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SHOULD COLLEGES USE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION?

Word Generation - Unit 2.02

Focus Words

affirmative | discrimination | aspect | retain | relevant



Weekly Passage

College admissions can be very competitive. Elite colleges admit only half or a quarter of the students who apply. Because the process is tough, admissions decisions can be controversial.

Some colleges look at students' races during admissions. Suppose an African-American student and a white student are similar. They have about the same grades and test scores. The African-American student may be more likely to be accepted. This is called "Affirmative Action." Colleges may use this to increase the number of minorities on campus. The idea is that racial diversity helps college students learn to work with people from different backgrounds.

Affirmative Action is designed to make up for past discrimination. African-Americans and Latinos were kept out of college in past

generations. Students from these groups today are less likely to have family members who went to college. They may have less inside knowledge about college preparation.

Without Affirmative Action, fewer minority students will attend elite colleges. At UC Berkeley, the number of African-Americans admitted dropped from 562 to 191 after the school stopped using race as one aspect of admissions. Looking at this experience, people argue that race should be retained as a factor in admissions.

Others say Affirmative Action is not fair because it can discriminate against white students. These people believe schools should only look at grades and test scores. They think that the color of a student's skin is not relevant. Is it important for colleges to have racial diversity? Should they use Affirmative Action?

Unit 2.02**Should colleges use Affirmative Action?
Focus Word Chart**

Word	Meaning	Forms	Examples of Use	Notes
affirmative	(adj.) - positive			
discrimination	(n.) - prejudice toward a particular group of people			
aspect	(n.) - a part of something; a characteristic			
retain	(v.) - to keep; to hold in place			
relevant	(adj.) - connected			

Should colleges use Affirmative Action?

Problem of the Week



Affirmative action is meant to give groups that have faced **discrimination** a better chance to succeed in American society. College attendance is **relevant** to success because college graduates usually make more money. Therefore, affirmative action programs in college might be a good way to help these groups. U.S. courts have decided that colleges can **retain** some, but not all, affirmative action programs.

In 2008, the U.S. Census Bureau found the following:

- ▶ 40% of white 18-24 year-olds were enrolled in college.
- ▶ 32% of African-American 18-24 year-olds were enrolled in college.
- ▶ 26% of Hispanic 18-24 year-olds were enrolled in college.

Option 1: Which of the following shows the fraction of Hispanic 18 – 24 year-olds enrolled in college in 2008?

- A) $\frac{1}{3}$
- B) $\frac{8}{25}$
- C) $\frac{13}{50}$
- D) $\frac{16}{25}$

Option 2: The year is 2008. Two 18-24 year-olds are chosen at random. One person is African-American, and one is white. How much more likely is the white person to be in college than the African-American person? Express as a percentage.

Discussion Question: In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson described the need for **affirmative** action this way:

“You do not take a man who for years has been hobbled by chains, liberate him, bring him to the starting line of a race, saying, ‘you are free to compete with all the others,’ and still justly believe you have been completely fair . . . We seek not just freedom but opportunity—not just legal equity but human ability—not just equality as a right and a theory, but equality as a fact and as a result.”

Women and non-whites have faced prejudice and **discrimination** in America. Therefore, when the question of fairness arises, race and gender are seen as **relevant aspects** of the people involved. Some people think that America has become less prejudiced. As a result, they say, today’s America should not **retain** affirmative action. But have we achieved “equality as a fact and as a result”? Or did President Johnson chose the wrong goal?

Should colleges use Affirmative Action?

Debating the Issue



I. Get ready...

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A Affirmative Action should be legal in college admissions because it is the only way to give minorities a fair chance.

B Affirmative Action helps everyone benefit from diversity on college campuses.

C Affirmative Action should not be legal because it discriminates against white students.

D Affirmative Action should not be legal because it leads colleges to judge students by their skin color, not by their abilities.

E _____

GO!

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

I believe that...

I agree with you because. . .

You make a good point, but have you considered...

Can you show me evidence in the text that supports what you said?

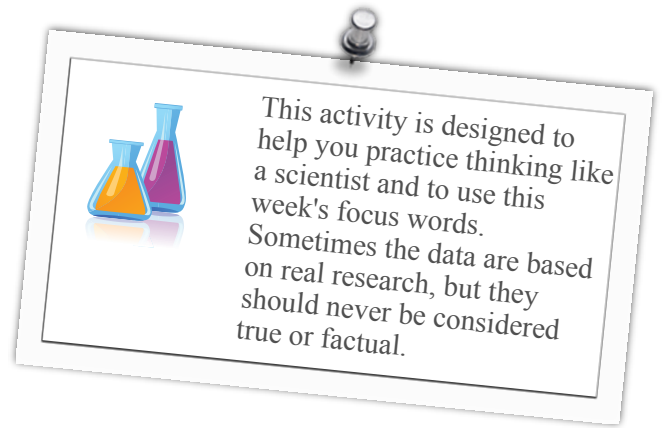
2. Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

Unit 2.02

Should colleges use Affirmative Action? Science Activity

Professor Kahn's class is talking about **Affirmative** Action.



"One of our Supreme Court Justices is a Hispanic woman," says Alan. "Why should we **retain** programs that help women and Hispanics get ahead? Minorities used to face **discrimination**, but not anymore. Affirmative Action just isn't **relevant**."

"Racism is complicated," says Alejandra. "It affects all different **aspects** of our lives. Take my name, for example. When a manager sees a resume from me, Alejandra Ortiz, and one from, say, Jennifer Smith, who gets a phone call, Alejandra or Jennifer?"

"Good question!" says Professor Kahn. "Let's find out!"

Question:

Are hiring managers less likely to call job-seekers with Hispanic names?

Hypothesis:

Hiring managers will be less likely to call a job-seeker with a Hispanic name.

Materials:

- ▶ A made-up resume

Procedure:

1. Create a resume for a pretend person who wants a sales job.
2. Find 60 businesses that are hiring salespeople.
3. On 30 resumes, write the name “Alejandra Ortiz.”
4. On 30 resumes, write the name “Jennifer Smith.”
5. Send the resumes to all 60 businesses.
6. Count the number of businesses that call back.

Data:

	Number of Callbacks
Alejandra Ortiz	10
Jennifer Smith	20

Conclusion:

Is the hypothesis supported or not by the data?

What evidence supports your conclusion?

How would you make this a better experiment?



Focus Words

	Exemplary
<input type="checkbox"/> Stated my own position clearly	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Included 1-2 arguments	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Included 1 counterargument	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Used 2-5 focus words	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check off what you accomplished:

- ☐ Stated my own position
- ☐ Included 1 focus word

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1-2 focus words

- ☐ Stated my own position clearly
- ☐ Included 1-2 arguments
- ☐ Included 1 counterargument
- ☐ Used 2-5 focus words

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