

MCAT Prompt 1

No matter how oppressive a government, violent revolution is never justified.

Government is usually created by human beings to serve that particular group's needs. One group may find it particularly advantageous to form a monarchy, while another group may find a democracy is more appealing. Although a government is created to serve the interests and needs of people, one must consider what part of the group has the most influence on what type of government will be chosen. They must also consider how much power and control the government will have on those who were not part of the decision. Unfortunately, many governing bodies created in the past have not served the majority of the people or have stopped serving the people who created them. When this type of conflict happens, those people who are being affected by the government have the opportunity to make a decision on whether to revolt with force or protest peacefully.

Modern societies, usually democracies, have more opportunity to declare that protesting an oppressive government is the key to change. A modern society would not need to challenge the government in question using force because they would be relying on their assumed right "to a fair trial" or "trial by jury." For example, when Rosa Parks decided to protest moving to the "back of the bus" for a white person, her supporters did not lash out with violence. Instead, they protested peacefully by using their economic leverage and religious convictions to get the change they wanted. Their leader, Martin Luther King Jr., firmly believed that violence would not get them what they wanted. He maintained that violence would only bring them down and make them look uncivilized and uneducated. A modern government would not want to appease a group of scoundrels who are uneducated and cause riots. Thus, violence would not be justified.

However, not all societies are modern ones. Even today there are societies that are ruled by religion or drug cartels. How would the subjects of those societies get their way if the ones ruling over them are ruthless and do not care for life? In this case, a violent revolution would be justified. Not because it would effectively get rid of the leaders of this oppressive rule by death, but it gives the people an opportunity to see what violence does to a society. Perhaps after this revolt, they will make a new government where violence will never be the answer again.

Revolts are always going to be looked at with two lenses: one by the people inside and one by the people outside. A revolt is not something that is set in stone, but has to be carried out in a way that fits the situation and the people. Sometimes, violence is not necessary, and sometimes, it is the only way. Defining what the society wants will determine the course of action and the outcome of a revolt.

I did this with one minute to spare. I'd give it a 3 or 4. I am not sure if I gave a specific situation in which violence may be justified, more like a generalization. Well, if anyone has any comments, let me know.

I may do another prompt tomorrow since I can only do them in 30 minutes. Seems easy enough to fit in somewhere during the day.

MCAT Prompt 2

All human rights involve responsibility.

Describe a specific situation in which a human right may not involve responsibility. Discuss what you think determines whether or not a human right involves responsibility.

When defining what are human rights, not all cultures have the same answer. In one culture, you may find that a basic right is to free speech, where another culture may declare a right to prayer. Some of the rights found in societies involve responsibility on the part of the one carrying it out, such as the "right to bear arms." There are some that are not as well defined and can mean many things to different people, such as the right to "liberty" or "the pursuit of happiness." When a society defines its rights, it then up to them to determine if the right requires responsibility so that laws may be applied to carry them out effectively.

Using the United States as an example, not all rights written are to be carried out with responsibility. An example of this may be the right to pursue happiness. Since happiness is different to different people, there is no defining statement to be made about what makes someone happy. Therefore, no law can be written to determine when someone is using this right inappropriately. If there is no law, there can be no punishment. In this case, anyone seeking happiness can do so without responsibility, at least to his fellow citizen. Of course, someone can argue that perhaps the act of murder can make someone happy, but these laws should apply to those with a sound mind and are not mentally ill.

There are rights that absolutely need to be carried out with responsibility. A prime example is the right to bear arms. Yes, it may be true that citizens have the right to defend themselves, but the term "defense" must be defined properly and must have laws or regulation attached to the right. Definition and regulation are important not only so that all citizens may enjoy this right, but that unlawful citizens may not use it against his fellow citizen in a way that is not "defense" without consequence.

