**2015 Lang Ques 1 Student Sample Essays (Honor Code) Synthesis**

**Sample J**

Enforcing an honor code to prevent plagiarism in college should be eliminated due to the majority of students that don’t follow this code or disagree with it lands at 52%, senselessly high punishment for cheating, including expulsion, and even senate members who criticize the use of the Honor Code. (49)

**Sample G**

My school has a somewhat developed honor system. It can be improved in many ways, such as, being a little more strict. Some ways that my school can become more strict in the honors system are, possibly using cameras to watch kids from above as stated in Source A. The school staff could become better at detecting cheaters. One way that this could happen is getting a computer program that detects plagerism.

The overall idea of an honor system is a great concept. Kids that work hard and cheat can report cheaters without having their name be brought up. But this program only works if students cooperate with the program. What students need to know is that their name will not be brought. That is why these programs are being held up in success. People are afraid of, “What if they found out I reported them?”

A professor at Rutgers University named Donald McCabe, Source C, stated that student enforced honor systems work well because it causes students to cheat less because they are afraid that some student will “rat them out”. It puts a fear and a paranoia sense into their heads.

In a study of two hundred seventy five people, Source E, it showed that only eight percent of the two hundred seventy five people, would report someone if they were cheating. Schools need to gain trust with the students who go there. This could change people’s ways of doing school work forever.

Cheating is one of the worst things you can do but it doesn’t get punished enough. Noone will stop cheating if all they have as a consequence is to serve a detention. (277)

**Sample Z**

Across the United States many schools of all levels have some form of an honor code. Although some believe it leads to sheating, all schools should implement this system because the vast majority of the time it promotes academic integrity and crates a strong learning environment.

Cheating in schools is pretty much inevitable. As Source D says, “The Internet provides an inexhaustible source of information, and it’s tempting to simply insert phrases directly into reports.” Source C backs this with the idea of a negative feedback loop. However they also acknowledge the fact that this loop works both ways. This positive loops leads to an expanding culture of trust and integrity.

Integrity is important and valued by many. Source E gives a statistic that 88% of students who participated in a survey believe that failure on an assignment was a reasonable violation of the honor code. Source B even extends this argument to say that integrity is implicit in an honor code. Operating under an honor code makes all students aware of the responsibility they hold and the image the must obtain.

With a campus wide sense of integrity, the overall environment is one of academic excellence. Source F says that the peer culture becomes one where cheating is viewed as socially unacceptable, and students would be embarrassed if other students found out that they cheated. Source B has a direct quote from the author, a student a Lawrence Academy, saying, “I voted in favor [of the honor code} because I wanted to go to a school where I could feel comfortable taking an exam without worrying about someone looking at my paper …” This trusting and relaxed feel around other students during an exam can only come from a system like the honor code.

With some small degree of inevitable cheating aside, the honor code system should be implemented in all schools due to its promotion of academic integrity and creation of a great learning environment. (327)

**Sample Q**

One of the few things we have in life that is ours and no one can ever take away from us is hour honor. Most times it’s something that is in us, and we can never change it. Some people are downright unhonorable people and I believe that can never truly change. That is why I believe that a system based on the honor of students is faulty and the honor code should be eliminated.

While most people would follow the honor code, there are some that won’t. Those that are competitive at heart would find it difficult not to cheat and get ahead of those non-cheaters doing honest work. A person who is not honorable and cheats, will always cheat. Once a cheater always a cheater. Source C states, “Critics … are skeptical that signing a piece of paper will suddenly cause a cheater to change his ways” and I agree with those critics.

Putting a system in place in which students are responsible for turning in their peers can raise problems because of relationships between students. Like in in Source B, students would not want to turn in other students because of the friction it would create. When students feel pressure to turn another student in they feel uncomfortable and as a result, most likely won’t turn that student in. This is backed up by Source E when it says only 8% of students would turn someone in for cheating, and 40% of students have violated the honor code and not gotten caught.

A code in place that lets students govern themselves might put teachers at ease when it comes down to making sure students don’t cheat or plagerize. This could in turn cause students to cheat more because their teachers weren’t paying close enough attention, and since only 8% would turn them in they would most likely get away with it.

