



Grade 12 Literacy Assessment

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT



Ministry of
Education and
Child Care



PART A

“Thinking Critically About the Texts”

Suggested Time: 65 minutes



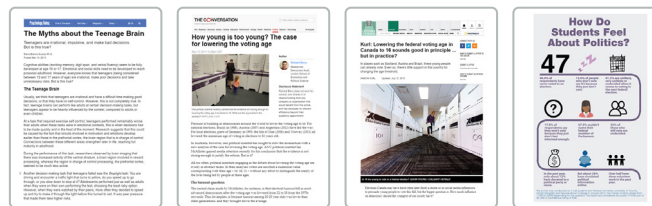
Context for Critical Thinking

While current laws and regulations in Canada reflect the view that youth are not ready to cast a vote in municipal, provincial, or federal elections, there is evidence to both support and refute this opinion. The age at which people are granted suffrage is not universal: some countries have experimented with lowering the voting age, while others are only beginning to examine research findings. Political scientists, sociologists, and psychologists offer a range of insights. As society reconsiders multiple perspectives on the importance of voting, perhaps it is time to amend our current electoral system and grant young people the right to vote.

Should the voting age in Canadian elections be lowered?

In this section you will:

- read and analyze a variety of texts
- answer selected response questions worth ten points
- complete a graphic organizer
- respond critically to the texts in a multi-paragraph composition





In the following text

Scientists have discovered some compelling facts about decision-making and brain development in the teenage brain.

The Myths about the Teenage Brain

Teenagers are irrational, impulsive, and make bad decisions.

But is this true?

Elena Blanco-Suarez Ph.D.

Posted Mar 19, 2019

Cognitive abilities (working memory, digit span, and verbal fluency) seem to be fully developed at age 16 or 17. Emotional and social skills need to be developed to reach prosocial adulthood. However, everyone knows that teenagers (being considered between 13 and 17 years of age) are irrational, make poor decisions and take unnecessary risks. But is this true?

The Teenage Brain

Usually, we think that teenagers are irrational and have a difficult time making good decisions, or that they have no self-control. However, this is not completely true. In fact, teenage brains can perform like adults at certain decision-making tasks, but teenagers appear to be heavily influenced by the context, compared to adults or even children.

At a task that required exercise self-control, teenagers performed remarkably worse than adults when these tasks were in emotional contexts, this is when decisions had to be made quickly and in the heat of the moment. Research suggests that this could be caused by the fact that circuits involved in motivation and emotions develop earlier than those in the prefrontal cortex, the brain region that is in charge of control. Connections between these different areas strengthen later in life, reaching full maturity in adulthood.

During the performance of this task, researchers observed by brain imaging that there was increased activity of the ventral striatum, a brain region involved in reward processing, whereas the region in charge of control processing, the prefrontal cortex, seemed to be much less active.

- 5 Another decision-making task that teenagers failed was the *Stoplight* task: You are driving and encounter a traffic light that turns to yellow, do you speed up to go through, or you slow down to stop at it? Adolescents performed just as well as adults when they were on their own performing the test, choosing the least risky option. However, when they were watched by their peers, more often they decided to speed up and try to make it through the light before this turned to red. It was peer pressure that made them take higher risks.

Some studies show the tendency of teenagers to embrace threat rather than avoiding it. In addition, teenagers seem to crave peer approval and pushed by peer pressure, which may explain why teenage criminal offenders tend to be in groups rather than acting alone.

The Importance of Having an Adult Brain

Researchers, using different tests like the ones mentioned above, conclude that performance maturity is rather reached at a later age, 21 or 22 years of age, which is what nowadays in the US is considered old enough to do certain activities such as drinking. However, other important activities such as driving and voting are allowed at a younger age, at which neurological maturity may still be under construction. These patterns though are found not only in American youth, but other countries around the world, suggesting that it has biological components, like genetics, and it is not purely cultural.

Adolescents, just like adults, are all different and some will face more trouble at adapting than others, making better decisions or exercising self-control. However, research on the adolescent brain is necessary as establishing brain maturity is crucial to shape policies and determine when the human brain has full cognitive ability to be responsible for its own actions and the consequences that come with them.

References

J., B., & Caudle, K. (2013). The Teenage Brain: Self Control. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22(2), 82–87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721413480170>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/brain-chemistry/201903/the-myths-about-the-teenage-brain>

For which activity would the author agree 13 to 17 year olds are cognitively unprepared?



Working a part-time job with peers.



Going on a road trip with friends.



Leading a group discussion with classmates.



Auditioning for a lead role in a performance.

Why would this article, which cites American research, be relevant to Canadian teens?

Research shows that North Americans are influenced by the same social stimuli.

Policy regarding brain research is developed internationally.

Much of the research is based on physiological characteristics.



In the following texts

There are various viewpoints regarding the societal impacts of lowering the voting age.

How young is too young? The case for lowering the voting age

May 13, 2014 10.36pm EDT



Author



Richard Berry

Researcher,
Democratic Audit,
London School of
Economics and
Political Science

Disclosure Statement

Richard Berry does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond their academic appointment.

One political scientist recently claimed that the evidence isn't strong enough for lowering the voting age in Australia to 16. What are the arguments to the contrary? [AAP/Lukas Coch](#)

Pressure is building in democracies around the world to lower the voting age to 16. For national elections, Brazil (in 1988), Austria (2007) and Argentina (2012) have led the way. For local elections, parts of Germany in 1995, the Isle of Man (2006) and Norway (2011) all lowered the minimum age of voting in elections to 16 years old.

In Australia, however, one political scientist has sought to slow the momentum with a new analysis of the case for lowering the voting age. ANU political scientist Ian McAllister gained media attention recently for his conclusion that the evidence is not strong enough to justify the reform. But is it?

All too often, political scientists engaging in the debate about lowering the voting age see it only in abstract terms. In their analyses voters are ascribed a numerical value corresponding with their age – 16, 18, 21 – without any effort to distinguish the reality of the lives being led by people at these ages.

The turnout question

The central claim made by McAllister, for instance, is that electoral turnout fell in most

advanced democracies after the voting age was lowered from 21 to 18 from the 1970s onwards. This, he implies, is because turnout among 18-20 year olds was lower than older generations, and they brought down the average.

- 5 While one cannot dispute that the enfranchisement of 18-20 year olds coincided with declining turnout, it is misleading to suggest a relationship between the two without considering the wide range of other causes.

For instance, economic inequality increased markedly in recent decades in advanced democracies. The effect of this on political participation has received precious little attention from political scientists. Where it has been studied, the negative impact of inequality on turnout is clear.

How young is too young?

Another common mistake is the assumption that the effect of lowering the voting age to 16 would be the same as lowering it to 18. McAllister admits to assuming that 16-17 year olds are “behaviourally similar” to 18-19 year olds. This is folly: the lives of most 16-17 year olds are markedly different to those aged over 18. 16-17 year olds tend to live with their parents, in a settled community where they have spent much of their lives.

Post-18, by contrast, young people’s lives become far more chaotic. They leave school and may leave home, embark on university or full-time employment, and deal with the range of stresses that accompany adulthood for the first time.

The chart below shows the ages at which people move from one local government jurisdiction to another in England and Wales. The peak time for people to move between areas is 18-19, with almost one-quarter of people doing so.