When law and regulation are applied appropriately, defining which rights require responsibility become much easier. It is important to take into account the way a right may be misconstrued and used against someone. In this case, the right to bear arms can easily be used for evil purposes. A right to "life" is also easier to understand. Currently, the right to life may extend into laws about the death penalty or abortion. In this case, defining what "life" is and what it can be applied to is key. After a society defines that, they can see if the right can be used in a deconstructive way. For the right to life, many people are still in disagreement about when to apply the death penalty, if at all, or if an abortion is murder or not.

Certainly, all rights are not created equal. There are many rights that do require responsibility and accountability. However, not all rights are very specific, and for good reason. Having generalized rights are useful to create a society where they are free to create and apply more rights as the society progresses.

One minute to spare again! I hope I did better on this essay than the last one. I randomly selected it from the book and I remember skimming over it a few days ago and saying "oh great, I have no idea which human rights don't require responsibility. Oh well!"

MCAT Prompt #3

Popular entertainment is rarely excellent entertainment

Describe a specific situation in which entertainment might be both "popular" and "excellent."
Discuss what you think determines when entertainment can be both "popular" and "excellent."

There are many forms of entertainment today. There are ancient forms, such as singing, dancing, and music, and newer forms such as theater. There are even newer forms today such as movies and video games that incorporate many older forms and change its delivery. Changing the mode of delivery has made many types of entertainment available to more people than ever before, and can reach all types of socio-economic groups. This kind of availability has made some forms of entertainment more popular than others.

Some people may argue that the popularity of a form of entertainment decreases its value to society or the arts. However, there are many examples of popular types of entertainment that are of excellent value in their message, the types of art forms utilized, or the art of delivering the entertainment piece.

For instance, movies are a popular form of entertainment, watched by millions of people each week. There are many movies that have become enormously popular such as Schindler's List, or The Lion King, that kept their value despite their popularity. Schindler's List may have been seen by millions, but that does not decrease the powerful depiction of the Holocaust. The Lion King may have been seen by even more people, but that also does not decrease its value as a cinematographic masterpiece of animated movies.

This can also extend to other forms of entertainment. Broadway musicals are a good example. The play Cats had been one of the longest running Broadway shows in history. It is true many people enjoyed this play, but that does not decrease its value in its contribution to songwriting and theatrics. Even traditional art forms like ballet can be popular. The Nutcracker has been a tradition for Christmas for generations. Certainly, there will be few who will say that this ballet lost all of its value to society because the vast majority of people love the music and dances. Classical music was also "popular music" at one point. Though some composers, like Mozart, have transcended time and are still popular today, they are most certainly not viewed as limited in their contributions and value to society then and now.

It may be true that some forms of modern entertainment are fleeting and do not have much value now and certainly won't have much tomorrow. These types of entertainment will always be there to fill the gaps between the gems of entertainment that rise to the top and become enormously popular with all kinds of groups of people. These types of entertainment will never lose their value and will last for hundreds of years because of their message, their beauty, their artistic expression, and their quality.

okay what did you think? I wrote this with THREE MINUTES to spare, so I went over it as best as I could. I see a spelling error! Oh no! Well, whatever. This one was an easy question. I think I answered it well enough to get a 4.

Maybe tomorrow I will write another one. I will take a short recess then get on that practice MCAT!

MCAT Prompt #4

Education makes everyone equal.

Explain what you think the above statement means. Describe a specific situation in which education does not make everyone equal. Discuss what you think determines whether or not education makes everyone equal

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Education in the United States today is not similar to what it was one or two hundred years ago, or even fifty years ago. Today, specific groups are not allowed to be restricted to attend school, which schools they may attend, and what subjects they may take.

In the past, for example, minorities and women were restricted to obtaining public education. This meant that men, usually white, were educated in subjects like math, science, and politics, and the rest of society may have been educated with traditions like cooking and sewing. This caused a skewed difference in power and groups to be unequal. They may have been unequal in prerequisite knowledge to obtain jobs, like becoming a medical doctor, or unequal in obtaining positions to rally change, such as a politician.

