



CUNYASSESSMENT TEST IN WRITING (CATW) Practice 8

Read the passage below and write an essay responding to the ideas it presents. In your essay, be sure to summarize the passage in your own words, stating the author's most important ideas. Develop your essay by identifying one idea in the passage that you feel is especially significant, and explain its significance. Support your claims with evidence or examples drawn from what you have read, learned in school, and/or personally experienced.

Banning Outdoor Smoking

When Mayor Michael Bloomberg began his campaign against cigarette smoking eight years ago, most New Yorkers breathed a sigh of relief. Bars, restaurants, hotels, office buildings—all are now smoke-free by law, making New York City a healthier place. And, for those already addicted or tempted, the city offered to help people stop smoking and gruesome television ads to try to keep them from starting.

That anti-smoking campaign has been a great public service, but now the mayor and City Council have gone too far. The council has voted to ban smoking outdoors in city parks, beaches and even plazas, including in Times Square. All of this takes the campaign too far, even for those of us who want to avoid the hazards of secondhand smoke.

Already smokers are forced to huddle outside in winter cold and summer heat. Now, they will not be able to stray onto the 14 miles of city beaches or into the city's 1,700 parks, not even Central Park or windswept Battery Park. Instead of smoking on Brighton Beach, what does a smoker do—take a boat out 12 nautical miles into international waters?

Some City Council members wanted to find a less-drastic solution—like having the ban but establishing smoking areas on the beach or in patches of the park. It's not great, but it's better than an all-out ban. Also, the city would have to provide a lot more receptacles for cigarette butts and enforce anti-littering laws in those areas.

Meanwhile, there is talk that the mayor and the City Council want to go even further, banning smoking near doors of office buildings and apartments. They need to take a deep breath and remember that we tried prohibition to ban alcohol 90 years ago. They called it a noble experiment. It turned into a civic disaster.

Adapted from an editorial in *The New York Times*, February 4, 2011.