

Should Schools Require Community Service for Graduation?

Many schools are looking for new ways to prepare students for life after graduation. One idea that has gained support is requiring community service as part of graduation requirements. Supporters believe volunteering helps students develop responsibility, empathy, and real-world skills. Others argue that community service should remain a personal choice. Should schools make community service a graduation requirement?

Students who volunteer often gain valuable experiences outside the classroom. Helping at a food bank, animal shelter, or community event allows students to practice teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. These experiences can also strengthen college and job applications by showing that students are involved in their communities. According to a national youth volunteer survey, students who volunteer regularly report feeling more connected to their communities and more confident in their abilities.

Community service also gives students the opportunity to see challenges that others face. Working with different groups of people can help students develop empathy and a greater appreciation for their own opportunities. Many educators believe these experiences encourage students to become active, responsible citizens who continue serving their communities as adults.

However, not everyone agrees that community service should be required. Some families already have busy schedules filled with work, sports, music lessons, or caring for younger siblings. Requiring volunteer hours could create additional stress for students who already have limited free time. Critics also argue that volunteering should come from a genuine desire to help others rather than from a graduation requirement.

Schools could address these concerns by allowing students to complete service in flexible ways. Students might volunteer at local organizations, tutor younger children, participate in neighborhood clean-up projects, or even complete approved service projects from home. Giving students multiple options would make community service more accessible while still encouraging civic responsibility.

Whether community service should be required remains a topic of debate. While supporters believe it teaches important life skills and benefits communities, others believe students should have the freedom to decide how they contribute to society.

Practice Activity: Identify the Appeals

As you read, highlight or label examples of:

- **Ethos (Credibility):** Where does the article build trust or rely on credible people or sources?
- **Pathos (Emotion):** Where does the article appeal to the reader's emotions or values?
- **Logos (Logic):** Where does the article use facts, reasoning, or examples to support its ideas?

Challenge Question: Which appeal is used most effectively in this article? Explain why using evidence from the text.