



Proficient | Exemplar Essay

Protection or Privacy

Patriot Act Protection



Claim and Focus

The essay introduces a clear, arguable claim (“Safety was a priority, even at the cost of privacy, proving that overall, safety is more important than privacy”). The writing maintains focus on the purpose and task, using a majority of the paragraphs to support and develop the claim and counterclaims (“It makes sense then that the government should have access to information that will help keep people safe”).



Support and Evidence

Appropriate evidence is cited to support the claim and oppose the counterclaims (“Essentially the Patriot Act gives investigators the ability to fight terror...”). The essay demonstrates an understanding of the topic by stating the strengths and weaknesses of the claim and counterclaims (“This seems like an invasion of privacy and law”).



Organization

The essay incorporates an organizational strategy with clear transition words and phrases (“additionally” and “however”) that show the relationship between and among ideas. The writing includes a progression of ideas from beginning to end with a strong introduction (“Both political parties worked together to ensure that American citizens could feel safe again”) and a concluding statement.



Language and Style

The essay demonstrates perspective and voice (“What is more important, security or privacy?”). A somewhat objective tone is maintained (“After all, if you’re innocent of wrongdoing, why should you mind if the government looks into your phone calls or other records?”). The essay employs interesting word choice (“there would be many more scars left in American memories”) and some variety in sentence structure.



Using Exemplars in Your Lessons

Exemplar essays are tools to take abstract descriptions and make them more concrete for students. One way to use them is to print the clean copies of the essays and allow students to use the rubric to make notes or even find examples of important elements of an essay - thesis statements, introductions, evidence, conclusions, transitions, etc. Teachers can also use exemplars to illustrate what each score point within a trait ‘looks like’ in an authentic student essay. For additional ideas, please see “25 Ways to Use Exemplar Essays” by visiting the Curriculum Resources page in Help.

Protection or Privacy



Notes

Patriot Act Protection

What is more important, security or privacy? The answer to this question was quite different before the terror attacks on September 11. Most people were shocked and surprised when the Twin Towers were attacked and the planes went down. This led politicians and ordinary people to ask how they could be safer. Both political parties worked together to ensure that American citizens could feel safe again. They passed the Patriot Act a short time after the attacks. Safety was a priority, even at the cost of privacy, proving that overall, safety is more important than privacy. First, the primary purpose of the U.S. government is to protect its citizens. "Essentially the Patriot Act gives investigators the ability to fight terror, using many of the same court-approved tools that have been used successfully for many years in drug, fraud, and organized crime cases." (Source 3) It makes sense then that the government should have access to information that will help keep people safe. The Patriot Act Infographic (Source 5) shows a visual of over thirty blocked terrorist plots since December of 2001. It is definitely better to prevent such attacks than to deal with the aftermath of terrorism. Without the Patriot Act there would be many more scars left in American memories and history books. This is more than enough reason for the Patriot Act to continue as it is currently written.

Additionally, consider that the Patriot Act also allows government intelligence agencies and criminal investigators to share information. Prior to the Patriot Act in 2001, the two law enforcement communities were unable to legally share information. The two agencies are allowed to share information if it is considered to be a matter of national security. This is a much more efficient use of resources than before. This is



the second reason why the Patriot Act needs to continue as a part of American policy.

However, Source 2 says "It's unconstitutional and illegal." This is not true, and it doesn't go against their Fourth Amendment rights. The Fourth Amendment is the right of the people to secure their personal things such as houses, papers and effects against unreasonable searches, and states that warrants shall not be an excuse to be able to violate this amendment. The Patriot Act allows the NSA to find information about private citizens without a warrant. They access phone records of people who have never been in trouble sometimes. This seems like an invasion of privacy and law. Safety should be a priority. The good intentions of the Patriot Act must be noted. This tactic has worked successfully on many different investigations such as fraud, drug trafficking, passport fraud, etc.

In conclusion, the Patriot Act is here to protect as many American lives as it can from clear danger so it is worth less privacy to have better security. After all, if you're innocent of wrongdoing, why should you mind if the government looks into your phone calls or other records?