



Should kids be allowed to participate on reality TV shows?

GETTING ORIENTED

The weekly passage covers issues related to children participating in the entertainment industry. Here is some information that might be helpful to students less familiar with the topic.

Child Labor

Young children have worked throughout history to help their families have more money to live. Historically, in America, many children worked on farms from early morning hours until late at night. When America became more industrialized with factories and businesses, children worked all sorts of jobs. Some states passed laws to protect children under the ages of 14 or 15, but it was not until 1938 that a federal regulation or law was passed requiring all states to have a minimum age and limited hours of work for young children.



Child Actors

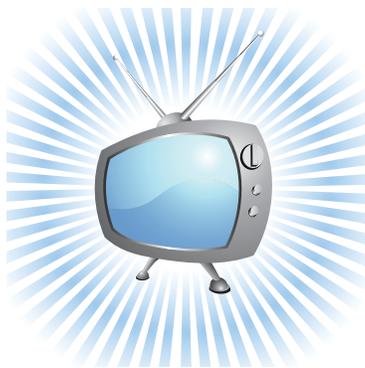
Many TV shows and movies are about families and have characters that are children. Because of this, there are many child actors who have to work long hours in order to film a show. Sometimes these actors become so popular that they are not able to have a normal life. There are laws that require that these child actors go to school and are not film late at night. In one popular TV show in the 1980s and 1990s called *Full House*, a young female character was played by twin actresses named Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen. This allowed the two sisters to only work half as much as the other actors.



Reality TV Shows

In the past, most TV programs were fictional or not real. Actors played characters and followed a script. There were also games shows where real people competed for prizes. Fictional TV programs were typically on in the evening and game shows were on in the morning and afternoon. In the last 15 years, a new kind of TV show has become popular where real people are featured. These people are

sometimes competing but many times they are just doing something that audiences find humorous or entertaining. MTV's *The Real World* and CBS's *Survivor* are a couple of the first reality TV shows to become popular.



Beauty Pageants

In a beauty pageant, women compete against each other to see who is the most beautiful and talented woman in the contest. Sometimes the contestants also answer questions about something important that is happening in the world. Every year, there is a Miss Universe pageant where women from all over the world compete for the crown. Some countries consider this a very important event.





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EVIDENCE AND PERSPECTIVES

	<i>Some may have this view:</i>	<i>But others may think:</i>
General Public	Many think that parents and children should get to make their own decision about whether or not a child should participate in reality shows. They think that parents know what is best for their kids and wouldn't want the government to interfere with their decisions. They think that children should have the right to show off their talent if they want to.	It is dangerous for kids to participate in reality TV shows. Some people think that there are dangerous people who watch these programs and might want to harm these children. They think that some parents might not consider the danger because of the potential fame that the show may bring their child. They understand that parents want success for their children but fear that many parents might not understand the risks involved.
Television Networks	Some networks will want to get as many viewers watching their TV shows as possible. They know that the more people who watch their network, the more money they can charge for advertisements. They know that shows that feature children attract a lot of viewers because children can make people laugh and cry very easily.	Having children on their programs can be a hassle because of all the laws and potential problems. They don't want to take the risk of someone harming a child and getting sued by the family.
Teachers and Coaches	They want kids to see other children doing extraordinary things. They want kids to have role models to look up to. They want the public to see that kids have tremendous potential and support programs that will allow all kids the opportunity to learn to dance or sing like the kids on the TV programs.	Having kids on reality shows sends the wrong message to kids that it's easy to be famous. They think that kids might see other children being successful and not recognize all the hard work behind the successes. They fear that children will get the message that some kids are just talented and view themselves as unlucky.

- The Thomson family of *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo* earns \$15,000-20,000 per episode.
- The reality TV Show *Kid Nation* which featured 40 children living in a world with little adult supervision was canceled after one season. There were five serious injuries while taping the show.
- A California law called the Coogan law requires that some of the money a child actor earns must be set aside for the child and cannot be used by the parents.
- Girls who watch reality TV are more likely to aspire to a leadership role than those who don't and are more likely to see themselves as role models. Girls who watch reality TV also spend more time on their appearance than those who don't watch reality TV.
- The first state to pass a child labor law was in Massachusetts in 1836. The law required factory workers under the age of 15 to attend school at least 3 months of each year.

Additional Information for Teachers

Survey of girls who do and don't watch reality TV
<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/oct/14/news/la-heb-girl-scouts-reality-tv-20111014>

Child actor laws
<http://www.sagafta.org/content/coogan-law>



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ANNOTATIONS FOR TEACHERS

Features of Academic Text: *Signal words*

Writers of academic texts are required to elaborate. If the purpose of this article is for readers to understand both sides of the issue, examples and additional reasons must be provided.

A good writer will help his reader by providing signal words.

