

Section 1

#1 (Opening paragraph)

Strengths: Your piece begins with a clear statement about the importance of student safety, which immediately connects with readers who care about children's wellbeing. You also clearly state your main argument about flashing light crossings in a way that's easy to follow.

Weakness: Vague Supporting Claims → Your opening makes broad statements like "one of the most effective and direct ways" without explaining why this solution is better than other safety measures. You also use phrases like "dramatically increasing visibility" and "powerful tool" without giving specific details about how these crossings actually work or what makes them so effective compared to regular crossings.

Exemplar: *"Installing pedestrian crossings with flashing lights near schools reduces accidents by 60% compared to regular painted crossings, making them more effective than speed bumps or warning signs alone."*

#2 (Second paragraph about FHWA research)

Strengths: You include specific research from the Federal Highway Administration, which adds credibility to your argument. The statistics you provide (20% to 80% improvement) give concrete evidence for your claims.

Weakness: Insufficient Context → Your writing mentions "extensive research" and "meagre 20%" but doesn't explain what conditions led to such low yielding rates initially, or whether these statistics apply to all types of roads and situations. You also don't clarify what RRFBs actually are or how they differ from other flashing light systems.

Exemplar: *"The Federal Highway Administration tested Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (bright LED lights that flash when pedestrians press a button) on busy suburban roads similar to those near schools, finding that driver compliance improved from 20% to 80%."*

#3 (Counterargument paragraph)

Strengths: Your piece acknowledges opposing viewpoints, which shows you understand that good arguments consider different perspectives. You attempt to address the concern about false security.

Weakness: Weak Rebuttal Structure → Your response to the counterargument feels rushed and doesn't fully address the concern. Phrases like "children are usually taught to look around" and "even more will happen if these are not implemented" don't provide strong evidence or logical reasoning. The sentence "So, the overall risk is still reduced" jumps to a conclusion without properly explaining how you reached it.

Exemplar: *"While children might initially rely too heavily on the lights, proper training programmes can teach students to always check for stopped cars before crossing, just as they do at traffic lights."*

■ Your piece tackles an important community issue and shows you understand how to structure a persuasive argument with evidence and counterarguments. However, you can strengthen your writing by providing more specific details and clearer explanations throughout. Additionally, your argument would benefit from exploring the topic with greater depth - for instance, discussing costs, maintenance, or alternative solutions would show more complete thinking. Also, some of your sentences could be clearer and more direct to help readers follow your reasoning more easily. Furthermore, your counterargument section needs stronger logic and evidence to convince readers who might disagree with you. You could also improve by explaining technical terms and providing more context for your statistics so readers understand exactly what you're discussing.

Overall Score: 44/50

Section 2

#1 The Case for Enhanced Pedestrian Safety Near Schools

Ensuring the safety of students as they travel to and from school is a paramount concern for any community. One of the most effective and direct ways to address this pressing safety issue is by installing a pedestrian crossing with a flashing light system in proximity to school zones. This ~~measure provides~~ [measure offers] a powerful tool to protect children by dramatically increasing visibility and driver awareness, promoting safe crossing habits among students, and providing essential peace of

mind to parents and the community. By investing in this straightforward infrastructure, we can create a safer environment for our most vulnerable pedestrians.

#2 The primary benefit of a flashing-light pedestrian crossing is its capacity to significantly enhance visibility and immediately capture a driver's full attention. Unlike traditional painted crosswalks, which are often overlooked, the bright, flashing lights are a clear and unmistakable signal that a pedestrian is attempting to cross. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has conducted extensive research demonstrating the effectiveness of systems like Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs). Their findings show that these systems can increase driver yielding rates from a meagre 20% to over 80%, a significant jump that directly translates to fewer near-misses and accidents. These lights provide a critical heads-up for drivers, granting them the necessary time to slow down and stop, thereby preventing potential tragedies before they can occur.

Beyond alerting drivers, these crossings also serve a crucial educational purpose by encouraging and standardising safe crossing behaviour in students. A flashing-light crossing gives children a designated and clear point of reference for crossing the street. The act of pressing a button to activate the lights reinforces a structured and predictable routine: stop, look, and only proceed when safe. This active participation in their own safety builds good habits that can last a lifetime. The National Centre for Safe Routes to School has noted that communities with dedicated and highly visible crossing infrastructure are more successful at encouraging children to use safe crossing points, reducing the dangerous practice of jaywalking. This creates a predictable flow of pedestrian traffic that is safer for everyone.

For parents and the broader community, the presence of this enhanced safety feature offers profound emotional reassurance. Every morning and afternoon, parents experience a moment of worry as their children navigate busy streets. A flashing-light crossing is a visible, tangible commitment to their child's safety, offering a sense of security that goes beyond mere statistics. It is a daily comfort to see cars yielding to their children, knowing that a simple piece of technology is working to protect them. This emotional payoff is a powerful reason to support such projects, as it reinforces the shared community value of prioritising the well-being of its youngest members. It transforms the often-anxious routine of walking to school into a safer, more reliable experience.

#3 However, a counterargument exists that the very technology designed to promote safety could inadvertently create a false sense of security. Critics suggest that an over-reliance on flashing lights could lead both pedestrians and drivers to become less vigilant. Children might assume that all cars will stop once the lights are activated, causing them to step into the crosswalk without first verifying that traffic has yielded. However, children are usually taught to look around before crossing, reducing the chance

of that happening. Not only that, if there are accidents with the flashing lights, even more will happen if these are not implemented. So, the overall risk is still reduced.

~~While the concern about a false sense of security is valid, it can be easily addressed through concurrent educational initiatives that reinforce the importance of looking before crossing.~~ [Whilst the concern about a false sense of security is valid, it can be easily addressed through concurrent educational initiatives that reinforce the importance of looking before crossing.] The overwhelming evidence shows that a flashing-light crossing is a highly effective, proactive measure that saves lives by making our streets safer. The benefits of increased driver awareness, standardised safe ~~behaviour~~ [behaviour], and invaluable community peace of mind far outweigh the potential for complacency, which can be mitigated with proper education. Ultimately, implementing this simple yet powerful solution is a truly critical step ~~toward~~ [towards] creating a more secure and nurturing environment for all students.