



Academic Writing



Paragraph Writing: Quotations

Social Media

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Writing Exercise: Paraphrasing

Topic: Social Media

Time: 60+ minutes

Level: *****[B1/B2/C1]

Lesson Plan

Aim: *To develop the students' ability to write a paragraph using a range of quotes to create a cohesive piece of writing. This exercise practises paraphrasing and linking devices.*

1. Lead in

Ask students to:

- Discuss 'how impactful social media is for teenagers.'
- Write down the positive and negative effects on teenagers ([students could do some internet research here](#)).
- Decide where they stand. Are they more optimistic or pessimistic?
- Feed in / check key vocabulary (see next page).

2. Lesson

- Choose three of these quotations and write a paragraph (approx. 120-180 words) on the following: 'The negative impacts of social media on teenagers far outweigh the positives'. Use accurate in-text citation and appropriate paraphrasing.
- Distribute the handout of quotes: Writing exercise 1.
- Students read the quotes (check any unknown vocabulary), identify the positive and negative statements and then choose **3 key quotes** to put in a paragraph.
- Give 40 minutes.
- Peer feedback ([use peer review form page 5](#)) or teacher marks [use marking code: www.academic-englishuk.com/error-correction].
- Give out sample answer with questions ([answers on page 6](#)).

Differentiation

- **Option 1:** Reduce the quotes down from 10 to 6.
- **Option 2:** Focus just on the pros or cons (Pros = quotations: 2,4,6,8,10 / Cons = quotations: 1,3,5,7,9).
- **Option 3:** Students write in pairs or small groups.

Social Media: Writing Exercise 1

Choose three of these quotations and write a paragraph (approx. 120-180 words) on the following: 'The negative impacts of social media on teenagers far outweigh the positives'. Use accurate in-text citation and appropriate paraphrasing.

1. 'There's no question kids are missing out on very critical social skills. In a way, texting and online communicating - it's not like it creates a nonverbal learning disability, but it puts everybody in a nonverbal disabled context, where body language, facial expression, and even the smallest kinds of vocal reactions are rendered invisible' (Ehmke et al., 2023).
2. 'In some cases, social media can provide social support from peers or others, which may be especially beneficial for marginalized young people' (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2023)
3. 'Everyone needs a respite from the demands of intimacy and connection; time alone to regroup, replenish and just chill out. When you don't have that, it's easy to become emotionally depleted, fertile ground for anxiety to breed' (Ehmke et al., 2023).
4. 'Online social interaction can promote healthy socialization among teens, especially when they're experiencing stress or social isolation. For youth who have anxiety or struggle in social situations, practicing conversations over social media can be an important step toward feeling more comfortable interacting with peers in person' (Weir, 2023).
5. 'Our ability to tolerate the distress of waiting has been eroded because we can Google the answer to almost any question' (University of Utah, 2023).
6. 'Social media platforms could serve as a gateway to mental health care or at least online social support as a buffer against stressors' (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2023).
7. 'We can act on impulse and post something to social media that may reflect a feeling or thought in the moment but may not be true to us a day later. When our more level-headed self is back in charge, we can feel embarrassment, shame, or regret' (Holzbauer, as reported by University of Utah, 2023).
8. 'Social media provides a lot of opportunities for young people to discover new information, learn about current events, engage with issues, and have their voices heard. And it gives them an opportunity to explore their identities, which is an important task of the adolescent years' (Nesi, as reported by Weir, 2023).
9. 'We also know that content can be filtered, edited, and manipulated before it's posted, which can lead to unattainable standards being broadcast to the entire world for anyone to see. Users are obsessed with instant gratification' (University of Utah, 2023).
10. 'Eight-in-ten teens say that what they see on social media makes them feel more connected to what's going on in their friends' lives, while 71% say it makes them feel like they have a place where they can show their creative side' (Anderson et al., 2022).

