

Section 1:

#1 "Whether volunteering should be a requirement of a student's schooling is a complex problem, and one that has been argued over by educators, lawmakers, and students. Although the inherent merit of volunteering cannot be disputed, the concept of mandating it is questionable from a standpoint of personal liberty and potential unintended consequences."

Strengths: You've established a clear thesis that presents both sides of the argument whilst subtly positioning your stance. Your opening effectively frames the issue as nuanced rather than binary.

Weaknesses: Lack of concrete position → Your opening paragraph could benefit from a more decisive statement of your position. The reader is left unsure if you're arguing against mandatory volunteering until the conclusion. ***I argue that whilst volunteering offers valuable benefits to students, making it mandatory undermines its fundamental purpose and creates significant practical challenges for schools and students alike.***

#2 "But because something is being made voluntary that wasn't voluntary before alters its nature at its foundation. Volunteering, by its very definition, is a freely given act, following an individual's own initiative to contribute to others' lives."

Strengths: You've identified a compelling philosophical contradiction at the heart of mandatory volunteering. Your point about the definitional conflict is particularly effective.

Weaknesses: Awkward phrasing → The sentence structure is confusing and detracts from your otherwise compelling point. Several phrases within this section need restructuring for clarity and impact. ***The very concept of 'mandatory volunteering' is contradictory, as volunteering, by definition, must be freely chosen. When students are forced to participate, we fundamentally change what should be a compassionate choice into an unwelcome obligation.***

#3 "The goal needs to be inspiring a lifelong allegiance to service, and that may be accomplished through inspiration, rather than coercion. Therefore, while admirable as the goals of compulsory volunteering are, the method is flawed, and other avenues are more likely to achieve the envisioned outcome of an active and humane society."

Strengths: Your conclusion effectively reinforces the main argument with a focus on the ultimate goal of creating civic-minded citizens. The contrast between inspiration and coercion is compelling.

Weaknesses: Repetitive wording → The conclusion repeats similar words and concepts rather than providing a fresh, memorable final statement. There's also a missed opportunity to suggest a specific, concrete alternative approach. ***Our goal should be nurturing a genuine commitment to community service that lasts far beyond school years. While mandatory programmes might yield short-term results, creating opportunities for meaningful, freely chosen service projects will more effectively cultivate the compassionate, engaged citizens our society truly needs.***

■ Your persuasive piece shows good understanding of both sides of the argument, but could be strengthened with more compelling examples. For instance, when you mention "administrative issues," you could describe a specific scenario showing how a school might struggle with placements. Your third paragraph makes an excellent point about the contradiction in forced volunteering, but this could be your opening argument rather than waiting until halfway through. Also, your alternative solutions in paragraph five need more detail – what specific programmes have worked well in schools? Your transitions between paragraphs could be smoother to help guide your reader through your reasoning. The piece would benefit from a stronger introduction that clearly states your position from the outset. You might also consider reorganising your arguments to place your strongest points first and last for maximum impact.

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Section 2:

Whether volunteering should be a requirement of a student's schooling is a complex problem, and one that has been argued over by educators, lawmakers, and students. Although the inherent merit of volunteering cannot be disputed, the concept of mandating it is questionable from a standpoint of personal liberty and potential unintended consequences. A careful examination of both the potential benefits and the potential drawbacks reveals that mandatory volunteering, while seemingly altruistically motivated, is actually not the optimal way of promoting a sincere spirit of civic responsibility.

Proponents of mandatory volunteering tend to refer to its power in getting youth to ~~internalize~~ [internalise] a sense of civic responsibility. They argue that requiring students to perform community service makes them conscious of society's needs and encourages them to become productive and active members of society. The exposure, they say, can bring about empathy, broaden perspectives, and instill a lifelong service habit. Besides, forced volunteering can make students gain practical skills, such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving, that are transferable to various aspects of their lives, including professional careers. Schools themselves would benefit from improved community relations and the positive publicity of actively engaging with the local community. The argument hopes that in the long run, coercive participation will result in a more active and compassionate citizenry.

~~#2 But because something is being made voluntary that wasn't voluntary before alters its nature at its foundation.~~ [But forcing something to be voluntary that was not voluntary before fundamentally alters its nature.] Volunteering, by its very definition, is a freely given act, following an individual's own initiative to contribute to others' lives. Forcing students to do so negates that natural incentive and reduces what might otherwise be a rich experience into an ordeal to be ticked off. This produces resentment, lack of interest, and going through the motions of the expected tasks. Students can just go through the motions, completing their hours but not really being interested in the cause or the individuals they are supposedly helping. Not only does this water down the community benefit but it may also create a negative view of volunteering and discourage people from participating in the future.

Moreover, ~~those~~ [the] administrative issues of managing compulsory volunteering on a mass scale are significant. Schools, particularly those with limited resources, may struggle to come up with good and suitable placements for all students. Arranging proper supervision, transportation, and teaching for volunteers also requires a lot of administrative effort and money. The responsibility often lies with the already overburdened staff and teachers to coordinate and manage such programs, diverting resources from the pedagogical process. There is also the possibility of an uneven playing field, as struggling students will be more likely to have barriers to the achievement of the requirements, e.g., no transportation or conflicting time demands because they already have family responsibilities or a job.

#1 A more effective method of creating a culture of civic engagement is through the creation of intrinsic motivation rather than having outside mandates. Schools should focus on giving students the opportunity to discover the private rewards of volunteering

by introducing them to a range of causes and ~~organizations~~ [organisations]. This can be done through the integration of service-learning projects into the curriculum, where schoolwork is connected by students to real issues and assisting in fixing them. ~~Encouraging student-led projects, in which students identify the needs of a community and devise their own projects, can lead to a feeling of ownership and to agents for change.~~ [Encouraging student-led projects, where students identify community needs and devise their own solutions, can foster ownership and develop them as agents for change.] Praise and appreciation for the efforts of student volunteers can also ~~maximize~~ [maximise] the positive impacts of volunteering.

Education is critical to creating active and responsible citizens. Compelling students to volunteer is not an option. Instead, schools must develop genuine interest in service through quality opportunity, supportive environment, and integration of service within the curriculum. ~~By developing intrinsic motivation, we can create a generation of individuals who not only wish to serve but will happily do so because they genuinely want to help better their communities and not because they must, but because they wish to.~~ [By developing intrinsic motivation, we can nurture a generation of individuals who serve their communities willingly and enthusiastically, not because they must, but because they genuinely wish to make a difference.] #3 True civic engagement springs from a genuine commitment, rather than from coerced obligation. The goal needs to be inspiring a lifelong allegiance to service, and that may be accomplished through inspiration, rather than coercion. Therefore, while admirable as the goals of compulsory volunteering are, the method is flawed, and other avenues are more likely to achieve the envisioned outcome of an active and humane society.