Slowly, certain minority groups were allowed to have education. A prime example is the "separate but equal" education in the mid 1900's. On the surface, minority schools had everything the white schools had: books, classrooms, and teachers. However, a closer investigation revealed that their books were outdated and their teachers not as qualified or paid as much. This results in an unequal education and causes the same unequal distribution of power in society. Just being from a "separate but equal school" could put the student at a disadvantage. Employers will know that the quality of these "separate but equal" schools are subpar and will make an effort not hire any graduates from these schools.

Today, the education system is much more integrated, even if the education is not as good. It is true that those that graduate from the same school could be aggregated together as equally educated and qualified. They had the same teachers, the same books, and the same resources. This helps alleviate discrepancies in power between a minority group and a majority group. However, this is not a cure for all discrepancies in equality and power.

Many schools today still discriminate who they will educate by using entrance exams and scrutinizing the candidate's background. Doing this will inevitably cause a separation between the ones who are educated at that school and those who are not. In time, that school can acquire a reputation as having the best students. Once this is established, the graduates will have more power in the workforce than those who were not educated there.

Therefore, it is not feasible to think that education creates equality. In most cases, it creates inequalities because of its penchant for creating hierarchies. These hierarchies can include the prestige of the school itself, the wealth and power of the current student body, the wealth and power of the alumni, and the quality of the resources the school is able to acquire. Even among schools that are in all cases equal, there will be some factor, real or perceived, that determines the status of the graduate which in turn, determines his power and influence on society.

MCAT Prompt #5

The success of a business depends on its ability to compete.

Explain what you think the above statement means. Describe a specific situation in which the success of a business might not depend on its ability to compete. Discuss what you think determines whether or not the success of a business depends on its ability to compete.

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Generally, businesses in the United States function on capitalism. In capitalism, a business will survive if it is able to outperform its competitors by having the most profits. Any business that cannot create a profit that is more than what it spends or owes will not thrive.

In most cases, the success of a business does depend on its ability to compete with other similar businesses. How it competes can differ. One company might prefer to solicit customers using telecommunications, like radio and television, while a competing company may prefer to reach customers by mail or billboards. Knowing the target audience is crucial to an effective advertising campaign. If a business assumes that its customers would most likely be driving and places advertisements on the highway, when in fact most of their customers take public transportation, they will not compete as effectively as the business that did their research correctly and placed their ads in the city bus.

There are some businesses that do not need to compete to be successful. Most of these types of businesses are similar to a monopoly, whether it be a monopoly of services or goods. An example of a monopoly of services would be a consumer having to buy all their power from one company only, because there is only one company contracted by that consumer's town or city. It doesn't matter if the power company advertises or not, they will make a profit. Of course, in this case, the business is successful because it has no competition.

A business can have competition and still seem like a monopoly. An example of this case can be the "big box stores" that some people think that because of their price negotiating power and size, these stores eventually shut down local businesses by offering lower prices that a smaller business can't afford to charge. In some places, these "big box stores" shut down their competition completely and then become a monopoly.

Both of these examples are still cases of the successful competitive skills needed to gain profits. The power company successfully outbid other power companies to be the sole provider of energy. And the "big box store" has successfully honed the art of negotiation and is able to get a better deal on pricing. The only time a business is not using some kind of competitive advantage is if the business is controlled by the government and laws are in place to prevent any other business from competing against it. However, in this country, there are an extremely small number of businesses like that and should not be lumped in with the free market. For almost all businesses, its ability to do research on what the target audience is, what it likes, what it wants, and what the business can do to obtain the goods and services the consumer wants is the most important factor in whether or not a business succeeds.

Im either getting better at this essay writing or I am not writing anything good because I seem to have plenty of time left in the writing sections...

Now a ten minute break and back to the last part, biological sciences.

MCAT Prompt #6

In advertising, truth is irrelevant

Describe a specific situation in which truth in advertising might be relevant. Discuss what you think determines when truth in advertising is relevant and when it is irrelevant.

Advertisements can be used for many things. It can be used to relay information about new products or services, social programs and benefits, or information about an existing business. Advertising can also take many different forms. It can be straight-forward and factual, it can be carefully crafted to appeal to emotions, or it can distort or exaggerate the truth or main idea or performance of a product or service to elevate its importance to the consumer.