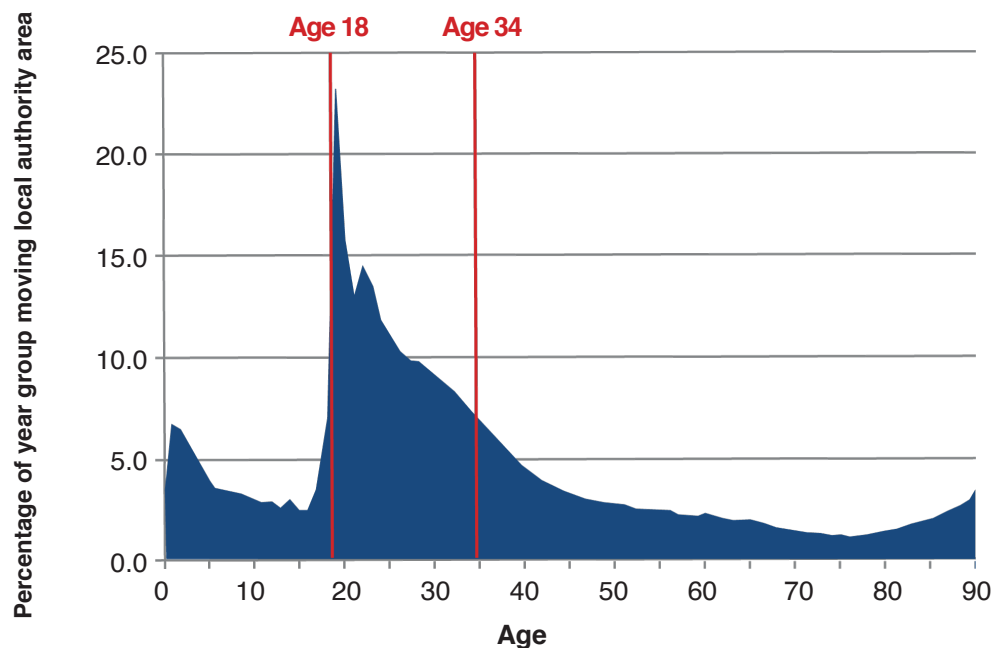


Figure 1: Percentage of people moving from one local government to another in England and Wales.
UK Office for National Statistics

- 10 People in their late teens and early 20s are living precisely the kinds of lives that make them less likely voters before we even take their age into account; 16 and 17 year olds are not. While this does not mean we should expect 16 and 17 year olds to vote in extraordinarily high numbers, it does suggest it will be easier to engage them in elections.

Austria and Australia

For Australia, of course, any attempt to track changes in turnout is rendered irrelevant by compulsory voting. McAllister’s analysis relies on results from the Australian Election Study, a post-election survey, in which people are asked if they would have voted were it not compulsory.

However, it is well-established that post-election surveys tend to over-estimate turnout. Asking people what their behaviour might have been in a hypothetical voluntary election introduces all kinds of additional uncertainty.

We can glean much better insight from overseas: for instance in Austria, where we can assess what 16 year olds actually do after being given the vote. Researchers in Austria have shown that in regional elections, first-time voters are more likely to vote at 16-17 than at 18-20, as per the chart below.

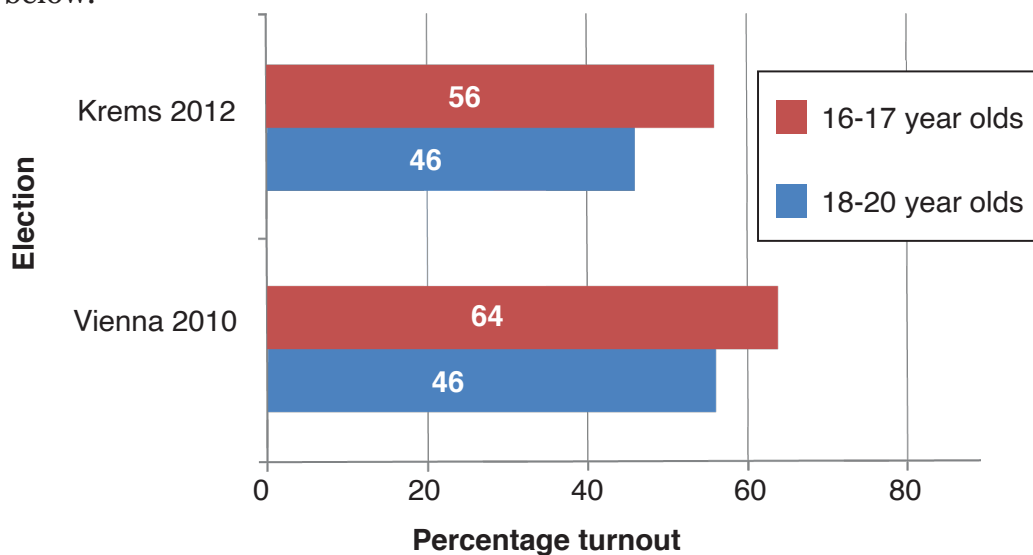


Figure 2: Percentage turnout of young voters in Austrian regional elections. Zeglovits, Aichholzer

With voting known to be a habitual activity, there is every reason to suspect this will translate into higher overall turnout in the future, notwithstanding the impact of other factors affecting turnout.

- 15 We are consistently told by expert opponents of votes at 16, and were told again by McAllister, that the reform is “not a panacea” for the problem of youth disengagement with politics. But the issue about panaceas is that they don’t exist, and nobody really believes they do. No advocates of lowering the voting age think it will automatically transform youth participation in democracy, or that it is the only reform required.

<https://theconversation.com/how-young-is-too-young-the-case-for-lowering-the-voting-age-25793>

Author



Richard Berry
Researcher,
Democratic Audit,
London School of
Economics and
Political Science

Disclosure Statement

Richard Berry does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond their academic appointment.

What is the likely purpose of this disclosure statement?

- to validate the author's expertise
- to suggest that the author is impartial
- to deter potential lawsuits against the author
- to foster agreement with the author's opinions

Which of the following statements best supports the author’s case for lowering the voting age?

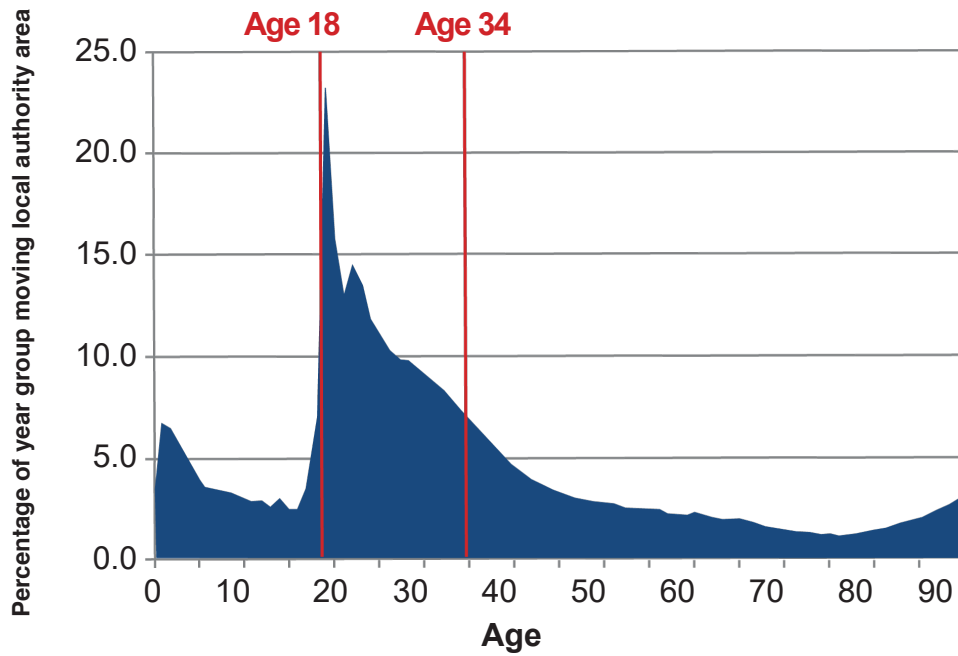
Young people need to understand the implications of compulsory voting.

