

As you read the passages below, consider how the student authors use persuasion techniques to argue their cases:

- logos--statistics, facts, and logical reasoning to support claims
- pathos--word choices that appeal to readers' emotions, adding power to the ideas expressed
- ethos--details or quotes that build trust in the authors' ideas or expertise, indicating either that they personally are experts on the topic they are writing about or that other "experts" agree with them.

Student Perspectives: The Recently Proposed Pennsylvania Teenage Passenger Bill

“Against the Bill”

Kyle W. Hartwig, Senior, Upper Saint Clair HS

Adults always single out teenagers as a group and make unfair judgments about them. This has happened once again. This time new teenage drivers in most states are faced with a driving law that prohibits them from having more than one teenage passenger. Such a law is both needless and unjust.

No teenagers I know use their cars just for socializing with friends. We also use them to transport ourselves and our companions to work, to carry brothers and sisters to their activities, to go to volunteer activities where we give our time to help others. Why should those of us who are reliable and conscientious be penalized because a couple teens take risks and have wrecks? The chances are excellent that those one or two kids will still engage in the same risks, law or no law, while those of us who are law-abiding pay the price. The mayor of our town, Ms. Ellen Price, is adamant that such a law is not necessary. She will not vote for this law. She knows how helpful it is to parents to be able to depend upon one of their children to help with family responsibilities, and she knows that that requires mobility.

Passenger restrictions also limit the social life of teenagers. At an age when we need to be developing our social skills, those of us without transportation will be condemned to sit at home and watch TV or play computer games. In addition, many of us participate in sports and after-school activities. Many of us have working parents. Put the two together and we have a problem. Our town does not have a public transportation system that is capable of taking the place of a car, so limiting the number of teen passengers in a car simply means that many of us will not be able to participate in important activities.

In addition, although teens are not experienced drivers, everyone knows that young people have quick reflexes, far better than those of the older people who are imposing this restriction upon us. Think about the athletes. They are not older people; they are the young, whose reflexes allow them to react swiftly and surely. A teenage driver has the physical reflexes that allow a rapid response to unexpected situations.

All of the students I know are signing a petition to demand that teenage drivers have no passenger restrictions. More students need to join the movement. This is a violation of our rights and our freedom. These anti-teen morons unfairly single us out and penalize us for our youth. They are un-American. We will not capitulate to the stereotypes all of these adults have of us. It's not child abuse, but the Traffic-Nazis are taking over our highways! Face it, when something's wrong, it's just not right.

“For the Bill”

Candice Ray, Upper Dublin HS

Teens sometimes have difficulty believing that anyone except us knows anything. Learning to drive is important to the independence of teenagers, but it is also a tremendous responsibility. Although having a law that keeps 16-year-old drivers from having more than one teenager in the car with them at first seems unfair, there are convincing reasons for this requirement.

The law is for our own safety and that of others. Since automobile accidents are the greatest cause of harm for teens between the ages of 15 and 18, it is not surprising that teen driving is a matter of concern. According to the National Transportation Safety Board, serious automobile accidents in 2003 involved 7,884 drivers from 15 to 20 years of age and resulted in 9,088 deaths. The drivers accounted for a little more than a third of the fatalities.

Robert Karns, Director of the Safety Board, states that “each additional teenager in the car increases the risk of a wreck.” As a result of such information, the District of Columbia and 26 states have passenger restrictions for young drivers in the provisional stage of licensing, and many states are considering doing so. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reports that teens are four times more likely than older drivers to be involved in an automobile accident and three times more likely to be harmed in one. The Institute also reports that 16- and 17-year-old drivers are twice as likely to have an accident if they have two teenage friends in the car and four times as likely to have one if they have three or more teenage friends in the car with them. Fatal crashes of 16-year-old drivers involve the highest percentage of speeding, driver error, and number of passengers. This information is enough to cause any reasonable person to wonder about the wisdom of allowing new teen drivers to take a carload of friends anywhere, even if the law permits it.

