

**124/128 PROMPTS AND QUESTIONS
FOR CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY'S EXIT EXAMINATION and
6-CREDIT HOUR QUALIFYING EXAMINATION**

Choose one of the following topics and write a well organized, well developed 400-450-word argumentative essay.

1. Some people say television caters to white America by programming shows that have very few minorities or by depicting minorities engaged in negative or criminal activities. Yet, others say things are changing, with more programs showing people of color in positive ways.
Does television accurately reflect society?
2. Some people say that living alone is an unhappy experience, while others argue that living alone fosters a sense of independence and personal responsibility.
Is living alone a desirable experience?
3. There are those who believe students who commit violent acts should be expelled from school because they are a bad influence on good students. Others say that we shouldn't expel students, but instead, we should place them in alternative schooling. These people believe that expelling violent students only helps them to move more deeply into violent lifestyles.
Should students be expelled for violent acts?
4. These are hectic times, much more so than twenty or thirty years ago. People are taking on a lot of responsibilities. Some people say that women are at a disadvantage, for they have much more to do than in the past.
Do women today have too much to do?
5. Computers are now so common that even toddlers can navigate the web, but some educators believe that computers are not effective teaching tools.
Does the use of computers in schools improve education?
6. People shout obscenities at each other in traffic jams and push and shove one another in crowded places, not caring if someone gets hurt. There is much violence and rage in people today, which is often taken out on others.
Are people losing respect for their fellow citizens?
7. So many social problems exist in America today that it is difficult to decide which one should be addressed first. Some people think that racial prejudice is the most important problem, while others say that the biggest problem is the failure of the educational system. Still others say that the most significant problem is urban poverty.
Is racial prejudice the greatest problem in America today?
8. Often, when the police fail to perform their jobs properly, their failure makes the headlines. We expect officers to have many talents, including making quick, accurate judgments about people and situations.
Do we expect too much of the police?
9. It is said that money can't buy happiness, and yet some people argue that money can solve many of life's most significant problems.
Can money buy happiness?
10. Capital punishment has been an issue for over a century. Today, America is the only nation outside the Third World to execute criminals.
Should the death penalty be abolished?
11. As a part of the new emphasis on family values, couples are encouraged to marry instead of living together first. Critics claim that when couples marry before they live together, the divorce rate increases.
Should couples live together before marriage?
12. Some businesses and neighborhood watch groups would like an ordinance against loitering in public places, but some citizens feel their rights would be violated.
Should there be a law against loitering?
13. Many people have come to the United States in search of freedom and opportunity. Once they arrive, some have mixed feelings about their decision to move to this country, realizing that there are barriers of prejudice that restrict them. Yet others are quite satisfied with their decision.
Does America offer freedom and opportunity to all?
14. Although statistically the crime rate has declined in the United States, we still have a high rate of juvenile offenders. Some people advocate getting tougher on these juveniles who break the law. Others think that better methods of helping young offenders should be employed.
Should society get tougher on juvenile offenders?
15. Capital punishment is now legal in several states. Many claim that it deters crime, gives the victims' families retribution, and is the only fair punishment for some crimes. However, we often hear of criminals who are on Death Row who have been found innocent.
Should the death penalty continue to be used as a form of punishment?
16. Talk shows often receive criticism for their violent or sexually oriented content. However, thousands of viewers each day hear about others' lives on shows with hosts like Oprah Winfrey, Jenny Jones, Jerry Springer, Montel Williams and others.
Should restrictions be placed on the subject matter of talk shows?
17. Biological parents have long been given preference by society and courts in matters of child custody and visitation. However, for a variety of reasons, many children are no longer cared for by their biological parents.
Is it better for children to be raised by their biological parents?

18. Clarence Darrow and many others have said that the primary cause of most crimes is poverty. Many others say that lack of moral values, not poverty, is the primary cause of crime.

Is poverty a major cause of crime?

19. Although women have made much social progress over the last forty years, some people argue that gender equality has not been achieved, and that this is still primarily a man's world.

Have women achieved equality with men?

