

PERFORM THE TASK

Should the minimum driving age be raised?

**You will read:**

- ▶ **TWO INFORMATIONAL ARTICLES**
Traffic Safety Facts
Teenage Driving Laws May Just Delay Deadly Crashes

You will write:

- ▶ **AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY**
Should the minimum driving age be raised?

Part 1: Read Sources

Source 1: Informational Article

2008 Data

TRAFFIC SAFETY FACTS

from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

AS YOU READ Analyze the data presented in the articles. Look for evidence that supports your position on the dangers of too much online time, or evidence that inspires you to change your position.

NOTES

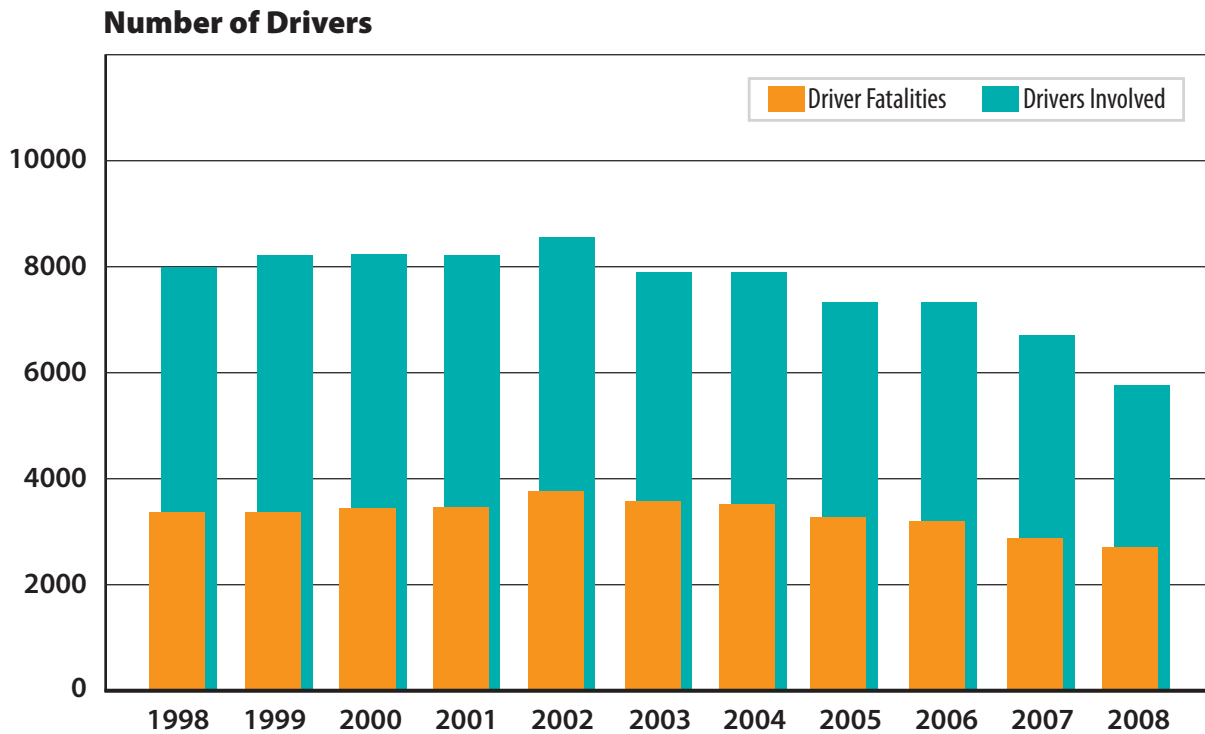
There were 205.7 million licensed drivers in the United States in 2007 (2008 data not available). Young drivers, between 15 and 20 years old, accounted for 6.4 percent (13.2 million) of the total, a 4.8-percent increase from the 12.6 million young drivers in 1997. In 2008, 5,864 15- to 20-year-old drivers were involved in fatal crashes—a 27-percent decrease from the 7,987 involved in 1998. Driver fatalities for this age group decreased by 20 percent between 1998 and 2008. For young males, driver fatalities decreased by 19 percent, compared with a 24-percent decrease for young females (Table 1). Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15- to 20-year-olds (based on 2005 figures, which are the latest mortality data currently available from the National Center for Health Statistics). In 2008, 2,739 15- to 20-year-old drivers were killed and an additional 228,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes.

