Justification Paragraph Packet Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Does technology mostly help or harm us?**

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Vocabulary** |  |
| Technology: | Help: | Harm: |

Respond to the following question. This is your **“Initial Response”**.

**Article 1: Social Media Can be a Hostile Place, but also a Supportive One**

Anna had just broken up with her boyfriend. It was 1:30 a.m. and she was trying to keep her mind off of it. It was too late to call her therapist. It was also too late to stop by a friend's house.

So, Anna, who asked to be identified by a different name, turned to Facebook. "I'm having a really hard time right now," she posted. "Is there anyone I can call and talk to until I feel better?"

Almost immediately, three people responded with offers to talk. They were friends she had met playing Quidditch, a sport based on the Harry Potter books. Anna talked to two of them until she was able to fall asleep.

"I used to be very shy about posting personal stuff on Facebook because I didn't want people judging me," said Anna, who is 26 years old. "But that night, I was in such a bad place; I was desperate, and I thought anything would help."

**Social Media And Emotional Well Being**

People tend to focus on the negative effects social media has on young people's mental health. Mental health is a person's psychological and emotional well being. Social media can lead to envy and cyberbullying.

Social media can be difficult for people who have trouble with their mental health. Mental illnesses are disorders that can affect someone's mood, thoughts and behavior. Anxiety and depression are two examples. Many people have mental health concerns at some point. A mental illness, such as depression, is different from normal feelings such as sadness. Mental illnesses cause ongoing stress and severely interfere with a person's life.

Most mental illnesses can be treated with medication and therapy. Many therapists warn teens and young adults with mental illnesses about using social media. They say it comes with risks.

**Self-Esteem Boosts**

However, some academics and therapists see a different side to the story. They have found that social media may also help improve mental health. It can boost self-esteem and provide a source of emotional support.

Amy Gonzales studies social media and health at Indiana University's Media School. She hopes we can avoid simplifying the issue. "We need to think about social media as not being absolutely good or bad," she said. "We need to think about how to come up with appropriate uses of this stuff."

Social media is central to the lives of teens and young adults. Nearly half of teenagers report they use it every day. Popular apps include Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Gonzales found encouraging results in a recent study. College students who viewed their own Facebook profiles felt more self-esteem afterward. Users can show off their best traits online. This encourages them to remember what they like best about themselves.

**Prevents Feelings Of Isolation**

Other studies show that people feel more support when they present themselves honestly on social media. They also feel less stress after posting.

"You get much broader affirmation, by posting on social media than from calling a relative," Anna said. Affirmation is a positive feeling of support. "It's one thing if you text a friend; it's another thing if you have a bunch of people trying to help you out," Anna said.

Matthew Oransky is a professor of psychiatry. Psychiatry is a medical field that deals with mental health. Oransky is also a therapist. He said many of his patients find social connections online they could not find elsewhere. "Kids who are isolated can find a community," he said.

Young adults with serious mental illness also find social support on social media platforms. John Naslund studies these benefits. "These people are openly discussing their illness online," he said. "We've found that comments related to mental health are overwhelmingly positive. People can learn how to [deal] with symptoms and how to find the right support."

**Post with Care**

Experts still think parents should help their children use social media wisely. Oransky suggests that parents talk with kids about privacy. It is important for teens to know how the things they post online might affect them when it comes time to apply for college or a job.

Anna is careful with her posts about mental health. She still views social media as a way to reach out for support when she needs it. "If you trust your friends," she said, "I don't see why you shouldn't embrace the social media option."

**Read Article 1 and answer the following questions.**

What is the main idea of the article?

What are three **reasons** the author gives that supports the main idea?

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List the reasons you agree with and the reasons you disagree with in the chart below:

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| --- | --- |
| I **agree** with…  | I **disagree** with… |
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**Article 2: Parents may fret, but even experts say social media use has its benefits**

Many teens spend time on social media sites posting about their world. Their lives seem almost perfect. In real life, however, their lives might not be so perfect. Social media lets teenagers connect all over the world. Still, the hours spent on Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook and other social media sites could be harmful, experts say.

**Too Much Social Media Is Not Healthy**

Studies show links between an overuse of social media and health problems. Those can include anxiety and body image issues. It is estimated that 75 percent of teenagers in America today are on social media sites. Some teens feel anxious if they can't update their status or find out what their friends are doing. They might have trouble relaxing. They also may judge their own worth by how many Snapchat followers they have. "One of the biggest challenges for teenagers is the fear of missing out or the need to feel accepted," said Shreya Hessler. She is a psychologist in Bel Air, Maryland. "Social media can put added pressure on teenagers if used in an unhealthy way." However, experts don't think teenagers need to unplug completely. Leslie Parker, a life coach in Baltimore, Maryland, said there are some benefits to social media. One is staying connected to people. It all depends on how students use it, she said. Many teenagers use social media for good reasons.Community concerns can be shared on social media, Hessler said. "People can share their life stories," she said.

**Social Media Can Lead To Emotional Issues**

Social media can be more of a risk than adults realize. That comes from a 2012 report by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Some teenagers may face online bullying. They also might develop depression. Depression is a serious illness. It is different from just feeling sad. Depression causes ongoing stress and interferes with a person's ability to function. Social media also might create body image issues. A survey of young people was done by the Royal Society for Public Health in the United Kingdom. It found that young girls compared themselves to photos of "perfect girls." These photos may actually be edited. Octavia Sykes works to help girls who have trouble with their body image. She said social media can increase these concerns.

