_____

Writing a two-sided argument essay
Topic: Social Media

Argument: *'Is social media a benefit for society?'*
Type: Academic [8 sources]
Level: ★★★★★[B2/C1]

Lesson Plan

Aim: *to develop the students' ability to generate main ideas with support and write a two-sided argument.*

3 types of lessons (writing x2 / reading)

1.Writing

- Ask Students to discuss *'Is Social media a benefit for society?'*
- Write down the reasons for 'yes' and 'no'
- Feed in / check key vocabulary (see next page)

Free Writing #1: [give out Outline #1] Students choose 2/3 of the positives / negatives discussed and add support. Go to introduction and fill the ideas of general, specific, outline, thesis, then to conclusion. Write the essay and students check ideas against the text [they could do the Reading Exercise]

Guided Writing #2: [give out Outline #2] Students read the outline with the basic points and then write the essay around these ideas. Then compare to the text.

Marking Student's work:
Use marking code: www.academic-englishuk.com/error-correction

2.Reading

1. Give out text and Outline #3. Students read the essay and write down the key points and support in the structured outline [the bullet points relate to each piece of support]. Students check answers with Outline #4.

_____

Is social media a benefit to society?

C. Wilson (2017)

Key vocabulary

Check this vocabulary before you read

1. Popularity
2. Biographical profiles
3. Proponents
4. To <u>facilitate</u> political change
5. A <u>frivolous</u> activity
6. Traditional media
7. A <u>wider pool</u> of employees
8. Capabilities
9. Participation
10. Isolated generation
11. To distinguish
12. Privacy
13. To infringe copyrights
14. Piracy
15. Addictive
16. To affect personality
17. The real world
18. Low self-esteem
19. Loneliness
20. Face-to-face interaction
21. To be blamed
22. To combat the negatives

_____

Is social media a benefit to society?

C. Wilson (2017)

Social media has exploded in the last 10 years. In fact, the popularity of sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn have grown by 36% since 2008 (Jordan, 2015). On social sites users create biographical profiles, communicate with friends and strangers and share thoughts, photos and similar media. Proponents of social networking sites claim that online communities increase interaction with friends and family, share valuable information and facilitate social and political change. Opponents of social networking state that sites prevent face-to-face communication, waste time on frivolous activity and alter behaviour. This essay will examine both the arguments for and against whether social media is good for society, and put forward the proposal that it is beneficial for society. For the purpose of this paper, social networking sites (SNS), social media sites (SMS), and social networks (SN) will be used inter-changeably but will carry the same meaning.

There is a significant amount of evidence that supports the notion of social media being a benefit for society. This first main benefit is that social media sites spread information faster than any other media. Recent research by Kidwali & Imperatore (2016) highlight that over 50% of people learn about breaking news from SMS and more importantly 65% of traditional media journalists and editors use sites like Facebook and LinkedIn for story research. A second significant benefit is that social media is an effective method of creating employment. Employers use social networks to advertise or find employees because they offer a wider pool of applicants and more efficient searching capabilities. To illustrate this point, 64% of companies are on two or more social networks and over 89% of these companies hired through LinkedIn (Wolburg, 2015). A final point is that SMS are a benefit for the economy. This divides into two main areas of political and financial. In the political arena, SNS have increased voters' participation. Facebook users have reported that communication between friends on political issues and campaigns have aroused more interest and been more persuasive in encouraging people to vote than in the past. For example, during the recent Brexit votes (in the UK, 2016), the readily available information and sharing of views on Social sites encouraged 20% more people to vote (The Economist, 2016). With regards to the financial benefits of SMS, the SN industry generates up to £1.3trillion to the economy every year (ibid) and provides thousands of jobs. Overall, the immense amount of available information shared and positive benefits for the economy highlight the significance of SNS.