Close Read

How many fewer 15- to 20-year-old drivers were involved in fatal crashes in 2008 than in 1998? Cite textual evidence in your response.

Graph

Driver Fatalities and Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes Among 15- to 20- Year Old Drivers, 1998–2008



Close Read

Is this a true statement? *In 2002, more than half of fatal crashes among 15- to 20-year-olds killed someone other than the driver.* Use the data in the graph and cite evidence in your response.

Table 1

Involvement of 15- to 20-Year Old Drivers in Fatal Crashes by Sex, 1998 and 2008

	1998			2008			Percentage Change, 1998–2008	
	Total	Age 15–20	Percentage of Total	Total	Age 15–20	Percentage of Total	Total	Age 15–20
Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes								
Total	56,604	7,987	14.1	50,186	5,864	11.7	-11	-27
Male	40,816	5,652	13.8	36,881	4,174	11.3	-10	-26
Female	15,089	2,335	15.5	12,568	1,688	13.4	-17	-28
Driver Fatalities								
Total	24,743	3,431	13.9	24,175	2,739	11.3	-2	-20
Male	17,992	2,476	13.8	18,694	2,010	10.8	-4	-19
Female	6,750	955	14.1	5,473	727	13.3	-19	-24

Note: Total includes unknown sex.

NOTES

In 2008, 12 percent (5,864) of all drivers involved in fatal crashes (50,186) were young drivers age 15 to 20 years old, and 14 percent (1,429,000) of all drivers involved in police-reported crashes (10,081,000) were young drivers.

Close Read

What can you conclude about the behavior of male and female drivers? What other factors could explain the difference?

Table 2**Population and Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes by Age Group, 2008**

	Age Group (Years)							
	15–20	21–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65–69	70+
Population (Percent)	8.5	5.5	13.5	14.0	14.6	11.1	3.7	9.1
Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes (Percent)								
–Single-Vehicle	14.0	13.1	20.9	16.9	15.5	10.3	2.8	6.2
–Multi-Vehicle	10.4	9.2	19.0	18.3	17.8	12.4	3.5	9.3
–All Fatal Crashes	11.9	10.8	19.8	17.8	16.8	11.5	3.2	8.1

Among 15- to 20-year-old drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2008, 30 percent (291) of those who did not have valid operator's licenses at the time of the crash also had previous license suspensions or revocations (Table 3).

Table 3**Young Drivers Involved in Fatal Crashes by Previous Driving Record and License Compliance, 2008**

Driving Record	License Compliance				Total (5,864)*	
	Valid (4,882)		Invalid (970)			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Previous Recorded Crashes	748	15.5	96	9.9	845	14.4
Previous Recorded Suspensions and Revocations	433	9.0	291	30.0	727	12.4
Previous DWI Convictions	63	1.3	37	3.8	100	1.7
Previous Speeding Convictions	1,017	21.1	135	13.9	1,154	19.7
Previous Other Harmful or Moving Convictions	877	18.2	182	18.8	1,060	18.1

* Includes 72 drivers with unknown license status. Note: Excluding all drivers with unknown previous records.

Close Read

Cite evidence from the text and graphics to support this statement: *Driver fatalities for 15- to 20-year-olds decreased 20% between 1998 and 2008.*

Source 2 : Informational Article

SEPTEMBER 14

Teenage Driving Laws May Just Delay Deadly Crashes

by Anahad O'Connor

AS YOU READ Pay attention to cause-and-effect relationships between changing licensing laws for teenage drivers and the rate of fatal crashes. Jot down comments or questions about the text in the side margins.

NOTES

A nationwide study shows that tougher licensing laws for teenage drivers have reduced deadly accidents among 16-year-olds, but with an unintended consequence: increasing the fatal crash rate among 18-year-olds.