20. We have been engaged in the "war on drugs" for many years, yet drug use is more widespread than ever. Some people call for harsher penalties. Others believe drugs should be legalized.

Should drugs be legalized?

21. Marriage is more than a piece of paper. It confers numerous benefits, such as health, disability and life insurance, pension plans and tax refunds to spouses. Many gay couples desire to marry to be able to share these benefits but have been denied this right.

Should gay couples be denied the right to marry?

22. American social activists, from Henry David Thoreau to Martin Luther King, Jr., have been willing to go to jail in order to bring about social changes they considered morally necessary. Due to their willingness to break the law, such people have been viewed by many Americans as threats to the social order.

Should people break laws they consider unjust or immoral?

23. Some people claim that crime is caused by poverty, a lack of education, or other social ills. Others claim that a lack of values causes people to commit crimes.

Does poverty cause crime?

24. Some people argue that because prejudice seems to have been around in history for so long, it is a natural part of being human. Others argue that prejudice is a behavior that people learn, growing up in a prejudiced society.

Is prejudice a natural human trait?

25. Women are often stereotyped as being more nurturing and less aggressive than men. In other words, they are said to be different from men psychologically as well as physically.

Are women psychologically different from men?

26. While some college professors do not take attendance, others keep close track of absences and drop students who have missed a certain number of classes. Some argue that since students are paying for their courses, it should be up to them how much they attend. Others argue that universities have the right to impose attendance policies on students.

Should students be dropped from their classes for non-attendance?

27. In theory, the welfare of the child is foremost in the adoption process. Steps are taken to insure that each adopted child will be loved and cared for. Some believe that other factors such as race must be considered.

Should interracial adoption be prohibited?

28. More children than ever are growing up in single family homes. Some child development experts believe that the quality of the home environment is more important than having two parents in the home.

Is a traditional family, with both parents in the home, always the best situation for raising children?

29. President Clinton has lied to the American people about an affair he had with Monica Lewinsky, a White House intern. Many consider his behavior and his lies to be symptoms of a deeply flawed character.

Can elected officials with character defects effectively lead a country?

30. Most people are shocked and frightened by the increasing number of children involved in violent crimes. If arrested, children can be prosecuted and punished by different standards than adults.

Should children ever be tried as adults?

31. Some people argue that parents should treat sons and daughters alike, while others claim that distinctions must be made, that gender rules require different treatment for sons and daughters.

Should parents treat sons and daughters differently?

32. Some companies provide up to six weeks of paid maternity leave and often provide up to three months of unpaid maternity leave for mothers with newborn children. Fathers of newborns, however, often don't get the same benefits.

Should fathers be eligible for paternity leave?

33. Studies show that children who read a lot for pleasure tend to do better in school and later in their professional lives. However, many children do not like to read and say that reading is boring.

Should children be required to read at home every day?

34. Many presidents have had extra-marital affairs like President Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky. Some Americans feel that since both parties consented to the affair, the president's personal life is not a public issue. Others believe that because Clinton lied about the affair under oath, he should be impeached for perjury.

Should the Clinton's affair be put aside, or should Clinton be impeached?

35. Some people argue that sex among teenagers is an acceptable practice, as long as they act responsibly. Others say that teenagers are too young to engage in sex.

Is sex among teenagers an acceptable practice?

