

PROMPT: How does being a Catholic make you a better American citizen and how does being an American make you a better Catholic?

Audience: Paulist priests of Immaculate Conception. Due _____ to Mr. Aboumoussa.

Purpose: Informed opinion / persuasive analysis.

Format: Five Paragraphs. Should be at least 500-600 words minimum. Times New Roman or Ariel font, 12 point. Proper heading and indentations.

Purpose: Explain how 19th century Paulist priest Father Isaac Hecker's → **IDEA** ← can be true for society today. How do the freedoms we are guaranteed in America enable us to practice our Faith better, and how does our Faith encourage us to be better citizens? **Use examples from your own experience** (what do you observe in your community or school? Ex.) Food and clothing drives to help the needy, whether the poor are Catholic or not, or **real situations you observe** in society, church, government, news, or other current events to support your opinions.

NOTE: Although you must restate Hecker's idea in your introduction (to make clear the topic of the essay) and perhaps give short background information on who he is, the essay is **NOT A BIOGRAPHY** of Fr. Hecker, but rather a **THOUGHTFUL EXPLANATION** of how his idea works in our American communities.

Contest: Essays qualifying for semi-finals will be judged by Mr. Aboumoussa and Mr. Zengel. Priests of Immaculate Conception will judge the final winning essay. All required essays count as a grade for English class. **The student of the winning essay will be awarded \$150.00 at graduation.**

Here is the original assignment from Father Ron Franco.

The Servant of God Isaac Hecker Prize

Servant of God Isaac Hecker (1819-1888), founder of the Missionary Society of Saint Paul the Apostle (Paulist Fathers) once remarked "I am a better American because I am Catholic; I am a better Catholic because I am an American."

This prize will be awarded annually to the graduating 8th grade student at Saint Joseph School, who writes the best essay on how being a faithful Catholic can contribute to making a person a better citizen and the United States a better country.

Introduction




1. **Hook:** *attention grabbing strategy*
2. **Bridge:** *several sentences that narrow the focus of the reader's attention*
3. **Thesis:** *a clear sentence containing a SUBJECT and OPINION that answers the prompt and gives the focus of the essay.*

Sample introduction: A Christmas Carol



Christmas as many know it today would not exist without Ebenezer Scrooge. Charles Dickens' holiday story has been very popular since it was first published, and many people believe that this novel's popularity has shaped many of our current attitudes and rituals at Christmas time. One of the main reasons readers still enjoy this story is because of the dramatic changes that occur to Scrooge's attitude in just one magical night. In the beginning of the story he is a mean old man who treats people badly and has no friends. On Christmas Eve the ghost of his former partner, Jacob Marley, visits him and warns him about the consequences of his behavior. He also foretells the visit of three ghosts, suggesting that Scrooge can avoid a terrible fate if he is willing to change. At the end of the novel Ebenezer Scrooge is a completely different man who has learned valuable lessons and who treats people the same way he wants to be treated.

Transitions

Persuasive Writing



Introductions	Making Your Point	Details	Other Words
I think...	Firstly, secondly, thirdly...	For example...	reasons
For this reason...	Furthermore...	In fact...	arguments
I feel that...	In addition...	For instance...	for
I am sure that...	Also...	As evidence...	against
It is certain...	Finally...	In support of this...	unfair
I am writing to...	Likewise...	Endings	pros
Of course...	Besides...	For these reasons...	cons
In the same way...	Again...	As you can see...	
On the other hand...	Moreover...	In other words...	
In this situation...	Similarly...	On the whole...	
	Surely...	In short...	
	Certainly...	Without a doubt...	
	Specifically...	In brief...	
	If... then...	Undoubtedly...	
	because...		



WRITE A THESIS STATEMENT

In 4 easy steps

Step 1	Ask a question:
Step 2	Create a Declaration:
Step 3	List Three Reasons Why:
Step 4	Combine & Write Your Thesis:

Some general questions to consider:

- What does the church teach about the responsibilities of good citizens? Think about how individuals, families, societies, and government are supposed to help everyone and support the common good of all.
- How do American freedoms and basic human rights help Catholics to grow in their faith?
- How does the Bill of Rights harmonize with the principles of the Catholic Faith concerning the freedom and dignity of individuals? (ex.- freedoms of speech, religion, press). How do these freedoms help protect our faith and help us to live it out in our country?
- How does the Church help encourage civil laws to be in accord with sound reason and natural law? (ex. – justice for all).
- How does Christ's love for us help us to recognize human dignity and compel us to love our neighbors?
- How does the Church help encourage us to value the sacredness of every human life? (ex. – right to life).
- How can the Church's guidance help shape our consciences so that we can make good choices and be of service to others? (Especially the weak, the vulnerable, the voiceless). Think about the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.
- In what specific ways does the church help society, especially the poor? (ex. - hospitals, schools, charities, etc.). How does American society help make these efforts possible?

Possible topics for body paragraphs:

Sanctity of Life: Dignity of the human person, right to life, unjust laws, abortion, euthanasia, stem cell research, etc.

Family Life: The protection of marriage and rights / well-being of children & the common good of society. Quality education, etc.

Religious Liberty: Conscience rights protections for persons who do not want to participate in any collective evil such as paying taxes for abortions, freedom to practice sound religions without attacks or coercion from big government.

Economic: Rights of workers, right to own private property, immigration policies, care for the poor, elderly, sick, etc.

Peace Keeping: Regional conflicts, global peace, avoiding war and promoting peace, just war policies, preventing genocide, torture, and direct and intentional targeting of noncombatants.

Voting: How to use a well-formed conscience to weigh issues and select leaders who will promote the common good and protection for life, justice, and families.

Education: Tax free education, character building, holiness, fairness, quality schooling, safe environments.

Charities: Feeding the hungry, healthcare, visiting the sick, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless.

Writing Rubric

Grade 8: Persuasive Essay Checklist

Directions: Reread your persuasive essay. What do you need to do to make it better? Use this rubric to help you decide. Check the sentences that describe your essay.

Loud and Clear

- ☐ The introduction hooks my audience and states my goal.
- ☐ At least three convincing reasons support my goal.
- ☐ Facts and examples elaborate every reason.
- ☐ My reasons flow logically from one to another.
- ☐ I've anticipated and answered all major objections.
- ☐ I write in a voice appropriate to my audience.
- ☐ A forceful conclusion restates my argument.
- ☐ There are very few mistakes in grammar, punctuation, or spelling.

Opinion Essay Outline

eslflow.com

Topic

1. Introduction
 - A. Attention Getter -
 - B. Thesis -
 - C. Supporting sentences -
2. Point 1 -
 - A. Supporting idea -
 - B. Supporting idea -
3. Point 2
 - A. Supporting idea
 - B. Supporting idea
3. Point 3
 - A. Supporting idea
 - B. Supporting idea
4. Conclusion
 - A. Summing up
 - B. Final opinion

Sample Body Paragraph Outline:

II. Bill of Rights: freedom of speech and freedom to exercise one's religion

A. American: our democratic government guarantees freedom to practice one's religion

1. Each citizen can practice his or her religion (within reason) without fear of legal punishment
 - a. The government even allows tax-exempt status for churches as a protection

B. Catholic: we can evangelize and participate in society

1. Each Catholic can participate in society without fear of censorship or prison
 - a. We can evangelize publically
 - b. We can offer sound advice to society on how to serve the common good