

I Sued My School for Censorship and Won | Annotation

	Employs a Public Voice	Advocates Civic Engagement or Action	Argues a Position Based on Reasoning & Evidence	Employs a Structure
<p>Title: I Sued My School for Censorship and Won — Because Being a Lesbian Shouldn't Violate the Dress Code</p> <p>Form: Commentary</p> <p>Media: Print</p> <p>URL: https://medium.com/@ACLU_NorCal/i-sued-my-high-school-for-censorship-and-won-521b400b59b8</p>	<p>Score: 4 The writing:</p> <p>Effectively uses tone and style to convince the intended audience of teens and other adults to recognize that high school students have rights to self-expression protected by the U.S Constitution. The tone is serious (“<i>My whole family decided that we had to take a stand.</i>”), yet employs humor to engage the audience (e.g., “<i>It said “NOBODY KNOWS I’M A LESBIAN.” It made me laugh because pretty much everybody knows I’m a lesbian.</i>”)</p> <p>Effectively establishes the writer’s credibility by focusing on her sense of being caught up in an unjust situation and her experience trying to negotiate that encounter. (“<i>“Oh no,’ I thought. ‘How much trouble am I in?’ I remember walking down to his office, knowing it was probably about the shirt, but wishing it wasn’t...Like I suspected, he told me I had to change my shirt. I asked why.”</i>)</p> <p>Enhances the writer’s credibility by demonstrating her knowledge of constitutional principles and significant cases that connect to her experience.</p>	<p>Score: 4 The writing:</p> <p>Effectively raises public awareness of this issue and establishes its importance, in the context of the 1st Amendment and freedom of expression, for an audience that could include classmates, families, and school administrators as well as supporters of the ACLU. The narrative reasoning would resonate with the writer’s peers and may also serve as a cautionary talk for school and police authorities. (“<i>And it turns out my shirt wasn’t the only type of speech the school was worried about. The assistant principal told the ACLU lawyers that shirts that said things like ‘I support interracial marriage,’ and ‘I believe in evolution’ could also be against the dress code.</i>”)</p>	<p>Score: 4 The writing:</p> <p>Uses effective and logical reasoning, supported and elaborated on through the links to the resolution of the author’s lawsuit and a summary of <i>Tinker v. Des Moines</i>. The account, as told, values the right to freedom of expression both for the writer and her classmates.</p> <p>Thoughtfully synthesizes and links the details of her personal story, connecting it to first amendment issues, to support her position that students need to understand their rights. (“<i>By dinner time, I wasn’t just upset, I was angry. I knew my rights. I knew there was nothing wrong with my shirt. But I also knew if I wore it again, I could get suspended for willful defiance.</i>”).</p> <p>Acknowledges that freedom of expression may make others uncomfortable, but argues discomfort alone can not restrict students’ First Amendment rights. This brief acknowledgment is appropriate to the purpose of raising awareness about rights, but more thorough analysis and countering may be necessary if she were writing for a different audience. For example a speech to the school board, for the right to wear her shirt. Or to grapple with the question of if there could</p>	<p>Score: 4 The writing:</p> <p>Presents a chronological narrative organization, interspersed with internal dialogue, that effectively develops the argument that students should understand their First Amendment rights.</p> <p>Includes a strong and purposeful opening opening, “<i>It all started with a t-shirt,</i>” that leads into the narrative about how she and her family came to sue the school district. The conclusion effectively establishes the significance of her case and strengthens the call for “<i>others to stand up for what you believe in. Even if</i></p>

		Because the primary purpose of this piece is to raise awareness about students' first amendment rights, the writing is not assessed for the reasonableness/feasibility thread.	ever be any restriction on what a student's t-shirt might say.	<i>what you believe in is controversial."</i> Uses narrative elements to link personal experience with important public, democratic values, creating cohesion and a consistent flow of ideas.
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