36. People often trust only those who are similar to them and tend to make unfair generalizations about others not like them.
Is it unfair to judge people solely on their appearance?
37. We live in a very modern, fast-paced world in which people can get so involved in the routines of their own personal lives that little time is left for the family.
Can practicing family traditions keep families strong?
38. Some people believe that the biggest problem minorities face today is poverty; however, it is difficult to change this social condition. There is constant speculation as to how America could help people rise out of poverty, but many argue about the causes of poverty and no solution has been proven to work.
Does a lack of education result in poverty?
39. Television has made entertainment and information accessible and inexpensive for American viewers. However, there are some who argue that television has turned Americans into a bunch of mindless couch potatoes.
Is television a negative force in American society?
40. Men are often labeled as less mature than women, especially in relationships. Some women find that men send mixed messages about where they want relationships to go.
Do men mislead women in relationships?
41. Some people say that a big city is a better place to live than a small town, while others argue that a small town is less stressful and less dangerous.
Is living in a big city better than living in a small town?
42. When there is a divorce, mothers win custody of their children more often than fathers. But many fathers argue that this is unfair.
Should fathers have an equal opportunity for custody of their children?
43. Many people say that individuals have to be careful of how they dress so others will take them seriously. There are other people who say that how people dress shouldn't be a consideration and that how people behave is more important than how they look.
Should we judge people according to how they dress?
44. While some college professors do not take attendance, others keep close track of absences and drop students who have missed a certain number of classes. Some argue that since students are paying for their courses, it should be up to them how much they attend. Others argue that universities have the right to impose attendance policies on students.
Should students be dropped from their classes for non-attendance?
45. Domestic violence often leads to marital discord and sometimes physical and emotional harm, or even death. Courts often become involved. Despite these facts, some believe that a level of violence within a marriage or an intimate relationship is tolerable.
Is any violence within a domestic relationship acceptable?
46. In many custody cases, parenting is still assumed to be the mother's responsibility. However, more and more, fathers are saying that they can take care of their children as well as the children's mother can.
Do women naturally make better parents?
47. Although values are taught in the home, the influence of the media cannot be underestimated in the formation of values.
Does television negatively socialize children?
48. Some people argue that police brutality and harassment are serious problems which increase the amount of crime and violence in inner-city neighborhoods. Others think the police are only trying to do their jobs under difficult conditions.
Do the police misuse their power?
49. One form of prejudice is against those whose speech or accent is different from mainstream speech. Some say that such speakers should try to conform to the mainstream. Others say they affirm their identity by retaining their original speech patterns.
Should people adapt their speech to conform to the speech of the majority?
50. Drivers' licenses require a proven understanding of the "Rules of the Road." Marriage licenses, however, are issued to couples without requiring much knowledge about the meaning of marriage.
Should obtaining a marriage license require passing a marriage education course?
51. Some people believe that one ordinary person cannot do much to change a community for the better. Others argue that one person can still create changes, whether big or small, within a community.
Can one person improve a community?
52. Television talk shows featuring "regular people" as guests are still popular with American audiences. Some critics claim these shows reflect society's declining moral values, while others claim they are just harmless fun.
Do television talk shows influence family values?
53. Many people believe our society has taken great strides in overcoming issues concerning sexism. Many women hold top positions in businesses and corporations, and many men are taking on responsibilities that have traditionally belonged to women.
Does our country provide equal opportunities for both men and women?
54. Some Americans feel that sexism doesn't exist anymore. They argue that the women's movement, civil rights laws, and affirmative action regulations have assured all Americans equality of opportunity. Others disagree and claim that gender discrimination is still a problem.
Does prejudice against girls and women still exist in America?

55. Some people say that the increased problems with teen violence stem from the amount of violence appearing in the media. Others, however, believe that parents, teachers, and peers, much more than the media, have an influence on teens.

Do the media influence the behavior of teens?

56. Some people believe that boys and girls learn in different ways and should not be taught together. Others, however, say children will never learn how to interact productively with the opposite sex if they are segregated in school.

Should boys and girls be separated in school?

57. People often trust only those who are similar to them and tend to make unfair generalizations about others not like them.

Is it unfair to judge people solely on their appearance?

58. The roles for most women in America have changed greatly. Women are no longer merely caretakers for their children and their households, and yet many people do not believe that these changes have been in the best interests of women or their families.

Have changes in women's roles improved the quality of their lives and/or made life better for their families?

59. Welfare reform has been in place for several years now. Critics of welfare reform think that it has done more harm than good to poor people. Others claim that it is working.

Has welfare reform been a success?

60. Some people argue that the need for programs such as affirmative action are no longer necessary. On the other hand, civil rights activists keep reminding people that the struggle for equality in America is far from over.

Are all Americans now treated equally?