

Argumentative Essay Practice 13

Question: “Young people should be more considerate towards the elderly.” What are your views?

Step 1: Defining your key terms

Young people: ages 18-29? Teenagers? Students? Make sure to give an idea *which* exact group of people you are referring to when you say “young people”

Elderly: By standard definition (from governments, etc.): it is people who are 65 years and older – but in broader ways, elderly can be also regarded as people who are more senior than you

Considerate: Don’t have to define what it means to be “considerate” in full – but think about what are the ways to be “considerate” to others? Giving up seats on public transport? Being polite to others? Thinking about the welfare and interests of others? What it means to be “considerate” for you will eventually show up in your examples.

More: Does the question imply that young people **now** are not **as** considerate as they should be to the elderly?

Step 2: Setting your conditions – do we have to set conditions at all?

Ask yourself:

1. Is this an absolute question? (Are there absolute terms such as “definitely”, “always”, “constantly”, “will”, etc.)
2. Does it require that you set conditions for *when* something would happen?
3. If no, let us consider some questions about this. These questions will guide you in formulating your arguments, putting in insight into your conclusion, and think about how you want to start your introduction.

Q1) What are **some infamous incidents** that has happened recently that might have prompted someone to ask this question? Are more people being inconsiderate to the elderly?

- Toa Payoh coffeeshop case: couple slamming elderly man who asked to share a table?
- Cases of financial abuse by children in old age becoming increasingly common
- 2013 neighbour abusing elderly in lift lobby
- Woman pushing down elderly cyclist

Q2) What **reasons** do you think teenagers might have when they are inconsiderate to the elderly? Do you think they **do it on purpose**?

- Many times the extreme cases of violence done to elderly seem to be a result of personal issues such as psychological and emotional instability
- Being inconsiderate could be unintentional and because of ignorance

- However, there are cases that such inconsideration is deliberate and done despite knowing how much it will hurt the elderly

Q3) Should *all* elderly persons be respected **regardless of how they treat younger ones**? Should we respect someone else simply because they are older than us?

- Many would agree that respect needs to be “earned” from others – we deserve respect by treating others kindly first
- As the saying goes “Do unto others as others unto you” – one should not inflict pain/cause harm to others when we don’t want it to happen to ourselves
- There are admittedly certain elderly persons who are extremely rude and offensive to younger people, or others in public and they do not absolutely deserve respect simply because they are old
- However, we should not respond to such offensive behaviour with equally harmful and inconsiderate actions: learning to give in, tolerate and even ignore will allow us to be the bigger person here

Q4) **In what ways will it help Singapore if we become more considerate and gracious, especially to the elderly in our country?**

- Elderly will definitely live in a better, more accepting environment without fear of being bullied, insulted or beaten up
- Elderly are less likely to be able to defend themselves when things get violent
- Being more considerate and gracious to the elderly will help us treat others (non-elderly) better as well, transforming Singapore into a better society
- Kindness and graciousness will go a long way in improving our quality of lives and the way we interact with others

Q5) Do treating elderly with consideration something we should do only in public when everyone’s watching? Is treating them with respect only applicable to our own parents/relatives/family?

- It is only right that we learn to treat all elderly, and better still, every individual with equal respect that they deserve
- Being considerate to the elderly is not only applicable to the seniors at home, our parents or grandparents → but to the elderly even in public areas (buses, trains, etc.)

