

Censorship

Almost since human beings began sharing ideas, the issue of censorship (officially suppressing ideas or writing) has been debated. Proponents of censorship argue, for example, that offensive material might morally corrupt children or that governments have the right to protect their national secrets. Opponents argue that censorship infringes on individual freedom and hinders progress. Censorship has long been an issue regarding books and papers; now, it has become a critical issue concerning the great amount of information on the Internet. Given the continued impact of censorship on various aspects of our lives, it is an issue worth examining.

Read and carefully consider these perspectives. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about the impact of censorship.

Perspective One

Selective censorship prevents children from being exposed to offensive material. It allows parents and caretakers to determine what material children are ready for and when they are ready based on maturity level.

Perspective Two

Censorship intrudes upon freedom of the press and freedom of speech. Individuals have the right to learn about their world, both its positive and negative aspects, and express their ideas on it.

Perspective Three

Censorship should not be condoned because it places too much power in the hands of a few: no government or leadership system should be allowed to decide what information should reach the public.

Essay Task

Write a unified, coherent essay in which you evaluate multiple perspectives on the conflict of censorship. In your essay, be sure to:

- Analyze and evaluate the perspectives given
- State and develop your own perspective on the issue
- Explain the relationship between your perspective and those given

Your perspective may be in full agreement with any of the others, in partial agreement, or wholly different. Whatever the case, support your ideas with logical reasoning and detailed, persuasive examples.

Planning Your Essay

Your work on these prewriting pages will not be scored.

Use the space on the back to generate ideas and plan your essay. You may wish to consider the following s you think critically about the task:

Strengths and weaknesses of the three given perspectives

- What insights do they offer, and what do they fail to consider?
- Why might they be persuasive to others, or why might they fail to persuade?

Your own knowledge, experience, and values

- What is your perspective on the issue, and what are its strengths and weaknesses?
- How will you support your perspective in your essay?