Over the last two decades, many states have put in place strict teenage driving laws, with graduated driver's license programs that require young drivers to meet certain restrictions before they obtain a full license. While the rules vary by state, they generally set a minimum age for earning a driver's permit or license and require a set number of supervised hours behind the wheel, and some prohibit driving with fellow teenagers, ban night driving or require at least six months of instruction before a driver's test. Over all, the tougher laws—which most states began adopting in the mid-1990s—have been credited with a 30 percent drop in highway fatalities among teenagers.

But “most of the prior studies on graduated driver licensing have only looked at 16-year-olds,” said Scott Masten, a researcher with California's Department of Motor Vehicles and the lead author of the current study. “When you do that you go, ‘Wow, these programs are saving lives,’” he said.

Discuss and Decide

Before reading the rest of the selection, discuss what sorts of reasons could account for the phenomenon mentioned in the first paragraph.

To get a broader perspective, Dr. Masten and his colleagues looked at data on fatal crashes involving 16- to 19-year-olds that occurred over a 21-year period, beginning in 1986. “When you look at the bigger picture across 18- and 19-year-olds, it looks like we’re offsetting those saved crashes,” he said. “In fact, 75 percent of the fatal crashes we thought we were saving actually just occurred two years later. It’s shocking.”

The study, published Wednesday in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, found that since the first graduated driver programs were instituted, there have been 1,348 fewer deadly crashes involving 16-year-old drivers. But at the same time, there have been 1,086 more fatal crashes that involved 18-year-olds. The net difference is still an improvement, Dr. Masten said, but not quite the effect that many had assumed.

“The bottom line is there is still a net overall savings from introducing all these programs,” he said. “So we are saving teen drivers over all, but it’s not nearly what we thought it would be.”

Dr. Masten strongly suspects that the reason for the increase in deadly crashes among 18-year-olds is that many teenagers, rather than deal with the extra restrictions for 16- and 17-year-olds, are simply waiting to get a license until they turn 18, and skipping the restrictions altogether. As a result, a greater proportion of inexperienced drivers hit the road at 18. He pointed out that when California instituted its tougher driving laws for teenagers, the proportion of 16- and 17-year-olds getting licenses to drive dropped while the numbers at 18 and 19 did not.

But the authors also suggested another hypothesis: that teenagers going through graduated driver license programs are not getting as much practical driving experience when they have “co-drivers.” In other words, while having adult supervision in the car reduces risk, it also protects teenage drivers so much that they miss out on learning experiences that can be gleaned only by driving alone, like knowing what it means to be fully responsible for a vehicle and knowing how to “self-regulate.”

Discuss and Decide

How have teenage driving laws changed? Cite textual evidence in your response.

NOTES

“Even though we want you to learn by driving with your parents, it’s really different from the sorts of things you learn when you’re driving on your own,” Dr. Masten said. “The whole thing about learning to drive is you need to expose yourself to crash risk to get experience.”

60 In an editorial that accompanied the study, researchers with the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, a nonprofit group financed by insurance companies, said the findings raised a “serious issue” that policy makers should take note of. They pointed out that one of the states with the toughest programs for teenage drivers is New Jersey, where all first-time drivers under 21 have to adhere to graduated driver restrictions.

70 “New Jersey’s approach has been associated with significant reductions in the crash rates for 17- and 18-year-olds and virtually eliminates crashes among 16-year-olds, without adversely affecting crash rates for 19-year-old drivers,” the authors wrote.

