

EXAMPLE LONG ARGUMENTATIVE THEME

Prompt: Choose a civics topic and a claim related to that topic. Write a multi-section Argumentative Theme about it, based on your research. One section should focus on support for the claim; the other section should focus on support for a counterclaim. Be sure to have at least three paragraphs in each section. Include in-text citations where needed and a reference list. Use the MLA style.

TITLE OF PAPER: Drones: More Like Planes than Kites?

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Drones: More Like Planes than Kites?

People have begun to wonder whether the owners of toy drones should be required to have a special drone pilot's license before they use their drones in public spaces. They ask: Are drones more like planes which require a pilot's license to operate or like kites which do not require a license? Not surprisingly, this issue has come to the forefront of public awareness because drones have become so popular and inexpensive. Toy drones with cameras mounted on them can cost as little as \$40 (Amazon 1), so a lot of people are buying them. Also, more and more drones are on the market each year. In 2013, only 327 types of drones were on the market; by 2020, 30,000 types of drones are expected to be available (Ranaivo 1). In fact, drones own a big piece of the economy. In 2004, the drone industry earned under \$1 billion. By 2024, the drone industry is expected to earn at least \$3 billion (Ranaivo 1). Nevertheless, because drones are a danger to humans, can be destructive and invasive, and are tricky to fly, people should be licensed to use them, and other regulations and restrictions should be followed, as well.

Reasons Supporting Licensing for Drone Owners

Probably the most important reason that people should have licenses to fly drones is that drones are dangerous to humans. Unexpectedly, even small drones can severely harm people. A drone that weighs only 2.2 pounds has 939 pounds of force if it falls from a height of 400 feet (Sobol 1). Indeed, small drones have hurt people. In one case, a woman was hit in the face by a drone, and it severely disfigured her face. In another case, a triathlete, Raija Ogden, was hit in

the head by a drone, and several stitches were required to close her resulting cut (Forrest 1). Also, drones can crash into a crowd of people. As the people try to dodge the drone, they can fall and injure each other. Finally, researchers at Virginia Tech have shown through simulations that a small drone can bring down an airplane (Ranaivo 1). If a drone were to get caught in a plane engine, the plane could crash and kill all the people on board.

Another important reason why people who own drones should have special pilot's licenses is that drones can be destructive to people's property and privacy. First, drones have been known to crash into houses and buildings and cause damage to them. They can break windows and damage walls and roofs. Moreover, drones have brought down power lines, and the electricity to hundreds of homes has been interrupted. These kinds of damage require expensive repairs and take people's time and effort. Another thing that can happen is that the batteries in a drone can explode on impact when the drone crashes. This can also cause costly repairs to whatever the drone hits. Further, drones can interfere with fire fighting. Firefighters have reported that they have not been able to use planes to dump water on wild fires because drones have been flying in the area. Wild fires can cause a lot of damage to homes and animals if they get out of control. Finally, drones have been used to invade people's privacy when photographs have been taken of people by camera drones without their permission. Celebrities are often the targets of paparazzi who can earn big paydays when they sell celebrity photos.

The final reason why people should earn licenses to fly drones is that controlling a drone is tricky. First of all, the controls on a drone are complicated. People mistakenly think that because they have operated a remote control car that they can operate a drone safely. Instead, most people need to be educated about operating a drone. They need to understand the differences between operating a drone in the air versus a toy on the ground. Second, people often

underestimate the power of a drone; a drone can rise up in the air faster than they expect. It can be 400 feet high in a few seconds (Sobol 1). Relatedly, people do not expect the speed of drones, and they do not allow for it. A drone can move out of sight within a very short period of time, and, if the operator is not familiar with the controls, it can disappear. Finally, a drone can get easily caught in a wind current; the wind can carry the drone away if the operator is not careful and prepared to prevent it. Such “flyaways” have become frequent events (Sobol 1).

Reasons Against Licensing for Drone Owners

Certainly, some people will argue that owners should not have to earn a pilot’s license to operate a drone. One reason against requiring licenses for drone operators is that smaller drones are meant to be toys for children. Children are typically not required to have licenses to operate their toys. For example, children use skateboards and bikes without licenses. They can have serious accidents and even be killed on these vehicles. Children also operate remote-control cars and planes without licenses. These toys are very similar to remotely controlled toy drones. Additionally, children fly kites without licenses. Like remote-control planes, kites can be very tricky to maneuver, especially in strong winds. They can also cause damage if they come down on a power line. They can cause death if flown during a storm.

Another reason against requiring licenses for toy drones is that licensing would be an added government limitation on an individual’s freedom. The U.S. is founded on the principle of freedom, and people want to be free of government interference in their lives. Federal and state governments already have a lot of laws that limit freedom. For example, people have to earn driver’s licenses before they can drive a car. They have to pay taxes on items that they buy. They have to pay part of their pay each month to the government as

income taxes. They have to register to vote. They have to register their guns. Additional limitations on freedom, like requiring people to get licenses to fly drones, are too limiting for people to enjoy life.

A final reason for not requiring licenses for drone operators is that it will be expensive. For one thing, people will have to be hired in each county or town to teach courses, give licensing tests, and monitor whether people get licenses after they buy a drone. Printing licenses will be costly, too. Also, police will have to monitor whether people have licenses when they are seen flying a drone. This will be difficult, given the number of drones that are being bought. Finally, some people will not be able to afford to take the required courses and buy the license in addition to buying a drone. This will restrict drone usage to people who have plenty of money.

Conclusion

To conclude, although these reasons for not requiring licenses for drones may be valid, the host of reasons for requiring licenses add up to the conclusion that they should be required. Certainly, the dangerous nature of drones with regard to harming people and property outweighs any counterargument. Although current Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations require people to keep their drones under the 400-foot level and to stay away from airports and stadiums (Ranaivo 1), these regulations are not sufficient to prevent most of the dangers to people and to property specified here. If people were to obtain a drone license, they would need to become educated about the laws and rules related to operating drones and would have to demonstrate their skills. To get skilled, they would need to practice flying their drones with supervision in safe locations like large enclosed spaces or large open empty spaces (like a large field). Perhaps two types of

drones could be created: one type for toys and one for professional use. Then, the FAA could require the toy drone industry to build certain functions into toy drones. For example, toy drones might have mechanisms inside them that limits their speed, the height they can attain, and the area that they can cover. They might also require a mechanism that keeps drones away from public arenas. These toy drones would not require licensing, whereas other drones created for adults would require licensing. The FAA needs to promote public education about drones used in the professions and the licensing of pilots. They should also institute serious penalties for people who do not fly their drones safely or who do not obtain licenses. Clearly, because of the damage they can cause to humans and property and the complexities involved in using them, drones are much more like airplanes than toy kites; they need to be respected as such by requiring a license to use them or by requiring certain limitations on their use by children.

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