



Proficient | Exemplar Essay

## Bag Tax

### Reducing Waste is Worth the Tax



#### Claim and Focus

The writer introduces a clear and specific claim ("It will reduce the amount... environment") and stays focused on developing it throughout the essay. A more precise or better-crafted claim would move this to a 4.



#### Support and Evidence

The writer balances evidence with analysis and connects each back to the claim (three sources cited and developed with explanations). Counterclaims are acknowledged ("Some may think that 25 cents for a little bag is not worth it," "maybe certain families might not be able to afford paying 25 cents for bags") as are their weaknesses ("but that small tax will encourage others to bring their own bags").



#### Organization

The writer organizes a cohesive argument that shows relationships between ideas. Clear transitions ("Because of this," "One of the reasons," "In other situations," "For all these reasons and more") help the argument progress from the introduction to a thoughtful conclusion.



#### Language and Style

The writer's syntax is varied, and while word choice is not particularly advanced, phrases like "The bottom line is" and "When you think about it" appeal to the intended audience. The writer maintains a fair and formal tone ("Experts have said," "Opposers of this issue believe").



#### Using Exemplars in Your Lessons

Exemplar essays are tools to take abstract descriptions and make them more concrete for students. One way to use them is to print the clean copies of the essays and allow students to use the rubric to make notes or even find examples of important elements of an essay - thesis statements, introductions, evidence, conclusions, transitions, etc. Teachers can also use exemplars to illustrate what each score point within a trait 'looks like' in an authentic student essay. For additional ideas, please see "25 Ways to Use Exemplar Essays" by visiting the Curriculum Resources page in Help.

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To Whom It May Concern:

Have you ever driven along the highway and seen plastic bags drifting in the wind? Millions of plastic bags are being littered and not disposed of properly. Because of this, our state government proposes that there should be a charge of 25 cents for every plastic bag used in stores. It will reduce the amount of plastic bags that end up in landfills and will also help save our cities money and remind people how they can take care of our environment. One of the reasons is that it will keep the community cleaner and healthier. Experts have said that "plastic bags are only useful for a few minutes, but can pose a threat to wildlife for decades." They also say that the bags made from petroleum products help contribute to global warming. California has made an example of banning plastic bags. Using reusable bags means the environment in California has less litter and a healthier space for animals and humans. Some may think that 25 cents for a little bag is not worth it, but that small tax will encourage others to bring their own bags. From the article "Bag Tax" it claims that "state authorities also praised the move, which should reduce the amount of money sanitation departments spend to clean up litter." When you think about it, you're just paying 25 cents to clean up litter and save your government money, which helps the economy. Some people are still against the tax. The American Progressive Bag Alliance has warned that "if this law were allowed to go into effect it would jeopardize thousands of California manufacturing jobs and fleece consumers for billions." In other situations, maybe certain families might not be able to afford paying 25 cents for bags. Opposers of this issue believe that the economy is in trouble if this law is put into action. Even with all of that, many cities, including Los



Angeles and Chicago have permanently banned plastic bags. If plastic bags weren't such a big issue, why would so many big cities ban them? The plastic bag tax would hopefully encourage people to reuse the bags that they already have bought. No one really wants to pay an extra 25 cents for a plastic bag, so the ones that they have will be more valuable and people will want to save them to avoid the tax. The bottom line is its purpose is to get rid of all the plastic bag trash, and help people not to be so wasteful. For all these reasons and more, our we need to say YES to a 25 cent bag tax.