An honor code is a faulty system because of the nature of human beings wanting to be the best. I believe a system like this could do more harm than good and teacher and students should do things based on their personal morals and beliefs. (359)

**Sample D**

Character, excellence, and commitment are three values that are encouraged in my school. Although these values are exemplified by some students, there is a large group of people in which they are absent. Our honor system is a demerit-based system, in which violators receive points off of a conduct grade. We must maintain this system, but change the way it is enforced. Different teachers tend to vary in severity of punishment, and this must end. With students expecting dishonesty or cheating from one another, they are more likely to do it themselves. More repurcussions must be enforced, rather than ignored by authorities in the school.

There is a growing problem in which certain teachers are taken advantage of due to lenient repurcussions. As Source E stated, “48% of students believe the honor code is enforced fairly.” When less than half of students believe the system is fair, there are some clear inconsistencies in the way it is enforced. If one student violates a rule and gets away with the same action, it brings forth uncertainty and a lack of organization. In my school, most people are aware of the teachers who let them get away with things, and they take advantage of them. If the rules were enforced, this would not happen.

Due to problems with cheating in the school over long periods of time, a general state of mind has been established. In Source C, Dirmeyer and Cartwright say that some colleges can not effectively establish an honor system “not because the students aren’t honest but because they don’t expect anyone else to be.” This situation exists in my high school. Rules that have been maintained but not enforced as a whole have brought upon a consensus that everyone else is going to cheat, wo why not do it? A set punishment must be enforced in order to deplete this thought.

A final point is that there is an unfair focus on certain issues and their repurcussions, while other problems go untouched. This creates an expectancy that it is okay to break the rules. When half of the school is written up for uniform violations while cheating is ignored, more people will join the cheating. According to Source D, thirty-nine percent of students accused of cheating “dropped out or have been expelled--The only penalty for such a crime.” This type of punishment will deter others from cheating, and can be used in other aspects of rule violation. If my school used this strategy, many problems would not exist.

In conclusion, I believe that the honor system at my school should be maintained, but more strongly enforced. The teachers must come together to punish students in the same way. The expected dishonesty from peers must be destroyed, in order to reduce problems with cheating. Lastly, the focus must be shifted from specific problems to rule-breaking overall. I believe these things would make my high school a more honorable place. (490)

**Sample A**

In a world where cheating and plaigerism have become second nature, the debate over whether honor codes could fix the problem has picked up speed. Nowadays its easier to text the class group chat and get answers than actually pick up the textbook. Though it could be argued that honor codes don’t work, it could also be said that they don’t hurt. My school does not have a written honor code but more of a tacit understanding of proper and improper behavior. If a written honor code were to be established at my school I feel like it would have tremendous benefits. I would also add that it should be student created.

One of the most obvious reasons a school would consider in establishing an honor code is the possibility of eliminating cheating. By creating an honor code you can establish rules but also punishments for certain actions. As the research done by Source E confirms, there are at least 42% of students who don’t know the sanctions that could occur. Though the research was done in 2007-2008 and is relatively out-dated, I find that this still remains true especially in my school. Not many people know the punishment faced do it is common to see people pushing their bad behavior to a point of suspension when they didn’t even know that was an option. According to the research cited in Source C, students at colleges with honor codes cheat less. I could see this being true because no matter whether someone is generally a cheater or not, no one wants to be suspended or expelled. Sources B and D account for two different instances where students, as a requirement of the honor code, had to write on papers or exams a pledge of honor. If students were to have to do this some might find it irritating as source B concluded, but I think it would remind students of their expectations and when they see it so often it will become second nature to abide by it.

Another pay off of investing in an honor code would be better character development and therefore better communities. If students were to create an honor code at my school it would give everyone higher standards. If there are higher standards people are less likely to act out or be of bad character because they wouldn’t want to face the ridicule of their peers. I agree with Source C as they say that the success of an honor code depends on the expectations of their peers. If everyone does something bad then people will think its ok for them to do the same. Noone wants to be the one person in their school that got caught, they would only be ok with it if they weren’t the only one. Also, if the honor code comes from students and is followed be students it would, as Source B also confirms, create a new level of trust between teacher and student allowing teenagers to recieve the desperate freedom they desire.