Young people need to travel extensively to inform themselves about voting issues.



Young people need to view voting as a habitual part of adult life before leaving home.

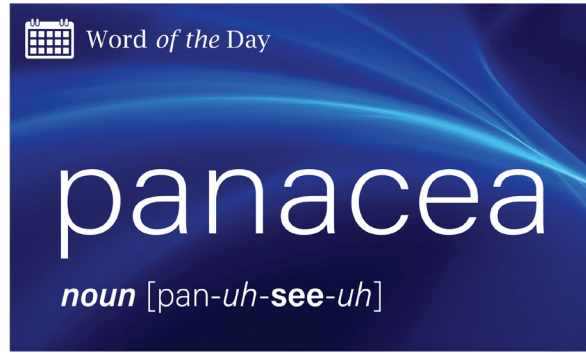
Young people need to consider the connection between voting and economic equality.



Which probable reason for the lower electoral turnout in young adults does this graph support?

Early adulthood is a time of

- inequality.
- transitions.
- financial stability.
- mental health stressors.



What does the use of the word panacea suggest about voting?

A large graphic with a dark blue background and light blue wavy lines. It contains four white rectangular text boxes arranged in a descending staircase pattern from top-left to bottom-right. Each box contains a different interpretation of the word 'panacea' in relation to voting.

that young voters identify closely with political movements

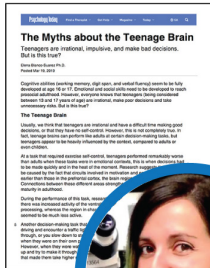
that voting age is less important than education levels

that lowering the voting age is not a universal solution

that young voters are keen to understand complex problems

Question A-7 (1 point)

How do the authors approach the topic of teen voting differently?



One looks at biological factors while the other examines sociological issues.

One focuses on Canadian data while the other draws from international sources.

One seeks to debunk a grassroots belief while the other supports an unorthodox theory.



Kurl: Lowering the federal voting age in Canada to 16 sounds good in principle ... but in practice?

In places such as Scotland, Austria and Brazil, these young people can already vote. Even so, there's little support in this country for changing the age threshold.

SHACHI KURL Updated: July 12, 2019

CONNECT WITH US



HOW TO SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

[Click Here](#)

SUBMIT A LETTER

[Click here to send us your letter.](#)

HOW TO SUBMIT AN OPINION COLUMN

[Click Here](#)



Is 16 too young to vote in a federal election? GAVIN YOUNG / CALGARY HERALD

Elections Canada may have hired (then later fired) a dozen or so social media influencers to persuade young people to vote this fall, but the bigger question is: How much influence on democracy should the youngest of our society have?

The arguments for lowering the voting age to 16 usually go something like this: It will increase voter participation, instil lifelong voting habits by starting them young, and ensure politicians are accountable to and thinking about young people.

Proponents will try to bolster their case by pointing to places such as Scotland, Austria and Brazil where 16-year-olds can already vote, and adding in the usual line of reasoning that if you're old enough to drive a car or consent to sex, you should be able to pick your elected officials. They'll hold up examples of political leaders who in their teens have run circles around the grown-ups in knowledge, eloquence and clarity of vision: Malala Yousafzi, Greta Thunberg.

I mean, it all sounds quite reasonable to me. But then, I was one of those annoyingly precocious 16-year-olds who would have gladly taken full advantage of the privilege, and taken it very seriously indeed.

- 5 Yet Canadians – of all ages – are utterly unmoved. Asked about this by the Angus Reid Institute, their overwhelming view is to deny ballot-box access to the teens in your neighbourhood.

A whopping 80 per cent of those in the grandparent zone (aged 65 and older) appear to arch an eyebrow and look disapprovingly over the rims of their reading glasses at lowering the voting age to 16. But get this, even two-thirds of the very youngest eligible voters – those 18-to-24-year-old members of whatever comes after the millennial generation – are swiping left on the idea too.

The empirical survey data tell us the what, but not the why. For that, I took a decidedly unscientific route, pestering friends, colleagues and acquaintances who – unlike me – actually know some teenagers, to get their take.

My little focus group yielded the common view that in an era of misinformation and social media saturation, adolescents won't be equipped to make informed choices. If trolls and bots can persuade adults in election campaigns of things that are not true, reasons a dad I know, what chance do teens – who live their lives on a variety of platforms – have?

Others take a different view. "They know more about what's happening with politics than I do at times," came a text. "I'd support lowering the voting age."

- 10 There were some crankier reactions to the idea, the old "kids don't pay taxes ergo shouldn't have a say" debate, coupled with the conviction that turning 18, and aging out of formal, compulsory education and either working or studying, or both, gives young people a clearer view of the realities of society, policy and economics and therefore makes them more responsible voters.

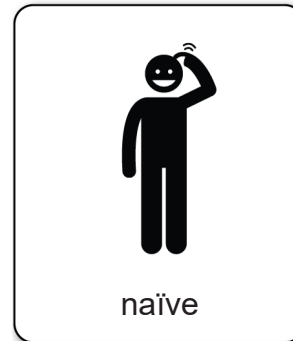
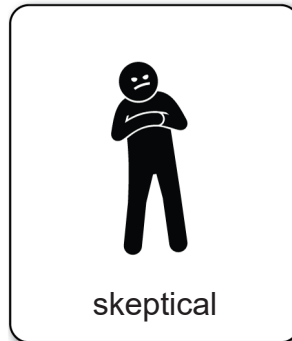
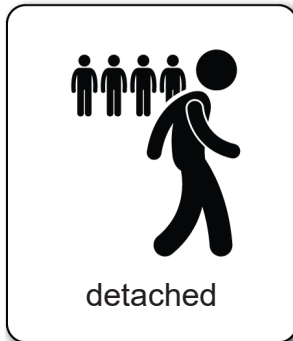
But here's the gloomier reality: The youngest voters already imbued with the right to have their say and complain about it later aren't exactly availing themselves of the entitlement. In 2015, more than half of young voters (58 per cent) cast a ballot. In 2011, just 41 per cent had. The voting propensity of older people – those in their 50s, 60s and 70s, is vastly higher.