Step 3: Brainstorming for ideas

Yes, young people should be more considerate to the elderly	No, young people deserve as much respect from elderly too
<p>1. We should be more considerate to the elderly because they would make up a <u>huge proportion of our population in the future</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Singapore is an ageing population and the percentage of elderly is likely to hit 20% in the near future ⇒ When so much of our population is comprised of these elderly, it is quite likely that chances of social interaction with these elderly will be high ⇒ One has to therefore learn to be considerate to these elderly, whether is it in public or private spaces so that they can feel accepted in their own country <p>2. We should respect our elderly because they have made <u>significant contributions and sacrifices to our country, and even to us</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ These elderly have worked hard when Singapore was still a new and young nation in the past ⇒ They are the ones who have sacrificed their lives, time and invested energy into creating the comfortable Singapore today ⇒ These elderly deserve to be respected and treated with consideration today because of their efforts in the past ⇒ We are enjoying the rewards of their hard work and the least we can do to show our appreciation is being kind to them <p>3. We should be more considerate to elderly because this <u>helps us set the right examples as role models for the younger generation in the future to follow</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ By treating the elderly with respect, consideration and kindness → we demonstrate by example what is the <u>appropriate</u> way to treat them ⇒ When we disrespect the elderly, our inconsiderate actions are significant <u>influences on the attitudes of the younger generation</u> towards elderly as well ⇒ Our disrespect will shape their <u>indifference, uncaring or rude attitudes/behaviour</u> towards us in the future ⇒ Understanding this in our own interest decades later: aren't we <u>giving them a chance/an excuse to treat us inconsiderately as well?</u> ⇒ Examples of being considerate? 	<p>1. Respect should be earned, not be granted simply based on one's age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ However, Singapore's strong Asian values on filial piety and respect for elders meant that it remains generally unacceptable that we are inconsiderate towards them ⇒ By virtue of their age, it is often expected that we respect these elderly because seniority holds special priority in our societies ⇒ It is still important to note that there <u>are</u> times when our respect may be reciprocated with unkind behaviour and attitudes <p>2. The elderly must also learn to appreciate and be respectful to the younger generation without abusing their positions as seniors in the society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ After all, every individual deserves the basic form of respect and consideration that should be granted to them in their interactions with others ⇒ Being an elderly individual does not and <u>should not</u> grant them special exclusion from this obligation to treat others in a considerate manner as well

Social workers say the financial abuse cases reported are just tip of the iceberg



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Social workers are seeing more senior citizens who have been cheated or financially abused by their children.

The children may have tricked or talked the parents into selling their home, often with the promise that the parents can live with the children in the children's home. But after taking the sale proceeds, they treat the parents shabbily, some even throwing the parents out.

There are also cases where children hold a parent's ATM card or manage their finances, as the parent may be too frail to go to the bank or is unfamiliar with the banking system. But the parent's life savings get wiped out as the children help themselves to the money.

Also common are situations of adult sons demanding money regularly from elderly parents and turning violent if they do not comply.

Related Story



Son sells aged father's three-room flat, takes money and leaves him destitute

TRANS Safe Centre, a charity specialising in helping abused elderly people, dealt with 11 seniors who suffered some form of financial abuse last year. In 2008, it had only two such cases, its senior social worker Mrs Chua Yixin told The Sunday Times.

Care Corner Project StART, another of the three agencies that specialise in helping those affected by family violence, estimates that it had about 20 such new cases last year, a "considerable" rise over the last few years, its team leader Kristine Lam said.

HIDING THE SHAME

The elderly may not even see this as abuse, but as their bad karma to have an unfilial child. They think it's shameful to tell others and they don't know what can be done about it

MRS CHUA YIXIN, senior social worker at TRANS Safe Centre, on abused seniors choosing to keep mum about being exploited by their children

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Pave, another family violence specialist centre, does not track the number of seniors who have been financially abused, but said the issue is definitely of concern. This is because social workers say that the cases reported are but the tip of the iceberg. Parents not only fear they will get the children in trouble if they go to the police, but also worry that the children will cut off ties if they go public.

And even when they seek assistance, it is often for financial aid or to find a place to stay for themselves or the abusive child. When doing so, they keep mum about how they have been exploited.

Said Mrs Chua: "The elderly may not even see this as abuse, but as their bad karma to have an unfilial child. They think it's shameful to tell others and they don't know what can be done about it."

Take for example the case cited by Project StART's Ms Lam of a widow in her 80s whose only child got her to sell her house worth \$4 million. The son, a businessman in his 40s, asked his mother to sign a document, purportedly to rent out her house and give him the rental income to help him cope with business woes.

As it turned out, the document was for the sale of the house. He later promised to buy her a small flat.

But that did not happen, and she found herself living with his family of five in his two-room flat. The woman also said her daughter-in-law treated her badly.

But she put up with it, as her son told her he would cut off ties and not attend her funeral if she went against his wishes, Ms Lam said.

Social workers say the financial abuse cuts across all income groups.

Mrs Chua gives the example of a widow in her 80s who receives \$450 a month from the Government's Public Assistance (PA) scheme for the destitute.

