



Emerging | Exemplar Essay

Letter to Your Principal: Cell Phones

Headphones or Speakers



Claim and Focus

A clear stance on the issue - whether or not cell phones should be banned from schools - is never addressed. Instead, the author of this response discusses why headphones are more effective than speakers, proving ineffective focus on the topic and the task. No counterclaim is addressed.



Support and Evidence

Some evidence is included (“[Headphones] can let you listen to your own music that you like...”), but it is irrelevant to the topic. While one statement comes directly from Source 3 (“It will help with bullying or harassing other students with unwanted voice or text messages”), it is lacking quotation marks and is not directly connected to the information that is addressed in the response.



Organization

The essay does not have a clear organizational structure and it is difficult to follow the progression of ideas. While a salutation is evident (“Dear Principal”) to indicate a letter structure, transitions and a conclusion of any kind are missing.



Language and Style

There is no clear perspective on the issue of using cell phones in schools, and instead, the response focuses on whether speakers or headphones are better. The language of the response is informal and inappropriate for the topic. Sentence structures are simplistic and unvaried throughout, making for an unengaging discussion.



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.

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Notes

Dear Principal,

Do you think the school should allow cell phones? I like to listen to music and using my phone is better than big speakers. Here are some reasons why.

Let's think about earphones that you can put with your phone, and how better they are than speakers. They can let you listen to your own music that you like, and so we don't talk if we listen to music on our own phones. That's why we need earphones not speakers so someone else should take speakers and only bring your 10 dollar earphones if you don't want to bring your expensive speaker. It will help with bullying or harassing other students with unwanted voice or text messages.