

PARAGRAPH 8.3 (*GREAT WRITING 2*)

An A+ for School Uniforms

In my opinion, school uniforms should be mandatory for all students. First of all, uniforms make everyone equal. In this way, kids with a lot of nice things can be on the same level as those with fewer things. In addition, parents and children know that getting ready for school every morning is much faster and easier if the school requires uniforms. Many kids waste time choosing what to wear to school, and they or their parents are often unhappy with their final choice. When I was in school, it only took me a few minutes to get dressed in my uniform. Finally, I believe that school uniforms make students work harder. When I wore my uniform in school, I concentrated more and got better grades. Some people might say that uniforms take away personal freedom, but students still have many other ways to express themselves. For all these reasons, I believe the benefits of school uniforms are so strong that we should require them immediately.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the structure of this paragraph? Please color code the sentences as follows:
 - Topic Sentence
 - Concluding Sentence
 - Primary Supporting Sentences (Main Arguments)
 - Secondary Supporting Sentences (Supporting Material)
 - Other
2. What is the specific policy the writer presents in the Topic and Concluding Sentences? Who should do what?
3. What are the three reasons given in the Primary Supporting Sentences that this writer presents supporting this policy as “the best” policy?
4. What kinds of support (Evidence, Examples, Explanation) does the author provide in the Secondary Supporting Sentences to support these claims?
5. Are there any sentences that seem unnecessary or weak, and which could be cut?
6. Which sentence did you mark as “Other”? What purpose does this sentence serve, within the paragraph?

NEW PARAGRAPH

Uniforms Are a Lie

I believe that school uniforms should be abolished from all public schools. First, while some people claim that uniforms make students “equal” regardless of their wealth or poverty, this claim is nonsensical. The truth is that school uniforms don’t *actually* conceal this aspect of students’ lives. Anyone who has attended a school with uniforms will tell you about how backpacks, shoes, phones, accessories, and hairstyles are all indicators of one’s socioeconomic status. Indeed, several studies have found that most people can quite accurately guess a stranger’s socioeconomic background after just a few moments of conversation over the phone. School uniforms don’t hide poverty, and the idea they could is both stupid and insulting to young people. Next, school uniforms in fact primarily serve to reinforce systemic inequality in schools. While they don’t hide inequality, uniforms are a pretext for avoiding *acknowledging* it. Erasing wealthier students’ advantages makes systemic unfairness officially “invisible” in schools. By creating an environment where certain kinds of inequality are systematically ignored, it becomes easier to maintain the fantasy that schools are “fair” to all students, regardless of the very real advantages or disadvantages that individual students actually face. Schools are not fair, and school uniforms mainly serve just to help to erase that unfairness. Finally, this attempt to erase inequality in schools unnecessarily hampers students’ education. Just as exposure to students of different ethnic backgrounds is one of the best ways to help students become empathetic and to reduce racism in society, allowing students to recognize that socioeconomic inequality exists in schools, in their classrooms, and in their own relationships will force them to develop empathy. Students will be more thoughtful and empathetic if they grow up wondering why one kind and clever classmate never has enough food to eat, or why a child who got help from an expensive tutor is given the same test as a kid who had to study alone, or whether the fact that a classmate might have failed an exam last week because her father died at work the day before, and whether that failing grade is “fair” considering the stress and grief she is feeling. We need to stop shielding students from these questions, and instead encourage them to explore them together, since they will face similar questions throughout their lives. For all these reasons, I believe school uniforms need to be abolished immediately.

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6. Which sentence did you mark as “**Other**”? What purpose does this sentence serve, within the paragraph?