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TITLE IX: PREVENTING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST GIRLS AND WOMEN IN SPORTS AND EDUCATION?

Word Generation - Unit 2.06

Focus Words

inequity | resources | adequate | illustrate | disproportionate



WEEKLY PASSAGE

Mia Hamm is considered the world's best all-around women's soccer player. She has scored more international goals in her career than any other player, male or female. Mia helped the U.S. national soccer team win the gold medal in the 1996 Olympic Games.

Hamm was born in 1972, the same year the U.S. government passed a law called Title IX. The law forbids discrimination against girls or women in schools or colleges that receive money from the U.S. government.

In 1971, the year before Mia was born, fewer than 300,000 high school girls participated in school sports. But by 1997 that number had grown to over 2.4 million. Some people think that Title IX led to better, or more **adequate**, representation of women in colleges. For example, the year Mia Hamm was born, only 9% of medical degrees were earned by women. But by 1994, twenty-two years later, that percentage jumped to 38%. Many say that these examples **illustrate** how important it is to have

laws that give both men and women the same opportunities in athletics as well as in college admissions.

A recent case highlights the **inequities** of college funding for female sports. A judge ordered Indiana University of Pennsylvania to restore funding for women's gymnastics and field hockey. The university wanted to focus its **resources** or funding on men's football. But the judge said that money problems and a desire for football prestige were not excuses for violating Title IX.

But is it appropriate for judges and lawyers to determine the sports programs at colleges? Some people feel that colleges know how to make the best decisions for their particular situations and that the law should be more flexible.

What do you think? At your school is there a **disproportionate** representation of boys or girls on your sports teams? In other programs?

Title IX: Preventing discrimination against girls and women in sports and education?

FOCUS WORDS OF THE WEEK

inequity : (noun) lack of equality; unfairness

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

resources : (noun) supplies of money or helpful items

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

adequate : (adjective) as much as necessary

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

illustrate : (verb) demonstrate

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

disproportionate : (adjective) too large or too small in comparison to other things

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

Title IX: Preventing discrimination against girls and women in sports and education?



PROBLEM OF THE WEEK


Title IX was passed to end gender **inequity** in universities and other places that get public money. People disagree about what it means. What does it mean to give **adequate** support to both genders? What does proportionate representation mean? If more men than women play sports at a public university, is this **disproportionate** representation automatically a violation of Title IX? Or is it only a violation if female athletes are being denied a chance to play? At some colleges, some men's teams were cut so that **resources** could be given to new women's teams. Some people argue that men's and women's interest level should be considered. If fewer women than men want to play sports, they say, then it should be okay to have fewer women's teams.

The problems below **illustrate** two different ways to think about proportionate representation. In Option 1, a school thinks in terms of numbers. In Option 2, a school thinks in terms of interest level.

Option 1: At University X, the student body consists of 8,000 men and 8,500 women. Three hundred men play a varsity sport. This is 3.75% of male students. If University X wants the number of women playing varsity sports to be proportional to the number of men, how many women would have to play?

- A) 300
- B) 310
- C) 319
- D) 331

Option 2: To be in compliance with Title IX, schools have to show progress towards equity. At University Y, the student body consists of 10,000 men and 10,000 women. Five hundred men play varsity sports, and 150 women. A poll of the student body showed that twice as many men as women are interested in playing sports. Therefore, the athletic department wants to increase the number of female athletes by 20% each year until there are at least 250 female athletes. How many years will it take?

 **Discussion Question:** Does Title IX create new **inequities** in college sports? Some schools have cut men's teams to fund women's teams. Title IX opponents say that this helps only a few women, and inflicts **disproportionate** harm on male athletes in sports that don't earn a lot of money, like wrestling or men's gymnastics. Title IX supporters disagree. They point out that for years, far more **resources** have been given to men's sports than women's sports. If more men want to play sports, this just **illustrates** the consequences of past inequity. To give today's women **adequate** opportunities to play sports, they must be given equal funding. What do you think? Is it okay to cut a men's sport to fund a women's sport? If not, where should the money come from?

Does Title IX prevent discrimination against women and girls in sports and education?



THINKING SCIENTIFICALLY

Ms. Kahn's class is discussing whether or not Title IX, a law enacted over forty years ago, has been effective in reducing **disproportionate** spending in boys' and girls' sports.

"My sister plays college basketball, and there wouldn't even be a team, let alone **adequate** funding for uniforms and games, if it weren't for Title IX," says Marie.

