



Proficient | Exemplar Essay

Young People As Activists

Change Happens with Protest



Claim and Focus

A clear claim on the topic is introduced and the essay maintains focus on defending this position. All parts of the claim are not developed evenly (“take action”), but the demands of the prompt are met.



Support and Evidence

Relevant evidence is quoted from multiple sources to support the ideas presented, though most of the evidence comes from Sources 1 and 3. The essay demonstrates reasoning and understanding of the sources and acknowledges the counterclaim to the position.



Organization

Clear transitions show the connections between ideas (“According to,” “In addition,” “On the other hand”) and purposeful paragraphs create an effective organizational structure.



Language

A consistent perspective is established by incorporating language that shows an awareness of the reader’s interests and is generally formal in style. Sentence structure is adequately varied and word choice is appropriate for the topic.



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.

Young People As Activists



Change Happens with Protest

The best method young people should use to advocate for change is social media. Protests have been used to fight for social justice throughout history and they are still needed for activism, but social media can have a bigger impact than protesting. Social media is the most effective method for young people to communicate, organize, and take action.

Young people are using social media to organize online petitions, walkouts, and in-person protests more and more. Young people grew up using the internet and social media, and now they are using it for online activism. According to Rainesford Stauffer in Teen Vogue, "social media has given young people a new space to share information and raise money. The effect is that young people are organizing and mobilizing like never before." He also reported that Ryan Pascal organized the Parkland protests over Instagram and Snapchat (Source 3).

In addition, students using social media played a large part in organizing the Black Lives Matter protests this year. The article "Parkland: How Protests Engage People and Create Change" described the protests for George Floyd. These protests happened all over the world and were about demanding an end to police violence. On June 4th, 2020, youth activists in the Teens for Equality group led a march in Nashville of over 10,000 people. It "was well-organized and there were no conflicts with police" (Source 1). Also Greta Thunberg went viral on social media which made students walk out of school all across the world for climate change (Source 2).

On the other hand, social media does have its downside. Many people think that



liking a post or signing a petition is all you need to do to make change. But even giving this little bit of effort still helps the movement by spreading awareness and staying informed.

Youth activism has always existed. The youth activists of the past were an important addition to the civil rights protests for equality at that time. The young citizens of today are realizing their power in a similar way and using social media to advocate for change. Social media activism is the most effective method to communicate, organize, and make real change in our world.