

The ACT Writing Test

The Writing Test consists of one writing prompt that briefly states an issue and describes two points of view on that issue. Students are asked to write in response to a question about their position on the issue described in the writing prompt. In doing so, students may adopt one or the other of the perspectives described in the prompt, or they may present a different point of view on the issue. Students' essay scores are not affected by the point of view they take on the issue. Prompts are designed to be appropriate for response in a 30-minute timed test and to reflect students' interests and experiences.

Each essay will be evaluated on the evidence it gives of the student's ability to do the following:

- express judgments by taking a position on the issue in the writing prompt
- maintain a focus on the topic throughout the essay
- develop a position by using logical reasoning and by supporting their ideas
- organize ideas in a logical way
- use language clearly and effectively according to the rules of standard written English

Students' essays will be scored holistically—that is, on the basis of the overall impression created by all the elements of the writing. Two trained readers will read each student's essay, each giving it a rating from 1 (low) to 6 (high).

The sum of those ratings is the Writing subscore, which can range from 2 to 12.

If the readers' ratings disagree by more than one point, a third reader will evaluate the essay and resolve the discrepancy.

In addition to the subscore, students receive positive and constructive feedback on their essays in the form of reader comments.

Prompts used for the ACT Writing Test:

- describe an issue relevant to high school students
- ask examinees to write about their perspective on the issue

As a starting place, two different perspectives on the issue are provided. Examinees may choose to support one of these perspectives or to develop a response based on their own perspective.

Notice: All Prompts are set up with the same format.

ACT Assessment Writing Test Prompt

In some high schools, many teachers and parents have encouraged the school to adopt a dress code that sets guidelines for what students can wear in the school building. Some teachers and parents support a dress code because they think it will improve the learning environment in the school. Other teachers and parents do not support a dress code because they think it restricts the individual student's freedom of expression. In your opinion, should high schools adopt dress codes for students?

In your essay, take a position on this question. You may write about either one of the two points of view given, or you may present a different point of view on this question. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

Handwritten annotations:
 - **Issue**: dress code
 - **Position 1 support**: will improve the learning environment
 - **Position 2 support**: do not support, restricts the individual student's freedom of expression
 - **Question**: should high schools adopt dress codes for students?

Note

- Your actual test booklet will have blank space for you to plan your essay. For this practice test, you can use scratch paper.
- You may wish to remove pages 75–78 to respond to this Writing Test prompt.
- When you have finished, read pages 66–72 for information and instructions on scoring your practice essay.

ACT-03A-PRACTICE

Issue
 2 Positions with support for each
 Question 58 } Critical Attributes

Students should be able to quickly identify the critical attributes of the prompt:

- The Issue
- Two Positions with support for Each
- The Question

Sample ACT Essay Prompt

Some cities have ordinances that limit the number of pets a city resident can own. Often, the maximum number of pets allowed is limited to three or four. Some people support the limit because they feel it protects them against having a neighborhood overrun with animals that could potentially become a public nuisance. Other people oppose the limit because they feel it infringes upon their rights as private citizens. In your opinion, should city governments be allowed to limit the number of pets a resident can own?

In your essay, take a position on this question. You may write about either one of the two points of view given, or you may present a different point of view on the question. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

What are the critical attributes of the above prompt?

➤ **The Issue:**

➤ **Two Positions with support for Each:**

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➤ **The Question**

Anchor Paper #1

In my opinion, cities should not limit the number of pets, of any kind, that people can own. Although it's true that some pet owners neglect their pets, I don't feel that limiting the number of pets people can own will change this problem. In fact, I feel that it is important for people to be able to own as many pets as they like. If cities limit the number of pets allowed in a household to three or four, it would create an even bigger problem than there would be without such a law in place.

For one thing, I feel the law would cause there to be many more homeless pets wandering the streets than there are now. Animal shelters cannot take in every stray, homeless, abused or neglected animal that comes along. But there are plenty of soft-hearted animal lovers out there who are willing to take in a stray dog or cat that shows up on their doorstep no matter how many animals they already own, and offer them the protection and caring they need. Many of these people volunteer at animal shelters themselves. Although some people who have a lot of pets don't take care of them like they should, most of these people will do everything in the world to make sure that their pets are well-fed and cared for. If it weren't for the kindness of these pet owners, many animals would be left to fend for themselves on the street.

