

Assigned seats will make everyone miserable.

Dear Principal Rodriguez,

I have to be honest: I've been bummed ever since you announced that you're considering assigned seats in the cafeteria. I don't think it's a good idea, and here's why.

First of all, lunch is the only time during the school day when we get to **socialize** with our friends. It would not be fair to take that **privilege** away. We work *reeeeeeally* hard in class, and the time we spend relaxing and goofing around at lunch is an important break.

It's true that finding a seat in the cafeteria can be stressful for some students, and I don't want anyone at Lakeside to **dread** lunchtime. But assigned seating doesn't seem like the best solution to the problem. For one thing, forcing kids to sit next to each other doesn't mean they're going to end up being friends. And even if assigned seating did relieve anxiety for some kids, would it be worth making others (like me) miserable?

Besides, when my friends and I eat lunch together, we are not excluding anyone. We would never turn someone away who wanted to sit with us.

Here's something else: Many schools that have assigned seating in their cafeterias rotate seats each week. But that could prevent friendships from forming. About a month ago, a new kid, Leo, began eating with us. Over the next few weeks, we got to know each other and became friends. If our seat assignments changed all the time, friendships like ours would not have time to grow.

Plus, there are ways to make the cafeteria a friendlier place without assigned seating. For example, we could swap out the rectangular tables for circular ones. That way, no one would get stuck at the end of a table and left out of the conversation. We could also appoint someone at each table to be the "Table **Usher**." The Table Usher's job would be to keep an eye out for kids who are looking for a seat and invite them over. Or what if we tried assigned seats just once a month? Like a special get-to-know-someone-new day? I'd be way less bummed about that.

Thank you for hearing me out,

Josh Graff



Scavenger Hunt

Directions: Hunt through each letter for the following elements.

1. Underline the **central idea**, or **central claim**.
 2. Star two pieces of **supporting evidence**.
 3. Circle the **counterargument**.
 4. Put a double star next to the writer's **rebuttal**.
- YOU decide: Who made the stronger argument?**