

DECISION MAKING

Directions: You will be asked to take a position on the public policy issue: **“Should the United States government require all motorcycle riders to wear helmets?”**

It should take about 20 minutes for you to complete your response.

Choose information from the following data sections, and use it with what you know to support your position.

MOTORCYCLE SAFETY

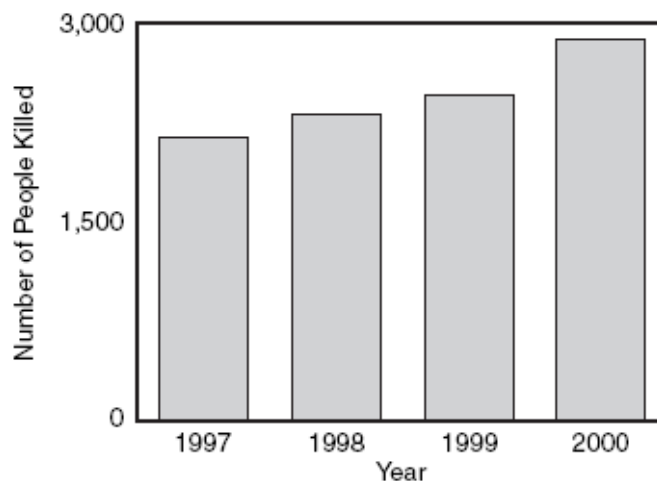
The number of motorcycle riders in the United States has increased over the last ten years. Currently there is a debate in Congress over legislation requiring motorcyclists to wear helmets. Some people think that many serious and fatal injuries could be avoided if the government required motorcyclists to wear helmets. Congress collected the following information about helmet use to help with their decision.

DATA SECTION

Part A

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration determined that the number of people involved in fatal motorcycle accidents increased 30% between 1997 and 2000.

Fatal Motorcycle Accidents in the United States, 1997-2000



Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

DATA SECTION (continued)

Part B

Currently each state has its own helmet law. This table shows the helmet laws in selected states and the percent of traffic deaths that are motorcycle riders.

Deaths of Motorcycle Riders in Traffic Accidents, 2003

Selected State	Helmet Law	Percent of Total Traffic Deaths
Alabama	Required for all riders	5.1
California	Required for all riders	9.1
Connecticut	Required for riders under 18	9.5
Indiana	Required for riders under 18	9.7
Iowa	No helmet use required	11.6
Wisconsin	No helmet use required	12.1

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

21 Taking a Stand

You will now take a stand on the public policy issue:

“Should the United States government require all motorcycle riders to wear helmets?”

You may either support or oppose a United States government proposal to require all motorcycle riders to wear helmets. Write a letter to your state representative explaining your position on the issue.

You will be graded on the following criteria. Your letter must include:

- a clear and supported statement of your position;
- supporting information using a core democratic value of American constitutional democracy;
- supporting knowledge (it is not enough to state your opinion) from history, geography, civics (other than the core democratic values), or economics; and
- supporting information from the Data Section.

- Remember:**
- Write or print neatly on the lines provided in your **Answer Document** using a No. 2 pencil.
 - No additional sheets may be used.
 - Nothing written in this booklet will be scored.

Some Core Democratic Values of American Constitutional Democracy

Fundamental Beliefs

Life
 Liberty
 The Pursuit of Happiness
 Public or Common Good
 Justice
 Equality
 Diversity
 Truth
 Popular Sovereignty
 Patriotism

Constitutional Principles

The Rule of Law
 Separation of Powers
 Representative Government
 Checks and Balances
 Freedom of Speech
 Freedom of Religion
 Federalism
 Civilian Control of the Military

Holistic Feature Scoring of Civic Writing: Grade 9

Points	Description
4	<p>In order to receive a 4-point score, the response must</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give a clearly stated position on the issue and support their position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students should use words such as support/oppose, for/against, agree/disagree, or should/should not – Do not accept those who do not take a stand, who say someone else (parents, school, or government) should decide the issue 2. Provide at least one supporting point that is based on the Core Democratic Values of American constitutional democracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Do not accept if this support contradicts stated position 3. Provide at least one piece of accurate, important and relevant supporting social studies information that comes from the student's prior knowledge of civics, economics, geography, or history (information other than that supplied by the Data Section or a Core Democratic Value) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Do not accept feelings or opinions for this element. – Do not accept if this support contradicts stated position. 4. Provide at least one piece of accurate, valid, and relevant supporting information from the Data Section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Do not accept if this support contradicts stated position – Data interpretations must be more right than wrong
3	<p>In order to receive a 3-point score, the response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give a clearly stated and supported position on the issue • contain at least 2 of the remaining 3 elements
2	<p>In order to receive a 2-point score, the response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give a clearly stated and supported position on the issue • contain at least 1 of the remaining 3 elements
1	<p>In order to receive a 1-point score, the response must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give a clearly stated and supported position on the issue
0	<p>Response shows no evidence of a clear position or the position is not supported in any way.</p>

NOTE: The supporting points used by students must be explained in enough detail to show a clear connection to the position taken.

I think all motorcycle riders should not be forced to wear helmets. But...

It is not safe without them. But to keep every one happy you should not require anyone over the age of 18 to wear helmets. In not very populated states. Like in California & Ohio should have to wear helmets because there is a lot more traffic than states like Texas. So you should only make really populated states wear helmets.

I think you should not have to wear a helmet if you don't want to. It should be your choice, it's your body. So you should do with it what you want. What if your head don't feel comfortable with a helmet on it is it fair you have to wear one. It's your life live it how you want to

I strongly believe that all motorcycle riders should be required by law to wear helmets. Studies have shown that you are less likely to die in an accident while wearing a helmet; the state of Alabama has a law that you must wear a helmet, and only 5.1% of traffic deaths were motorcycleists. California, on the other hand, who does not have a law for wearing helmets, has a motorcycleist death percentage of 12.1. The number of people killed has increased by 30% between 1997 and 2000. Only three years! Making a law would hopefully stop a trend like this from forming. My feelings also support the fundamental belief of life, which everyone is entitled to. A law for wearing helmets would hopefully save many lives, which, in turn is good for Michigan; more lives means more people, which means more workers. So, please consider proposing that Michigan have the law of wearing helmets. Thank you.