



People and Achievement

Article: should schools celebrate effort more than prizes?

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you write.

1. What achievements are usually celebrated at school?
2. Why is effort sometimes harder to notice than winning?
3. How can schools encourage students who do not win prizes?

Exercise 6 at a glance

Write an article, often for a school magazine.

Use a catchy title and opening hook.

Develop ideas with reasons and examples.

Use a semi-formal, engaging style.

2. Exam-style task

Your class has recently discussed whether schools should celebrate effort more than prizes. Write an article for your school magazine about this topic.

Here are some comments from students to help you:

'Winning a prize feels amazing.'

'Effort shows real determination.'

'Some students work hard but never come first.'

'Awards can motivate people to aim higher.'

Now write an article for your school magazine.

The comments may give you some ideas, and you should also use some ideas of your own.

Write about 120 to 160 words.

3. Model article

More Than First Place

Why do we only clap loudly for the person holding the trophy? Winning is exciting, and prizes can make students feel proud. However, achievement is not always as simple as coming first.

Celebrating effort matters because many students make real progress without winning an award. A student who improves their reading, keeps practising a sport or finally speaks in front of the class has achieved something important. Recognising effort can also encourage students to keep going when success takes time, especially if they usually compare themselves with stronger classmates.

That said, prizes should not disappear completely. Competitions can be exciting, and awards can push talented students to aim higher. The problem comes when only a few winners are noticed and everyone else's hard work is forgotten.

In my view, schools should celebrate both results and effort. Certificates, short mentions in assembly or class displays could recognise determination, improvement and teamwork. If achievement is seen in different ways, more students will feel that their progress matters.

4. Explore the model: structure, content and register

Work with the model article. Underline, label or make short notes.

Focus	What to find	Done?
Article structure	Find the title, hook, argument, contrast and final view.	
Content point 1	Where does the writer explain why effort should be celebrated?	
Content point 2	Where does the writer explain why prizes can still be useful?	
Final view	Where does the writer suggest how schools could recognise achievement?	
Audience and register	Find two places where the article sounds engaging but suitable for a school magazine.	
Development	Find one example, reason or effect that improves the answer.	

5. Language from the task prompts

The task prompts can guide your grammar and content choices. Notice which language each prompt naturally needs.

Prompt	Useful language	Why it fits	Example from the model
value of effort	examples + achievement language	You are showing different types of progress.	improves their reading / keeps practising a sport
value of prizes	contrast + motivation language	You are balancing effort with competition.	That said, prizes should not disappear / can push talented students
your view	both/and recommendation	You are giving a balanced final view.	celebrate both results and effort / could recognise determination

6. Build an engaging article

Notice how article phrases help you interest the reader and organise ideas clearly.

Job	Useful article phrases
hook the reader	Why do we only clap loudly for...? / Is achievement more than first place? / Who deserves to be noticed?
add context	Winning is exciting... / achievement is not always... / Many students make real progress...
introduce examples	A student who improves... / finally speaks in front of... / keeps practising...
show contrast	That said... / should not disappear completely / The problem comes when...
show effect	can encourage students to keep going / success takes time / feel that their progress matters
finish with a view	In my view... / Schools should celebrate both... / If achievement is seen...

7. Vocabulary and useful article phrases

Use chunks that sound natural for this task. You can also upgrade your writing with precise words and phrases.

Purpose	Useful chunks / language	Add your own
describe achievement	trophy / prize / award / class display	
describe effort	determination / improvement / teamwork / keep going	
describe balance	results and effort / talented students / hard work	
sound article-like	holding the trophy / more than first place	
upgrade ideas	recognising effort / real progress / aim higher	

8. Plan your own article

Use the same task, or change the details to another achievement issue.

Section	My idea	Useful language
catchy title		
opening hook / context		
why effort matters		
why prizes matter too		
final view / suggestion		

