

Grade 11
Volusia Literacy Test 2:
Informative Writing



Source 1: BABY BOOMERS

History.com

1 Almost exactly nine months after World War II ended, “the cry of the baby was heard across the land,” as historian Landon Jones later described the trend. More babies were born in 1946 than ever before: 3.4 million, 20 percent more than in 1945. This was the beginning of the so-called “baby boom.” In 1947, another 3.8 million babies were born; 3.9 million were born in 1952; and more than 4 million were born every year from 1954 until 1964, when the boom finally tapered off. By then, there were 76.4 million “baby boomers” in the United States. They made up almost 40 percent of the nation’s population.

THE BABY BOOM

2 What explains this baby boom? Some historians have argued that it was a part of a desire for normalcy after 16 years of depression and war. Others have argued that it was a part of a Cold War campaign to fight communism by outnumbering communists. Most likely, however, the postwar baby boom happened for more everyday reasons. Older Americans, who had postponed marriage and childbirth during the Great Depression and World War II, were joined in the nation’s maternity wards by young adults who were eager to start families. Many people in the postwar era looked forward to having children because they were confident that the future would be one of comfort and prosperity. In many ways, they were right: Corporations grew larger and more profitable, labor unions promised generous wages and benefits to their members, and consumer goods were more plentiful and affordable than ever before. As a result, many Americans felt certain that they could give their families all the material things that they themselves had done without.

THE BABY BOOM & THE “FEMININE MYSTIQUE”

3 The baby boom had a particularly confining effect on women. Advice books and magazine articles (“Don’t Be Afraid to Marry Young,” “Cooking To Me Is Poetry,” “Femininity Begins At Home”) urged women to leave the workforce and embrace their roles as wives and mothers. The idea that a woman’s most important job was to bear and rear children was hardly a new one, but it took on a new significance in the postwar era. First, it placed the baby boomers squarely at the center of the suburban universe. Second, it generated a great deal of dissatisfaction among women who yearned for a more fulfilling life. (In her 1963 book “The Feminine Mystique,” women’s-rights advocate Betty Friedan argued that the suburbs were “burying women alive.”) This dissatisfaction, in turn, contributed to the rebirth of the feminist movement in the 1960s.

THE BOOMER MARKET

4 Consumer goods played an important role in middle-class life during the postwar era. Adults participated eagerly in the consumer economy, using new-fangled credit cards and charge accounts to buy things like televisions, stereos, and new cars. But manufacturers and marketers had their eyes on another group of shoppers as well: the millions of relatively affluent boomer children, many of whom could be persuaded to participate in all kinds of consumer crazes. Baby boomers bought mouse-ear hats to wear while they watched “The Mickey Mouse Club.” They bought rock and roll records, danced along with the T.V. show “American Bandstand” and swooned over Elvis Presley. They collected hula hoops, Frisbees and Barbie dolls. A 1958 story in Life magazine declared that “kids” were a “built-in recession cure.”

THE BOOMER COUNTERCULTURE

5 As they grew older, some baby boomers began to resist this consumerist suburban ethos. They began to fight instead for social, economic and political equality and justice for many disadvantaged groups: African-Americans, young people, women, Native Americans and Hispanics, for example. Student activists took over college campuses, organized massive demonstrations against the war in Vietnam and occupied parks and other public places. Young people also participated in the wave of uprisings that shook American cities from Newark to Los Angeles in the 1960s. Other baby boomers “dropped out” of political life altogether. These “hippies” grew their hair long and experimented with drugs. Some even moved to communes, as far away from Levittown as they could get.

BABY BOOMERS TODAY

6 Today, the oldest baby boomers are already in their 60s. By 2030, about one in five Americans will be older than 65, and some experts believe that the aging of the population will place a strain on social welfare systems.

Source 2: Why You Need To Pay Attention To Gen X

By Gwen Moran

7 *Gen Xers are often overlooked. But they have some unique leadership attributes—and their collective power is growing.*

8 Members of Generation X (typically defined as born between 1965 and 1981) are used to being in the shadow of the massive generations that came before and after them. Baby boomers and millennials tend to get the lion’s share of attention as far as demographic groups go. And, of course, the novelty of emerging generation Z is capturing a few headlines as well.

9 “It’s kind of been the neglected or overlooked generation in a lot of ways,” says Stephanie Neal, a research scientist in Development Directions International’s (DDI’s) Center for Analytics and Behavioral Research (CABER). But their growing influence and unique attributes are worthy of more attention, she says.

10 Neal says that gen X leaders now hold more than half (51%) of leadership roles globally. And new DDI research shows a wealth of attributes—including tech-adept, loyal, and committed to development—make them especially valuable to the companies that employ them.

FORMED BY ADVERSITY

11 While ascribing certain attributes to an entire generation is always filled with disclaimers about individuals not always conforming to the masses, gen Xers were trailblazers in formative, if not terribly positive ways, says Cam Marston, founder of Generational Insights, a Mobile, Alabama, consultant company. They were the “latch-key kids,” many of whom had two working parents and came home from school to an empty house—with no mobile phones to keep in touch with Mom and Dad all the time. Many entered the job market during or shortly after the recession in the late 1980s.

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These phenomena left them with no illusions about how easy it would be to make their way in the world.

