

# Article of the Week – Week One

## *Half of American Teenagers Volunteer, Largely Because Their Friends Do (1250L)*

### Directions:

1. **Read and annotate** the article with a minimum of 8 markings.
2. **Write a synonym** or simple definition above the bolded words found throughout the article.
3. Complete the **They Say / I Say** section by using the template provided on the back of the instructions sheet.
4. Complete the **Quick Questions** section by creating two researchable questions and writing out the answers.
5. Complete the **Grammar** section by using the example mentor sentences to craft your own sentences.

## Half of American Teenagers Volunteer, Largely Because Their Friends Do

More than half of American teenagers and young adults volunteered last year, and the best way to enlist this group turns out to be peer pressure: Three quarters of people ages 13 to 22 whose friends volunteer regularly also do so, which is nearly twice the number of those who pursue voluntary activities based on their concern about particular social issues. Those were the key findings of new research results released by DoSomething.org, a group working to get young people involved in social change.

The study, based on data from 4,363 young people, found that the most common form of support by volunteers was assistance with fundraising. Thirty-eight percent of those in the survey said they helped with **solicitations**, prompting the study's authors to conclude: "Young people are a secret weapon. A donation pitch from a passionate teen is way more influential than a cold call or that newsletter you were thinking about sending."

The study also found a gender divide in volunteer activities. Boys were more likely to undertake physical activities such as environmental cleanup or working with younger children in sports, while girls were more likely to help the homeless and other needy people or to work with arts groups.

Among other findings from the survey:

1. Students in private high schools were 25 percent more likely to **volunteer** than those in public schools.
2. Seventy percent of young people from wealthy families volunteered, compared with 44 percent of those from low-income households.
3. Young people who reported sending out frequent text messages were 13 percent more likely to have volunteered last year than those who owned or shared a mobile telephone but did not text regularly, and they were 38 percent more likely to volunteer than those without mobile phones.
4. Despite the heavy use of technology by young people, few of those surveyed went online to find volunteer opportunities. Young people were 66 percent more likely to seek volunteer activities by talking to people than by turning to social media or Web sites.

The researchers say the responses to the survey pointed out many ways that nonprofits can do a better job of getting young people to volunteer. Among their suggestions:

Offer ways to socialize. A top priority for many young people in choosing volunteer activities is having a chance to interact with friends, especially those of the opposite sex. "Think of volunteering like a high-school party," the researchers write. "Volunteering, like everything else, is about blending in, making friends, and having a good time."

*Notes on my thoughts, reactions and questions as I read:*

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Make volunteer jobs accessible. **Proximity** to home ranks second of the reasons why young people choose the volunteer activities they do. The researchers advise charities to provide volunteer activities close to home, but not in the home.

Offer one-time or brief activities. Many young people are pressed for time, so offer them tasks that can be completed quickly. “Teens often decide to go last minute, avoid showing up early and almost never stay until the end,” the researchers write. “Being first or last isn’t cool.”

Provide volunteer jobs in familiar settings. In recruiting young people, keep in mind the extracurricular activities they already pursue. Those on sports teams, for example, are more likely to want to help younger kids in recreational programs, while those who play musical instruments are probably more interested in working with arts or other cultural groups.

Focus on providing direct help to people. Hunger and homelessness are issues that many young people care about, the survey found. They tend to be more interested in helping people or animals in need than in volunteering for causes that do not have such direct or personal benefits, the survey found. In practice, that means they’re likely to regard an activity like sending messages to troops overseas as more important than installing energy-efficient light bulbs.

Minimize the focus on young volunteers. At a time of life when many young people are self-conscious, they often prefer to remain **anonymous** or help from a distance when volunteering, the researchers write. “In the mobile age, they’re more accustomed to anonymity.”

Offer volunteer jobs with benefits. For high-school students, the No. 1 concern about the future is getting into college and paying for it, the survey found. That worry was a bigger concern than getting a good job, having enough money, the environment, crime rates, personal health, or dying. Volunteer activities that can help give young people an edge in college admissions or provide similar **incentives** will be highly attractive to them, the researchers write.

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## They Say / I Say:

**On the back of this sheet of paper, use the following template to write two well developed paragraphs. Fill in the blanks with your own words using information from the article where needed.**

The general argument made by (the author) in her/his work, \_\_\_\_\_, is that \_\_\_\_\_. More specifically, (the author) argues that \_\_\_\_\_. She/he writes, “\_\_\_\_\_.” In this passage, (the author) is suggesting that \_\_\_\_\_. In conclusion, (the author’s) belief is that \_\_\_\_\_.

In my view, (the author) is wrong/right, because \_\_\_\_\_. More specifically, I believe that \_\_\_\_\_. For example, \_\_\_\_\_. Although (the author) might object that \_\_\_\_\_, I maintain that \_\_\_\_\_. Therefore, I conclude that \_\_\_\_\_.

## Quick Questions:

**Question:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Question:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Grammar:

**1. The following sentence from the article uses an appositive to add or clarify information. Put a box around the appositive in the sentence.**

The study, based on data from 4,363 young people, found that the most common form of support by volunteers was assistance with fundraising.

**2. Write your own sentence that uses an appositive.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Find a compound sentence from the article and write it below. If you can’t find one, write one of your own.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