With the list of potential benefits piling up surrounding the implementation of an honor code there is no reason not to try it. If schools fear rejection from students then they are allowing students to continue bad behaviors when a simple trial and error honor code that could be created by the students themselves could be written on command. Its only hurting not to try so I will push my school to give it a try too. (582)

**Sample O**

In an age where a world of resources is available at the click of a button, the issues of plagiarism and cheating have become significant in the academic community. The creation of honor codes that attempt to regulate immoral behavior of students have garnered much attention. While some are of the belief that these codes are excessive, others view them as necessary for protecting the integrity of students and the schools they attend. The high school that I attend does have an honor system; however, the degree to which it is respected likely varies among students. The honor system mandates that plagiarising or cheating on any assignment will result in a score of zero and disciplinary consequences, such as receiving detention. I believe that this honor code is just right for fulfilling the needs of my school; the punishments warranted for cheating are valid ways to promote academic integrity and honesty without being overwhelming and should thus be maintained.

The existing honor code in place at the school I attend is sufficient without being changed. A baseline punishment is required to prove that the school genuinely cares about the issue of cheating, and to discourage potentially dishonest students from committing this crime. As Source B claims, an honor code prevents a student from fearing their original work will be stolen by undeserving plagiarisers. I would agree with this statement, as I have experienced the uncomfortable situation of working in close proximity to cheaters in the past. Having regulations and outlined consequences for cheating limits the magnitude of its occurrence and makes the majority of students more comfortable during their education. Also, punishing a cheater by giving them no credit for the assignment in question is reasonable, as it disciplines them for their dishonesty where required, without overstepping any boundaries. For instance, many would argue when I say a wrongdoer should be punished, but only for that which he did wrong.

The honor code in place at my school is useful because it does the job of discouraging cheating without suffocating students. For example, the code relies on students to make the conscious decision to avoid cheating. Source A insinuates that students cannot be trusted to abide by a verbal or written code and sarcastically suggests that schools should invest in spycams. I am of the belief that Source A is incorrect in the assumption that honor codes do not work without the use of recording technology; monitoring students in this way refutes the purpose of an honor code of protecting their integrity. Another factor I would deem unnecessary for a successful honor code is the requirement of students to report cheating they witness. This places unnecessary stress on students who are forced to cross social boundaries and risk harassment from their peers. Source E declares that only 8% of students in a small university would report a fellow student for cheating, a fact that does not surprise me. By being overly mandatory, an honor code loses its effectiveness.

The honor code I abide by fulfilling the needs of students and teachers and maintains a perfect balance between necessity and practicality. All honor systems are vital for keeping educational values respected and can be very useful when properly applied. (538)

**Sample N**

My high school has a written honor code. I couldn’t honestly say what provisions it includes or what penalties are in place to punish activities that violate it. Perhaps this lack of discussion of the honor code is a contributing factor in the acceptedness of cheating at my school. Many of my classmates do not view cheating as a serious offense, likely because students are rarely caught cheating & punished for it. I believe that my school should maintain its honor code, but integrate it more regularly into classroom discussions & enforce it more strictly so that it will be more effective. Honor codes only work if students feel a high sense of being held accountable for following the code.

Honor codes, when implemented properly, have generally been shown to have at least some success. Research by Rutgers University professor Donald L. McCabe supports the conclusion that students whose colleges have honor codes in place are less likely to cheat (Source C). Hampden-Sydney College, which has a “strictly enforced” honor code, rarely finds evidence of student cheating. The success of honor codes such as these lies in their administration, not the mere fact of having an honor code in place. At Hampden-Sydney College, there is an all-student court in place to handle cheating allegations, & punishments for cheating range from suspension to expulsion (source C). That the college has a court in place specifically to deal with this matter sends the message to students that violation of the honor code will be taken seriously, decreasing the likelihood of cheating. Furthermore, the disciplinary actions for punishing cheating are clearly delineated for students at this school, making it effective. However, according to a study conducted at a small public university, 42% of students are unaware of what specific disciplinary actions can be taken against them if they are found to be in violation of the code (Source E). Unsurprisingly, 40% of students at the same university reported having violated the honor code without being caught (Source E). A clear link can be seen between these statistics. Unlike at Hampden-Sydney College, where students know the risk they run by cheating & as a result adhere to the code, students at this university don’t know what consequences they may face & as a result they are of little import to them. Students can not fear the penalties if they do not even know what penalties exist or simply have some vague, nebulous idea of what the punishments are. If my school were to make the penalties clearer to students, I believe they would feel more compelled to follow the rules.