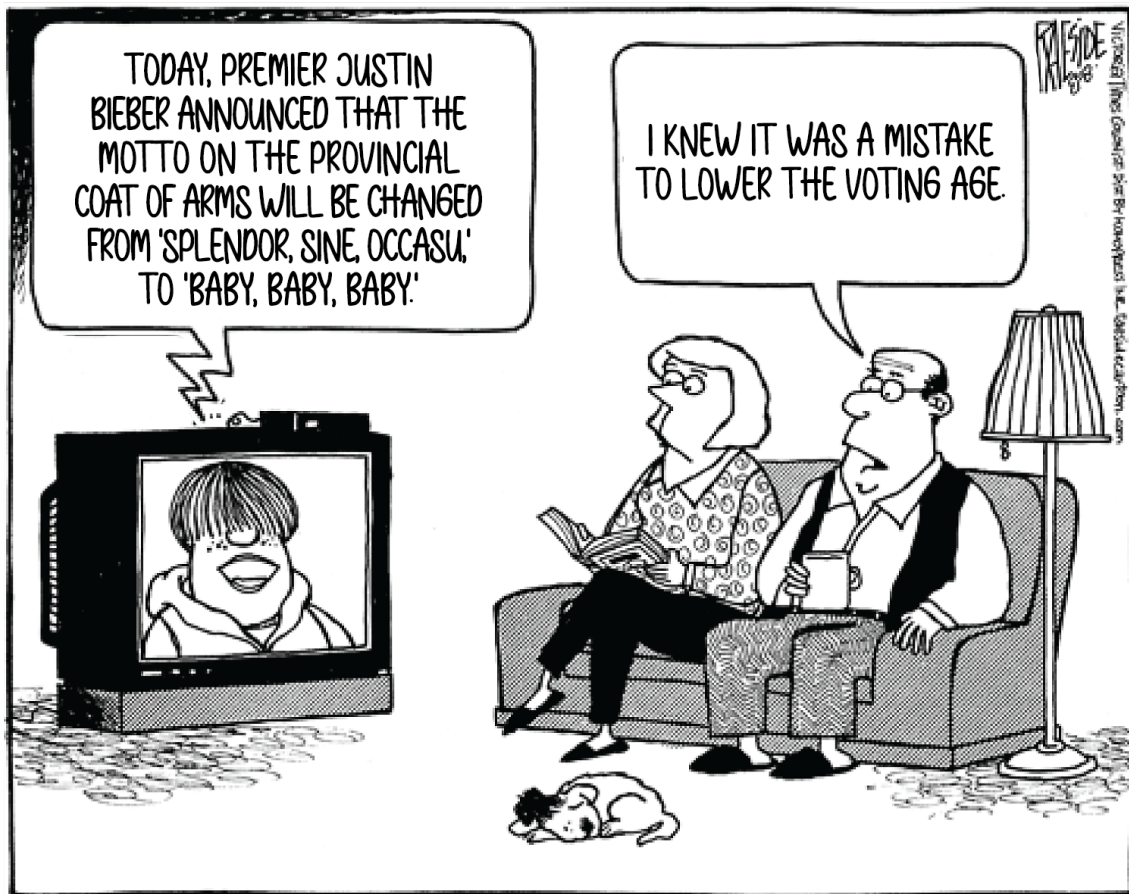
Giving younger Canadians a say makes a lot of sense to me. But given recent voter turnout, whether they even bother to say anything isn't a problem that lowering the voting age is likely to solve.

Shachi Kurl is Executive Director of the Angus Reid Institute, a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation.

<https://ottawacitizen.com/opinion/columnists/kurl-lowering-the-federal-voting-age-in-canada-to-16-sounds-good-in-principle-but-in-practice>

Which word best describes the author's tone in the article?





<https://raesidecartoon.com/vault/voting-age-bc-elections-justin-bieber/>

How would the author of the article likely respond to this political cartoon?

- She would dispute the suggestion that voters are apathetic.
- She would appreciate the lighthearted approach to a serious subject.
- She would agree with the newscaster's critique of electoral reform.
- She would disregard the man's skeptical observation about voting age.



In the following text

University students were surveyed about the role politics plays in their lives.

How Do Students Feel About Politics?

47



46.4% of respondents have never voted in an election.

15.6% of people who don't vote say it's because they just don't care.

41.2% are unlikely, very unlikely or undecided when it comes to voting in the next federal election.



17.9% of respondents say they won't vote because they just don't feel informed enough.

67.5% couldn't name their federal member of Parliament.

35% of those who will vote are undecided.



In the past year, only about 13% have donated to a political party or cause.

But about 28% have circulated political information online.

Over half have done volunteer work in the past year.

This survey was conducted on 1,155 students from Ryerson University, University of Toronto, OCAD University and George Brown College in January 2015. The margin of error ranges from 1.73% to 2.89% depending on the question. The results are considered accurate 19 times out of 20, with a confidence rating of 95%.

Based on the infographic, what would students argue is needed to increase their participation in elections?

We need more information.

We need younger candidates.



We need to move voting online.

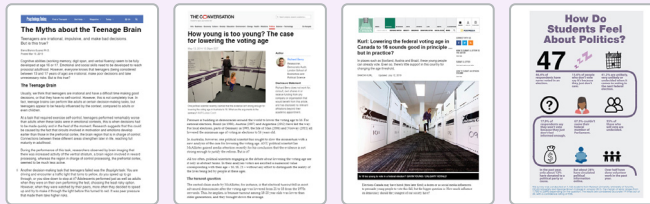
We need more volunteer opportunities.

Graphic Organizer (A-11) (6 points)

Suggested time: 10 minutes



Aspects of Critical Thinking



Based on your understanding of the texts, write a statement that identifies your perspective on when people are ready to vote:


Provide evidence from at least one text that **supports** your perspective:

Provide evidence from at least one text that **challenges** your perspective:

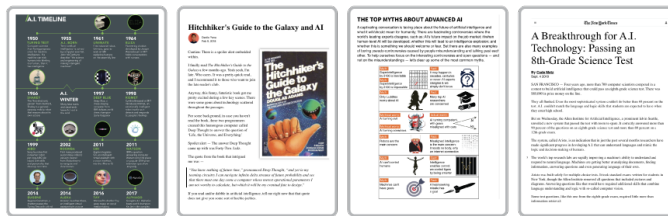
Write at least one question about the voting age that could deepen your understanding of the topic:

Written Response (A-12) (12 points)

 Responding Critically to Texts

 **Context for Critical Thinking**

While current laws and regulations in Canada reflect the view that youth are not ready to cast a vote in municipal, provincial, or federal elections, there is evidence to both support and refute this opinion. The age at which people are granted suffrage is not universal: some countries have experimented with lowering the voting age, while others are only beginning to examine research findings. Political scientists, sociologists, and psychologists offer a range of insights. As society reconsiders multiple perspectives on the importance of voting, perhaps it is time to amend our current electoral system and grant young people the right to vote.



Should the voting age in Canadian elections be lowered?

- You must respond to this question in a multi-paragraph composition.
- You must communicate an argument that demonstrates your critical thinking skills.
- You must support your argument using evidence from at least one of the texts.

Suggested time: 30 minutes

PART B

“Going Beyond the Texts”

Suggested Time: 55 minutes

? Essential Question

How does an understanding of mental health and wellness influence people’s lives?

In this section you will:

- read and analyze a variety of texts
- complete selected response questions worth fifteen points
- select a Writing Pathway to complete your extended written response



Writing Pathway

1

Understandings about health and wellness continue to evolve.

2

Health and well-being are fundamental to living a full life.



In the following text

The First Nations Health Authority describes factors that contribute to health and wellness.

First Nations Perspective on Health and Wellness

First Nations Health Authority

www.fnha.ca



Centre Circle: individuals taking responsibility for personal health and wellness.

Second Circle: Mental, Emotional, Spiritual and Physical facets of a healthy life.

Third Circle: overarching values that support wellness:

Respect: honouring where we come from, cultures, and traditions.

5 **Wisdom:** knowledge of language, traditions, culture, and medicine passed on by our ancestors.

Responsibility: something we all have to ourselves, our families, our communities, and the land.

Relationships: mutual accountability and reciprocity (togetherness, team-building, capacity building).

