

FL ELFAS
Passage Cover Sheet

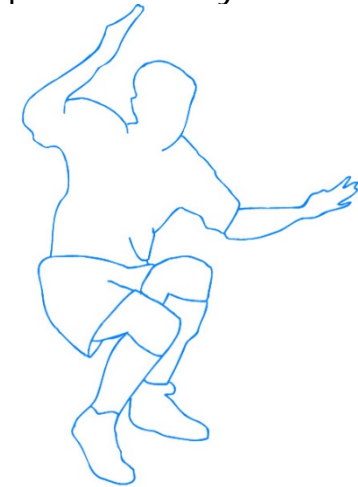
Title:	Skateboard Parks: If You Build Them, They Will Come
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Grade Band:	6-8
Genre:	Informational Text
Text Type:	Opinion Essay
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Lexile Range:	925-1185
Flesch-Kincaid:	12.0
Qualitative Ranking:	Moderate

Skateboard Parks: If You Build Them, They Will Come

Skateboarding first gained popularity during the surfer craze of the 1960s. Many saw it as a fad that connected landlocked residents to the surfing styles and music (Jan and Dean's "Sidewalk Surfin'," 1964) that grew out of California. Even though nearly fifty million skateboards were sold in the early sixties, by the early 1970s, skateboarding fell out of fashion.

In the late 1980s, however, the skateboard broke away from its association with surfing. Since then it has become so popular that some groups want to make it a sport in the 2016 Olympics. Despite its popularity, some see skateboards and skateboarders as public nuisances—zipping through crosswalks, damaging concrete ramps, stairs, and railings, and endangering pedestrians. Some want skateboarding banned, and some communities have passed laws against skateboarding.

One solution to the flap over skateboarding is for communities to build skate parks. Skate parks are the perfect compromise between dedicated skateboarders and their detractors because they provide social benefits to skateboarders, promote healthy lifestyles, and provide safety benefits for both skateboarders and the community.



The Tony Hawk Foundation has awarded more than 500 grants to design and build skate parks nationwide, and the foundation outlines the benefits of these parks on its website. First, because skate parks provide a destination for skateboarders, they offer social opportunities

for students who often may not be involved in activities at school. At the skate park, they can share their talents and knowledge, and forge friendships that can last a lifetime.

When several teenagers were interviewed at a popular skateboard park, one dedicated enthusiast, Jeb Crowthers, spoke for the group. "My best friends come to the park. We teach and give each other tips and have a blast together," he explained.

Second, skate parks promote active, healthy lifestyles. With so much written today about the importance of patterns of fitness for life, the skateboarders' needs for strength, balance, and coordination, and how these impact a healthy lifestyle are reinforced by the access that skate parks provide.

Finally, because skate parks are often designed by skateboarders working with construction companies, their layouts (inclines, slopes, and turns) provide safer environments. The parks usually have posted regulations requiring equipment such as headgear and elbow and kneepads. There are an estimated seven to nine million skateboarders and only 3,000 skate parks. Additional skate parks would create a safer environment for both skateboarders and the public. Over 90% of fatal accidents involving skateboards occur outside of skate parks, and most of those involve a motor vehicle. Clearly, skate parks are a sound investment in safety.

Although concerns about skate parks exist regarding cost, upkeep, liability, and noise, the advantages of skate parks outweigh the objections. The growth of skate parks reveals that skateboarding is a legitimate activity, and having a public place to skateboard reduces the damage to public property and the danger to both skateboarders and citizens. If cities can build parks for dogs, isn't it logical to also build parks for people who want to skateboard?

ELL CONSIDERATIONS:

- Show students pictures of a skate park. Preferably, show a short Internet video clip of youth riding on skateboards doing various tricks in a skate park. Ask the ELLs if they have been to a skate park. Ask if they have seen these in their own countries. Discuss the popularity of skateboarding in the various countries represented.
- On the board, draw a T-chart. At the top left, write *surfing*; at the top right write *skateboarding*. List characteristics of each in the columns and then discuss the differences and similarities between the two activities.
- Tell the students that this passage is of the persuasive type. By looking at the title, ask the students if the author is for skateboard parks or against them. Briefly elicit a couple of popular arguments for and against skateboard parks. Pair students so they have the opportunity to debate the issue of skateboard parks using the language from the text to support their arguments.
- Explain or discuss with ELLs the following vocabulary prior to introducing the passage. The following key words or phrases reflect important vocabulary or academic concepts appropriate to address at this level. The meaning of vocabulary can be taught to students using a variety of research-based strategies, including student-friendly explanations, synonyms or antonyms, demonstrations, gestures, or illustrations. Explaining the meaning of the word or phrase in the context of a sentence also provides students with an additional language model of how the word or phrase is used in a sentence different from the context in the passage. Demonstrations or examples and non-examples can also be used to explain meaning or check for understanding, including use of Spanish cognates.

Tier two words/Spanish cognates:

- craze
- popularity/popularidad
- landlocked
- endangering
- dedicated/dedicado
- destination
- flap
- detractors
- objections/objeciones
- forge friendships
- upkeep
- legitimate/legítimo
- skate parks

Tier three words:

- a fad
- headgear
- kneepads
- liability