Truthful advertising is seen usually when the product or service is self-explanatory, such as the hours of operation or which credit cards are accepted. If the product or service is in a less competitive area or in an area of government, this type of advertising should be used. For example, the local department of motor vehicles may advertise their new license plate rates for the coming year. There would be no need to distort the truth, and there should not be any distorting because lying about prices would not be favorable to the public who is expecting one price and has to pay another.

When the product is not a necessity or is in competition with other companies that produce the same product or service, advertisements may not be as cut-and-dry as was the case for the motor vehicle office. Products that are not necessary for life have to advertise how it is needed and to do that, the advertisements may distort the relevance or performance of the product. For example, it is not necessary for human life that I have a certain high heeled shoes. However, the advertisement may show that if I buy this type of shoe, I will have more friends, or look prettier, or win a spouse. This may happen if I buy that shoe, but it is certainly not the most likely scenario. Another example is two supermarkets competing for your business. You can choose to shop at either store, and they both have comparable prices and products. The supermarket that wins your business is the one that somehow swayed you to shop there by advertising that the store is more "friendly" or "fun." These terms do not actually describe an inanimate supermarket, but appeal to your emotions and how "good" you feel about shopping in one store over another.

Many forms of advertisements are useful. Some just display pertinent information about a business, while others use the emotional response of humans to persuade them to buy or use their products and services. Some people may think that advertisements should only convey the truth. However, as long as the advertisement is not completely falsifying everything about the product or service, appealing to emotions should be viewed as an acceptable form of advertisement.

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MCAT Prompt #7:

Those who own land have the right to do with it as they choose.

Describe a specific situation in which someone who owns land might or might not have the right to do so as they choose with it. Discuss what you think determines whether or not those who own land have the right to do so with it as they choose.

Modern societies have many laws dictating how one can function in that society. Some of those laws include land use. It is not the case anymore that a person can do whatever they want on a parcel of land just because they own it.

Using the United States as an example, a person is free to buy land and generally do what he wishes with it, if it conforms to the laws of that geographic area. If that person were to buy land in a well-developed city, he would not only be required to obtain permits to build on that land, but he is also restricted to what structures to build. In one part of the city, he may only be allowed to build a business, while in another part he may be allowed to build anything under four stories tall. If the owner decided to build a farm in the metro area, he may be fined and summonsed to court.

Other areas of the United States may be more lax in their laws of what may be done with land. Parts of the Midwest are relatively uninhabited, and a person could then build what he chooses, so long as it doesn't hurt humans or the environment. An owner may be able to drill for oil on his land, but may suffer fines if the environment was compromised due to an oil spill.

It seems as though the most important factors in determining how land can be used is they type of government of the area, the area itself and its significance, and the type of population nearby. If someone lives in a place where there is a king that controls all the land, certainly he would not be able to do what he pleases with it. If someone happens to own land that the government now sees as important to the preservation of some kind of species or landscape, the owner would be heavily restricted on what he may do with that land, if anything at all. If the land owner buys land in a place where many people live, he would be restricted on what he may do with it as well.

Is there any place that can say a landowner may do what he chooses with the land? Yes, perhaps in some hypothetical kingdom where there are no other countries or rivals nearby. The king, who is the land owner, can do anything he please. Another example may be if some wealthy tycoon purchased a whole island for himself, then he would only have to answer to his laws. However, there is a highly unlikely chance that there would be no surrounding nation that would intervene if necessary. For example, if the hypothetical king or tycoon were to start detonating nuclear weapons for pleasure "on his land," he would surely be scrutinized by neighboring countries or populations. This scrutiny may escalate into a war if the neighboring countries or populations felt it necessary to eradicate this land owner to protect their well-being.

Owning land doesn't have the same meaning as it may have hundreds of years ago. Increased population and government control have made many rules and regulation regarding land use. Although one may still be able to buy land as he chooses, he may be very limited as to what may be built, performed, experimented, or in an extreme case, detonated, on that land.

