

The following passages appeared in a flyer presenting the pros and cons of setting a national minimum driving age of eighteen in the United States.

Teen Drivers Put Everyone at Risk

1. The legal driving age varies from country to country. In many countries the minimum driving age is eighteen. In the United States, however, most states issue restricted or full licenses at sixteen years of age, with some issuing learner permits to drivers as young as fourteen. The United States should standardize the minimum driving age across all states, and that age should be raised to eighteen.
2. If the minimum driving age were eighteen in the United States, we would see a dramatic change in accident and fatality rates. The National Teen Driving Statistics says that motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers and that sixteen-year-olds have higher crash rates than drivers of any other age. In fact, sixteen-year-olds are three times more likely to die in a motor vehicle crash than the average of all drivers. Those facts alone should lead us to conclude that an older minimum driving age is a safer driving age.
3. The National Institutes of Health offer a convincing reason to make a national minimum driving age of eighteen. They found that in a sixteen-year-old, "the executive branch" of the brain is generally far less developed than those of teens just a little older- the part that weighs risks, makes judgments and controls impulsive behavior. The scientists have found that this vital area develops significantly through the teenage years and isn't fully mature until age 25. That is why brain and auto safety experts think that most teenagers are just too immature to handle today's cars and roadway risk as they tend to treat cars more like toys or video games. If we really want to protect society, we would establish a minimum driving age of 25!

A Minimum Driving Age Is Unfair

1. Young drivers have more accidents than older drivers. That is a fact. However, calls to raise the minimum driving age to eighteen are misguided. Younger drivers have more accidents because they are inexperienced, not because of how old they are. If the minimum age is raised to eighteen, then eighteen-year-olds- still inexperienced drivers--will have more accidents.
2. Raising the legal driving age based on a generalization that younger people do not drive responsibly is unfair to the majority who are responsible. Men are statistically more likely to be involved in car accidents than women. However, there is no discussion of restricting driving licenses to the latter group. The teenage group has a fair number of accidents, but so does the over-60 group. Should we take away their licenses too? Just because some in a group are irresponsible, that does not mean all should be penalized.

Write an essay in which you explain your own position on the issue of whether or not there should be a national minimum driving age of eighteen in the United States.

Be sure to use evidence from the text passages provided as well as specific reasons and examples from your own experience and knowledge to support your position. Remember that every position exists within the context of a larger discussion of the issue, so your essay should, at minimum, acknowledge alternate and/or opposing ideas. When you have finished your essay, review your writing to check for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

MY ESSAY

The legal driving age varies between countries due to safety concerns. I have traveled to many places where the minimum driving age was eighteen. However, the ongoing debate over whether the United States minimum driving age should change continues, and it concerns many parents over their child's safety.

The United States should raise the minimum driving age to eighteen, for the safety of teenage drivers and other drivers on the road. The National Teen drivers statistics reported that drivers under the age of eighteen have significantly higher crash rates than those of an older age. This endangers the lives of many on the road and the teenage drivers themselves. Raising the driving age to a minimum of eighteen reduces the risk of fatal injuries. This supports my point that driving under the age of eighteen is too dangerous. Furthermore, parents would be put at ease if their kids were not exposed to the dangers of driving so soon; my parents felt that my older brother was only mature enough to drive when he turned eighteen.

Teenage drivers are a huge risk, especially because their brains are still developing. The brain does not fully develop until the age of twenty-five, so putting emotionally immature teens out on the streets is dangerous. Teenage brains need time to develop in order to make the split-second judgments one might have to make while driving. Being a teenager myself has let me see how susceptible teenagers are to their emotions; this can cause road rage and lead to rash decisions.

As the second passage points out, many might argue that raising the driving age is unfair to teenagers who are responsible enough to drive. Although some teenagers may be responsible enough to drive, it does not rule out the fact that a lot of teenagers are not. Allowing a certain age group to drive means allowing even the immature and irresponsible people in that age group out on the streets. If it means that lives will be saved thanks to a decrease in fatal accidents, then teenagers should not be allowed to drive. Teenagers who are in need of a mode of transportation may use a bike or take the bus, which is much safer than driving. The passage also compares teen and older drivers to men and women. This is not a fair comparison since the accidents caused by the age difference between adults and teenagers is more significant than the accidents caused by the driver being a certain gender. Driving is a huge responsibility that should not be taken lightly; once you start the engine, you become responsible for your life and the lives around you.

The legal driving age should be raised to eighteen to decrease fatalities and anxiety on the streets. Driving will become much safer and parents won't have to worry about their young loved ones on the road. Additionally, teenagers get the time to become mature emotionally before they start driving; those who already are will have to wait for the safety of the greater community. Driving is a huge responsibility that should only be handed to those who are ready for it.