Fourth Circle: people that surround us and the places from which we come: Nations, Family, Community, and Land are all critical components of our healthy experience.

Land: sustains us physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally. Land is the ultimate nurturer of people.

10 **Community:** where we live, come from, and work. There are communities of place, knowledge, interests, experiences, and values.

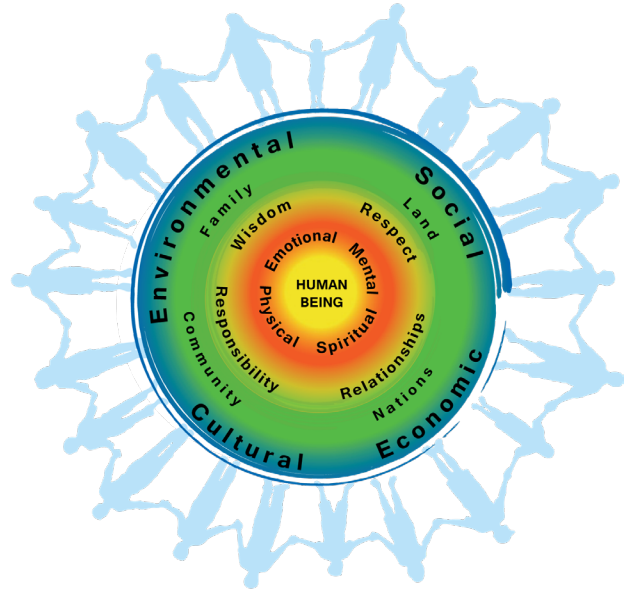
Family: our support base including who we care for and our support systems.

Nations: broader communities outside of our families and communities.

Fifth Circle: determinants of health:

Social: security, housing, food, prevention, promotion, education, health awareness, and outreach supports, are critical aspects of wellness.

15 **Environmental:** land, air, water, food, and other resources that need to be cared for in order to sustain healthy children, families and communities.

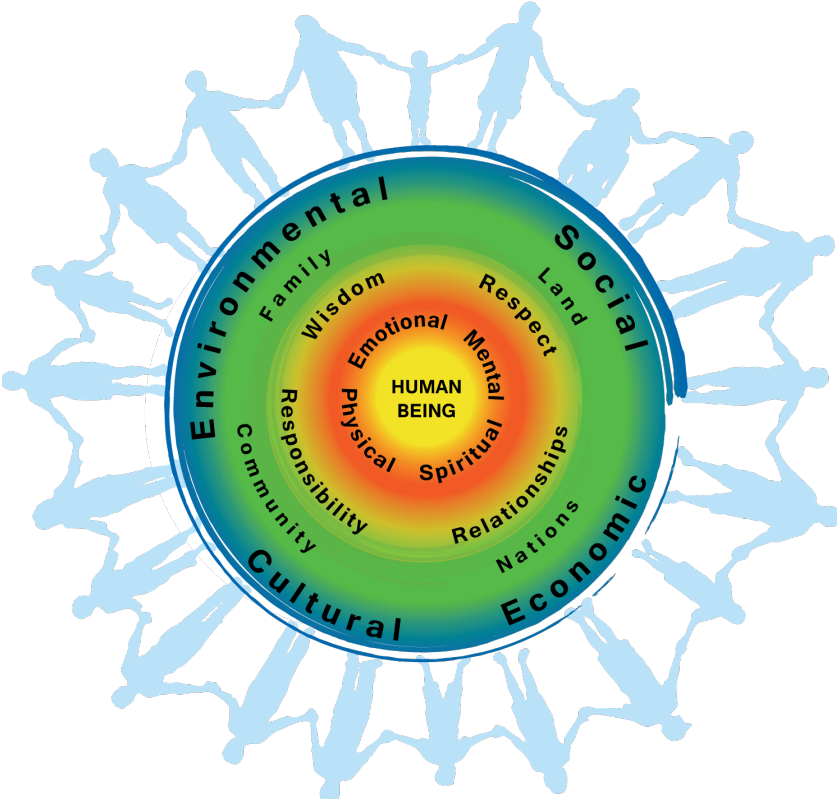


Cultural: language, spirituality, ceremonies, traditional foods and medicines, and teachings.

Economic: resources which we have a responsibility to manage, share, and sustain for future generations.

Outer Circle: strong children, families, and elders. People are holding hands to demonstrate togetherness, respect and relationships. Children are the heart of our communities and connect us to who we are and to our health.

<https://www.fnha.ca/wellness/wellness-and-the-first-nations-health-authority/first-nations-perspective-on-wellness>



What does the structure of this visual depiction suggest about aspects of health and wellness?

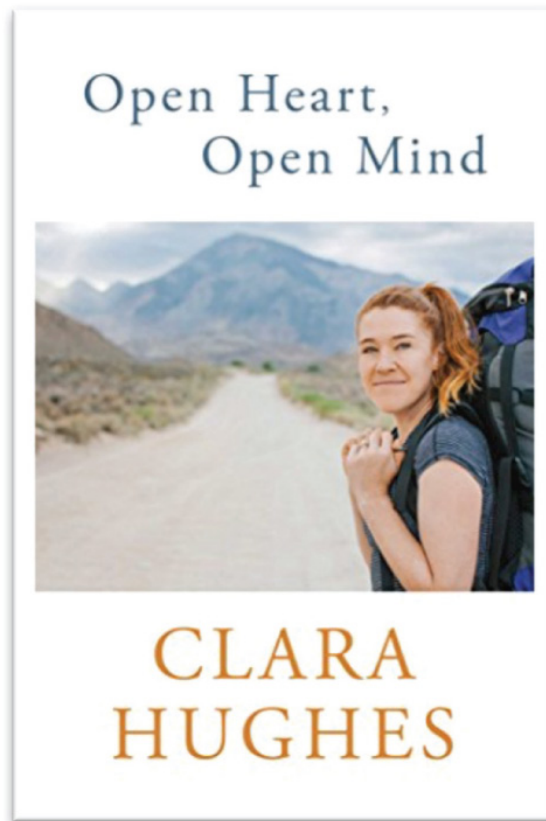
They are

static.
identical.
divergent.
integrated.



In the following text

In her memoir, an Olympic medalist acknowledges pivotal moments in her life.



It started with my being asked to be the flag-bearer. I was sure I had the capacity to carry our flag and still perform. My first race was thirty-six hours after the march into BC Place, but I wasn't concerned. Without hesitation, I accepted. The Vancouver Winter Games in 2010 were my fifth games. I thought I'd been through it all but competing at home took the stress to a new level. I was propelled from the hermetic existence of training and became, for a few days, the single focus of the biggest sporting event in Canadian history.

Richmond City Hall became Olympic central for the press conference. For the first time in my life, I felt that bliss without having to skate or ride myself through a world of pain.

The press conference turned my elation to despair. All my confidence and excitement was shattered as soon as I entered the obligatory media scrum. Reporters asked about the flag-bearer curse, the cost of venues, and protests on the streets.

I left the press conference in a state of shock. I'd made a mistake and a big one at that. There was no way out, and I knew it. My fifth Olympic Games had begun.

- 5 I sat alone in the apartment that'd been provided as part of our home-team advantage. I opened my laptop. That's when I saw an e-mail from my good friend Tewanee Joseph.

Tewanee was the CEO of the Four Host First Nations (FHFN), made up of the Lil'wat, Musqueam, Squamish, and the Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. Every Olympic moment would take place on their territorial land.

