 2. Discuss what you learned about making an argument for your position on a controversial issue.

- How did knowing whether you were addressing administrators, parents, or students affect which reasons you used and how you presented them? Why did you expect your audience to accept your reasons?
- To set up a debate, we asked you to think in pro/con terms, but there are usually more than two points of view on most controversial issues. What values, priorities, or interests do you think are most important to your audience when they think about this issue? What is most important to you?

Reading Essays Arguing a Position

Basic Features

As you read essays in this chapter arguing a position, you will see how different authors incorporate the basic features of the genre.

A Well-Presented Issue

Read first to see how the writer presents the issue. Is the issue controversial and clearly arguable — a matter on which people can reasonably disagree — or is the issue not arguable because opinions are based on belief, faith, or personal taste?

Writers may also use a variety of strategies to present the issue. Their choice of strategies depends in part on what they assume readers already know and what they want readers to think about the issue. For current, hotly debated issues, the title may be enough to identify the issue, but for less well-known issues, the writer may need to establish that the issue exists and is serious enough to deserve readers' attention. To inform readers about the issue's seriousness and to arouse readers' concern, writers may

- give examples or statistics that show how many people are affected by the issue and how they are affected;
- use scenarios or anecdotes that resonate with readers' own experiences and raise their concern; or
- quote authorities or research studies to show that the issue deserves attention.

Do not assume that the writer's presentation of the issue is objective. Writers almost always try to define or *frame* the issue in a way that promotes their position, usually by emphasizing values, priorities, and interests that are important to the reader. So as you read essays in this chapter, be attentive to how the writers frame the issues, and consider how this framing affects your response to the essays.

As you can see from these examples, many controversial issues have no obviously right answer, so simply gathering information — finding the facts or learning from experts — will not settle disagreements about them. However, it is possible through reasoned argument to convince others to accept or reject a particular position.

Improving our research and argument strategies has practical advantages in college, where we often are judged by our ability to argue convincingly, and in the workplace, where we may want to take a stand on issues concerning working conditions, environmental impact, or pay and promotional policies. Furthermore, as citizens in a democracy, we have a special duty to inform ourselves about pressing issues and to participate constructively in the public debate. Therefore, learning to make reasoned arguments is not a luxury; it is a necessity if our form of government is to survive and flourish.

In the following section, you will read essays arguing about children's sports, fast-food jobs, and the habits of the rising generation (yourself and your peers). These readings illustrate the strategies writers typically use when composing arguments. The Guide to Writing that follows will support you as you compose your own argument, showing ways to use the basic features of the genre to present your issue, state your position, offer plausible reasons and support, and make counterarguments.

A Collaborative Activity: Practice Arguing a Position

To get a sense of the complexities and possibilities involved in arguing a position, get together with two or three other students, and discuss an issue you have strong feelings about. Here are some guidelines to follow:

Part 1.

- As a group, choose one issue from the following list, or think of a different college issue you all know about:
  - Should admission to college be based solely on high school grade-point average?
  - Should there be a community service requirement for graduation from college?
  - Should college students be required to take courses outside their major?
  - Should the federal government subsidize everyone's college education?
  - Should sororities and fraternities be banned from college campuses?
  - Should drinking alcohol on college campuses be permitted?
  - Should college students living in residence halls be allowed to have pets?
  - Should college athletes be paid?
- Decide which audience you are trying to convince of your position on this particular issue — college administrators, your parents, or your fellow students.
- Divide into two teams — pro (those in favor) and con (those opposed) — and take a few minutes to think of reasons why your audience should accept your position.
- Take turns presenting your argument. You may have only a few minutes each, so set a phone alarm or countdown timer.

Arguing a Position

You may associate argument with quarreling or with the in-your-face exchanges we hear so often on radio and television talk shows. Although this kind of "argument" lets people vent strong feelings, it seldom leads them to consider seriously other points of view or to reflect on their own thinking. This chapter presents a more deliberative kind of argument that depends on giving reasons rather than raising voices.

Our culture is not entirely devoid of reasoned argument, however. In fact, you are probably quite familiar with at least some of its many forms, from newspaper editorials to formal debates to courtroom summations. Other examples of argument can be found in brochures, Web sites, documentaries, and advertisements.

