

## **Formal Argument for/against Participation Trophies**

A formal argument is not about criticism; rather, it represents *one side* of a complex issue. Rooted in research and analysis, **a formal argument presents evidence to defend a claim or provide support for one side of a multi-sided debate.** It is likely that evidence exists for the opposite side, which is why formal arguments can be challenging. **The goal is to present concrete points and facts rather than rely on emotion and personal anecdotes.**

Formal arguments are written in the **third person** and **thesis statements should be arguable.** That is, they *make claims that could be challenged.* Using words such as *must* and *should* help create an arguable thesis.

To defend your position, I have provided a selection of articles for you to read through and use as evidence in your paper, either as direct quotes or paraphrased information. *You must cite your work in the essay and also provide a Works Cited sheet. You are welcome to do your own research if you like.*

**For this essay, make an argument for or against participation trophies and then defend it.**

To help form your own opinion, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do participation trophies have benefits? What are they?
2. Do they prevent healthy competition? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. Do participation trophies have the same impact no matter the child's age? Do they have the same impact on a five-year-old as they do a fifteen-year-old?
4. Are participation trophies a profitable business for sports companies? Does that impact our perception of their role in competitive and non-competitive sports?
5. What are the parents' roles in their children's successes in sports? Does praise from parents and friends have the same or disproportionate impact as trophies?

**Be specific in your argument, as vague claims have too many holes. A weak argument is saying participation trophies are good, bad, or inconsequential.**

Examples of strong arguments include:

- Participation trophies do not harm the overall well-being of a child and should be awarded at the end of each season.
- Trophies should only be awarded to the winning team/participant, as participation trophies do not encourage healthy competition.
- Participation trophies are helpful for elementary-age children but unnecessary in high school sports.