

The writer made it clear that this argument is a part of a bigger conversation about a topic/text.

The writer interested the reader in the argument and helped the reader to understand the backstory behind it. The writer gave the backstory in a way that got the reader ready to understand the point being made.

Dear Administration and Members of the PTA,

Imagine that you were told that you could no longer do what you loved to do because someone thought it might be too dangerous. How would you feel? Recently, the students at our school were told that we could no longer play football on the school grounds. Every day we gather before school and after to play football but now we are told that this is no longer allowed. This is an unfair decision for many reasons. Football is an important source of physical fitness and it teaches us important life lessons. In addition, it's an inexpensive and inclusive game that many of us are passionate about. Denying us the chance to play it is taking away an important part of our interests. I am writing this letter to ask you to please remove the ban and allow us to play football on the school grounds again.

First, you should consider that by taking away the chance to play football before and after school, you are taking away an opportunity for us to be healthier. America is facing a big problem—its youth are unhealthy. In the article “Couch Culture: Only a Quarter of U.S. Youth Get Recommended Exercise” by Alexandra Sifferlin it says that one out of every three children in the U.S. is overweight or obese (2014). The article refers to scientific studies done by the National Center for Health Statistics in which researchers found that only about 24.8% of youth surveyed in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)'s National Youth Fitness Survey gets the amount of physical fitness that the U.S. government has recommended. That means that most kids in America are not getting enough physical fitness and they are in danger of growing up to become adults who are sick with diseases like cancer, diabetes, and heart trouble. Playing football is one way that we could stay much more active. Football offers lots of exercise for many muscle groups. Kimberly Nunley (2013) wrote a blog for Livestrong.com about the main muscles used to play football and she claims, “Football is a sport that requires strength and power in nearly every muscle throughout the body.” That means every single muscle is getting used and getting exercise when you play football! Plus, there are other physical benefits, too. According to another article “5 Mental and Physical Benefits of Playing Football,” Schienbaum (2013) says that football teaches agility, hand-eye coordination, builds muscle, and requires strategy. He also argues that these benefits of football will help players to do better when they play other sports and off the field. Football is not like games like baseball or kickball where players spend a lot of time waiting around for it to be your turn. Stopping us from playing on the grounds is cutting off a major form of exercise and physical fitness for lots of students.

The writer made it clear to readers what the piece will argue and forecasted the parts of the upcoming argument.

The writer arranged the parts of the piece purposefully and led readers from one claim or counterclaim or reason or piece of evidence to another.

The writer incorporated and cited trustworthy sources.

The writer included varied kinds of evidence such as facts, quotations, examples, and definitions.

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## Grade 7 (continued)

## Argument Writing

The writer used topic sentences and transitions to clarify the structure of the piece and to highlight main points.

The writer included domain-specific, technical vocabulary relevant to the argument.

The writer's argument is compelling as well as understandable. It is clear why this argument matters and why the audience should care about it.

The writer wrote about another possible position and explained why the evidence for his/her position outweighed the counterclaims.

Another reason why you should take away the ban on playing football in the school grounds is that football teaches important life lessons. According to the article "3 Ways Your Child Will Benefit from Playing Football," by Steve Alic (2013), "by playing this sport, young athletes learn football's timeless qualities of leadership, responsibility, perseverance and teamwork." This means that playing football teaches lessons about leadership and dedication and pushing yourself to do more than you thought you could. As the quarterback of our team, I have personal experience with gaining leadership skills through playing football. When I pulled the team into a huddle a few weeks ago and ran through our plays, I really felt like a leader. Everyone on the team was looking at me and nodding and then when we ran the play and scored a touchdown, they all ran up to me and slapped me five. "Great job leading," they said. Without these kinds of experiences, how do you learn to be a leader? Playing football is not just about exercise. What happens inside your mind—thinking about the strategies you need to use to get the ball and to take it down the yard and how you are going to work as a team—that's important, too. These are lessons that we could carry with us our whole lives. Taking away football means you are taking away those lessons.