There is also evidence that suggests SNS are not beneficial to society and in fact are weakening communities and creating an isolated generation. The first main detrimental effect of SNS is information sharing. Much of the information being shared on these sites is not always true, but people's personal opinions written as facts. As a consequence, it can be difficult to distinguish the difference. Many social network users fail to realise that SNS lack privacy controls and any personal information posted can be accessed and used by anyone. In a recent survey by Boyd & Hargittai (2015), 13 million Facebook users were unaware of Facebook's privacy policy. Of course sharing media content information such as video, music and documents can infringe copyrights and cause artists, musicians and writers to lose income. It has been estimated that over £10bn is loss through SN piracy (CSIS, 2014). The

_____

second serious effect is SNS are addictive. Young people in particular waste hours of time sending messages, checking for replies and updating profiles. Bruns (2015) estimates that the average 18-year old spends up to 4 hours a day on SMS and cites recent research which has highlighted that two thirds of teachers claim heavy SN use can be permanently distracting and affect grades at school. The final negative associated with SNS is it affects personality and behaviour. In terms of personality, constantly interacting on SNS can create social isolation as users become less connected to the real world. This can lead to a higher risk of depression, low self-esteem and loneliness (Stejin, 2014). In fact, too much communication online is changing behaviour and reducing the ability to spend time interacting face-to-face with family and friends. Family's spend 50% less time together than they did 10 years ago and SNS are being blamed for this (ibid). In sum, the negatives of information sharing, being highly addictive and changes in personality are the main reasons against a benefit to society.

In conclusion, it is true that there are many negatives connected to SMS, however, the main benefits of improving the economy financially and politically far outweigh those negatives. Countries need economic growth to create prosperity and more opportunities for employment, this can be done through SMS. It is therefore recommended that to combat the negatives, SMS need stronger regulations on sharing copyrighted materials and more advice and help for those who have become isolated.

<div align="right">800 words</div>

Reference List

Boyd, D. and Hargittai, E. (2015). Facebook Privacy Settings: who cares? *First Monday*, 15(8)

Bruns, A. (2015). Making Sense of Society Through Social Media. *Social Media Society*, 1

Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), (2015). The Cost of Cybercrime. *Network Security*, 2015(10), p.2

The Economist. (2016). Explaining the Brexit vote. [online] Available at: http://www.economist.com/news/britain/21702228-areas-lots-migrants-voted-mainly-remain-or-did-they-explaining-brexit-vote [Accessed 16 Jul. 2016].

Jordan, K. (2015). Academics Awareness, Perceptions and Uses of Social Networking Sites: Analysis of a Social Networking Sites Survey Dataset. *SSRN Electronic Journal*.

Kidwali, G & Imperatore, T., (2016) "Social Media as a Journalist Tool," Journal of Social Networks, 97 (6), pp.63-64

Steijn, W. (2014). A Developmental Perspective Regarding the Behaviour of Adolescents, Young Adults, and Adults on Social Network Sites. *CP*, 8 (2)

Wolburg, J. (2010). Online Public Relations: A Practical Guide to Developing an Online Strategy in the World of Social. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 27(5), pp.481-482

_____

Outline #1

Make notes using this outline to plan an essay on: 'Is social media a benefit for society?'

Introduction	
General	
Specific	
Outline	
Thesis	

Positives *- write your ideas and support*

1) **Point / idea:**
support

2) **Point:**
support

3) **Point**
support

Negatives *- write your ideas and support*

1) **Point / idea:**
support

2) **Point:**
support

3) **Point**
support

Conclusion	
Summary:	
Thesis	
Recommendation	

_____

Outline #2

Use these ideas to write a two-sided argument on: 'Is social media a benefit for society?'

Introduction	
General	Social media >10 years. Social media sites > 36% since 2008. Activities = profiles, communicate & sharing thoughts, photos. (Jordan, 2015).
Specific	Proponents > interaction friends & family, share info and help change. Opponents prevent face-to-face comm., waste time & behaviour
Outline	Examine both the arguments for & against
Thesis	beneficial for society.
Clarify terms	(SNS), (SMS), (SN) used inter-changeably carry the same meaning.