A study at the National Institutes of Health indicates that the part of the human brain that controls judgment and evaluates the consequences of our actions might not be fully formed until the age of 25. Until this study, researchers had placed the age at 18. If this is true, it could explain the reckless behavior of many teens, behavior that often extends into their twenties. It also could be a strong reason for being cautious about the driving circumstances of young people. This is not the only study that indicates such caution is necessary. One study at Temple University in Philadelphia examines the results of peer pressure in risky driving situations. The study, which uses a driving game, has an individual guide a car through a course, both alone and in the presence of friends. Three different age groups participated in the study: 13–16, 18–22, and 24 and older. Members of the oldest group showed caution whether driving alone or with friends present, but the two younger groups took more chances when they were with their friends. Furthermore, because these drivers were habituated to the noise and distraction of many passengers, they were unable to see their own mistakes. Once again, this is a good indication that a law restricting the number of teenagers in the car with a young driver is a good idea.

Limiting the passengers of a novice 16-year-old driver is a law made for the benefit of everyone involved. The driver will have the opportunity to become more experienced before adding the distraction of a carload of friends. Sensible teens will see that this law is a method of protecting themselves, their friends and family, and all the others who will encounter them on the highway. If they are patient and cautious, they will have the rest of their lives to drive a car filled with friends.

As you read the passages below, consider how President Kennedy uses persuasion techniques to argue his case:

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“Address at Rice University on the Nation’s Space Effort”

President John F. Kennedy

President Pitzer, Mr. Vice President, Governor, Congressman Thomas, Senator Wiley, and Congressman Miller, Mr. Webb, Mr. Bell, scientists, distinguished guests, and ladies and gentlemen:

William Bradford, speaking in 1630 of the founding of the Plymouth Bay Colony, said that all great and honorable actions are accompanied with great difficulties, and both must be enterprised and overcome with answerable courage. If the history of our progress teaches us anything, it is that man, in his quest for knowledge and progress, is determined and cannot be deterred. The exploration of space will go ahead, whether we join in it or not, and it is one of the great adventures of all time, and no nation which expects to be the leader of other nations can expect to stay behind in the race for space.

Those who came before us made certain that this country rode the first waves of the industrial revolutions, the first waves of modern invention, and the first wave of nuclear power, and this generation does not intend to founder in the backwash of the coming age of space. We mean to be a part of it--we mean to lead it. For the eyes of the world now look into space, to the moon and to the planets beyond, and we have vowed that we shall not see it governed by a hostile flag of conquest, but by a banner of freedom and peace. We have vowed that we shall not see space filled with weapons of mass destruction, but with instruments of knowledge and understanding.

Yet the vows of this Nation can only be fulfilled if we in this Nation are first, and, therefore, we intend to be first. In short, our leadership in science and in industry, our hopes for peace and security, our obligations to ourselves as well as others, all require us to make this effort, to solve these mysteries, to solve them for the good of all men, and to become the world's leading space-faring nation.

We set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained, and new rights to be won, and they must be won and used for the progress of all people. For space science, like nuclear science and all technology, has no conscience of its own. Whether it will become a force for good or ill depends on man, and only if the United States occupies a position of pre-eminence can we help decide whether this new ocean will be a sea of peace or a new terrifying theater of war. I do not say the we should or will go unprotected against the hostile misuse of space any more than we go unprotected against the hostile use of land or sea, but I do say that space can be explored and mastered without feeding the fires of war, without repeating the mistakes that man has made in extending his writ around this globe of ours.

There is no strife, no prejudice, no national conflict in outer space as yet. Its hazards are hostile to us all. Its conquest deserves the best of all mankind, and its opportunity for peaceful cooperation many never come again. But why, some say, the moon? Why choose this as our goal? And they may well ask why climb the highest mountain? Why, 35 years ago, fly the Atlantic? Why does Rice play Texas? We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too.

