

Elaboration Practice—Minimum Legal Drinking Age

Question: Should the drinking age be lowered from twenty-one?

Thesis Statement (Claim): Since teens are not mature enough to handle alcohol responsibly, the United States drinking age should remain at age twenty-one.

Reason (Why?): Lowering the drinking age of teenagers would be negligent and pose serious dangers.

Select one or more quotes as compelling evidence for the provided reason.

- “Alcohol consumption can interfere with development of the brain’s frontal lobes in a young adult, a part of the brain essential for functions such as emotional regulation, planning, and organization.”
- “When alcohol consumption interferes with this early adult brain development, the potential for chronic problems, such as greater vulnerability to addiction, dangerous risk-taking behavior, reduced decision-making ability, memory loss, depression, violence, and suicide, is greater.”
- “One hundred of the 102 analyses (98 percent) in a 2002 meta-study of the legal drinking age and traffic accidents found higher legal drinking ages associated with lower rates of traffic accidents. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimated that MLDA [minimum legal drinking age] 21 decreased the number of fatal traffic accidents for eighteen- to twenty-year-olds by 13 percent and saved approximately 27,052 lives from 1975 to 2008.”
- “A peer-reviewed study from the *Journal of Studies of Alcohol and Drugs* found that the younger a person begins to drink alcohol, the more likely it is that they will use other illicit drugs.”
- “Lowering MLDA twenty-one to eighteen will irresponsibly allow a greater segment of the population to drink alcohol in bars and nightclubs, which are not safe environments” (ProCon.org, 2016a).

Questions to Consider

- Why do I think this evidence is important or significant to my argument?
- What do I want people to believe, think, or infer because of this evidence?
- How does this evidence reinforce or relate to my argument?
- What analysis, insight, interpretation, or evaluation can I offer from this evidence to help readers see how it connects to my argument?

Sentence Frames

(Use one or more.)

- Based on the evidence, one can conclude (infer, determine, recognize) _____.
- As _____ believes (asserts, proves), _____.
- In other words, _____ is asserting (confirming, supporting) that _____.
- As a result of this evidence, consider _____.
- What is clear from this evidence is that _____.
- Essentially (basically), _____ demonstrates _____.
- To reiterate _____’s point, _____.
- The point _____ makes coincides with _____.
- This evidence (shows, reveals, indicates, suggests, furthers the) _____.

Elaboration: