

CELP Benchmark Essays

Prompt:

In addition to their regular school work, some students are very busy with extracurricular activities such as sports, music lessons, and other activities.

Discuss the pros and cons of such activities over both the short term and the long term - that is, in terms of their lives as students and their future lives.

Then make suggestions for how students should manage their time. Be sure to support your opinion with reasons and explanations.

Sample 1, exemplifying characteristics of an “Honor’s Pass” essay:

Text of Essay

[Comments refer to both regular text and blue highlighted phrases.]

Extracurricular activities can have a positive influence on students’ development, but good grades and great family time can have just as much, if not more, of an impact.

The problem is that some students find themselves spending all evenings with extracurricular activities, which reduces the family time together (family dinners, talks, games, etc.). They are simply overloaded with too many extracurricular activities an out of balance when it comes to their free time. These feelings can lead to stress and anxiety. In addition to some extracurricular activities, students need time to call on their own resources and creativity. That is, students also need time to explore things in depth. When they are involved in too many different things, they sacrifice breadth for depth of thinking and reflection.

Of course, extracurricular activities are vital for students to build self-confidence and to connect with peers; I don’t want to deny that. I even think that students who are busy with extracurricular activities are less likely to be involved in crimes or alcohol and drug abuse, especially when they come from poor communities. Extracurricular programs are also needed to prepare students for the transition into adulthood.

Organized activities – as long as they don’t clog up a student’s entire schedule – can provide opportunities to acquire and practice specific social, physical, and intellectual skills that may be useful in future professions. Extracurricular activities can also contribute to the well-being of one’s community and give students the feeling of belonging to a socially recognized group, and the experience of dealing with challenges.

On the other hand, however, good family relationships also have a

Comments on Evaluation

The introduction begins well and the overall organization is well-controlled and appropriate to the material. The writer develops both sides of the topic competently; the essay achieves a balanced presentation of the pros and cons of extracurricular activities with smooth connections and effortless flow. The relatively short discussion of family, while in the thesis, should be overlooked given the prompt and time constraints.

This essay has very complex and accurate grammar/syntax and vocabulary. Some of the complex clauses are very sophisticated (e.g., ...can have just as much, if not more, of an impact .)

Lexical items, including idiomatic phrases, are selected precisely enough

similar positive impact on children and teenagers. Ideally, students should be able to manage both participation in extracurricular activities and family time. It's certainly challenging to find the appropriate balance of activities, but it should be the ultimate goal.

to make points effectively (e.g., impact, overloaded, call on, sacrifice, transition, clog up, the feeling of belonging, socially recognized group, ultimate goal).

This essay meets all C2 requirements for grammatical accuracy, wide range of vocabulary, well-balanced competent task completion, and controlled organization, thereby exhibiting typical features of an "Honors Pass" performance level.

Sample 2, exemplifying characteristics of a “Marginal Pass” essay:

Text of Essay

[Comments refer to both regular text and blue highlighted phrases.]

Nowadays the majority of the students are very busy with extracurricular activities, except for their regular school work. However, there are many advantages and disadvantages of doing such activities.

Firstly, I think that this is good for the students. Unfortunately the greek educational system does not provide such activities but **it forces only an theoretical subjects. So the students broaden their minds with other valuable knowledge.** In addition there are many children who have got a special talent and they are not so good in the school. **By this way,** they will have the chance to enhance and to grow this talent. This **will may** have as a result to choose their future profession. For example they may be good in sports, so they may be a great athlet or **they may have a good voice and to become a famous singer.**

On the other hand there are also some negative aspects. These days the students have a very busy schedule. The school lasts seven hours everyday and they have to learn many things. So sometimes they may feel tired, under pressure and this may lead to depression. They have to combine many things and this is not so good for the mental and the physical health.

All in all, I believe that there are some things that students can do in order to overcome the difficulties. They should make a program with their activities and with the hours that they should study about the school. If they really want to do social activities they should get used to spend their time logically and not to waste it. But if they do these activities only because their parents said so, they should stop doing them and they should focus on the school subjects.

Comments on Evaluation

This essay has a clear introduction. The writer rephrases the essay prompt and signals that the essay will present a balanced opinion. By the end of the first paragraph the writer also makes his/her point of view clear.

The organization is generally controlled, but connections between ideas and sentences are not always successful. For example, readers must make a leap in logic between “it forces only an theoretical subjects,” and the sentence that follows. Additionally, the reference implied by the statement “By this way,” is not clear. There are also verb form and number agreement errors, as in “they may have a good voice and to become a famous singer.”

The writer employs both simple and complex

To conclude, I think that there is a high competition nowadays. This means that many student want to excel in other activities such as music, sport etc. But other students are really good and they want to follow their hobby as a future job, **no matter pressed** they feel. So, only by following a firm schedule everyday they will manage their time and to combine the school work with the extracurricular activities. Of course they shouldn't focus only on these activities.

syntax, but most sentences are simple or simple compound sentences. Some constructions are failed attempts at idiomatic language (e.g., "no matter pressed they feel," paragraph), but such risk taking is a sign of developing proficiency.

Grammatical errors such as subject-verb agreement, number agreement, misused infinitives, etc., do not confuse meaning. Vocabulary usage adequately creates the writer's meaning. Overall this essay shows that the writer can express his/her ideas, but needs to improve in all areas discussed above.

Sample 3, exemplifying characteristics of a “Narrow Fail” essay:

Text of Essay

[Comments refer to both regular text and blue highlighted phrases.]

Nowdays is commonly said that students have a very busy life as school subjects are quite difficult and demanding. However most of the students do extracurricular activities.

On the one side, having a hobby might effect marks. Free is few and some students might ignore their school homework and studying. Consequently school marks could be much lower and this matter would affect him in the future life because finding a job would be very difficult. Furthermore, student life is quite busy, there is few free time, and every day life is very difficult and tiring. On the other side, having a hobby is profitable. **To begin with, in future life might provide to the student relavent to the hobby.** For an example, **a student who takes football lessons, in the future life he can be a football player or a football coach.** In addition, having a hobby is very enjoyable and relaxing and can reduce student’s stress and anxiety.

However, students are able to combine school and extracurricular activities. First of all, **time is considered useless should be reduced so to having extra time for important activities.** For an example if a student has not enough time for homework he might spent less time watching television or going not so often walks with his friends. What is important, student **should organized** in order to have time for school homework and also for activities. A solution is making a program

Summarizing, student’s life is very busy. However, having a hobby is profitable. Students must be organized in order to combine both school and extracurricular activities.

Comments on Evaluation

The writer attempts an introduction but the essay is under-developed and poorly organized. The writer mentions the pros and cons of extracurricular activities and tries to provide suggestions for how students should manage their time. Transitions are basic, e.g., to begin with, furthermore) and sometimes unclear.

The writer’s control of grammar conventions is weak. Morphological errors are frequent (e.g., “spent” instead of “spend”). The missing auxiliary verb in the passive construction “should [be] organized” can confuse readers. Also, while simple sentences are accurate, more complex ones are often inaccurate, and at times incoherent. See the blue highlighted sentences for examples.

The writer's range of vocabulary is limited, with numerous errors in choice (e.g., "effect" instead of "affect", "useless" instead of "wasted") and expressions that are confusing or incomprehensible, such as in "free is few."

While the reader can grasp the meaning intended, one must work hard to understand many expressions, some entire sentences, and therefore main ideas. The idea that a hobby can be or become profitable is somewhat obscured by the language of the two sentences that follow.