

News Debate: Snowed Out!



Should schools ban snow days?

Students at Mississinawa Valley School in western Ohio have to say "so long" to snow days. The white powder may fall, but students won't be able to spend the day sledding. Classes will be in session-online. Officials say that holding electronic workdays (e-days) will help students keep up with their studies and familiarize them with virtual learning. It will also prevent requiring students to make up days later in the year.

Some students argue that it's not fair to ditch snow days, however. They say that snow days give them a much-needed break. They also note that missing a day here and there is not enough to put them behind. In addition, some educators point out that not everyone has access to home computers and that sometimes siblings have to share computers. Should students be required to work on snow days? *Current Events* student reporters Jordan Dewar and Logan Gegg shoveled it out.

E-day Now, Play Later

Which would you prefer: spending a cold day on a computer, or sitting in school in June when you should be on vacation? Having online work on a snow day is the better choice. You would be working on a day that you already planned on having schoolwork. As Patrick Long, 13, from Silver Spring, MD., says, "A couple hours of online work beats going in for additional days in June."

Having extra days of school in summer can interfere with families' vacation plans. Besides, what if your school does not have air-conditioning? Imagine sweating through seven hours of school on a hot June day when you could have been relaxing by a pool. Doesn't an e-day sound better than that?

Finally, for some students, it would be easier to concentrate on e-days than on makeup days. "You can do a little work online, go play, and then come back later," says Rachel Meyers, 12, from Silver Spring. "But on June days you would just have to sit there for seven hours, thinking about how you could be outside, so you lose focus."

Save Snow Days

Snow days are days of well-deserved fun. However, a school in Ohio wants to replace them with e-days. Four out of five Altamont, Kan., students disagree with that arrangement. One problem with the plan is that it punishes students who don't have computers at home; those kids would have to make up e-day work within two weeks. So when school resumes after an e-day, the students without Internet access at home will be behind and have to work double-time to catch up.

In addition, some school districts may not have the money to fund e-days. According to the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), many districts are making budget cuts. "School budget cuts across the country ... are expected to continue into the 2012-13 school year," the AASA Web site states. Adding e-days could burden districts in fragile financial situations. Austin Krewson, an Altamont eighth grader, agrees. "The school wouldn't be able to afford both the Web site and taking care of the school," he says.

Furthermore, electrical outages are common during snowstorms. If kids don't have power at home, the money and time involved in implementing the new program would be wasted.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What are students at Mississinawa Valley School saying "so long" to?

- A. summer vacation
- B. home computers
- C. e-days
- D. snow days

2. What argument is presented in the text?

- A. an argument about whether a school's winter break should be as long as its summer vacation
- B. an argument about whether schools should replace snow days with e-days
- C. an argument about whether students learn better by reading e-books or print books
- D. an argument about what the best way to spend summer vacation is

3. Read this sentence from the text:

"Which would you prefer: spending a cold day on a computer, or sitting in school in June when you should be on vacation?"

What answer does the author probably expect from readers?

- A. The author probably expects readers to answer that they would prefer spending a cold day on a computer.
- B. The author probably expects readers to answer that they would prefer sitting in school in June when they should be on vacation.
- C. The author probably expects readers to answer that they would be equally interested in both options.
- D. The author probably expects readers to answer that they do not have enough information to decide.

4. What is one reason given for having snow days instead of e-days?

- A. Students will be working on days that they already planned on having schoolwork.
- B. Having extra days of school in summer can interfere with families' vacation plans.
- C. Not all students have access to computers at home.
- D. Not all schools have air-conditioning.

5. What is the main idea of this text?

- A. Schools everywhere should replace snow days with e-days.
- B. No school should replace snow days with e-days.
- C. There are reasons for and against replacing snow days with e-days.
- D. Concentrating on computer work in cold weather is easier than sitting in class during the summer.

6. What is one reason given for having e-days instead of snow days?

7. Explain whether snow days should or should not be replaced by e-days. Support your argument with evidence from the text.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Some argue that schools should implement electronic workdays; _____, students will have to attend additional school days in June.

- A. previously
- B. currently
- C. for example
- D. otherwise

9. Vocabulary Word: implement: to ensure that a plan of action is completed.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence:
