

STAAR Practice #1

TEXT

Read the letter below about a town soccer league.

Town Soccer League

Dear Town Council Members,

- 1 I am currently a sixth-grade student at Jameston Middle School. Our school offers a sports program that only enables a small number of students to participate on the school soccer team. I think this is unacceptable, because only the top sixteen students out of the five hundred get the chance to compete on the team. Because of this, I believe our town should start a town-wide soccer league for the spring and fall.
- 2 The town already has a recreational sports program that offers baseball, basketball, softball, and swimming. So, it wouldn't cost the town that much money to add another sport to its roster. Soccer is a relatively inexpensive sport because the players do not require much equipment beyond shin guards, balls, and soccer nets. And yes, the town would also have to provide fields for teams to play on, but we have many town parks. Our town parks already have several grassy fields that could be easily converted and utilized by the town for this purpose.
- 3 Soccer is one of the most popular sports for kids. By adding this league, you would make many parents happy. Kids of all ages will get involved, learn a new sport, and get lots of exercise. According to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, children and teens should get at least one hour of exercise every day. Soccer is a very active sport that requires players to run along a field for ninety minutes per game. Starting a soccer team would give the children of our town safe and affordable access to a fun form of physical activity.
- 4 Thank you for your consideration of my idea to implement a soccer league in Jameston.

Sincerely,

Tyler Nash

MODEL

Now look at this assessment item that deals with identifying faulty reasoning in persuasive texts.

- 1 Which of the author's arguments is based on faulty reasoning?
- A *Our school offers a sports program that only enables a small number of students to participate on the school soccer team.*
 - B *Because of this, I believe our town should start a town-wide soccer league for the spring and fall.*
 - C *The town already has a recreation sports program that offers baseball, basketball, softball, and swimming.*
 - D *So, it wouldn't cost the town that much money to add another sport to its roster.*

What is the focus of the question? It is asking you to identify an example of faulty reasoning, for instance stating something as fact without backing it up with evidence.

What is the correct answer? The correct answer is choice "D." The goal of the letter is to persuade members of the town council to start a town soccer league, and Tyler uses his opinions and some facts to argue his point. In this sentence, he makes an assumption about what it would cost the town to add a soccer league, but he does not point to any evidence that this assumption is correct.

Why are the other choices not correct?

A is incorrect—it states a fact that is backed up with evidence later in the letter.

B is incorrect—it is a statement of Tyler's opinion, which a letter writer is entitled to have.

C is incorrect—it states a fact that Tyler backs up with evidence when he lists the other sports teams the town supports.

Now, using the letter, answer the items on these standards using the practice method above.

YOUR TURN

Use "Town Soccer League" to answer questions 2–3.

- 2 Which sentence from the letter shows that Tyler has considered an opposing viewpoint?
- F *Soccer is a relatively inexpensive sport because the players do not require much equipment beyond shin guards, balls, and soccer nets.*
 - G *And yes, the town would also have to provide fields for teams to play on, but we have many town parks.*
 - H *Soccer is one of the most popular sports for kids.*
 - J *Starting a soccer team would give the children of our town safe and affordable access to a fun form of physical activity.*
-
- 3 In paragraph 3, Tyler includes specific information from the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans in order to —
- A give an example of how a government agency can help kids improve their health
 - B show support by a government agency for adding a soccer field
 - C add credibility to his argument that kids in the town need soccer to get exercise
 - D evaluate the effectiveness of the town's current recreational sports program

Continue to next passage.

Let's Move

Michelle Obama's Campaign

Let's Move! First Lady Michelle Obama launched the "Let's Move" **campaign** on February 9, 2010. This campaign was created to bring attention to and end childhood obesity in the United States. The initiative has the goal of "solving the challenge of childhood obesity within a generation so that children born today will reach adulthood at a healthy weight."

"The physical and emotional health of an entire generation and the economic health and security of our nation is at stake." - Michelle Obama

The Let's Move campaign centers on five steps that will help youth today lead a healthier lifestyle.

Step 1: Move Everyday - A minimum of 60 total minutes of physical activity per day for every single kid will get him or her moving in the right direction. They will feel better, be less stressed, more attentive in school, and get a better night sleep, all because of one hour of physical activity.