Here are some of the signal words that the writer uses in this passage:

Furthermore

For instance

Just as

For example

What are some other signal words that a writer can use for "furthermore"?

additionally

moreover

in addition to this

In August 2012, seven-year old Alana Thompson debuted in her own reality TV show called *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo*. Alana, or Honey Boo Boo, **emerged** as an audience favorite in the hit show *Toddlers & Tiaras*, a reality TV show about beauty pageants for young girls. She is a little heavier than many of the other girls and did not win the beauty pageant, but her funny lines and overly-confident personality won the hearts of TV viewers. During the first few weeks of the program, 2.3 million viewers watched *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo*.

Some people argue that shows like *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo* and *Toddlers & Tiaras* **exploit** young children for the purposes of entertainment. They say that people are not watching these shows because they are interested in learning more about pageants or the people who participate. They say that people watch because they like to make fun of these girls and their parents. **Furthermore**, they claim that the children are not able to make a decision as to whether or not they want to have their lives recorded and broadcast to the world. They worry that these children will be **confronted** by viewers throughout their lives and reminded of embarrassing childhood behavior that they would rather forget. They point to the tragic lives of many child TV stars from the past that struggle with addiction and other emotional problems.

Advocates of kids participating in reality TV shows argue that kids have an opportunity to be discovered doing

something that they loved to do. **For instance**, the hit TV show *Dance Moms* features a dancing class of talented young dancers and their mothers who make tremendous sacrifices while pursuing a dream. They argue that these kids have an opportunity to share their determination and talent with the world so that other children may be inspired to work hard at something they love to do. **Just like** Alana Thompson was discovered, other children on these shows may find themselves starring in a Broadway musical or a Hollywood movie.

Some people also argue that participating in a reality TV show does not **interfere** with a child's ability to be a happy and productive adult. They say that this experience makes them more confident and not afraid to take risks. They say it develops leadership qualities in these young people. **For example**, many childhood movie stars, such as Emma Watson from the Harry Potter movies, have been able to lead very successful lives. Emma Watson chose to attend Brown and Oxford Universities and is a successful model. If childhood movie stars can go on to lead successful and happy lives, why can't childhood reality TV stars?

Do you think children should be allowed to star in reality TV shows? Do you think there is a certain age where a child should be able to participate? Do you think children who participate in reality TV are more or less likely to have problems due to their fame?



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GENERATING WORDS

Changing Verbs to Nouns by adding suffixes **-ation** and **-ence**

This week's focus words included four verbs or action words.

to confront – to face, especially in challenge

to interfere – to get in the way of

to emerge – to become known

to exploit – to make use of, often unfairly

Each of these verbs becomes a noun when we add the suffix **-ation** or **-ence**.

confront	+	ation	=	confrontation	(a confrontation happens when people are asked to talk about something that is hard to talk about or controversial)
exploit	+	ation	=	exploitation	(using someone or something in an unfair way)
emerge	+	ence	=	emergence	(an event or series of events when someone or something becomes known)

Below is an example of how the verbs **to emerge** and **to exploit** can be changed to nouns. The writers could have used the nouns **emergence** and **exploitation** in the passage.

Verb (from the passage)	Noun
Alana, or Honey Boo, emerged as an audience favorite in the hit show <i>Toddlers and Tiaras</i> , a reality TV show about beauty pageants featuring young girls.	This emergence led to the creation of her own TV show called <i>Here Comes Honey Boo Boo</i> .
Some people argue that shows like <i>Here Comes Honey Boo Boo</i> and <i>Toddlers & Tiaras</i> exploit young children for the purposes of entertainment.	Exploitation of young people is typically illegal and some people argue that shows like <i>Toddlers & Tiaras</i> should not be allowed to use child stars.

How could the writer have used the noun **confrontation** in this passage?

Verb (from the passage)	Noun
They worry that these children will be confronted by viewers throughout their lives and reminded of embarrassing childhood behavior that they would rather forget.	_____ _____ _____

Change the following verbs into nouns. Then write a sentence that uses the noun. Try to write a sentence that the author could have used in the weekly passage.

verb	noun	sentence
to participate	_____	_____ _____
to interfere	_____	_____ _____
to determine	_____	_____ _____



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DEVELOPING DISCUSSIONS

Persuasion Balance

There are always good reasons and evidence to support both sides of a controversial issue. If not, the issue wouldn't be controversial! But some reasons and evidence will *weigh* more. It is important for us to talk thoroughly about both sides, but we want to argue for the side where the reasons and evidence have more *weight*. This weight will be different for every person because we value different things.

Reasons and Evidence for My Position

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Reasons and Evidence for the Opposing Position

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



Academic Conversation:

Explain your persuasion balance to your partner. Why did you think some reasons and evidence had more weight than others? Why did one side weigh more than the other for you? If you are listening, ask your partner to elaborate if you need him or her to be more clear.

Words and Phrases You Might Say

"I believe that _____"

"This evidence weighs more for me because _____"

"I think this is more important because _____"

"While _____ is a good reason, I think that _____ is more convincing because ..."

"Overall, I think the argument that _____ carries more weight because _____"

"Some people would argue that _____; however I think they should consider _____"