She is bedridden and lives with the youngest of her six children, a son in his 50s. The jobless man used his mother's PA money for himself, leaving her malnourished, among other problems. He even took his mother out to the streets to beg, his siblings told Mrs Chua.

But when they questioned their brother or tried to visit the old woman, he threatened to kill himself and found ways to stop them from visiting her. With the social workers' help, however, the other children eventually managed to have her placed in a nursing home.

Mrs Chua said many such abuse cases come to light only when the other children smell a rat.

For instance, when the parents are not properly looked after, or when the child who is suspected of cheating the parent prevents siblings from having any contact with the parent.

One man even went so far as to take his mother to a lawyer's office to sign a statutory declaration - a statement made under oath - that she did not want any contact with her four other children. She also signed a letter authorising the son, a professional in his 40s, to handle her finances - her worth is estimated to be in the millions.

The son has prevented his siblings from visiting. He refuses to open the door when they show up, and they have not seen their mother, who is in her 80s and uses a wheelchair, for over a year.

The woman's other children suspect that he has got her to make him the sole beneficiary in her will, Mrs Chua said. They are now exploring their options to gain access to their mother, she added.

Many cases of financial abuse involve a son abusing his mother.

Said Mrs Chua: "Mothers tend to give in to their children's demands more often than dads. Traditionally, mothers dote on their sons more, so some take advantage of this."

Associate Professor Ruby Lee of the National University of Singapore Law Faculty said financial abuse is a tough nut to crack as most seniors do not want to report the wrongdoing or take their children to court.

Making a police report may not help, because the children's actions, while morally wrong, may not be a criminal offence, she said, citing the example of children reneging on their promise to house their parents after taking the proceeds from selling the parents' flat.

But if a parent has lost his mental capacity due to dementia, for example, and a child is suspected of cheating the parent, the siblings can ask the court to appoint them as deputies to make key decisions on the parent's behalf.

For a start, social workers say it is important to raise awareness of financial abuse so that the elderly can learn how to safeguard their money. Ms Micki Sim, a social worker at @27 Family Service Centre, suggested: "Talk to someone, like a social worker, if you feel you have been exploited and we will see how we can help."

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You're how old? We'll be in touch

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Ashton Applewhite

It might not seem that Mrs Hillary Clinton and Mr Donald Trump have much in common. But they share something important with each other and with a whole lot of their fellow citizens. Both are job seekers. And at ages 68 and 70, respectively, they are part of a large group of Americans who are radically upending the concept of retirement.

This year, almost 20 per cent of Americans 65 and older are working. Some of them want to; many need to. The demise of traditional pensions means that many people have to keep earning in their 60s and 70s to maintain a decent standard of living.

These older people represent a vast well of productive and creative potential. Veteran workers can bring deep knowledge to the table, as well as well-honed interpersonal skills, better judgment than the less experienced and a more balanced perspective. They embody a natural resource that's increasing: the social capital of millions of healthy, educated adults.

Why, then, are well over 1.5 million Americans older than 50, people with decades of life ahead of them, unable to find work?

The underlying reason isn't personal, it's structural. It's the result of a network of attitudes and institutional practices we can no longer ignore.

The problem is ageism - discrimination on the basis of age. A dumb and destructive obsession with youth so extreme that experience has become a liability. In Silicon Valley, engineers are getting Botox and hair transplants before interviews - and these are skilled, educated, white guys in their 20s, so imagine the effect further down the food chain.

Age discrimination in employment is illegal, but two-thirds of older job seekers report encountering it. At 64, I'm fortunate not to have been one of them, as I work at the American Museum of Natural History, a truly all-age-friendly employer.

I write about ageism, though, so I hear stories all the time.

The 51-year-old Uber driver taking me to Los Angeles International Airport at dawn a few weeks ago told me about a marketing position he thought he was eminently qualified for. He did his homework and nailed the interview. On his way out of the building he overheard: "Yeah, he's perfect, but he's too old."

I'm lucky enough to get my tech support from Mr J. K. Scheinberg, the engineer at Apple who led the effort that moved the Mac to Intel processors. A little restless after retiring in 2008, at 54, he figured he would be a great fit for a position at an Apple store Genius Bar, despite being twice as old as anyone else at the group interview. "On the way out, all three of the interviewers singled me out and said, 'We'll be in touch,'" he said. "I never heard back."

