

This week's issue:

SHOULD MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE TO MEET A GRADE REQUIREMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS?



Questions for Classroom Discussion:

- What is the rule about playing sports in Svenka's school?
- Why do some people think that middle and high school students who play sports should maintain certain grades?
- Why do some people think that grade requirements for sports are not a good idea?
- Is there a grade requirement to be eligible to play sports in your school?

Svenka worked hard on her soccer skills and made the school team. When she got an F on her report card, the coach told her she was not **eligible** to play unless her grades improved. The school that Svenka attends, like many others around the country, has a rule: If you don't pass a class, you don't get to play. Svenka thinks that this is unfair. She does not think this one bad grade should **affect** her place on the team.

Some people think that middle and high school students should **maintain** certain grade point averages to play sports. Many schools use grades as a **prerequisite** for participation in after-school activities. They feel that the students should work as hard in the classroom as on the field. If students really want to play they should work extra hard in school to make sure that they can.

Not only does this rule encourage student athletes to keep up with their schoolwork, it also motivates coaches to teach players how to balance their time. Coaches don't want their star athletes to fall behind in school and be dropped from the team.

On the other hand, there are people who do not think grade requirements are a good idea. They think that forcing students to get a certain grade will keep too many from participating. In **previous** years, some students took easier classes just so they could play sports. This was unfair to the athletes who had to work harder to keep up their grades in challenging classes.

What do you think about this? Does the "no pass, no play" rule seem fair to you? Should middle and high school students have to meet a grade requirement to participate in sports?

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eligible | affect | maintain | prerequisite | previous

USE THE FOCUS WORDS * and alternate parts of speech

prerequisite (*noun*) requirement that must be met before moving on

➡ **Sample Sentence:** Turning in all your homework is usually a **prerequisite** for getting good grades.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** What are some **prerequisites** for getting a driver's license?

***prerequisite** (*adjective*) required before something else can happen

➡ **Sample Sentence:** Punctuality (being on time) is a **prerequisite** behavior for getting a raise.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** What are some **prerequisite** achievements for becoming a doctor?

eligible (*adjective*) qualified for

➡ **Sample Sentence:** Students must bring in signed permission slips to be **eligible** to participate in field trips.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** Do you think students who don't do their homework should be **eligible** to go on field trips?

maintain (*verb*) to keep up; to sustain

➡ **Sample Sentence:** Raphael got a 100% on the quiz, which allowed him to **maintain** his A+ average in class.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** What can you do to **maintain** a good reputation among your peers?

affect (*verb*) to have an effect on

➡ **Sample Sentence:** Eating a healthy breakfast can **affect** how well you do in school.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** Besides diet, what else can **affect** your performance in school?

***affect** (*noun*) observable emotion

➡ **Sample Sentence:** Ella's **affect** changed as soon as she saw the grade on her test.

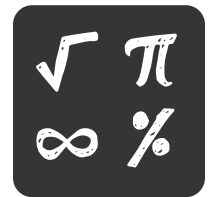
🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** Describe a poker player's **affect**.

previous (*adjective*) earlier, most recent

➡ **Sample Sentence:** We won our game last night because we played a lot better than we had in the **previous** game.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** If you could choose any of your **previous** teachers to teach your class next year, who would you choose and why?

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DO THE MATH


In Georgia, students must **maintain** good grades to be **eligible** to play sports. For a student to join a sports team, he or she must have met certain **prerequisites** the **previous** semester. In 2009, the Georgia school board made a change that **affects** middle school students. Before, middle school students had to pass five classes the semester before playing a sport. Now, students have to pass at least 70% of their classes the semester before playing a sport. One reason the Georgia school board changed their sports eligibility rule is because different Georgia schools follow different schedules. Some students only take four classes each semester, so even if they passed every class, they wouldn't meet the eligibility requirement of passing five classes.

Option 1: If students take four classes, how many must they pass to pass at least 70% of their classes?

- A. at least 1
- B. at least 2
- C. at least 3
- D. all 4

Option 2: Sierra passed five of her classes, but she did not meet Georgia's new sports eligibility requirement that students must pass at least 70% of their classes. How many classes must she have taken?

Sierra must have taken a minimum of 8 classes. Here is one way to think about it: Let t = classes taken and p = classes passed. Then, solve the inequality $p \geq .7t$. When $p = 5$, we get $7.1 \leq t$. Since t must be a whole number, Sierra must have taken 8 or more classes.

