

SAMPLE WRITING PROMPT

This prompt will not be used on the MEA. It is provided as an example of the format of writing prompts aligned to the 2007 MLR writing performance indicator B3.

CELL PHONE USE IN SCHOOL

Many schools ban the use of cell phones in school. Some do not allow students to bring cell phones to school at all. However, many parents and students feel cell phones should be allowed as long as they do not ring in class. Should cell phones be banned from schools?

Write an essay in which you argue *for or against* the use of cell phones in school. The lists below contain information from articles about cell phone use.

Your essay must include evidence from the lists below to support your position. In addition, you may also use evidence based on your own experiences or other learning.

Reasons to SUPPORT cell phone use in schools:

- if a student forgets something at home, s/he can quickly call home for the item and the day is less disrupted than if the student had to go to the office to call home.
- many parents want to have immediate access to their children in time of emergency; the cell phone gives them this access
- cell phones often include such advanced technology like access to the internet or complex calculators that it's like having personal computing at your finger tips.
- teachers and administrators in schools which ban cell phones spend a great deal of time enforcing the policy when they could be doing something more productive.
- after the attacks on September 11, 2001, many parents in New York City insisted that schools lift their ban on cell phones because students couldn't contact their parents since public phones were busy or not working.

Reasons to OPPOSE cell phone use in schools:

- a student may inadvertently detonate a bomb by using a cell phone.
- cell phones in the classroom are distracting and a threat to the integrity of instruction: students can cheat on tests by sending a text message.
- many states and school systems banned the use of pagers in the 1990's due to concerns about drug deals being conducted with the use of pagers, a policy which was expanded to include cell phones and, in some cases, laptop computers.
- not everyone can afford a cell phone, therefore a cell phone becomes a symbol of status.
- many locations in Maine do not have access to cell tower signals. Relying on them could prove to be unreliable.

These sources would be listed on a separate "works cited" page in the MEA test booklet.
Sources:

http://www.schoolsecurity.org/trends/cell_phones.html

http://thinklab.typepad.com/think_lab/2006/05/is_it_time_to_a.html

http://www.education-world.com/a_issues/issues270.shtml