

2026 Critical-Thinking-Based Slide Presentation Contest

Study Guide for the Prepared Presentation

Topic: Should off-campus workplace internships be mandatory for students in vocational high schools and specialized tracks of comprehensive high schools in Taiwan?

Background of the Topic

Off-campus internships have become an important part of vocational education in many countries. These internships allow students to gain real-world experience by working in businesses or organizations outside their schools. In Taiwan, vocational high schools and specialized tracks of comprehensive high schools aim to prepare students for future careers by teaching both knowledge and practical skills. Because of this focus, many educators believe that internships allow students to connect classroom learning with real workplace experience. However, an important question remains: Should internships outside school be mandatory for students in vocational high schools and specialized tracks of comprehensive high schools in Taiwan? Here, the word “mandatory” means that students must complete an internship provided by an establishment outside of school before graduating from high school.

Arguments for Internship Outside School (PRO)

- **Real-World Skills:** Students learn things at work that books cannot teach, such as how to talk to a boss or solve problems in a busy kitchen or factory.
- **Job Readiness:** Having work experience on a resume makes it easier to find a job after graduation. Companies like to hire people who already know how a business works.
- **Networking:** Students meet professionals who can give them advice or help them find future jobs.
- **Taiwan’s Economy:** Good internships help schools and businesses work together, ensuring students learn the skills Taiwan’s industries need right now.

Arguments Against Internship Outside School (CON)

- **Unfair Treatment:** Not all internships are good. Some students might be used as "cheap labor," doing boring tasks like cleaning or moving boxes instead of learning real skills.
- **Safety Risks:** Young workers are more likely to be injured on the job because of their limited experience. High-risk jobs, such as construction or manufacturing, can pose dangers to students.
- **Financial Stress:** Some internships are unpaid. This is hard for students who do not have much family money or who need to pay for bus tickets and food to get to work.
- **Schools Lacking Support:** The current education system may lack strong partnerships with business,

Instructions on the Prepared Presentation

As presenters, **choose one side** of this debate.

You either:

- **Support the policy (PRO):** Off-campus internships should be mandatory for students in vocational high school and specialized tracks of comprehensive high school.
- **Oppose the policy (CON):** Off-campus internships should not be mandatory for students in vocational high school and specialized tracks of comprehensive high school.

Your goal is to **defend one side of the issue**, not both.

When preparing your presentation:

- Explain what **“off-campus internship”** and **“mandatory”** mean.
- Provide **2–3 strong arguments** that support your position.
- Use **examples, evidence, or logical reasoning** to support your ideas.

- Respond to **at least one concern from the other side**.

To ensure your presentation is effective:

- Keep your slides **clear and simple**.
- Avoid slides with **too much text**.
- Focus on explaining your ideas clearly instead of reading directly from slides.

References

The following references are intended to help you begin researching the topic. They are **not a complete list**, and you should carefully evaluate whether the information is useful for your argument.

1. ETF – Work-Based Learning

https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-11/ETF_WBL_Leaflet_2024_EN.pdf

2. EU to crack down on unpaid internships ‘exploiting despair of young people’

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/20/eu-to-crack-down-on-unpaid-internships-with-new-directive>

3. Young Worker Employment, Injuries and Illnesses Charts

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/young-workers/charts/index.html>

4. Taiwan MOE – Technical and Vocational Education Act

<https://edu.law.moe.gov.tw/EngLawContent.aspx?id=353&lan=E>

5. Overseas Students from Southbound Policy Targeted Countries Exploited to Work? Ministry of Education: Severe Measures Taken to Protect Students’ Rights

<https://english.moe.gov.tw/cp-117-21653-42503-1.html>

6. Taiwanese students' rights must be protected overseas: vice premier

<https://english.ey.gov.tw/Page/61BF20C3E89B856/ee835cf9-71a1-41a5-94ca-8ff57f952e8d>

Possible Questions for the Q&A After the Presentation

Here are some possible follow-up questions judges may pursue after your presentation:

Questions for a PRO speech

- What do you mean by “internship” in your speech (where, how long, what kind of work)?
- If internships build real skills, then can you give one example of a skill students learn better in the workplace than in school?
- If internships improve job readiness, then what is one clear sign that a student is “more job-ready” after an internship?
- What rules must exist, so internships are safe and truly educational (not just cheap labor)?

Questions for a CON speech

- What is your one biggest reason for saying off-campus internships should not be mandatory?
- How can we tell the difference between a good internship and a bad one?
- What field(s), in particular, can suffice with on-campus internships, and why do you say so?
- If off-campus internships are not mandatory, what is your plan to better prepare students for work after graduation?

Questions for either a PRO or a CON speech

- What do you think is the strongest argument from the other side, and how do you answer it?

- In Taiwan, internships can be on-campus, off-campus, or mixed, so which one do you support most, and why