

English Language and Composition

Synthesis Question 1

(Suggested reading time—15 minutes)

(Suggested writing time—40 minutes)

Directions: The following prompt is based on the accompanying six sources.

This question requires you to synthesize a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. *Refer to the sources to support your position; avoid mere paraphrase or summary. Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument.*

Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations.

Introduction: The term “zero tolerance” was coined in the 1980s for strict policies as part of the federal “War on Drugs.” Zero tolerance became national policy for schools when President Bill Clinton signed the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994. Since that time, states and school boards have expanded the policy to include automatic expulsion or suspension for drugs and alcohol, fighting, swearing, disrupting class, disobedience, truancy, and other forms of misbehavior. Clearly, the intent behind zero tolerance was to discourage undesirable or dangerous activities. But how successful has this policy been? Has it made schools safer, or has it created more problems than it has solved?

Assignment: Read the following sources (including any introductory information) carefully. **Then, in an essay that synthesizes at least three of the sources for support, take a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim that zero tolerance policies are both important and effective in protecting the welfare of students, teachers, and staff in our nation’s schools.**

You may refer to the sources by their titles (Source A, Source B, etc.) or by the descriptions in parentheses.

Source A (Ewing)

Source B (First)

Source C (Survey)

Source D (NSSSS homepage)

Source E (Peterson)

Source F (Gladwell)