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### **Proposal Essay**

Within the realm of controversial topics, there are many of which centers on the administration of certain protocol and policies, often enacted to address problems or to improve on them. As in the case of my topic, standardized testing, the adoption and execution of this procedure was made on the grounds of improving a measure of educational knowledge in a test-based setting. Although this sounds straightforward in theory, there are many positives and negatives associated with the practice of taking standardized tests as well as the effects that they carry on a test-taker. Due to the extensiveness of this topic, I propose to analyze the affirmative and the opposition sides as well as movements on both sides of the issue that call for the improving and replacement of the tests respectively. I believe that analyzing both sides and acknowledging the reasoning behind the issues would help in making for a paper that wouldn't necessarily and harshly put down any supporters of the side that I personally am not part of. More importantly, I hope to educate readers whom aren't familiar with every detail surrounding the controversy of the tests and by doing so would help them take a side given the research I will conduct. Nevertheless, this isn't to say that I won't be neutral in my views; my position on the matter is against the use of the exams and my research findings and arguments will strongly support my opinion. It is up to the readers to decide which stance is better to side with; I will make a compelling case for my views.

Delving into the topic, standardized tests are widely practiced in the United States and among many countries worldwide. One of the prime reasons behind administering the tests is

to measure a student's academic learning capacity in which the results determined would serve as an indicator to what college level a student should aim for when applying. Due to colleges and universities having score ranges in a formulaic fashion (the higher the score range, the more prestigious the institution is and vice versa), essentially the tests are designed to help colleges narrow their applicant pool down to analyze individuals who meet their specific qualifications. Certainly with having a test that can measure a student's learning aptitude and knowledge, the affirmative side would argue that the exams helps one to realize their strengths and weaknesses in a particular area. If such strengths and weaknesses were realized, a student could use this as a basis to help shape their decision on a major and by extension, a college (mapped to a particular tier as per test score range). However, the opposing side to this issue would claim that the tests do not accurately reflect every college's curriculum and academic rigor which could thereby lead to a misleading perception of a student's academic performance. Furthermore, the tests alone do not solely reflect a student's mastery; grade point averages, portfolios and projects can be used in tandem for a better read on a student's academic history and future potential.

From what was already stated thus far, in terms of highlighting the pro and con sides on a specific issue that standardized tests raise, there is significantly much more information to elaborate on. In order to address this, for the purposes of research, I will look up statistics (i.e. concerning scores vs. geographic location) and observational/experimental patterns in test-takers (and what effects they short and long term) to support my findings for each side. In addition, I will also research on information regarding calls for improving the structure standardized tests versus measures to undermine or entirely replace them (either with another test of similar format or a new concept altogether). Among the reasons for including this is to

show how each side in the matter is willing to do something noteworthy to improve on the problems that the tests get criticized for. By incorporating this in my paper, readers can get a sense of appreciation and understanding of how people in either side of the issue are willing to help for this academic cause. This is also done to prevent readers from taking one side and sticking to it without proper exposure from all perspectives on the matter.

With regards to developing my research, I will mainly explore online sources with the possibility of mixing in some book sources as well. Already having done some searching and skimming, I have noticed that online sources provide adequate details on both pros and cons of standardized testing. An article in Education.com entitled “Standardized Testing” heavily talks about the advantages, disadvantages, alternatives and the quality of the tests. ProCon.org also goes into heavily analysis of the topic but is much more extensive; not only are there bullet points for every argument for and against the tests but each one are supported by sources from books and other articles (i.e. quotes, findings)! Just from these two sources, I already have a decent bulk of my research.

One of the last things to establish in my proposal is to reiterate my stance on the controversial issue—am I for or against standardized testing? I would first like to say that regardless of my personal and academic history in dealing with the tests, I won’t allow it to affect me in establishing a prominent paper reflecting only one of the two views. As stated before, I would like for the reader to look through and digest my research and findings before they make a decision—therefore it is important that I maintain somewhat of a neutral tone. However, when considering my past experiences with taking the exams (among them, the SATs), I am against their use but not necessarily its theoretical goal. Although I do not like the format of how questions are chosen and asked in tests like the SAT, I still am in favor of

an aptitude test with significant changes—changes that will be elaborated in detail in the final paper.

In conclusion, I strongly believe that writing and going in depth about standardized testing will make for an interesting yet persuasively compelling paper. Even though as a person, I have a side already picked, my paper will fairly highlight the issues, concerns and solutions for the affirmative and opposition sides but not too entirely lenient on the latter. In doing so, I will be utilizing the Rogerian argument to support the structure of my writing content for maintaining neutrality where needed. Otherwise, my paper will closely follow the classical format of arguing for organization purposes where I can effectively showcase my cases for arguing various points versus their certain rebuttals. I do anticipate that my opposition to the issue (the affirmative side) will consist of educators from many levels (teachers, professors and school administrators) and colleges themselves for reasons already highlighted before. Nonetheless, I am prepared to rebut and persuade these groups by utilizing strong sources and proper language when addressing my claims and reasonings.