

Read the information in the box below.

“Before I can live with other folks I've got to live with myself. The one thing that doesn't abide by majority rule is a person's conscience. “

from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee

Although we are often concerned about others' opinions of us, we must also be certain we can live with our own decisions.

Think carefully about this statement.

Write an essay explaining whether people should be more concerned about the approval of others, or more concerned about doing what they believe is right.

Be sure to —

- clearly state your thesis
- organize and develop your ideas effectively
- choose your words carefully
- edit your writing for grammar, mechanics, and spelling.

Read the information in the box below.

On a Sunday afternoon in 1938, millions of Americans were sitting at home in front of their radios when a special program, *War of the Worlds*, was broadcast.

War of the Worlds was a work of fiction, a story about Martians invading and attacking major cities all over the country. The radio broadcast was so convincing that many listeners believed that aliens were actually invading. Thousands panicked. Citizens evacuated their homes, built gas masks, or armed themselves. The entire country was affected by one radio program.

In the 21st century, we are surrounded by media messages, delivered via television, online sources, movies, books, advertisements, and more. Some messages contain truth, but many mislead consumers.

Consumers of the mass media believe much of what they see and hear. **Think** carefully about this statement.

Write an essay explaining the impact of the media on people's lives.

Be sure to —

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Read the information in the box below.

"I like to listen. I have learned a great deal from listening carefully. Most people never listen."

-Ernest Hemingway

Think about how and why listening might be more valuable than speaking.

Write an essay explaining how listening contributes to understanding.

Be sure to —

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Read the information in the box below.

"You don't know who is important to you until you actually lose them."

-Mohandas Gandhi

Although losing something valuable can be a terrible experience, loss sometimes allows people to see the world differently. **Think** carefully about this statement.

Write an essay explaining the effect of loss on people's lives.

Be sure to —

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Read the information in the box below.

During the 1930's, the farm country that covers the central plains of the United States suffered an intense drought. As a result of that drought, dust storms overwhelmed the entire region, destroying the countryside and forcing farmers to abandon their homes. This period in American history was known as the Dust Bowl.

The Dust Bowl taught farmers that they must be more careful to protect their farmland. Although it was expensive and time consuming, farmers planted *windbreaks*, rows of trees that sheltered the land from the wind, helping prevent similar dust storms in the future.

Although many people make decisions based on what will benefit them today, some people choose to make decisions based on what will benefit them later in life. **Think** carefully about this statement.

Write an essay explaining whether people should be more concerned with their immediate circumstances or their long-term goals.

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Read the information in the box below.

Warfare has had an enormous impact on the evolution of technology throughout human history, providing scientists the opportunity to experiment with new weaponry, develop new surgical techniques, and implement revolutionary improvements in manufacturing. But warfare has also had a major effect on one other field: deep-sea exploration.

Submarines were developed as engines of war. Even the earliest submarines were able to move silently behind enemy lines and attack their targets unexpectedly. Today, though, submarine technology allows marine scientists to reach beneath the ocean floor, sailing to depths of nearly 7 miles. These scientists have uncovered a world of mystery and beauty never seen before by human eyes.

Although conflict can be disruptive, it sometimes allows people to see the world in new ways. **Think** carefully about this statement.

Write an essay explaining whether conflict sometimes creates positive results.

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Read the information in the box below.

During his lifetime, Thomas Alva Edison became known as a master inventor. He was responsible for improvements in light bulbs, movie cameras, phonographs, typewriters, film, and batteries. In fact, Edison was granted 1,093 patents in his lifetime.

Although the ideas for these inventions were his own, Edison did not work alone. He operated a large laboratory and employed apprentices, assistants, and experimenters to help him develop his many inventions.

Even the most brilliant and creative minds in history have benefited from the cooperation and input of others. **Think** carefully about this statement.

Write an essay explaining how cooperation can help people as they pursue goals.

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Read the information in the box below.

“Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently.”

-Henry Ford

Although people are encouraged when they experience success, failure can inspire a person to become better, smarter, or stronger. **Think** carefully about this statement.

Write an essay explaining the effect of failure on people’s lives.

Be sure to —

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Read the information in the box below.

In Brooklyn, students at a junior high school called I.S. 318 are challenged by poverty. More than 70% of the students in this inner-city school live below the poverty line. Hunger and violence are commonplace.

And so, to fight poverty, students at I.S. 318 have... formed a Chess Club? Their Chess Team is the most successful junior high team in the entire country and has won against both junior high and high school teams from all over the United States.

Members of the Chess Club talk about all they have learned from their experiences: how to win, how to lose, how to fight for what you believe in, how to focus on a tough task, and how to think ahead. Being an I.S. 318 Chess Champ means becoming a more capable person, one better prepared to defeat poverty.

The communities that surround us can have a significant impact on the people we become. **Think** carefully about this statement.

Write an essay explaining the effect of community on people's lives.

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Read the information in the box below.

Thomas Edison was one of the most famous inventors in American history. He held over 1,000 patents, including one for the new and improved light bulb he created in 1879.

Edison's light bulb was not a simple invention. He worked for years to develop it. In 1890, Edison was interviewed by *Harpers* magazine and spoke about the long road to the light bulb's invention.

"I speak without exaggeration when I say that I have constructed 3,000 different theories in connection with the electric light, each one of them reasonable and apparently likely to be true. Yet only in two cases did my experiments prove the truth of my theory."

Sometimes people learn more from the mistakes they make than they might learn by succeeding. Sometimes success only comes through trial and error. **Think** carefully about this statement.

Write an essay explaining the effects persistence can have on people's lives.

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