

Passage 1

Read the following passage. Then answer the questions that follow. Use the Tip below each question to help you choose the correct answer. When you finish, read the answer explanations at the end of this chapter.

Safe at Sixteen? Why We Should Raise the Legal Driving Age

by Eliot Golden

To many teens, turning sixteen is a rite of passage. In most states, this is the age when young people become eligible for a driver's license. Adolescents see this as the beginning of freedom and independence, but many adults feel that this is a dangerous and deadly time for many teenage drivers. Statistics show that young drivers are more likely to speed, run red lights, and behave recklessly behind the wheel than more mature, experienced drivers. Many experts agree that this kind of behavior accounts for the thousands of teens killed every year in automobile accidents. In fact, according to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, teens are four times more likely to crash than are older drivers. This has caused many to question what can be done to keep teen drivers safe.

A growing number of people feel that the only way to truly prevent tragedy is to raise the legal driving age. Most teens, and even some parents, scoff at this idea, but many people feel that such action is necessary, and their concerns are being heard by our nation's lawmakers. A number of states have already raised the minimum age a teen must be to acquire a full, unrestricted license, meaning that many young drivers must be accompanied by a licensed adult when they hit the roads. These states use graduated licensing programs that put limitations on young drivers. The programs restrict teens from driving late at night or carrying other teenage passengers until they have logged a certain number of hours driving under the supervision of a parent or guardian. Safety experts point out that more supervised experience makes safer drivers and reduces the risk of fatal accidents among teens. But are these programs doing enough to keep kids safe?

Researchers also note that maturity plays a major role in safety on the roads. Many young drivers are overconfident in their abilities and do not think about the risks associated with getting behind the wheel. Studies show that of all age groups, teens are the most likely to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, drive without wearing a seat belt, and underestimate hazardous road conditions. Some argue that making mature decisions about driving is something that can only come with age, despite the number of hours spent practicing.

Keeping all this in mind, the only logical and responsible solution to this problem is to raise the legal driving age. Many teens will argue that their freedom is being taken from them, and many parents might be inconvenienced by having to drive their kids to school, work, or practice, but the alternative is far worse. Turning sixteen is an important milestone in any young person's life, but it doesn't necessarily mean that they are ready to drive. By raising the legal driving age and giving teens more time and experience behind the wheel, we can help make sure that turning seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen is just as exciting and safe for teens.

Questions 38-55: Read the following passage carefully before you choose your answers.

The following selection is part of a speech by Robert Emmet, a twenty-five year old Irishman who led an unsuccessful rebellion against the English government in 1803. Convicted and condemned to death for treason, he delivered the following oration before the English court.

- I am asked what have I to say why sentence of death should not be pronounced upon me, according to the law. I have nothing to say that can alter your predetermination, nor that it will become me to say....But I have that to say which interests me more than life, and which you have labored to destroy. I have much to say why my reputation should be rescued from the load of false accusation and calumny which has been cast upon it. I do not imagine that, seated where you are, your mind can be so free from prejudice as to receive the least impression from what I am going to utter. I have no hopes that I can anchor my character in the breast of a court constituted and trammelled¹ as this is....Were I only to suffer death, after being adjudged guilty by your tribunal, I should bow in silence, and meet the fate that awaits me without a murmur, but the sentence of the law which delivers my body to the executioner will, through the ministry of the law, labor in its own vindication to consign my character to obloquy....The man dies, but his memory lives. That mine may not perish, that it may live in the respect of my countrymen, I seize upon this opportunity to vindicate myself from some of the charges alleged against me. When my spirit shall be wafted to a more friendly port---when my shade shall have joined the bands of those martyred heroes who have shed their blood on the scaffold and in the field, in the defense of their country and of virtue---this is my hope: I wish that my memory and my name may animate those who survive me, while I look down with complacency on the destruction of that perfidious government...which sets man upon his brother, and lifts his hand, in the name of God, against the throat of his fellow who believes or doubts a little more or a little less than the government standard---a government which is steeled to barbarity by the cries of the orphans and the tears of the widows it has made....

- I have always understood it to be the duty of a judge, when a prisoner had been convicted, to pronounce the sentence of the law....but where is the vaunted impartiality, clemency, and mildness of your courts of justice, if an unfortunate prisoner...is not suffered to explain his motives sincerely and truly and to vindicate the principles by which he was actuated? My lords, it may be part of the system of angry justice to bow a man's mind by humiliation to the purposed ignominy of the scaffold; but worse to me...would be the shame of such foul and unfounded imputations as have been laid against me in this court. You, my lord, are a judge; I am the supposed culprit....By a revolution of power we might change places, though we never could change characters. If I stand at the bar of this court and dare not vindicate my character, what a farce is your justice!....Does the sentence of death, which your unhallowed policy inflicts on my body, condemn my tongue to silence and my reputation to reproach? Your executioner may abridge the period of my existence; but while I exist, I shall not forbear to vindicate my character and motives...which [are] the only legacy I can leave to those I honor and love, and for whom I am proud to perish. As men, my lords, we must appear on the great day at one common tribunal; and it will then remain for the Searcher of All Hearts to show a collective universe who was engaged in the most virtuous actions, or swayed by the purest motive...

¹ literally, caught or confined in a net; fettered or shackled