Step 2: Try a New Fruit or Veggie - There are thousands of fruits and vegetables available that most kids have never tried. Fruits and veggies are important for a healthy diet and kids can have more fun eating them by trying new things. Let your kids come grocery shopping with you and pick out their own fruits and veggies to try, turning a healthy lifestyle into something fun for them. Make a challenge to make the most colorful salad possible which will increase the number of nutrients they will get from it.

Step 3: Drink Lots of Water - Keep less soda in the house and increase the **consumption** of water. Only purchase 100% real fruit juice. If the kids want something similar to a soda then add a splash of juice into some sparkling water.

Step 4: Jumping Jacks to Break up TV Time - The statistics for how much television kids watch per day is very high, but it is also a good opportunity to make some big changes. Try doing jumping jacks during commercial breaks and in between shows. Same thing goes for kids that spend all day on the computer, have them run up and down the stairs, do sit-ups or push-ups, stretch, or come up with their own physical activities to break up the time in front of a computer screen.

Step 5: Help Make Dinner - Plan the daily dinner menu with your kids. If it is made into a fun experience that they have some say in, they will not just learn about making healthy choices, they will be excited to do so.

Choose the best answer to each question.

4. Which the following best fits the overall main idea of the "Let's Move" campaign?
- A campaign to help increase exercise in day to day life
 - A campaign to help the youth of America lead a healthier life style
 - A campaign about eating a healthier diet
 - A campaign to help families eat healthier meals at dinner time

5. Read the following quote.

"The physical and emotional health of an entire generation and the economic health and security of our nation is at stake." – Michelle Obama

Based on the quotation we can conclude that –

- The future of the United States depends on the physical activity of future generations.
- Our country will have a better future if generations to come are healthier.
- Generations to come will be safer.
- Michelle Obama will help other countries around the world become healthier.

6. As used in Step 3, what does the word **consumption** mean?

- to eat, drink, or ingest food or drink
- to eat very quickly
- wash or rinse out by pouring large amounts of water over
- eat or drink with a loud sloppy noise

7. Which theme below best fits the overall notion of the campaign?

- things are not always as they appear
- actions speak louder than words
- rules are put in place to help protect us
- making changes to improve your healthy can lead to a better future

8. What is the author's purpose in writing this passage?

- To describe to the reader how to eat healthy
- To inform the reader about what healthy food to buy
- To entertain the reader with exciting new way to exercise
- To persuade the reader to make healthy changes

9. What is the best summary of the campaign?

- a. Plan the daily dinner menu with your kids. If it is made into a fun experience that they have some say in, they will not just learn about making healthy choices, they will be excited to do so.
- b. The Let's Move campaign, led by Michelle Obama, is bringing attention to childhood obesity. The goal is to help youth of American reach adulthood at a healthy weight. By following the programs 5 steps, families can lead a healthier life style. Five Steps: move every day, try new fruits and vegetables, drink water, exercise during TV breaks, and make dinner together.
- c. There are thousands of fruits and vegetables available that most kids have never tried. Fruits and veggies are important for a healthy diet and kids can have more fun eating them by trying new things. Let your kids come grocery shopping with you and pick out their own fruits and veggies to try, turning a healthy lifestyle into something fun for them. Make a challenge to make the most colorful salad possible, which will increase the amount of nutrients they will get from it.
- d. The physical and emotional health of an entire generation and the economic health and security of our nation is at stake.

10. Which of the following is not a fact expressed in the passage?

- a. Michelle Obama launched the "Let's Move" campaign on February 9, 2010
- b. try doing jumping jacks during commercial breaks and in between shows
- c. kids can have more fun eating healthy by trying new things
- d. keep less soda in the house and increase the consumption of water

11. We can best infer from the passage that the United States has –

- a. a childhood obesity problem
- b. healthier food than other countries
- c. a more physically active population
- d. made laws mandating a healthy lifestyle

12. Look at the dictionary entry below.

campaign \kam'pān \ verb
1. a series of military operations intended to achieve a particular objective 2. work in an organized and active way toward a particular goal, typically a political or social one 3. the competition by rival political candidates and organizations for public office 4. To race

Which definition of the word **campaign** is used in the first paragraph?

- a. Definition 1
- b. Definition 2
- c. Definition 3
- d. Definition 4

13. Which of the following is the author's claim?

- a. let's get up and move
- b. we can end childhood obesity
- c. there are 5 easy steps you can follow to lead a healthier life
- d. keep less soda in the house