His e-mail was an invitation to a brushing-off ceremony. While all my competitors moved deeper into bubbles that isolated them from everything but sport, I travelled to find out exactly what this ceremony was.

Tewanee's home was on the small patch of Squamish First Nations Reserve on Vancouver's North Shore. We walked into the warmth of the house, greeted by an abundance of food and smiles. All offered warm hugs; all were eager to make us welcome. After having been more or less institutionalized through a program of elite training, not to mention the pressure I put on myself, I was relieved to relax and forget my responsibilities.

These feelings strengthened when Tewanee's wife, Rae-Ann, gave me a silver hummingbird pendant her son had picked out for me. She told me it would give me wings to fly. I wore it the entire Games.

- 10 The brushing-off ceremony was conducted amid candles, singing, and chanting, with kids laughing and playing in the background. An elder addressed us in his native language. His gestures and soothing voice, like the tones of Mother Nature, made me feel like he was telling the story of the earth, wind, sun, and rain. I sat smiling with the others, taking in the energy and the calmness of his voice, and feeling completely within the moment.

Another elder addressed each of us in turn, opening our hearts to the energy of the flame and crushing away negativity. He told us, "I cannot heal you of your pain. Only you can heal yourself with your open heart and your open mind."

At one point, Tewanee's thirteen-year-old daughter stood in the middle of the room, crying. We listened respectfully as the elders told her, "Thank you for sharing your beautiful tears with us. Let them flow."

Since I knew I carried a pool of raw feelings and unshed tears inside of me, I was grateful to see such despair welcomed as powerful and good.

One of the elders spoke to me in English: "You can only attract success for yourself if you want every single one of your competitors to be good and strong. When you wish good things for others, this comes back to you. The strength to be kind is not often asked for, but this is perhaps the most important strength to have."

- 15 The elder then addressed my team: "You are Clara's force field, her circle of strength – there to support her. She needs you." They all turned their eyes toward me. I felt utterly loved.

The stress of bearing the flag and competing melted away. I left armed with clarity, ready for the Games, our Games.

Hughes, Clara. *Open Heart, Open Mind*. Toronto: Simon and Schuster Canada, 2015.

What does Clara Hughes' phrase "I was propelled from the hermetic existence of training" suggest her world was like prior to agreeing to be a flag bearer?





Why is Hughes discouraged after the press conference?



She wasn't able to articulate her feelings about the Olympic games.

The reporters highlighted some negative aspects of the Olympic games.



She didn't have a choice about answering the questions.

The reporters asked intrusive and personal questions.




What advice would Hughes most likely consider after listening to the Elders' teaching?

- stay focused
- remain confident
- encourage challengers
- acknowledge spectators


Question B-5 (1 point)

First Nations Perspective on Health and Wellness
Open Heart, Open Mind


Which phrase from the “First Nations Perspective on Health and Wellness” best captures the realization Hughes’ gains after the brushing-off ceremony?




“Land is the ultimate nurturer of people.”



“Responsibility: something we all have to ourselves, our families, our communities, and the land.”



“Children are the heart of our communities.”



“Relationships: mutual accountability and reciprocity (togetherness, team-building, capacity building).”



In the following text

A researcher examines the heightened stress levels found in adolescents.

Our Teens Are More Stressed Than Ever: Why, and What Can You Do About It?

May 9, 2019

The period of adolescence is *not* inherently characterized by “storm and stress.” Adolescence is a period of transformation.

The popular bogeyman

The most popular focus of blame for teen stress is social media. On the one hand, it's certainly obvious that teens spend hours every day staring at screens. And, adolescents are especially sensitive to the social comparisons that result from seeing carefully curated, idealized bodies and lifestyles online.

There's some evidence to support that social media may harm kids. But the situation is complicated. Science and culture zig and zag while scientists test and correct each other's conclusions, and the correlations between screen use and mental illness have been roundly criticized. One social scientist tweeted that data *also* shows that “teen pregnancy, drug use, and delinquency all declined significantly with the rise of smartphone and social media use.” In other words, correlation is not causation. It simply means that two things just co-occurred.

Are teens the canaries in the coal mine?

Teens take in more of the outside world than children do. Neurological changes occur in puberty that draw their attention outward, beyond the family, and their cognition allows them to ponder big issues in more abstract ways. Because they take in more and more of the outside world, what teens absorb is increasingly stressful. Yet teenagers have no prior experience and few strategies for dealing with this new level of exposure. Stress and adolescence can make for a perfect storm.

5 So what might be helpful?

1. Society has forgotten about an important developmental task of adolescence.

In the 1960s, psychoanalyst Erik Erikson wrote his groundbreaking work, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, about identity in adolescence. Identity is how you walk in the world. It's a sense of knowing who you are, what you believe, where you fit, and where you're going. It includes being at home in your body, having personal agency, and feeling of sameness through time, all of which contribute to a general sense of well-being. According to Erikson, finding a healthy identity is the central task of adolescence.

Young children identify with their parents: they imitate them and believe that they'll grow up to be like them. But with the onset of puberty, neurological and social forces propel teens to

differentiate from their parents. (Differentiation is not a rejection of parents, but a reconfiguration of the relationship in order to accommodate a teen’s growing autonomy and independence of thought and action.)

The psychologist Jeffrey Arnett said that the central themes to be settled in establishing a healthy identity are worldview, work, and love. The psychologist James Côté believes that identity rests on two things: first, the feeling of having matured into adulthood, and second, finding a permanent niche in community. But exploration can occur across many domains, including politics, religion, societal issues, relationships, recreation, appearance, competence, occupation, morality, ethnicity, sexuality, and intimacy. The process can last a decade or more but it culminates in commitments to those dimensions, a greater sense of purpose, a coherent system of values, and long-term plans.

In their book, *Talented Teenagers: The Roots of Success and Failure*, authors Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, and Whalen identify the qualities that sustain the development of talent across teen years. Along with a modicum of talent and holistic support, *free time* was an important variable. Teens who were distracted with too many life hassles, family conflicts, excessive out-of-school employment, or over-scheduling, did not have the unencumbered time and space that was necessary to just “mess around” in the subject area, to dream, practice, and experiment. Exploring what you’re good at and what you enjoy takes sheer time.

2. Some stress is good.

- 10 Stress in the right amount promotes neural growth, enhances task performance, and can be a motivation to stretch, reach, and strive.

When young people have a chance to master a new challenge, it can contribute to their resilience. Their challenges should be reasonably within their developmental competence; not overwhelming; and “scaffolded” if necessary, where they’re coached through the components. After the challenge has passed, rest and repair also help.

3. Mind the basics—sleep, exercise, nutrition.

Teens need more sleep than adults, and they need it later on the clock. Sleep is critical to all areas of functioning. It’s necessary for cognition and consolidating memories, especially in the adolescent period of rapid brain growth. Teens should follow good sleep hygiene, including screen-time management. Healthy nutrition and regular aerobic exercise also help keep an even keel.