References

Anderson, M., Vogels, E.A., Perrin, A., and Rainie, L., (2022). *Connection, Creativity and Drama: Teen Life on Social Media in 2022* [online]. Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2022/11/16/connection-creativity-and-drama-teen-life-on-social-media-in-2022/> (Accessed 14 March 2024)

Annie E. Casey Foundation, (2023). *Social Media's Concerning Effect on Teen Mental Health* [online]. Available at: <https://www.aecf.org/blog/social-medias-concerning-effect-on-teen-mental-health> (Accessed 16 March 2024)

Ehmke, R., Steiner-Adair, C., and Wick, D., (2023). *How Using Social Media Affects Teenagers* [online]. Available at: <https://childmind.org/article/how-using-social-media-affects-teenagers/> (Accessed 11 March 2024)

University of Utah, (2023). *The Impact of Social Media on Teen's Mental Health* [online]. Available at: <https://healthcare.utah.edu/healthfeed/2023/01/impact-of-social-media-teens-mental-health> (Accessed 16 March 2024)

Weir, K. (2023). 'Social media brings benefits and risks to teens: Here's how psychology can help identify a path forward', *American Psychological Association*, 54(6), doi: <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2023/09/protecting-teens-on-social-media> (Accessed 16 March 2024)

Paragraph Peer Feedback Form

	Yes	No	Comments <i>Anything missing, unclear or a mistake.</i>
Main Body			
Is there a clear topic sentence?			
Is there a main argument?			
Are the ideas supported?			
Are there three quotes in the paragraph?			
Are the ideas commented upon and evaluated?			
Are the sources incorporated effectively?			
Is the in-text referencing accurate?			
Is there a concluding sentence?			
Highlight anything you don't understand.			
Language			
Highlight any vocabulary mistakes.			
Highlight any grammar mistakes.			
Highlight any academic style mistakes.			
Organisation			
Is it logical and clear?			
What cohesive devices have they used?			
Highlight anything you don't understand?			
Overall			
What did they do well?			
What do they need to do to improve?			

Sample Answer

The detrimental impacts of social media on teenagers are notable with regard to mental wellbeing. Although it is reported that adolescents who feel uncomfortable with interacting in real-life social situations, triggering spells of heightened anxiety or stress, may benefit from socialising online, as it can be seen as a way to ‘practice’ how they would act and react (Weir, 2023), Ehmke et al. (2023) claim that anxiety could instead be increased, due to the fact that constantly being online and never allowing yourself to mentally switch off could leave you drained emotionally, which is when anxious feelings can arouse. Furthermore, feelings of worry and angst may be further exacerbated owing to the impulsive nature that social media tends to generate. As Holzbauer (cited by University of Utah, 2023) reports, it is common to feel regretful or even shameful about what we post, owing to the fact that we tend to act on impulse and these posts may not reflect our true feelings. These negative feelings could spiral out of control if teenagers are actively posting several times a day.

179 words

Paragraph Questions

- 1) Is there a topic sentence? What is the topic? What is/are the controlling ideas?
- 2) Is there a main argument?
- 3) Which quotes were used?
- 4) Is it logical and clear? How has the paragraph been organised?
- 5) Is there an example?
- 6) Is there a concluding sentence? What is concluded?
- 7) How are the sources incorporated?

Sample Answers

The detrimental impacts of social media on teenagers are notable with regard to mental wellbeing. Although it is reported that adolescents who feel uncomfortable with interacting in real-life social situations, triggering spells of heightened anxiety or stress, may benefit from socialising online, as it can be seen as a way to 'practice' how they would act and react (Weir, 2023), Ehmke et al. (2023) claim that anxiety could instead be increased, due to the fact that constantly being online and never allowing yourself to mentally switch off could leave you drained emotionally, which is when anxious feelings can arouse. Furthermore, feelings of worry and angst may be further exacerbated owing to the impulsive nature that social media tends to generate. As Holzbauer (cited by University of Utah, 2023) reports, it is common to feel regretful or even shameful about what we post, owing to the fact that we tend to act on impulse and these posts may not reflect our true feelings. These negative feelings could spiral out of control if teenagers are actively posting several times a day.

179 words

Paragraph Questions

1) Is there a topic sentence? What is the topic? What is/are the controlling ideas?

Topic: Social media and teenagers. Controlling idea: mental health.

2) Is there a main argument?

Yes: negatives outweigh the positives.

3) Which quotes were used?

Quote 3 / Quote 4 / Quote 7.

4) Is it logical and clear? How has the paragraph been organised?

Social media particularly affects mental health > feeling socially awkward in person > being social online could help reduce this > yet constantly being online leads to emotional drainage > further increases anxiety > social media encourages impulsive behaviour > impulsiveness leads to negative feelings > anxiety heightened again.

5) Is there an example?

'As it can be seen as a way to 'practice' how they would act and react'.

6) Is there a concluding sentence? What is concluded?

There is a direct link between social media use and negative mental wellbeing.

7) How are the sources incorporated?

Ehmke et al. (2023) claim that...

As Holzbauer (cited by University of Utah, 2023) reports...