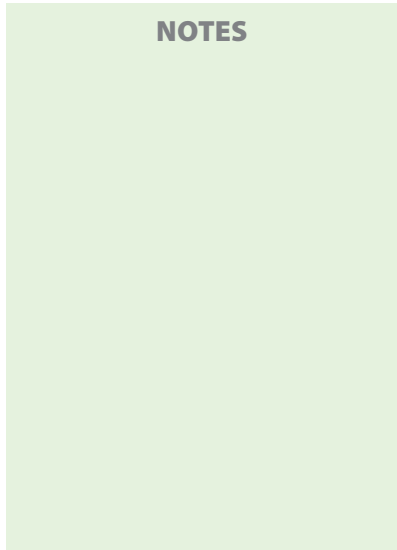
80 But in a twist, New Jersey’s tough laws may have just shifted the effect to 21-year-olds, similar to the way tough restrictions on 16- and 17-year-olds were followed by a spike in deadly crashes among 18-year-olds in other states, Dr. Masten said. In New Jersey, a study of deadly crashes did not look specifically at 21-year-olds; they were mixed into a larger group of 20- to 24-year-olds. But the research still found a 10 percent increase in deadly crashes in that group after New Jersey’s tougher graduated driver licensing program was instituted, suggesting that 18-, 19- and 20-year-olds may be waiting out the tough restrictions there as well.

Close Read

What general principle does New Jersey’s experience suggest about driving restrictions and age?

Other researchers have also found that the reason the rate of crashes among teenagers is so high—they account for 10 times as many crashes as middle-aged drivers—is not that they are reckless, but that they make simple mistakes, like failing to scan the road, misjudging driving conditions and becoming distracted. Some of these problems can be addressed through what experts call narrative driving: having adult drivers point out to teenage passengers examples of unsafe driving and explain to them how they are dealing with distractions on the road.

- 90 Lack of sleep can also be a major factor in teenage crashes. A study in the *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine* this year found that teenagers who started school earlier in the morning had higher crash rates.



Close Read

Provide evidence from the article that supports the position of allowing teenagers to drive at age 16. Then provide evidence that supports the position of *not* allowing teenagers to drive at 16.

Pro	Con
<p>Support Allowing 16-Year-Olds to Drive</p>	<p>Against Allowing 16-Year-Olds to Drive</p>

Respond to Questions on Step 3 Sources

These questions will help you think about the sources you've read. Use your notes and refer to the sources in order to answer the questions. Your answers to these questions will help you write your essay.

- 1 Is the evidence from one source more credible than the evidence from another source? When you evaluate the credibility of a source, examine the expertise of the author and/or the organization responsible for the information. Record your reasons.

Source	Credible?	Reasons
Informational Article Traffic Safety Facts		
Informational Article Teenage Driving Laws May Just Delay Deadly Crashes		

- 2 **Prose Constructed-Response** What point about teen driving is raised in both the blog "Teenage Driving Laws May Just Delay Deadly Crashes" and the data from "Traffic Safety Facts"? Why is this point important to address when making an informed decision about teen driving? Support your answer with details and statistics.

- 3 **Prose Constructed-Response** Does the bar graph in "Traffic Safety Facts" support or contradict the information in the article "Teenage Driving Laws May Just Delay Deadly Crashes"? Use details from the article and the graph to support your answer.