 **Discussion Question:** Under the **previous** rule, passing a certain number of classes was a **prerequisite** for playing sports. The new rule asks students to pass a certain percentage of classes. In some schools, students can choose to take extra classes. Under the new rule, if students take more classes, they must **maintain** more passing grades to stay **eligible** to play sports. Will the new rule **affect** how many classes students take? Do you think it will discourage students from being ambitious and taking more classes? Why or why not?

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THINK SCIENTIFICALLY

Mr. Seemy finds Vickie sitting sadly in the hallway, holding a basketball. “What’s wrong, Vickie?” Mr. Seemy asks.

“I’m not **eligible** to play in the game tonight,” Vickie says. “Our coach made good grades a **prerequisite**. I try to **maintain** a strong B in each class, but I failed a history test last week and an English test the **previous** week. I’m so frustrated! I’ll probably just quit the team.”

“Don’t do that!” says Mr. Seemy. “Basketball can help you keep your grades up. Exercise **affects** your brainpower.”

“Really?” asks Vickie.

“Let’s investigate!” says Mr. Seemy.

Some of the students in Mr. Seemy’s class volunteer to participate in a study Vickie does on physical activity and memory.

<p>Question: How does exercise affect brainpower?</p>	<p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ask Group A to run for ten minutes. ▶ Ask Group B to sit for ten minutes. ▶ Give memory test. ▶ Calculate the average score for each group. 							
<p>Hypothesis: Students who run before a memory test will score higher than students who sit.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Data:</th> <th>Group A (runners)</th> <th>Group B (sitters)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Average score</td> <td>89%</td> <td>66%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Data:	Group A (runners)	Group B (sitters)	Average score	89%	66%
Data:	Group A (runners)	Group B (sitters)						
Average score	89%	66%						
<p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Group A (10 students) ▶ Group B (10 students) ▶ Memory test 								

Is the hypothesis supported by the data or not?

Supported. Note: Review the issue of correlation vs. causation.

What evidence supports your conclusion?

Runners earned a higher average score than sitters.

How would you make this a better experiment?

Consider sample size, number of trials, control of variables, whether the procedure is a true measure of the question, replicability, data collection, etc.

Real Research: The article cited below describes a study where college students ran, lifted weights, or sat quietly before a memory test. The runners consistently performed best. The article connects this finding to other studies that have suggested that exercise in general and aerobic exercise in particular stimulates helpful brain activity.

Reynolds, G. (2009, September 16). Phys ed: What sort of exercise can make you smarter? *The New York Times*. Retrieved on January 22, 2010 from <http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/09/16/what-sort-of-exercise-can-make-you-smarter/>

Classroom Discussion: Summarize the real research. (People who ran before a memory test outperformed people who sat or lifted weights.) Are students surprised by this finding? Why or why not? Which side(s) of this week’s debate could the finding support?



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DEBATE THE ISSUE

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A

Students who play sports should not have to **maintain** passing grades in any of their classes.

OR

B

Students who play sports should have to **maintain** passing grades in all of their classes.

OR

C

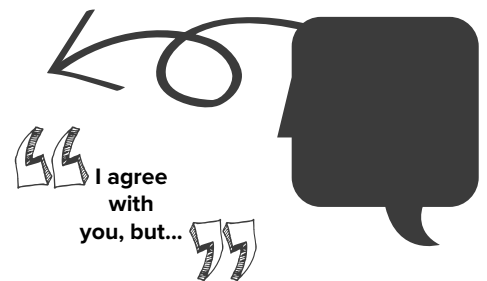
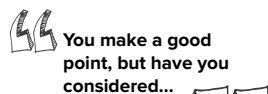
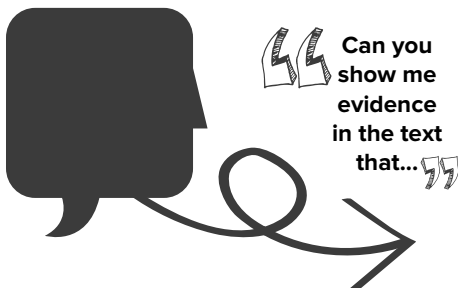
Students who play sports should have to **maintain** passing grades in a certain percentage of their classes.

OR

CREATE YOUR OWN

Jot down a few notes on how to support your position during a discussion or debate.

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these:



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TAKE A STAND



Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples. Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

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