Recruiters say people with more than three years of work experience need not apply. Ads call for "digital natives", as if playing video games as a kid is proof of competence.

Resumes go unread, as Ms Christina Economos, a science educator with more than 40 years of experience developing curriculum, has learnt. "I don't even get a reply - or they just say, 'We've found someone more suited'," she said. "I feel that my experience, skill set, work ethic are being dismissed just because of my age. It's really a blow, since I still feel like a vital human being."

A 2016 study by the National Bureau of Economic Research found "robust" evidence that age discrimination in the workplace starts earlier for women and never relents. The pay gap kicks in early, at age 32, when women start getting passed over for promotion.

Discouraged and diminished, many older Americans stop looking for work. They become economically dependent, contributing to the misperception that older people are a burden to society, but it's not by choice. How are older people supposed to remain self-sufficient if they're forced out of the job market?

AGE-OLD BIAS

Not one negative stereotype about older workers holds up under scrutiny. Abundant data shows they are reliable, handle stress well, master new skills and are the most engaged of all workers when offered the chance to grow and advance on the job. Older people might take longer to accomplish a given task, but they make fewer mistakes. They take longer to recover from injury but hurt themselves less often. It's a wash. Motivation and effort affect output far more than age does.

Age prejudice - assuming that someone is too old or too young to handle a task or take on a responsibility - cramps prospects for everyone, old or young.

Millennials, who are criticised for having "no work ethic" and "needing to have their hands held", have trouble getting a foothold in the job market. Unless we tackle age bias, they too are likely to become less employable through no fault of their own, and sooner than they might think. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act kicks in at 40.

The myth that older workers crowd out younger ones is called the "lump of labour" fallacy, and economists have debunked it countless times. When jobs are scarce, this is true in the narrowest sense, but that's a labour market problem, not a too-many-old- people problem.

A 2012 Pew Charitable Trusts study of employment rates over the past 40 years found rates for younger and older workers to be positively correlated. In other words, as more older workers stayed on the job, the employment rate and number of hours worked also improved for younger people.

Progressive companies know the benefits of workplace diversity. A friend in workforce policy calls this the "shoe test": Look under the table, and if everyone is wearing the same kind of shoes, whether wingtips or flip-flops, you've got a problem. It's blindingly obvious that age belongs alongside race, gender, ability and sexual orientation as a criterion for diversity - not only because it's the ethical path but also because age discrimination hurts productivity and profits.

Being part of a mixed-age team can be challenging. Ms Betsy Martens was 55 when she landed a job as an information architect at a start-up during the heady days of the tech boom. Decades older than most of the staff, she found it invigorating. "When it came time to talk about the music we loved, the books we'd read, the movies we saw and the life experiences we'd had, we were on different planets, but we were all open-minded enough to find these differences intriguing," she told me. Things shifted during an argument with her boss. "When he said exasperatedly, 'You sound just like my mother.' That was the moment the pin pricked the balloon."

"Culture fit" gets bandied about in this context - the idea that people in an organisation should share attitudes, backgrounds and working styles. That can mean rejecting people who "aren't like us". Age, however, is a far less reliable indicator of shared values or interests than class, gender, race or income level. Discomfort at reaching across an age gap is one of the sorry consequences of living in a profoundly age-segregated society.

Cornell gerontologist Karl Pillemer says that Americans are more likely to have a friend of a different race than one who is 10 years older or younger than they are. Age segregation impoverishes us, because it cuts us off from most of humanity and because the exchange of skills and stories across generations is the natural order of things. In the United States, ageism has subverted it.

What is achieving age diversity going to take? Nothing less than a mass movement like the women's movement, which made people aware that "personal problems" - like being perceived as incompetent, or being paid less, or getting passed over for promotion - were actually widely shared political problems that required collective action.

The critical starting point is to acknowledge our own prejudice: internalised bias like "I'm too old for that job", and that directed at others, like "It's going to take me forever to bring that old guy up to speed".

Confronting ageism means making friends of all ages. It means pointing out bias when you encounter it (when everyone at a meeting is the same age, for example). Confronting ageism means joining forces. It means seeing older people not as alien and "other", but as us - future us, that is. NEW YORK TIMES

•Ashton Applewhite is the author of *This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism*.