

ASSIGNMENT FOR  
ARGUMENT DRAWING ON MULTIPLE SOURCES

Re: Paper #2, an argument

Fall 1992

This paper is to be written in formal academic style for a college educated, general reader. Consider the portfolio readers.

In this paper, use sources from Robert K. Miller's text, The Informed Argument, Section 4, "Competition: Is It Good for You?." Synthesize at least three sources into an essay that effectively argues a clearly stated thesis, explores competing hypotheses, and explains the relationship between your position and the opposition. You may well use personal experience and/or general knowledge; however, you must also use material (facts, examples, cases, reasons, etc.) from three or more of the sources that have been assigned from Miller.

In length, the paper must be at least 500 words (2 typewritten pages) and no more than 1,000 words (4 typewritten pages).

The planning, shaping, and drafting of the argument is the subject of lecture and discussion in class meetings. You may also refer to Miller (1-78) and Troyka (127-175) for advice and direction on argumentative writing. And as always, you may consult with the instructor.

As with Paper #1, for this paper, the first draft you submit is evaluated for thesis, development, coherence and nature of the assignment but not mechanics. Therefore, concentrate on content. All submitted drafts must be typed. Format according to MLA as found in Troyka.

The second draft is to be revised, edited and proofread. It is graded for mechanics as well as for content, so it should conform to standards of formal English suitable for the audience and also conform to the MLA format. See Troyka, Appendix B. Place the second draft on top of the first with its grading sheet attached. Secure the two with a paper clip if you wish.

### An Argument for Competition

Competition can take many different forms and appear in many different places. It may surface in the work place, in the classroom, on the playing field, or even between two young girls vying for the attention of one young man. In each of these cases, there will be a so-called "winner and loser." Many people will argue that this could be damaging to anyone, child or adult. This may be true in a few cases, but overall, competition is a natural process that is an essential part of the growing process.

In many of the cases cited by Katherine Martin in her essay "Is Winning Everything?", she clearly exemplifies situations where competition can prove to be detrimental. Each case: the one of the young boy afraid of batting who is forced to stand at home plate while his father throws pitches at him, a mother storming to the dugout during a Little League game to criticize her son for being tagged out, the football coach screaming obscenities at a young player, and a father beating an exhausted son to keep him running laps, are all very extreme cases (Martin 373). Yet they do occur. They happen when adults let themselves get too involved in the competitive lives of children. By allowing this to happen, adults are expecting children to live out their expectations, hopes, and aspirations (Marting 375). All of this could be avoided and competition among young people could be productive and enjoyable, as it should be.

D. Stanley Eitzen, a sociology professor at Colorado State University, expressed it well when he wrote, "If competition is "natural" among the human species, so, too, is cooperation" (395). If only everyone could understand that, then there would not be such a debate about whether or not competition is healthy. Cooperation has produced some very notable accomplishments, such as the building of the railroads, the colonies winning the Revolutionary War, and the Chicago Bears winning the Superbowl in 1985 (Eitzen 395). In the end, everything can be traced back to cooperation and competition. These two concepts are the basis for an argument for competition. Competition is healthy and productive when people cooperate (Paetsch 417-18).

Many students start their athletic careers at a young age. Many professional football players, for example, have probably been playing since they were big enough to hold a ball in their hands. For many people growing up today, sports are what keeps them going. the reason they keep their grades up in school is to be able to play sports. This shows that sports and competition are very strong motivators (Eitzen 397) when they are not abused. Coaches, students, and the teaching staff all need to work together to augment the needs and aspirations of all involved.

It is necessary to work as a team to make competition enjoyable and profitable without any part of the whole considering itself more important or worthwhile than any other.

Through competition, children learn some very important qualities that will one day help them in life. One of the most prominent of these qualities is cooperation. To win, you must be a team player. A basketball game is not won by only one person; nor are football or baseball games. Children realize this at an early age. They further this idea by realizing that winning is not everything if there is fun and excitement, all the while being with friends (Martin 375).

While there will still be the people who argue that competition is detrimental to the development of children, children will still compete. These people are not realizing that there are more ways to compete than just athletically. Children will also compete with each other in the classroom, on an intellectual level. There is no way to completely delete competition from a child's life. Through competition, children will learn much about life and how to get by in today's world. They will also learn one universal and necessary concept, cooperation.

#### Works Cited

Eitzen, D. Stanley. "The Dark Side of Competition in American Society." Miller 395-402.

Martin, Katherine. "Is Winning Everything?" Miller 373-376.

Miller, Robert K. The Informed Argument. 3rd ed. New York: Harcourt, 1992.

Paetsch, Tim. "Competition: An Abused Privilege." Miller 415-418.