You should consider how inexpensive and inclusive football is. You don't need fancy equipment. Just grab the pigskin and your friends and you are set. No one is excluded. If someone else wants to join in the game, then we take turns rotating who is on the field. Football is not like sports like tennis where people get left out and you have to pay lots of money for fancy rackets. Football is just a bunch of people running around having a great time. And it's part of our community. Students have been playing football before and after school for years. When I was a little kid in elementary school I would watch kids in middle school running around in all kinds of weather because they loved playing football so much. It was like I was watching a joyful future and now that is gone. Many of us want to play football in high school and college. We are losing out on a chance to practice and get better. When tryouts come in high school, we'll be unprepared and likely will not make the team.

Some people say football is too dangerous. They say that kids shouldn't play football because they will get injured and get concussions. This is not the whole story. Saying that football causes injuries overlooks all the good that comes out of playing football like the exercise and the mental good. Football is an important game for youth to play. In his article, Steve Alic (2013) argues "to the kids, though, the game is about fun, friendships and camaraderie. It's about achieving success or learning from failure then lining right back up to try again." In addition, I surveyed all of the kids I know who played football and out of 36 kids, 7 have gotten hurt and only 3 have been hurt badly enough to have to go to the doctor or

The writer used transitions to link different parts of the argument and to make it clear when the writer is stating a claim or counterclaim, giving a reason or offering or analyzing evidence. The transitions help the reader follow from part to part.

The writer analyzed or explained the reasons and evidence given, showing how they fit with the claim and support the argument.

The writer varied sentence structure.

The writer used words purposefully to affect meaning and tone.

The writer used metaphors to explain concepts.

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## Grade 7 (continued)

## Argument Writing

the hospital. Sure, you could get hurt playing football (you could get hurt playing ANY sport) but on the other hand, there are ways we could make football safer. In the article, "The Problem with Football: How to Make it Safer" by Sean Gregory (2010), it says that NFL Competition Committee is thinking of ways to make football safer and they have suggestions for youth football too. They say that players should be more careful not to head butt or to not keep pushing themselves if they think they are injured. We, the students who want to play, could write up a list of rules and make sure that everyone signs them. That way we could make sure that our game is safer. That would be a fair compromise. To take football away completely is unfair.

The writer acknowledged alternate positions but refuted them.

The writer used internal punctuation appropriately within sentences and when citing sources, including commas, dashes, parentheses, colons, and semicolons.

In conclusion I would like to say that we have nowhere else to go play. You do need a lot of space to play football and there aren't a ton of football fields or yards around everywhere. If we have to go play in football leagues, our parents will have to pay money for us to join and that is not fair. We need the space on the school grounds. Schools should support students' passions and interests. Football is a fun game which is full of invigorating exercise both physical and mental. It is a passion for many of us and we are all asking you to reconsider your ban. Please let us continue to play football on the school grounds. We promise you we will make sure we play safely. That way everyone will be happy.

The writer used a formal tone, but varied it appropriately to engage the reader.

In the conclusion, the writer reinforced and built on the main points in a way that makes the text a cohesive whole. The writer restated main points and highlighted their significance.

Sincerely,

A concerned student who misses football

P.S. I listed my sources below in case you want to check them:

The writer spelled material in citations correctly.

Alic, S. (2013). *3 Ways Your Child Will Benefit from Playing Youth Football*. [Web Log Entry] Retrieved from <http://usafootball.com/blogs/americas-game/post/7269>

Gregory, S. (2010). The Problem with Football: How to Make it Safer. *Time Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1957459,00.html>

Nunley, K. (2013). *Main Muscles Used in Football*. Retrieved from <http://www.livestrong.com/article/461382-main-muscles-used-in-football/>

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## Grade 7 (continued)

## Argument Writing

Scheinbaum, C. (2013). *5 Mental and Physical Benefits of Playing Football*. [Web Log Entry] Retrieved from <http://www.theadrenalist.com/sports/5-mental-and-physical-benefits-of-playing-football/>

Sifferlin, A. (2014). *Couch Culture: Only a Quarter of U.S. Youth Get Recommended Exercise*. Retrieved from <http://healthland.time.com/2014/01/08/couch-culture-only-a-quarter-of-u-s-youth-get-recommended-exercise/>

Silverman, S. (2014). *What Are the Health Benefits of Being a Football Player?* Retrieved from <http://www.livestrong.com/article/406283-what-are-the-health-benefits-of-being-a-football-player/>