

An argument of  
reason and passion:  
jacqueline howard's  
essay sample



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Standardized testing, every student should be familiar with it, but is it nonsense? Does it actually help schools and their students advance in academic competence, or does it hinder their ability by adding more anxiety and stress to students? Jacqueline Howard, a twenty year old student helps us disclose on these examinations by giving us a student's perspective on how standardized testing is not only changing the way government looks at funding, but also discouraging students and changing the way people look at students. Through Howard's ethos, pathos, logos, and style in her essay, we can really see her passion for other students and her reason to promote a change.

Howard begins her essay by giving us an overview of herself and how, even though she was a home schooled student, she was still drastically affected by standardized testing. In her adolescence she witnessed many of her friends as they underwent different standardized tests in public school and saw the affect that these tests had on them. She tells us about how they were greatly discouraged because of tests, and how these tests just increase anxiety. She also enlightens us on the subject of schools funding, and the direct correlation to how well its students do on the tests. This leads to schools treating students as just numbers on a form. Finally she gives us some insight on how a more creative approach has helped in students' scores. Ultimately, she's writing the essay as tool for future students to maybe get people thinking about the effects of standardized tests. This is a message to all parents, administrators and politicians; this might be something that is very worthwhile for you to read.

In Howard's ethos we can see that she has a distinctive view of her topic. For most of her speech Howard is definitely stern on her view of standardized testing and lets us know about it in many different parts of the essay, from the beginning to the end. Almost immediately, you see evidence of ethos when Howard describes what the issue meant to her; "a very important issue that affected my learning process and will continue to affect those of the youth in the future." A hint of sympathy is portrayed in the essay when Howard talks about her friends and fellow students, who weren't as fortunate as her, seen in the third paragraph. As the essay progresses, a deeper tone of concern for the future of students is seen all the way through the essay, to a climax in the closing paragraph stating, "Think of your children, nephews, nieces, and even the children of your friends. Surely you don't see them as having tattooed numbers on their heads or categorize them as passing or failing."

In many instances throughout her essay Howard uses her own experiences as logical evidence, or logos, on the issue at hand, as seen in paragraphs five and eight. She has also done some research on the subject herself. For example, in paragraph nine, she explains to the audience about a Michigan State University research study in which as much as fifty percent of the material on standardized tests was not taught in the classroom. "Fairtest.org" tells us about how states that opt in a more creative standardized test have students that do better, than in schools that don't. This directly correlates with one of Howard's main points, that there should be more creative tests used instead of bland multiple choice tests. The logical evidences that we see spawn from the "No Child Left Behind Act" and its

policy on standardized testing. If your school does not have enough money to afford the proper resources to teach the students, so that they are able to pass, the school loses funding, making it even harder, sometimes impossible to help those students gain an education.

“ Not only is the concept of failure a heavily influential deterrent for many students but treating us all like cogs in a machine adds an essence of impersonality that affects students on an entirely new level.” This is just one example of Howard’s pathos, and how she uses figurative language to show an exuberant amount of emotion throughout the essay. She explains to us how anxious she felt about the outcome of the test, no matter how well she knew the subject matter, letting us see her true emotions. Her emotions continue up until the very last paragraph, as she reinforces her thesis statement saying, “ help impart the knowledge that every student is more than a number by pushing for a change in our system.”

The way Howard uses her own voice and experiences, all through the essay, really has an impact on the style of the piece. In almost every paragraph of the essay, Howard puts at least some of her own thoughts in, which greatly enhances the reader’s ability to be tuned into the essay. Overall, she uses very powerful sentences and sentence structure.

Parents, administrators, and politicians better be ready to be persuaded to perform some type of action, after reading this paper. Through the word choices and sentence structure, Howard definitely has written a very effective paper. The way she puts a lot of her own experiences into the essay, also plays a key role in the effectiveness and greatly helps achieve

bringing the reader into the argument, as a student. As you read the essay, you will stumble upon a few different logical fallacies, most of them involving Howard talking about the student population as a whole. Even though you see these fallacies, the effectiveness of this persuasive article is not skewed at all.

Think back to your high school days; did standardized testing hinder your ability to perform well in school? Did these tests discourage you or did you just flow along the academic river, paying no attention to the tests? In any case, after reading this paper, we can all agree that Howard not only showed us an incredible students' perspective on the issue, but also enhance our awareness about how bad standardized tests actually are. One must ask if we can all sit back and watch as our country's view of students is changed by these tests or can we do something about it. After all, our own children are the new generation of students.

#### Works Cited

Howard, Jacqueline. " Persuasive Essay - More than a Number." Howard's LA 101H Blog. 21 Apr. 2011. Web. 27 Jan. 2012