

HiSET Essay Guide

The essay prompt will always follow this structure:

Write an essay in which you explain your position on the issue of _____.

Follow these directions—Be sure to use specific reasons and examples from the articles AND your own experience and knowledge to support your position.

Introduction

Two articles discuss the issue of _____

_____. One passage states that _____

_____ while another passage argues _____

_____ MY POSITION is that _____

Body Paragraph 1

According to "_____ TITLE OF ARTICLE _____," the writer feels
(then explain their argument) _____

In contrast the writer of "_____ TITLE OF SECOND ARTICLE _____,"
(name other article and explain the other argument), _____

Body Paragraph 2

From my viewpoint, _____
_____. I read (add in
a personal example) _____
_____. I know _____
_____. Although the other author
believes _____

_____, It is my position that _____

Conclusion

To summarize both articles make valid points, but I agree with the author who supports
the idea of _____ because
_____. My position of
_____ makes the most sense. In today's society this is
important because _____
_____.

Essay sample

TWO ARTICLES DISCUSS THE ISSUE of a dog park in the city of Muscatine. **ONE PASSAGE STATES** that a public park for dogs would be too costly and have a negative impact on the community **WHILE** another passage argues that a dog park would be a benefit for the city and add value to the community. **MY POSITION is that** a dog park would be helpful for dog owners as well as the community.

ACCORDING TO the AUTHOR of "A Dog Park Benefits All," the park would allow much needed space for dogs confined to an apartment or small home with no real yard. In addition, the columnist feels that a dog park would increase property values in the community. **IN CONTRAST**, "No Dog Park for Muscatine" mentions the drawbacks such a facility would have on the community. One example is the cost of construction and another is the noise of barking dogs.

FROM MY VIEWPOINT, I agree with the author in support of dog parks built by the city. As a dog owner who lives in an apartment, **I KNOW** how important it is to get my dog daily exercise. A dog park is not only easy to access, but allows various opportunities for dogs to get exercise and socialize as well. **ALTHOUGH** these parks do cost money and dogs can be noisy, **IT IS MY OPINION** that the benefits to the community outweigh the negative aspects addressed in the article.

TO SUMMARIZE, BOTH ARTICLES MAKE VALID POINTS, BUT I AGREE WITH THE AUTHOR WHO SUPPORTS the idea of city created dog parks **BECAUSE** it is a good place for dogs and their owners. **MY POSITION THAT** a city maintained dog park **MAKES THE MOST SENSE. IN TODAY'S SOCIETY THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE** a community that provides a place for dogs and their owners to safely exercise and play is providing a key service to many of its citizens.

Here is the prompt and readings for the above essay

Sample Essay Question for the HiSET test

Following these instructions, you will find two passages in which the authors put forth differing perspectives on an issue of importance. Read both passages carefully, noting the strengths and weaknesses of each discussion. **Then, you will write an essay in which you explain your own opinion on the issue.**

Muscatine, Iowa, is considering building a public dog park in a residential area of the city. The dog park would consist of an acre of open land surrounded by a fence, where dog owners can unleash their dogs for play and exercise. Two residents wrote blog posts for the city's website expressing their views.

Reading 1: A Dog Park Benefits All

Our city is in desperate need of a dog park. Just ask my dog Gizmo, whose only exercise is his daily walk around the neighborhood. Rental units house 68% of city residents. A quarter of these rental units are in apartment buildings like mine. Apartment buildings typically have very little private yard space. Because it's against city ordinance for dogs to be off-leash in public areas, Gizmo can't run and play very much at all.

Exercise is important to dogs' mental and physical health. According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), dogs that don't get exercise can act out by barking and destroying things at home. Socializing is important too. If a dog doesn't learn to get along with other dogs, it may attack a strange dog or a person. When New York City started allowing dogs off-leash in dog parks, dog-bite reports went from 40,000 to fewer than 4,000 per year.

Bad behavior caused by dogs being lonely or poorly exercised is partly responsible for the 2 million pet dogs that end up at U.S. animal shelters every year. In one 2013 study, researchers reported that 65% of owners who left their dogs at shelters blamed it on the dog's bad behavior.

A dog park would address these issues. It would also prevent pet owners from illegally letting their dogs loose to exercise in empty lots and city parks. In a city, dogs running free can injure people or get hit by cars.

A dog park wouldn't be good just for dog owners. Everyone would benefit. Dog parks have been shown to raise property values in their communities. Property in the city would be in high demand since the 37% of Americans who own dogs often look for a dog park when choosing where to live.

Reading 2: No Dog Park for Muscatine

I like dogs, but I don't want a public dog park. It would be a burden for taxpayers and a lawsuit waiting to happen.

Some cities require owners to obtain and display permits to have dogs off-leash at the dog park, but most people do not do so. Mostly, cities rely on people respecting the parks' rules, even though the rules are often not heeded. This means that if a dog attacks another dog or a

person in a dog park, the victim can rightfully sue both the dog's owner and the city for not enforcing the law.

A dog park will make the community unpleasant. Traffic congestion will increase near the park. Noise from barking dogs and their yelling owners will disturb nearby residents. This could cause them both stress and lack of sleep. The average dog bark is 75 decibels, and many large dogs bark at 100 decibels. Even through a closed window, a dog's bark can reach a noise level that is mentally upsetting. This problem has been reported by residents living near dog parks in Reston, Virginia, and Chandler, Arizona, among other places.

Taxpayers should not have to fund this expensive project. The park's fencing alone will cost \$70,000! Dog owners shouldn't be able to pressure the city to provide a space to exercise dogs just because the owners cannot provide space themselves. I have a cat, as do many other residents. However, I'm not about to suggest that Muscatine taxpayers fund a public catnip garden!

A person's pet is her own responsibility and no one else's. If dog owners want a park, they should build it far away, on private land, and pay for it themselves.

Prompt:

Write an essay in which you **explain your own position on the issue of whether or not public dog parks should be built in cities.**

Be sure to use specific reasons and examples from your own experience and knowledge to support your position. Evidence from the passages provided should also be used to support your ideas. 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.