Positives
1) **Spread information faster** (than any other media)   • >50% of people learn news (Kidwali & Imperatore, 2016)   • media journalists for story research.
2) **Effective method of creating employment**.   • Employers advertise or find employees = wider applicants & search.   • 64% of companies have two+ social networks   • 89% companies hired through LinkedIn (Wolburg, 2015)
3) **Economy. political and financial.**   • increased voters' participation.   • Facebook = interest / persuasive in voting   • Social media =20% more people to vote in Brexit (The Economist, 2016).   • SN industry = £1.3trillion & thousands of jobs.

Negatives
1) information sharing.   • information not always true, & opinions written as facts.   • SNS lack privacy controls accessed and used by anyone.   • 13 million Facebook users unaware of Facebook's privacy policy (Boyd & Hargittai, 2015).   • Infringe copyrights & artists etc. / lose income. / Piracy cost = £10bn (CSIS, 2014).
2) Addictive.   • Young people = waste hours of time (profiling, messages, etc…)   • 18-year old = 4 hours a day (Bruns, 2015)   • Two thirds of teachers claim SM affect grades at school.
3) Personality and behaviour.   • Social isolation   • Depression, low self-esteem and loneliness (Stejin, 2014).   • Reduce interacting face-to-face with family and friends.   • Family's spend 50% less time than 10 years ago

Conclusion	
Summary:	Lots of negatives to SMS, main benefits = economic and political
Thesis	Countries need economic growth SM is good
Recommendations	SMS = stronger regulations on sharing copyrighted materials & more advice for isolated.

_____

Outline #3

Read the essay on: 'Is social media a benefit for society?'' Fill in the outline (basic notes only)

Introduction	
General	
Specific	
Outline	
Thesis	
Clarity of terms	

Positives - *find the main points and support*

1) _____
-
-
-

2) _____
-
-
-

3) _____
-
-
-
-

Negatives - *find the main points and support*

1) _____
-
-
-
-

2) _____
-
-
-

3) _____
-
-
-
-

Conclusion	
Summary:	
Thesis:	
recommendations	

_____

Outline #4 ANSWERS

Introduction	
General	Social media has exploded last 10 years. popularity of sites grown by 36% since 2008. Profiles, communicate & sharing thoughts, photos. (Jordan, 2015).
Specific	Proponents > interaction friends & family, share info and facilitate change. Opponents prevent face-to-face comm., waste time & behaviour
Outline	Examine both the arguments for & against
Thesis	Put forward the proposal that it is beneficial for society.
Clarify terms	(SNS), (SMS), (SN) used inter-changeably carry the same meaning.

Positives
1) **Spread information faster** (than any other media)   >50% of people learn about breaking news (Kidwali & Imperatore, 2016)   - media journalists for story research.
2) **Effective method of creating employment**.   - Employers advertise or find employees = wider applicants & searching capabilities.   64% of companies are on two or more social networks   89% of these hired through LinkedIn (Wolburg, 2015)
3) **Economy. political and financial.**   - increased voters' participation.   - Facebook aroused more interest / persuasive in voting than in the past.   - Brexit votes encouraged 20% more people to vote (The Economist, 2016).   - SN industry generates up to £1.3trillion provides thousands of jobs.

Negatives
1) information sharing.   - information not always true, but people's personal opinions written as facts.   - SNS lack privacy controls accessed and used by anyone.   13 million Facebook users were unaware of Facebook's privacy policy (Boyd & Hargittai, 2015).   - Infringe copyrights & artists etc. lose income. Piracy cost £10bn (CSIS, 2014).
2) Addictive.   - Y/P waste hours of time sending messages, checking and updating profiles.   18-year old spends up to 4 hours a day (Bruns, 2015)   - two thirds of teachers claim SM affect grades at school.
3) Personality and behaviour.   - social isolation less connected to the real world.   - higher risk of depression, low self-esteem and loneliness (Stejin, 2014).   - reducing interacting face-to-face with family and friends.   - Family's spend 50% less time >10 years ago

Conclusion	
Summary:	>negatives to SMS, however, the main benefits of improving the economy financially and politically far outweigh those negatives.
Thesis	Countries need economic growth to create prosperity and more opportunities for employment, this can be done through SMS
Recommendations	SMS need stronger regulations on sharing copyrighted materials and more advice and help for those who have become isolated.