



Advanced | Exemplar Essay

## Letter to the Editor: Social Media

### More Bad Than Good



#### Claim and Focus

The writer presents an interesting, clear, and precise claim (social media “hinders productivity, spreads unreliable and false information, and has significant and negative effects on our social lives”). A strong focus on supporting and developing the claim is maintained and counterclaims are fairly examined.



#### Support and Evidence

Specific, relevant evidence is cited to support the claim (various statistics, “militant terror groups,” “child predators”) and is explained with full reasoning. Counterclaims are acknowledged and skillfully debunked (“Often, social media sites can be a place of solace for them, but unfortunately, cyberbullying is much more common”).



#### Organization

The essay demonstrates a logical progression of ideas, including an effective introduction and conclusion. Varied transitions enhance the relationships between and among ideas (“Countless studies have shown,” “On a related note,” the Gertrude Stein quote, “In addition,” “One has to wonder”).



#### Language and Style

Advanced vocabulary and vivid imagery are used to engage and attend to the reader’s interests (“your bright cell phone screen illuminates your face late in the night”). A definitive voice and perspective are balanced with a formal style. Varied sentence structure and a clear command of conventions add to the flow of the essay.



#### Using Exemplars in Your Lessons

Exemplar essays are tools to take abstract descriptions and make them more concrete for students. One way to use them is to print the clean copies of the essays and allow students to use the rubric to make notes or even find examples of important elements of an essay - thesis statements, introductions, evidence, conclusions, transitions, etc. Teachers can also use exemplars to illustrate what each score point within a trait ‘looks like’ in an authentic student essay. For additional ideas, please see “25 Ways to Use Exemplar Essays” by visiting the Curriculum Resources page in Help.

## Letter to the Editor: Social Media



Notes

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The scene is all too familiar; your bright cell phone screen illuminates your face late in the night and the time reads 11:03 p.m. You hear a small chime as a new notification pops up and without a thought, you decide to immediately check that notification, maybe even respond. Two minutes should be all it takes, but it doesn't take two minutes. Before you know it, the time reads 12:38 a.m. Congratulations, you just wasted one and a half hours on social media, trading your valuable REM sleep in exchange for nothing. This scenario is anything but unique. These days, a picture is worth a thousand words, and a tweet one hundred and forty characters. These one hundred and forty characters are helping to create an entire generation of distracted, zoned out individuals. While social media's original goal was to enhance communication, in reality it hinders productivity, spreads unreliable and false information, and has significant and negative effects on our social lives.

Social media serves as the black hole of productivity. Countless studies have shown that students who use social media while studying experience a score 20% lower than those who do not engage in social networking. In addition to that startling information, students who use social media average a 0.76 lower GPA than students who do not. Since the rise of social media, the education standards in which social networking is prevalent (ex. America) have since fallen short of those of countries (ex. China) who severely limit the use of social media. On a related note, child obesity is becoming a huge problem in our country. There are hundreds of programs that encourage kids to get out and be active, but one of the biggest factors preventing children from being outside is the internet and

social media. Kids today find it all too tempting to spend countless hours tweeting about their own lives, instead of working towards a goal that will keep them healthy and change the world, which would inspire others to tweet about them.

The American author Gertrude Stein once said, "Everybody gets so much information all day long that they lose their common sense." Social media is a space where unreliable and false information can be spread with the click of a button. In several of the recent worldwide tragedies that involved violence, many of the perpetrators were heavily influenced militant terror groups through social media. Individuals who might have once been studious university students lost their common sense and were attracted to a world of darkness and violence. In addition, social media sites like Facebook can be the perfect place for child predators or for people to "pretend" to be something that they are not, putting up fake profiles to maliciously commit crimes. Even headlines you read on Twitter or Facebook might not be based on the absolute truth, so you have to interact with social media with caution and common sense.

Many believe that social networks bring people together. Men and women can share their ideas, tell their unique stories, and even connect with one another around the globe. There are thousands of individuals who might feel shy or awkward in real life, so they choose to find friends and connections behind the safety of their keyboards. Often, social media sites can be a place of solace for them, but unfortunately, cyberbullying is much more common. 800,000 Facebook users were harassed by cyberbullies in 2012. 33.7% of social network users confessed to committing acts of cyberbullying themselves. Social media has an extreme effect on our social lives, adding to dispersal of false information on the internet. Someone can spread a nasty rumor on Facebook or send a mean picture on SnapChat, and once the information is shared, it is impossible to stop it. Sometimes the victim tries to fight back, but other times, these false rumors and this cyberbullying

can lead to depression and suicide. One has to wonder: would all of these fights actually happen in person or are the people doing it because they can hide behind a screen? Clearly, online social networking affects our interactions with each other in significant ways and could, in some ways, be considered ANTIsocial media.

Overall, social networks play a big role in our modern world. We cannot hide from them, but we can examine social networking and look at the positive and negative aspects of it. Many people think that social networks have impacted the world positively because of how people can connect to one another all over the globe. Some people think that it's wonderful how much things have changed so fast and all the advances in technology over the years have changed future generations for good. However, when looking at the aforementioned examples, there are undoubtedly more drawbacks than benefits to our society with the existence of social media. Its negative effect on our productivity and social lives, as well as the overall spread of false information, is evidence enough that social media has made a dark mark on our bright future. We must consider these aspects of social networking as we move forward. We must work hard to rewrite our chapter in the Book of Life and leave the Facebook far behind.