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Here are the first essays I wrote. I couldn't even finish one. I think it was mostly because I was in a hurry and had to pick up TJ from work, but anyway, here are my first two MCAT essays (I don't have the prompts):

MCAT Prompt #8:

A:

There is no politician that can offer fair representation to all the people. Therefore, a politician can come from many backgrounds and still be effective and represent most of the people. Although many politicians are wealthy, not all were born wealthy, and using the criterium of wealth to determine if someone will be an effective politician is flawed. There can be a politician who is wealthy and ineffective as well as one who is wealthy and effective.

When someone says that a wealthy politician cannot offer fair representation to all the people, he is probably assuming that because he is not wealthy, as are most other people, that politician doesn't "understand" his plight. He may assume that the politician was always wealthy and does not know what it feels like to work at a hard job and make very little money. He will then assume that because they lead different lives, the politician simply cannot make the same decisions and come to the same conclusions.

This kind of thinking just isn't the case. Humans are capable of sympathy, compassion, and empathy. One doesn't need to have experienced the same setbacks in order to feel angry or sad. One also doesn't have to be in the same economic bracket in order to feel the pain of loss, the joy of winning, and the headache from working too hard at the job. This applies to the steel-worker, the pharmacist, and the politician.

The politician in question may have come from humble backgrounds that are not announced. How someone acquires wealth should be a better indicator of how well they can represent a group, rather than how much they have at the present moment. If a politician acquired his wealth through an invention, would he be a better fit? Not necessarily. Would the politician be a better representative if he acquired his wealth through enterprise? Maybe. Perhaps that may be an instance that the politician would be favored. He would identify better with the general population because it shows that he had to "work hard" to get where he is, and did not gain his status simply by being born into the right family or knowing the right people.

Picking the right politician goes beyond his net worth. It should be done with scrutiny to his record of performance, rather than factors that are less likely to drive his decision making process.

MCAT Prompt #9:

B:

In a free society, laws are subject to change because of many factors. Laws can evolve with society to keep pace with the status quo. Laws are created to keep abreast of new issues and thought process, good or bad. Laws are also expunged because of perceived errors of previous outcomes or because they no longer apply.

Perhaps the best facilitator of change is a peer review. In this country that means that an appointed set of judges are obliged to review laws to see if they still apply or can be eliminated. A free society has this type of setting for laws because free societies do not have monarchs or emperors who set up rules to benefit the society, but rather to benefit the monarch. In a free society, laws are subject to change because it is the people that create them, and if the people evolve, then so must the laws.

However, being a free society does not mean a free for all. There are some laws that can not be changed in order to uphold the idea of a free society. Obviously, a law against a ruling monarch should be one of them. Also, a free society needs to establish laws that cannot be abolished because they are "inherent truths" relating to the rights of man. One such law may be that all people shall be free to speak their opinion without fear of death. Another law should be that citizens remain citizens, in that they are part of a society, not a ruling class.

Laws that foster the creative ability of man, such as forming an opinion, and his right to confer with his neighbors about what he thinks is unjust should be the basis of a free society and should be "laws" that cannot change in that society that wishes to be considered a free society.

(pfft, what a crappy essay, I'd give it a 0 - and I don't mean "0")

Next essay, much improved:

MCAT Prompt #10:

Successful politicians are motivated more by practical considerations than moral values

Explain what you think the above statement means. Describe a specific situation in which successful politicians might be motivated more by moral values than by practical considerations. Discuss what you think determines whether successful politicians are motivated more by practical concerns or by moral values.

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Modern politicians in this country are voted in by citizens who feel that the candidate best represents their values and beliefs. The elected official is supposed to then fight for these values and beliefs within the context of their power and position in office. Because there will be different majorities electing different officials into office, there will be a clash between what the citizens see as defending moral values or defending practical considerations. As the elected official moves up in rank, there will be more and more people with whom he is to represent. Naturally, he cannot please everyone and must compromise by broadening his ideals and values to include those of the majority if he wants to win office. This is when, perhaps, his initial campaign representing morals will be emphasized less and the practical considerations for the majority of the citizens will be emphasized more.