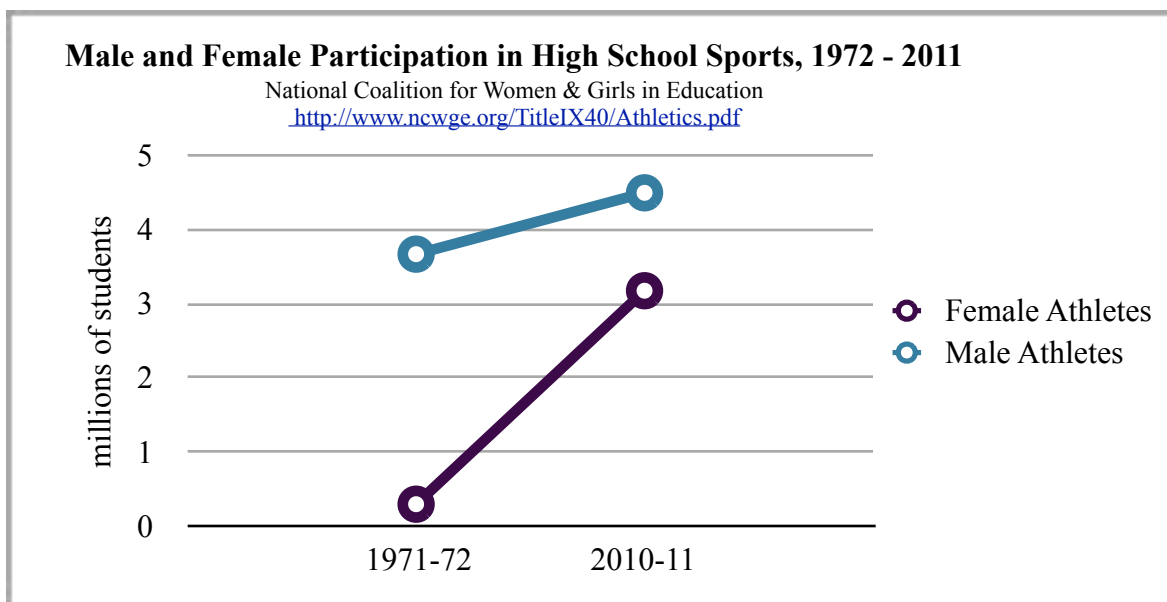
"Yeah? Well, my brother is on the wrestling team at Central High," says Alex, "and his team has to raise money for uniforms because they have to share half their **resources** and budget with girls! I mean, who ever heard of a girl wrestler?"

"That's sexist! And totally old-school," blurts Ally. "Women's wrestling—and water polo, and boxing, and even race car driving—is a serious sport with professional athletes, both male and female. Your brother's attitude just **illustrates** why Title IX is still so important."

"But I've heard on the news that Title IX just takes money away from boys' and men's sports," counters Alex. "So there might be more girls playing, but that's because there are fewer boys. That's unfair!"

"Alex, you are making a claim that Title IX laws, in effect, reduce the amount of boys participating in sports in favor of girls' participation," says Ms. Kahn, "but as a scientist you must remember that claims have to be supported with evidence."

"I have some research data here that might help us decide if what Alex heard is true," says Ms. Kahn. "We need to look at real evidence, not just opinions, to decide if there is **inequity**."



Do these data provide evidence to support Alex's claim that fewer boys play sports now than in the past? Why or why not?

What other evidence would you need to determine whether Title IX has been effective or not?

Title IX became a law in 1972. After that, girls' participation in sports increased by 980%. Many sports are played by both males and females; however, there are certain sports that are dominated by either males or females, not both. Do you think associating sports with a certain gender will ever disappear?

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DEBATING THE ISSUE

Get ready...

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A Money that colleges make for selling tickets or television rights for popular men's sports such as football should benefit all student sports programs, especially women's sports teams that don't get as much attention.

B Female and male student athletes should be treated equally. They should get the same money and the same programs. Schools should be penalized if they break the law.

C Title IX is not a good law because men and women are not the same. Schools should be allowed to devote more resources to one or the other. The law is too strict.

D Since most major professional sports leagues are for men, colleges should also focus on sports programs for men. Title IX should be overturned.

E _____

Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:

GO!

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

I believe that...

*I agree with you,
but...*

*You make a good
point, but have you
considered...*

*Can you show me evidence
in the text that...*



Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples.
Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

inequity | resources | adequate | illustrate | disproportionate

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.