For another thing, allowing people to have as many pets as they want would save people money on taxes. Animal shelters are funded with taxes and donations. If the number of animals that end up in shelters increases, our taxes will increase, too. So, if people adopt more pets, taxes will go down.

Finally, I feel that pet ownership is a basic human right that the government has no business setting limits and restrictions on. There are some people who are alone in the world except for their pets. It isn't fair for the government to deny these people their rights, and the happiness and love that comes with owning and taking care of a pet that often becomes more family than family.

In conclusion, these are just a few reasons why I feel the city should not set a limit on the number of pets people can own. People who own a lot of pets are helping the community. It doesn't make any sense for the city to prevent them from doing this.

Anchor Paper #2:

Cities across the country have been begun passing laws that limit the number of pets that people are allowed to keep in their household. They have adopted such laws to avoid a situation in which the city would be overrun with stray animals. While I realize that pet overpopulation is a very real and serious problem in certain cities, I very much oppose laws that limit the number of pets per household.

The first and most important reason why I oppose these laws is because they blatantly disregard people's rights as private citizens. People should have the right to do what they wish in the confines of their own homes, as long as their actions are within the boundaries of basic human decency. Once the government passes a law regulating how many pets a person can own, this sets a very dangerous precedent. What will stop the government from controlling the number of cars a person can own, or even the number of children a family can have? Our forefathers endured many hardships so that Americans would one day enjoy these personal freedoms, and I feel that it is our duty to protect them.

The second reason why I oppose these laws is due to my concern for the animals. Animal shelters are already overcrowded today as it is. Laws that limit the number of household pets will only serve to create a larger burden for already overcrowded animal shelters because people will not be able to adopt as many animals. Because of this, an increased number of animals will have to be euthanized. If people were allowed to own as many animals as they wished, however, thousands of animals could escape this terrible fate and instead live out their days in caring homes.

I understand that there are many pet owners who neglect and mistreat their animals, and that these people are the reason why cities feel such laws are necessary. Even so, I don't believe that thousands of loving, caring pet owners should be penalized for the shortcomings of others. Instead of limiting the number of pets allowed per household, it would make more sense to pass laws that punish people more harshly for not caring properly for their animals. If these types of laws were passed, people would quickly learn that there is a price to be paid for their irresponsible actions. Such laws might even dissuade irresponsible people from even owning pets in the first place, further alleviating the animal nuisance problems that some cities face.

In conclusion, I feel that laws limiting the number of pets per household is wrong and unnecessary. Cities that are thinking of adopting such laws should first consider less drastic alternatives instead, such as laws that punish people more harshly for animal neglect. In doing so, they will be helping to protect the rights of

private citizens—rights which form the foundation upon which this great nation was built.

Anchor Paper 3:

I do not believe that cities should tell people how many pets they can have, only if it is a serious problem. It is an unfair law. The city shouldn't be able to tell people what they can or can't do in their own house. Though too many pets outside the house is different.

Pets are part of the family. If people have more than four pets, its not fair if that they could be taken away from them. If the man came and took my dog away, it would be bad as taking my little sister.

It is not right for the city to pass a law that punishes animals. Animals are innoscent creatures who just want someone to love them and care. They make people happy. Like the saying goes, the more the merrier. That's how much happier you are with a pets unconditional love. It is a free country. People should be able to have more than four pets if they want without them being taken away. Pets makes us better people in the long run, which is good for the city.

Anchor Paper 4:

I am strongly in favor of cities having laws that limit the number of pets that people can own. Laws are made to protect the public, and there should be laws that protect people from neighbors who allow their pets to become a nuisance.

Not everyone likes animals. My parents are an example of this. So, one of these people lives next to a neighbor with ten animals, that could be very annoying to them. If the pet owners don't have a fenced in yard, than their animals would be in their neighbor's yard all the time. If you don't like animals, this would be very annoying.

If you watch shows like Animal Cops, you can see what happens when people have too many pets. If people had only a couple of pets, then they could afford to take care of them better. Then these problems would not exist.

This is why I think that they should limit the amount of animals you are allowed to own. If there are too many pets in a house, the house will get ruined. This would be bad for the neighborhood because nobody want's to live next to a run-down house. Having laws against too many pets would pervent this.