**Teens Say They Worry About Missing Out**

Social media may separate teenagers from the real world. Hessler said meetings with her might be the only time some teens have a conversation without the interruption of social media or other technology. Some teenagers panic if they cannot check Twitter or Snapchat, she said. This can happen if their phones die or are taken away by their parents. Kristina Dyson is a student at Mercy High School in Baltimore. She said she uses Snapchat and Twitter to communicate with her friends to know what they are doing. "If I don't have social media, I don't know what's going on, and I need to know what's going on," she said.Teens can fear missing out. This can be a problem if it creates anxiety or interferes with school work and everyday life, experts said.

**Teens Losing Their Connection With People**

Parker said social media can keep teenagers away from family time. They might have fewer real-life conversations. "Kids should connect with people, not so much the machines, not so much Twitter," she said. She thinks later "it will just make them become more distant, in terms of talking to someone." The American Academy of Pediatrics report found that parts of social media can be good. For example, students can connect to discuss homework. They also can join groups of creative people, Sykes said. Hessler suggested setting a schedule for social media use. When sleeping or studying, students should remove their device from the room. Teenagers can also learn to be more aware of their social media use, Sykes said. If you find using social media is making you anxious, it may be time to pull back, and realize you aren't going to miss out on anything.

**Read Article 2 and answer the following questions.**

What is the main idea of the article?

What are three **reasons** the author gives that supports the main idea?

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List the reasons you agree with and the reasons you disagree with in the chart below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I **agree** with…  | I **disagree** with… |
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**Article 3: Less time using screens might help teens be happier, study says**

Recently, Silicon Valley executives have been speaking out about the addictiveness of smartphones. They are particularly concerned over their effect on teenagers. Now, a new report backs up their concerns. The report finds that the more hours a day teens spend in front of screens, the less satisfied they are.

Here's the name of the report: "Decreases in Psychological Well-Being Among American Adolescents After 2012 and Links to Screen Time During the Rise of Smartphone Technology." It was published in the journal Emotion. Every year The University of Michigan does survey questions with eighth, tenth and twelfth graders. The report used information from the answers students gave to the survey.

**Teens' Self-Esteem Down Since 2012**

The report said that young people's self-esteem and happiness have gone down since 2012. The year 2012 was the first year that more than half of Americans owned a smartphone.

The report also found that adolescents' psychological well-being decreased the more hours a week they spent on screens. That includes the following: the Internet, social media, texting, gaming and video chats. The findings are like earlier reports linking frequent screen use and teenage depression and anxiety.

In the past six years, more and more people have started using devices. The percentage of teens who had smartphones was 37 percent in 2012. It went up to 89 percent in 2016. Those statistics come from the Pew Research Center and the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

**Graphing The Connection Between Happiness And Screen Use**

The study graphed the connection between happiness and screen activities. It also graphed the connection between happiness and non-screen activities such as sports. Jean Twenge helped lead the study. She is a psychology professor. She called the relationship of screen and non-screen activities "zero sum." That means if you are doing one, it takes time away from the others.

Diane Tanman lives in Chevy Chase, Maryland. She worries that is the case for her sons. Her boys are 11 and 15. They used to play games in fields when they were little and it made them happier, Tanman said. These days her sons are more into online games. Many of the games have rewards built in to keep players coming back. "I think it's addictive," Tanman said. "It's just junk food for the brain."

Ed Lazzara says his 12-year-old son Leo is a fan of the game Minecraft. Leo is more irritable after he has been playing a lot, Lazzara said.

**"Some Of It Is About Your Particular Kid"**

Amanda Lenhart is deputy director of the Better Life Lab at New America. She has studied teenagers and screen use. Lenhart said rather than making one set of rules about when and how much screen time teens should have; she prefers a case-by-case approach. "Some of it is about your particular kid and your particular life, and you as a parent," she said. "Some of it is you looking at your child and saying, 'Something is not right here.'"

Many schools ask students to be online and to use iPads, Chromebooks or other devices. But it's to do their work. Teachers have complained that technology can become a distraction when students use it in the classroom for things other than their studies.

**"It Shouldn't Be Part Of Your Every Day"**

Marina Bowsher has a 14-year-old boy and a 12-year-old girl. She views screen time "like dessert." She said this: "Sure, you can have some once in a while, but it shouldn't be part of your every day."

**Read Article 3 and answer the following questions.**

What is the main idea of the article?

What are three **reasons** the author gives that supports the main idea?

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List the reasons you agree with and the reasons you disagree with in the chart below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I **agree** with…  | I **disagree** with… |
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**Vocabulary:**

Identify 7 **high-utility** words in all three articles, then find the definition and draw a picture.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Vocabulary Word** | **Definition** | **Picture** |
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**Organize your ideas:**

After reading the three articles, take a final stand on the topic question.

**Does technology mostly help or harm us?**

 **Claim**: I think technology mainly

 , because

 .

Transition Word: Transition Word: Transition Word:

**Supportive Evidence from text:**

**Supportive Evidence from text:**

**Supportive Evidence from text:**

**REASONING:**

**REASONING:**

**REASONING:**

**Final Paragraph:**

Write your final justification paragraph. Be sure to include:

* A clear topic sentence that states your claim
* 3 pieces of evidence from the texts that support your claim
* 3 reasons that explains how your evidence supports your claim
* 5 transition words
* 6 high utility words
* Concluding sentence