This is not to say that the politician has now converted to only considering policies that are purely practical. A politician may still be interested in moral values, especially his own. If the politician was a devoted Catholic, he may decide to cut funding to sex education programs in the school because it clashes with his moral values of pre-marital sex. However, a politician may decide to cut funding to sex-education programs because it is practical. In the latter case, he may feel that pre-marital sex is causing too many teen pregnancies supported by tax dollars and therefore will vote to promote sex education to help stop this burden to tax payers.

In general, politicians make decisions based on what would make them successful. Sometimes, a politician can be very flexible and can become more motivated by morals than by practicalities and vice versa. Other times, a politician may wish to enter politics as someone who stays true to his values. Although this type of strategy may be successful in local representation or in smaller, homogenous populations, it may not work as well in larger, heterogenous populations, or in areas that are not supportive of those specific moral values. The end result may be a short political career.

Therefore, a successful politician should consider their goals against the backdrop of the citizens they wish to represent. If a politician desires to become the greatest mayor of a very religious and traditional town, he should make sure his values align with those of the town. If a politician desires to become the governor of an entire state that houses many metropolitan areas, large universities, and non-traditional types of people, he would have to consider if his moral values will get in the way of his success to represent the people he wishes to represent.

It is true that one has to be honest with themselves and not deviate too far from their beliefs, but in order to be successful, especially as an elected official, one must be able to balance their own beliefs with those of the people he wishes to represent. Of course, if he feels that there is an issue to which he cannot agree with because it clashes with his deep-rooted beliefs, then it would be best to follow his moral compass. By doing this, he will establish himself, at the very least, as an honest and trustworthy leader.

MCAT Prompt #11

A person's first priority in life should be financial security

Explain what you think the above statement means. Describe a specific situation in which a person's first priority in life might not be financial security. Discuss what you think determines whether or not a person's first priority in life should be financial security.

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Most people in this country will agree that having financial security is of high priority. Evidence of this goal is seen in the millions who go to college to try to increase their earning power, or the hourly employee who attempts to climb the corporate ladder to a higher salary. This compulsion to have money is extended to people who play the lottery, hoping for the jackpot, or the young woman in search of a rich husband. Financial security seems to be the motivation for many things that people do.

There are people in society that are contrary to what is thought of as the norm. Yes, there are some people who do not view financial security as a high priority. Some of these people may include altruists and volunteers who feel that helping your fellow man is more important than monetary gain. Or perhaps the religious man who feels spreading his teachings is far more important than acquiring wealth. Then there is the very far end of the spectrum that includes those with mental disorders, who cannot fully grasp the concept of money and its value, and drug addicts, who have lost their sense of reality and are only fixated on obtaining the drug that they desire.

For however many people there may be that do not desire financial security, there are many more people that do desire it. Most of the time, their desire for financial security is not because they are power-hungry. Most of these people simply want to be able to support themselves and their family in a socially appropriate way. They want to be able to buy a home that they can live in, be able to buy the things they need and perhaps a little more, and be able to provide for themselves in the years that they may not be able to work. Having financial security means having more freedoms and relying on yourself. These are some values that are heavily emphasized in a free society and by its citizens.

On the flip side, there are those whose desire to obtain financial security is very overwhelming. The strong desire to obtain money then becomes the influence for all that they do. They may make decisions solely on how much money they will make off of it. If, for example, a young woman will marry anyone rich, she may forfeit her happiness for monetary freedom.

Although it may be good to desire financial security, one has to be careful about why they desire this and how they are obtaining this goal. Perhaps with careful introspection, one may be able to successfully balance their desire of living the good life with simply obtaining money at all costs. Because path one includes thoughtful deliberate decisions and balance of desires and the other includes simply doing what it takes to obtain a goal, there will be some people that cannot achieve this goal, or may achieve it at the expense of their own beliefs and other people.

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