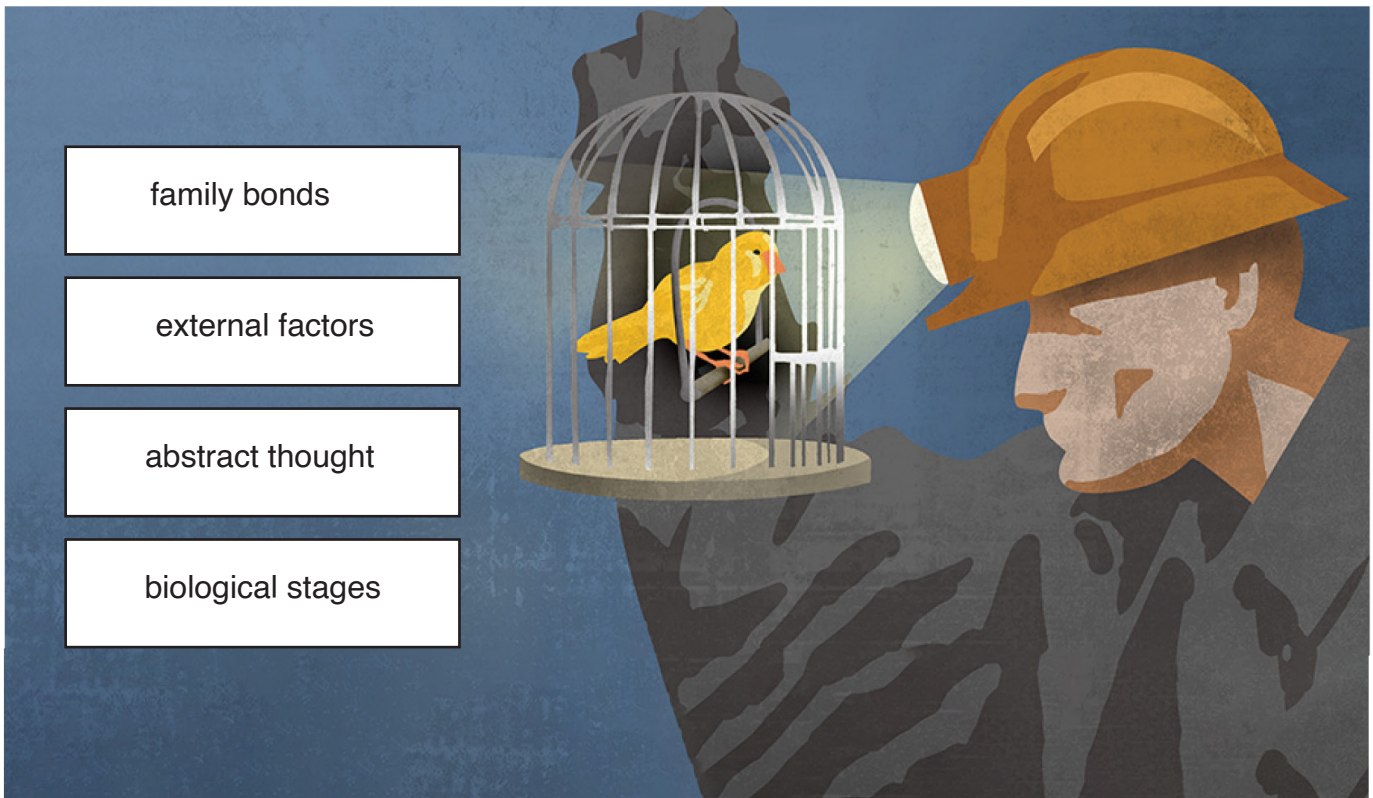
Whatever the cause of adolescent stress, it falls to parents, educators, and mentors to help teens move through it.

Adapted from <https://www.developmentalscience.com/blog/2019/5/7/our-teens-are-more-stressed-than-ever>
Copyright 2019 Diana Divecha

Are teens the canaries in the coal mine?

Teens take in more of the outside world than children do. Neurological changes occur in puberty that draw their attention outward, beyond the family, and their cognition allows them to ponder big issues in more abstract ways. Because they take in more and more of the outside world, what teens absorb is increasingly stressful.

Which influence on adolescent development is the focus of this paragraph?



https://staticshare.america.gov/uploads/2014/11/canary_art22.jpg

What two central tasks do psychologists such as Erikson, Côté, and Arnett suggest adolescents should prioritize as they move into adulthood?

The image shows a digital interface with a grey background and a white title bar at the top that reads "GOALS FOR ADOLESCENCE". Below the title bar are five goal cards arranged in two rows. Each card has a unique background and text:

- Top Left Card:** Features a background of blue arrows pointing in various directions. The text "ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE" is written vertically in red, with a red arrow pointing right next to the word "ACHIEVING".
- Top Middle Card:** Features a background of orange and yellow wavy lines. The text "LEARNING TO AVOID CONFLICT" is written in white on a dark blue background.
- Top Right Card:** Features a light blue background with a green and blue stylized human figure. The text "IMPROVING PHYSICAL HEALTH" is written in green.
- Bottom Left Card:** Features a background of green and white wavy lines. The text "ESTABLISHING A SENSE OF SELF" is written in green.
- Bottom Right Card:** Features a blue background with a white outline of a head containing gears and a question mark. The text "DEVELOPING A SENSE OF CURIOSITY" is written in white.

What is a logical next step for a parent who is convinced by the author's argument?

- Eliminate activities that will produce stress in their teen's life.
- Remove social media influences from their teen's daily routine.
- Require that their teen wakes up promptly at an early hour each day.
- Encourage their teen to develop more relationships outside the family.



In the following text

An artist uses humour to cope with mental health challenges.



HOME / ART

Illustrator Draws Humorous Comics About Her Mental Illness to Help Destigmatize It

By Sara Barnes on March 6, 2017



REAL LIFE HORROR MOVIES

Humor is a powerful way to deal with the barbs of life. On its face, mental illness is nothing to laugh about, but illustrator Gemma Correll has used her biting wit as a coping mechanism for her own depression and anxiety. By pointing out the perils of dealing with mental illness, Correll is also destigmatizing it. The comics create an open dialogue on brain health, and best of all, people realize that they aren't alone in these feelings: "I think that it's a lot more prevalent than people realize. I know that I would have felt a little better as an anxiety-ridden teenager if I knew that I wasn't completely alone in my fears."



Gemma CORRELL

<https://mymodernmet.com/gemma-correll-mental-health-comics/>

What does Gemma Correll hope to achieve through her comics?

She hopes to

▼

- reveal the potential dangers of mental illness.
- reduce misconceptions surrounding mental illness.
- educate people about alternative treatments for mental illness.

Based on the comics, what is the main source of Correll's anxiety?

CONFINED SPACES

INTERPERSONAL SITUATIONS

NEW EXPERIENCES

SOCIAL MEDIA



Question B-11 (1 point)

Which of Correll's comics conveys advice that would be endorsed by the author of "Our Teens are More Stressed than Ever...?"





In the following text

A resource guide outlines how laughter can benefit mental health.

Why Laughter Is Good for Mental Health



March 30, 2018






If someone plays an April Fools' joke on you today and it makes you laugh, thank them. That's because laughter is scientifically proven to benefit mental health.

Mental Health Benefits

- ✓ **Releases endorphins:** Natural chemicals in the body promote a sense of well-being.
- ✓ **Decreases anger:** Defuses anger, conflict, and self-blame.
- ✓ **Eases distressing emotions:** Counteracts feelings of anxiety and sadness.
- 5 ✓ **Relaxes and revitalizes:** Increases our energy levels.
- ✓ **Reduces stress:** Decreases cortisol (stress hormone); lower levels are better for mental health.
- ✓ **Brings more joy and fun into our life:** This one is self-explanatory!

Scientific Validation

The study of laughter is called gelotology. This field of study examines the physiological and psychological effects of humor. Below are a few highlights of the research on laughter and mental health.