While such arguments typically rely on written or spoken language, visuals can also play a significant role. As an example, consider the public service announcement (PSA) reproduced here. Using a single image and relatively few words, the PSA makes a surprisingly effective argument: Even a couple of beers can be a recipe for disaster, given the right conditions — so don't drink and drive. The serene visual, the familiar recipe format, and the use of realistic language expressing a seemingly moderate perspective ("It's only another a beer"; "just a few") reach out to average adults, who likely do not think of themselves as reckless or irresponsible, and remind them that it can be a short step from an ordinary evening relaxing with coworkers to a catastrophic accident.

In this chapter, we ask you to compose an argument on a topic of your choosing. As you compose your argument, you should consider whether the use of visuals or multimedia would help your readers more immediately or more fully grasp your position.

Reading and Writing Arguments

Like the writers in the chapter-opening scenarios — the college student supporting the Employee Free Choice Act, the parents arguing in favor of the Peacemakers program, and the financial industry executive defending AIG bonuses — writers who advocate controversial positions know that they will have a better chance of convincing others if they present the issue and their positions clearly, offer plausible reasons and support for their positions, and acknowledge other points of view.

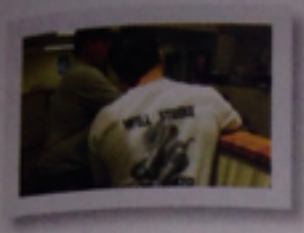
Controversial issues often provoke strong feelings. Perhaps criticisms are being leveled against a widely accepted practice, like allowing college athletes to register for courses before all other students to accommodate practice and travel schedules, or maybe someone is proposing a radical divergence from established policy, like the U.S. government's use of torture to get information from prisoners. People may agree about goals but disagree about the best way to achieve them, as in the perennial debate over how to make a public college education affordable to all qualified students, or they may disagree about fundamental values and beliefs, as in the debate over granting citizenship to immigrants who have entered the United States illegally.

The "It's Only Another Beer" Black and Tan

8 oz. pilsner lager
8 oz. stout lager
1 frosty mug
1 icy road
1 pick-up truck
1 10-hour day
1 tired worker
A few rounds with the guys

Mix ingredients.
Add 1 totalled vehicle.

Never underestimate 'just a few.'
Buzzed driving is drunk driving.



IN COLLEGE COURSES For a political science course, a student writes an essay arguing in favor of the controversial Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). She begins by explaining that the EFCA would reform current labor law by allowing workers to unionize if a majority simply signed a card requesting it; under current law, their employer can require a secret ballot. Those who oppose the new law claim that without a secret ballot, workers could be intimidated into voting for the union.

The student's essay argues that under existing law employers routinely make use of the time required to set up a secret ballot to dissuade workers from voting to unionize. To support her argument, she cites statistics from the National Labor Relations Board and other sources showing, among other things, that 88 percent of the unfair labor practice citations in 2006 and 2007 were against employers, not unions.

IN THE COMMUNITY In a letter to the school board, a group of parents writes a petition in favor of a proposal to institute a Peacemakers program at the local middle school. They begin with anecdotal reports of bullying at the school to underscore the need for action. They emphasize that the program's primary goal — teaching children not to avoid conflict but to manage conflict constructively — is one all parents could endorse, and they argue that those who oppose the program misunderstand it. They demonstrate parents' misunderstanding of the program's methods — for example, the ideas that students must keep their hands clasped behind their backs when walking down the halls and that students cannot play contact sports like basketball and football. To clarify the Peacemakers' actual methods, they briefly describe the negotiation procedure children are taught that involves articulating what they want, listening to what others want, and cooperatively inventing ways of resolving the conflict. They conclude by claiming that learning negotiation skills like these will help children throughout their lives.

IN THE WORKPLACE An executive in the financial industry defends American International Group (AIG) on a blog for paying out $165 million in bonuses after the company was saved from bankruptcy by taxpayers. The executive begins by acknowledging the justifiable public indignation. Nevertheless, he argues that AIG had no choice but to honor the bonus contracts. He claims that efforts by the government to void the contracts would set a dangerous precedent. He concludes by reminding his readers of what he assumes is a shared value: Not getting paid for work already performed is un-American.

To his surprise, his blog entry provokes nearly two hundred responses, most of which disagree with his defense of the bonuses, arguing that incompetence and greed should not be federally subsidized.