- 12 These generational signposts left their mark on many gen Xers, says generational expert and humorist Meagan Johnson, coauthor of *Generations, Inc.: From Boomers to Linksters—Managing the Friction Between Generations at Work*. From an early age, they had freedom to make decisions and were left on their own to organize their time, do their chores, and get their homework done before their parents got home. This has made many gen X managers entrepreneurial and independent—which can be a challenge for their millennial counterparts and direct reports who often crave more feedback and interaction, Marston says.
- 13 “The gen X thinks he or she is doing his or her team a favor by leaving them alone to do their job,” he says. They work with others like they like to work—get the work done, avoid the distractions, and go home. Gen X often don’t crave the close workplace friendships that their older and younger counterparts do, Johnson adds. At the same time, they do place a high value on mentoring and helping others develop.

CROSS-GENERATIONAL STRENGTHS

- 14 The DDI research found that this smaller group between two massive generational populations enjoys some of the best attributes of both, however. Despite their penchant for being independent, Marston says gen Xers are good communicators—especially those who fall in the “tweener” group born between 1960 and 1970—late boomer generation through early gen X.
- 15 “These people are remarkable communicators,” he says. They understand the boomer mentality and often excel in management and leadership roles because of their remarkable communication skills, he says.
- 16 As for the myth that gen Xers aren’t as tech-savvy as “digital natives (millennials), the research just doesn’t bear that out, Neal says. The DDI report found that gen Xers were early tech adopters and are just as digitally adept as their younger counterparts. A 2016 Nielsen report also found that they’re more prolific social media users than any other generation, she says. They typically spend more time plugged in to their devices and have less work-life balance than their millennial counterparts.

WHAT GEN X WANTS

- 17 While gen Xers are pegged as loyal workhorses, if they feel bored or stagnant, they’ll move on, Marston says. Companies need to be ready with an answer in the form of new opportunities, stretch assignments, or career path options.
- 18 To make the most of their gen X employees, Neal says companies should let them use their independence and external development to solve challenges. In one of her reports on the research, she writes, “Gen Xers are taking the lead at a time when change is regular and desirable. Provide them the freedom and encouragement to try out new approaches and challenge old ones to encourage innovation and growth.”

Johnson also sees opportunity in encouraging their inclination to mentor others—which is good news because millennials often value strong mentors.

Source 3: Who Are Millennials?

By Douglas Main, LiveScience Staff Writer

- 19 Millennials have been characterized in a number of different ways. On the negative side, they've been described as lazy, narcissistic and prone to jump from job to job. The 2008 book "Trophy Kids" by Ron Alsup discusses how many young people have been rewarded for minimal accomplishments (such as mere participation) in competitive sports and have unrealistic expectations of working life.
- 20 A story in *Time* magazine said polls show that Millennials "want flexible work schedules, more 'me time' on the job, and nearly nonstop feedback and career advice from managers." Another *Time* story in May 2013, titled "The Me Me Me Generation," begins: "They're narcissistic. They're lazy. They're coddled. They're even a bit delusional. Those aren't just unfounded negative stereotypes about 80 million Americans born roughly between 1980 and 2000. They're backed up by a decade of sociological research." The article also points out that Millennials may be simply adapting quickly to a world undergoing rapid technological change.
- 21 A 2012 study found Millennials to be "more civically and politically disengaged, more focused on materialistic values, and less concerned about helping the larger community than were GenX (born 1962-1981) and Baby Boomers (born 1946 to about 1961) at the same ages," according to USA Today. "The trend is more of an emphasis on extrinsic values such as money, fame, and image, and less emphasis on intrinsic values such as self-acceptance, group affiliation and community." The study was based on an analysis of two large databases of 9 million high school seniors or entering college students.
- 22 They have also been described in positive ways. They are generally regarded as being more open-minded, and more supportive of gay rights and equal rights for minorities. Other positive adjectives to describe them include confident, self-expressive, liberal, upbeat and receptive to new ideas and ways of living.
- 23 As Millennials have come of age, there has been a shift away from brand loyalty to cause loyalty with respect to business. Brand loyalty focuses on the products social status in the market place. Cause loyalty focuses on the ideals of the business itself. This is evident in the footwear market where in the last decade Sketchers has fallen out of the limelight and companies such as Toms have emerged. This a shift exemplifies the cause-consciousness of a Millennial consumer. This trend can be largely attributed to the generation's increased access to the world and awareness of global issues as fueled by technological advances. Thus marks the birth of a generation whose consumption is based as much on tangible product as it is on company purpose or passion.
- 24 Though viewed as more liberal, some Millennials are bucking recent trends. A study published March 31, 2017 by the Council on Contemporary Families found that high school seniors increasingly believe that the man should be the bread-winner in a relationship and a woman should care for the home. "It's been a steady reversal," said

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study co-author Joanna Pepin, a doctoral candidate in sociology at the University of Maryland.

- 25 Millennials are also more likely to use public libraries than other generations, according to the Pew Research Center.

Writing Prompt

Vanity Fair writer, Rich Cohen remarked, "A generation is the creation of shared experiences, the things that happened, the things you all did and listened to and read and went through and, as important, the things that did not happen."

Write an essay explaining how defining characteristics distinguish generations. Remember to cite textual evidence in your response.

Manage your time carefully so that you can

- read the passages;
- plan your response;
- write your response; and
- revise and edit your response.

Be sure to

- use evidence from multiple sources; and
- avoid overly relying on one source.

Your response should be in the form of a multiparagraph essay.