Another important part of the successful implementation of an honors code that my school lacks is a general sense among the student body that academic integrity is something to be taken seriously. High-school age kids are infamously influenced by their peers very easily & likely to adopt the attitudes of people around them. Cheating is an accepted practice. According to research, “a culture that makes most forms of serious cheating socially unacceptable among the majority of students” is common among schools with low levels of cheating (Source F). The knowledge that your peers will look down on you if you cheat would be a far more powerful incentive for many people not to cheat than formal school punishment. In order to create this anti-cheating “culture” among the student body, my school should discuss the importance of integrity regularly, not just once at the beginning of the year, & hold students accountable for their actions.

In short, my school must adjust the way in which it administers its honor code to make if effective. (609)

**Sample QQ**

Cheating has become an epidemic in education systems all across the globe. Students cheat on anything and everything, from homework assignments to quizzes to standardized tests. To address this issue, many schools have adopted honor codes intended to cultivate integrity among students. While the honor code is hard to enforce and--as the name implies--relies heavily on the students’ sense of honor, if an honor code is accompanied by in-class discussion on the issue of cheating, it can positively affect the culture of a school. My current school has an honor code, yet I believe my school would be benefitted by increased discussion regarding the code to encourage students to adhere to the code and pressure their peers to do likewise.

The chief objection to the honor code is that it is difficult to enforce. When teachers do not trust their students, they may feel the need to spy on them to prevent them from cheating (Source A). In such cases, the idea of leaving a room full of students to their own devices seems utterly implausible, even with an honor code in place. After all, students will cheat even when the stakes are high. The University of Virginia’s honor code did not prevent a staggering 157 students from cheating, even knowing that they faced expulsion if they were caught (Source D). Yet in all cases, the first step to creating an environment in which teachers are able to trust students, in which students prevent each other from cheating, is by holding more discussions about academic dishonesty. Cheating benefits nobody in the long run; it encourages students to get by through trickery rather than actually building competence. It even hurts the witness, who may see his own grades suffer as the result of a harder curve. While no honor code is infallible, having an honor code and educating students on the consequences of cheating is a necessary first step to building a culture of integrity on campus. In the University of Virginia scandal, it was a student who first alerted the professor to the cheating occurring (Source D). Cheating may be epidemic, but the path to ending it can start with just a few students who recognize its harm and will work to eradicate it. Thus, it is important for schools to discuss cheating and impress upon their students its wrongness.

On a large scale, honor codes are effective. Studies show that “students at colleges with honor codes--typically student-enforced--cheat less than their counterparts elsewhere do” (Source C). The most important feature of this is that the honor codes are student-inforced--more than failing, more than expulsion, what deters students from cheating is the disapproval of their peers and the actual risk of being reported. The success of any honor code depends on “other students’ tolerance for cheating” (Source C) and the establishment of “a culture that makes … cheating socially unacceptable” (Source F). If a greater portion of students are taught that cheating is unacceptable, if students are encouraged to end cheating among their peers, honor codes can be effective. But as Dirmeyer notes, the success of an honor code depends not upon its existence, but its perception among the students.

My high school would benefit tremendously from increased discussion on the honor code. As shown by Source E, few students are actually willing to report their peers for cheating; if this number increased even slightly the honor code might start to hold some actual value. Maybe by the time my friends take the AP Lang exam, they won’t have to position themselves to hide their answers from people behind them--as I did. (607)

Sample J 1

Sample G 2

Sample Z 3

Sample Q 4

Sample D 5

Source A 6

Source O 7

Sample N 8

Sample QQ 9