It is for these reasons that I regard the decision last year to shift our efforts in space from low to high gear as among the most important decisions that will be made during my incumbency in the office of the Presidency. In the last 24 hours we have seen facilities now being created for the greatest and most complex exploration in man's history. We have felt the ground shake and the air shattered by the testing of a Saturn C-1 booster rocket, many times as powerful as the Atlas which launched John Glenn, generating power equivalent to 10,000 automobiles with their accelerators on the floor. We have seen the site where five F-1 rocket engines, each one as powerful as all eight engines of the Saturn combined, will be clustered together to make the advanced Saturn missile, assembled in a new building to be built at Cape Canaveral as tall as a 48 story structure, as wide as a city block, and as long as two lengths of this field. Within these last 19 months at least 45 satellites have circled the earth. Some 40 of them were "made in the United States of America" and they were far more sophisticated and supplied far more knowledge to the people of the world than those of the Soviet Union. The Mariner spacecraft now on its way to Venus is the most intricate instrument in the history of space science. The accuracy of that shot is comparable to firing a missile from Cape Canaveral and dropping it in this stadium between the the 40-yard lines. Transit satellites are helping our ships at sea to steer a safer course. Tiros satellites have given us unprecedented warnings of hurricanes and storms, and will do the same for forest fires and icebergs.

We have had our failures, but so have others, even if they do not admit them. And they may be less public. To be sure, we are behind, and will be behind for some time in manned flight. But we do not intend to stay behind, and in this decade, we shall make up and move ahead. The growth of our science and education will be enriched by new knowledge of our universe and environment, by new techniques of learning and mapping and observation, by new tools and computers for industry, medicine, the home as well as the school. Technical institutions, such as Rice, will reap the harvest of these gains.

And finally, the space effort itself, while still in its infancy, has already created a great number of new companies, and tens of thousands of new jobs. Space and related industries are generating new demands in investment and skilled personnel, and this city and this State, and this region, will share greatly in this growth. What was once the furthest outpost on the old frontier of the West will be the furthest outpost on the new frontier of science and space. Houston, your City of Houston, with its Manned Spacecraft Center, will become the heart of a large scientific and engineering community. During the next 5 years the National Aeronautics and Space Administration expects to double the number of scientists and engineers in this area, to increase its outlays for salaries and expenses to \$60 million a year; to invest some \$200 million in plant and laboratory facilities; and to direct or contract for new space efforts over \$1 billion from this Center in this City.

To be sure, all this costs us all a good deal of money. This year's space budget is three times what it was in January 1961, and it is greater than the space budget of the previous eight years combined.

That budget now stands at \$5,400 million a year--a staggering sum, though somewhat less than we pay for cigarettes and cigars every year. Space expenditures will soon rise some more, from 40 cents per person per week to more than 50 cents a week for every man, woman and child in the United States, for we have given this program a high national priority--even though I realize that this is in some measure an act of faith and vision, for we do not now know what benefits await us. But if I were to say, my fellow citizens, that we shall send to the moon, 240,000 miles away from the control station in Houston, a giant rocket more than 300 feet tall, the length of this football field, made of new metal alloys, some of which have not yet been invented, capable of standing heat and stresses several times more than have ever been experienced, fitted together with a precision better than the finest watch, carrying all the equipment needed for propulsion, guidance, control, communications, food and survival, on an untried mission, to an unknown celestial body, and then return it safely to earth, re-entering the atmosphere at speeds of over 25,000 miles per hour, causing heat about half that of the temperature of the sun--almost as hot as it is here today--and do all this, and do it right, and do it first before this decade is out--then we must be bold.

However, I think we're going to do it, and I think that we must pay what needs to be paid. I don't think we ought to waste any money, but I think we ought to do the job. And this will be done in the decade of the sixties. It may be done while some of you are still here at school at this college and university. It will be done during the term of office of some of the people who sit here on this platform. But it will be done. And it will be done before the end of this decade. I am delighted that this university is playing a part in putting a man on the moon as part of a great national effort of the United States of America.

Many years ago the great British explorer George Mallory, who was to die on Mount Everest, was asked why did he want to climb it. He said, "Because it is there." Well, space is there, and we're going to climb it, and the moon and the planets are there, and new hopes for knowledge and peace are there. And, therefore, as we set sail we ask God's blessing on the most hazardous and dangerous and greatest adventure on which man has ever embarked.

Thank you.

