Prompt #1:

From talk radio to television shows, from popular magazine to Web blogs, ordinary citizens, political figures, and entertainers express their opinions on a wide range of topics. Are these opinions worthwhile? Does the expression of such opinions foster democratic values? Write an essay in which you take a position on the value of such public statements of opinion, supporting your view with appropriate evidence.

Thesis:

Historical

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Worthwhile | Not Worthwhile |

Literary

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Worthwhile | Not Worthwhile |

Current Events

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Worthwhile | Not Worthwhile |

Pop Culture

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Worthwhile | Not Worthwhile |

Personal Experience

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Worthwhile | Not Worthwhile |

Prompt #2:

A weekly feature of The New York Times is a column by Randy Cohen called “The Ethicist,” in which people raise ethical questions to which Cohen provides answers. The question below is from the column that appeared on April 4, 2003.

At my high school, various clubs and organizations sponsor charity drives, asking students to bring in money, food, and clothing. Some teachers offer bonus points on tests and final averages as incentives to participate. Some parents believe that this sends a morally wrong message, undermining the value of charity as a selfless act. Is the exchange of donations for grades O.K?

The practice of offering incentives for charitable acts is widespread, from school projects to fund drives by organizations such as public television stations, to federal income tax deductions for contributions to charities. In a well written essay, develop a position on the ethics of offering incentives for charitable acts. Support your position with evidence from your reading, observation, and experience.

Thesis:

Historical

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Good | Bad |

Literary

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Good | Bad |

Current Events

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Good | Bad |

Pop Culture

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Good | Bad |

Personal Experience

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Good | Bad |

Prompt #3:

The first Buy Nothing Day—a day on which people are urged to purchase no goods—was organized in Canada in 1992 as a way to increase awareness of excessive consumerism. A Buy Nothing Day has been held yearly since then in many nations. An online article, “Buy Nothing Day: 1006 Press Release,” urged worldwide acceptance of taking a “24-hour consumer detox as part of the 14th annual Buy Nothing Day” in order to “expose the environmental and ethical consequences of overconsumption” (“Buy Nothing Day,” courtesy Adbusters, www.adbusters.org).

Consider the implications of a day on which no goods are purchased. Then write an essay in which you develop a position on the establishment of an annual Buy Nothing Day. Support your argument with appropriate evidence.

Thesis:

Historical

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| --- | --- |
| Pro | Con |

Literary

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Pro | Con |

Current Events

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Pro | Con |

Pop Culture

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Pro | Con |

Personal Experience

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Pro | Con |

Write a thesis

Historical

Literary

Current Events

Pop Culture

Personal experience