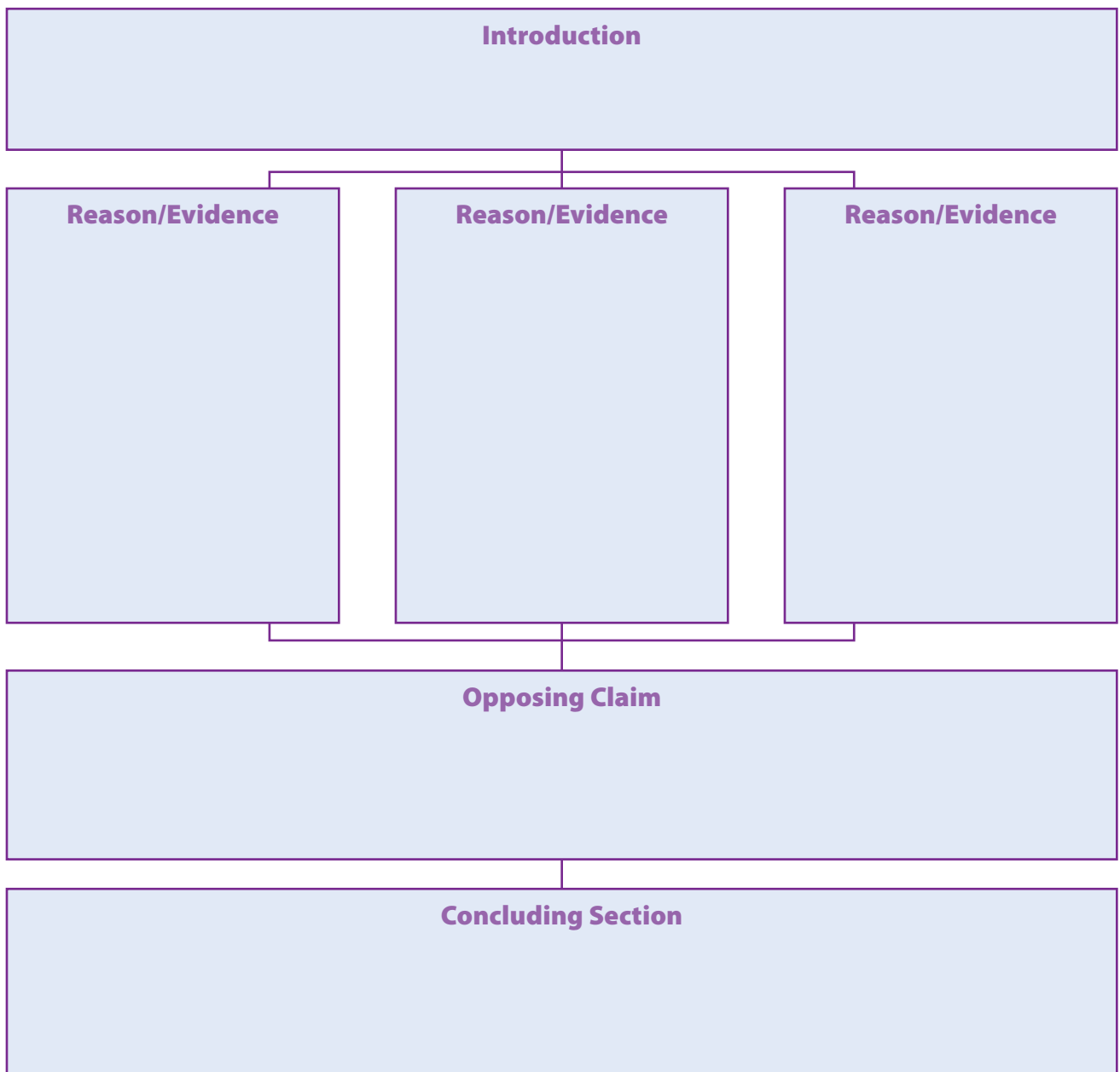
Part 2: Write

ASSIGNMENT

You have read about traffic accidents caused by teens. Now write an argumentative essay answering the question: Should the minimum driving age be raised? Support your claim with details from what you have read.

Plan

Use the graphic organizer to help you outline the structure of your argumentative essay.



Draft



Use your notes and completed graphic organizer to write a first draft of your argumentative essay.

Revise and Edit



Look back over your essay and compare it to the Evaluation Criteria. Revise your essay and edit it to correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.

Evaluation Criteria

Your teacher will be looking for:

1. *Statement of purpose*

- ▶ Is your claim specific?
- ▶ Did you support it with valid reasons?
- ▶ Did you anticipate and address opposing claims fairly?

2. *Organization*

- ▶ Are the sections of your essay organized in a logical way?
- ▶ Is there a smooth flow from beginning to end?
- ▶ Is there a clear conclusion that supports the argument?
- ▶ Did you stay on topic?

3. *Elaboration of evidence*

- ▶ Is the evidence relative to the topic?
- ▶ Is there enough evidence to be convincing?

4. *Language and Vocabulary*

- ▶ Did you use a formal, noncombative tone?
- ▶ Did you use vocabulary familiar to your audience?

5. *Conventions*

- ▶ Did you follow the rules of grammar usage as well as punctuation, capitalization, and spelling?