- 10  Research showed that laughter releases physical and emotional tension, elevates mood, enhances cognitive functioning, and increases friendliness.
-  A study of female college students showed that both humor and exercise reduced psychological distress and increased well-being. However, humor lowered the students' anxiety more than exercise.
-  A study of 95 male college students and 125 female students found that having a good sense of humor directly mitigates depression.

Make Yourself Laugh

Typically, something makes us laugh, and then the benefits to the mind and body come next. However, it can also go the other way around. When we decide to laugh, even if it's fake, the body responds as if it's real. Therefore, we receive the same benefits, such as the release of endorphins in the brain.

Laughter and Relationships

Robert Provine, a psychologist from the University of Maryland, found that we actually laugh most when talking to friends. In fact, we are 30 times more likely to laugh at something when we are with other people.

Laughter benefits our connections with others. In turn, stronger connections benefit our mental health.

Bring Laughter Into Your Life

- 15 **Smile.** Smiling is contagious.
- Practice gratitude.** When you reflect on what you're thankful for, your state of mind improves.
- Go where the laughter is.** Spend time with people who make you laugh.
- Get a pet.** Have you ever noticed that spending time with a pet makes you laugh?
- Tell jokes.** Talk about what made you laugh, or tell your favorite jokes.
- 20 It's clear that laughter is good medicine for stress and depression. It's free and has no side effects.

Adapted from <https://www.newportacademy.com/resources/mental-health/laughter-good-for-you/>

Make Yourself Laugh

Typically, something makes us laugh, and then the benefits to the mind and body come next. However, it can also go the other way around. When we decide to laugh, even if it's fake, the body responds as if it's real. Therefore, we receive the same benefits, such as the release of endorphins in the brain.

What does this excerpt indicate about the effects of laughter even when it is fake?

Fake laughter begins as a

process which results in a

benefit.

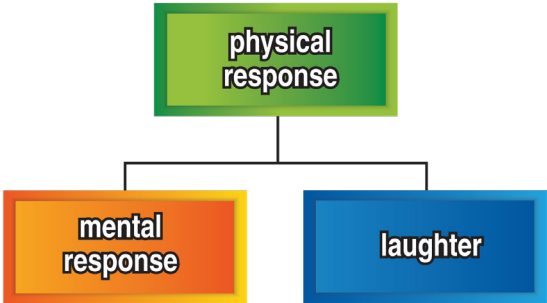
temporary

physical

mental

permanent

Which diagram best illustrates the relationship between laughter and health as discussed in the text?



Which quote about laughter supports the central idea of the following excerpt?



A study of female college students showed that both humor and exercise reduced psychological distress and increased well-being. However, humor lowered the students' anxiety more than exercise.

*When you realize how
PERFECT EVERYTHING IS,
you will tilt your head back, and
LAUGH AT THE SKY.*

– Siddhārtha Gautama

However, a **GOOD LAUGH** is a
mighty good thing, and rather
too scarce a good thing;
THE MORE'S THE PITY.

– Herman Melville

LAUGHING IS,
and will always be.
the best form of
THERAPY.

– Dau Voire

We don't laugh because we're
happy

– we're happy because we
laugh.

–William James

Which mental health benefit is most directly related to Correll making art as a “coping mechanism”?

Mental Health Benefits

- Releases endorphins
- Decreases anger
- Eases distressing emotions
- Relaxes and revitalizes



Essential Question

How does an understanding of mental health and wellness influence people's lives?



Writing Pathway



Click on your preferred Writing Pathway to continue to the extended written response.



1

Understandings about health and wellness continue to evolve.



2

Health and well-being are fundamental to living a full life.

Question B-16 (12 points)

1 Writing Pathway

Understandings about health and wellness continue to evolve.

- You must express yourself in an extended written format of your choice.
- You must communicate insights that demonstrate your creative, reflective, and/or critical thinking skills.
- You may refer to the texts, but you are not required to do so.

Suggested time: 25 minutes

Question B-16 (12 points)

2

Writing Pathway

Health and well-being are fundamental to living a full life.

- You must express yourself in an extended written format of your choice.
- You must communicate insights that demonstrate your creative, reflective, and/or critical thinking skills.
- You may refer to the texts, but you are not required to do so.

Suggested time: 25 minutes



SELF-REFLECTION

Take a moment to reflect on your experience with the assessment.

Your feedback will provide valuable information to the assessment developers.

**This component is not scored and your responses will be confidential.*

Question 1

In order to get ready for this assessment, I...

(Select all that apply)

- prepared ahead of time in class.
- prepared with my peers.
- prepared on my own.
- did not prepared.
- Other

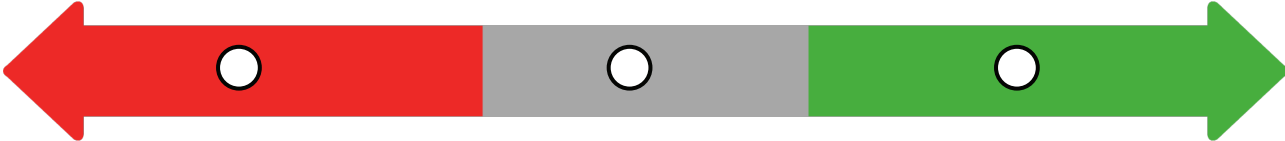
I prepared by...

- doing the sample assessment.
- looking at online videos.
- looking at online scoring rubrics.
- looking at online student exemplars.
- Other

Question 2

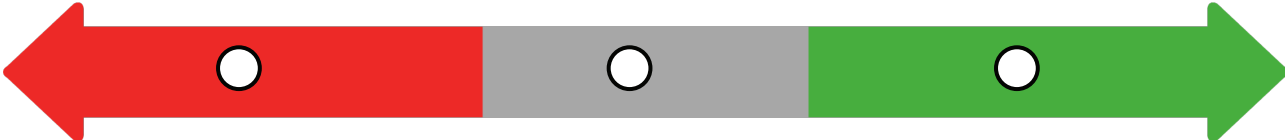
This assessment let me demonstrate my ability in literacy:

Disagree unsure Agree



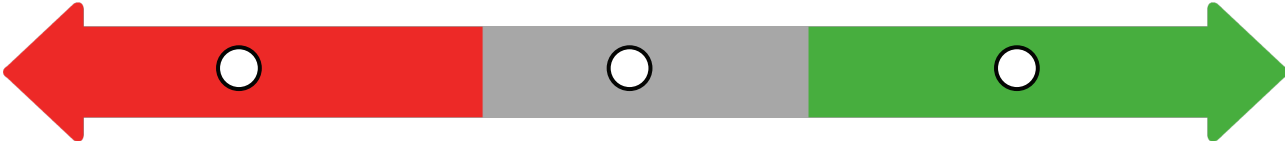
I was able to comprehend the texts:

Disagree unsure Agree



I was able to communicate in writing:

Disagree unsure Agree



Question 3

This assessment let me demonstrate the following competencies:

(Select all that apply)

- Critical and Reflective Thinking
- Creative Thinking
- Communication
- Positive Personal and Cultural Identity
- Personal Awareness and Responsibility
- Social Awareness and Responsibility

Question 4

I encountered challenges during this assessment.

- Yes
- No

The challenges I encountered on the assessment were with:

(Select all that apply)

- the texts.
- the online format.
- the length of time.
- the amount of writing.
- the overall difficulty.

Question 5

A key takeaway for me after completing this assessment is:

Question 6

Do you have any feedback or comments about the assessment?