# **ENGL003/-102**

**SPRING 2024**

**Argumentative Essay Final Draft (20%)**

**Student 1: Yahia Hany Gaber ID: 231000412**

**Student 2: Omar Hesham Desouky ID: 231000256**

**Essay Title:**

**Not everyone with access to social media should be able to post.**

As online misinformation spreads, should there be constraints on social media as to limit the ability to post to only individuals with the ability to contribute constructively? (Yahia)

Social media platforms have democratized communication, allowing anyone with an internet connection to share their thoughts, opinions, and experiences with the world. this freedom comes with its challenges. The posting of misinformation and false news, hate speech and harassment must raise concerns about the negative impacts of unrestricted posting privileges. (Omar)

Although not everyone agrees, posting on social media platforms should be exclusive to

verified individuals guaranteed to maintain the truthfulness of information and news while having a safe harassment free community. (Yahia)

One of the main arguments against the freedom of positing online is the spread of fake news and misinformation. As news stories are being shared all over social media platforms, it is easy for readers to misinterpret these stories and share them to others with their own interpretation leading to the spread of different false versions of the same story, Marcus Woo (2021) compares the spread of online misinformation to an infectious virus mutating and evolving over time and trying to stop the spread is like chasing a prey that cannot be caught. This uncontrollable spread can risk the public safety as many readers are not able to distinguish between real and fake news and information which impacts the truthfulness of sources and platforms. Another impact of fake news and misinformation is on social unity and cohesion. According to Lee De-Wit et al (2019), there is evidence suggesting that social media has become a site of ferocious political arguments that drives polarization through organizing people into communities based on tribal conflicts. This polarization can be taken further since users tend to follow pages and groups that align with their beliefs leading to selective exposure that strengthens bias, and since social media often portrays situations as “us versus them”, that bias and polarization can lead to a tear in the community’s cohesion and unity. Thus, the unrestricted freedom of posting online not only risks public safety through the infectious spread of misinformation but also threatens social unity by fostering and growing political polarization and greater biases. (Yahia)

Furthermore, the most dangerous part about social media is hate speech, harassment and cyberbullying which highly affects people especially teenagers which can lead to mental health issues like depressions and anxiety, Hate speech can be in the form of a post or a video or even in a chat with a stranger and it is very dangerous even for a teenager which it could easily affect his mindset and make him feel like he is nothing, Harassment is to abuse people on the internet and sending to victim graphic material that is knowingly offensive also it could be a post to harassing someone and convinces people that this person is bad person. Cyberbullying is to post hurtful or abusive messages about someone and it could be rumours too and the most dangerous part is to circulating private or embarrassing information or photos of person to extorts and make this person do bad things especially if it was a teenagers because they are not fully matured and they will obey anything, So this will affect the youth mental health wish could cause depression and anxiety even before the COVID-19 pandemic the rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide in young people were high and according to data from the U.S Centers for disease control and prevention in 2021 more than 40% of high schools reported depressive symptoms (Kirsten Weir,2023). some people think that bullying is a part of growing it but bullying could affect teenagers in long term especially when cyberbullying appears it has been worse than before and it can be seen daily on social media such that 15% of students ages 12-18 reporting being affected by cyberbullying (Kathleen Curties,2024) in conclusion social media could be good if you use it in the right way but most of the time it could be harmful especially to teenagers which could highly affected by cyberbullying and harassment which affects their mental health and increase suicide rates so teenagers should be aware while using social media. (Omar)

On the other hand, a lot of people argue that freedom of speech is a must, and that everyone should have the right to post freely on social media. (Yahia) They claim that posting on social media has its own benefits like making us connected to people we love and the rest of the world in addition to expressing our thoughts and opinions. “Social media appears to have a range of benefits. It provides a way for many of us to connect with others. We can support other people by posting online and feel supported by them” (Peggy Kern, 2019). (Omar) While parts of their arguments may be valid, according to the national library of medicine (2024), a lot of pressure is built inside users to create the stereotype that others want to see. This prolonged pressure to match other people’s lifestyle to be popular relates to negative signs and symptoms of depression, stress and anxiety as these symptoms can diminish self-esteem as individuals may believe that their lives are less successful of fulfilling compared to the perfect images they see online. Additionally, those same individuals will have urges to maintain an online image that matches societal expectations which can become mentally exhausting and create a sense of identity loss. Moreover, the pressure to be engaging and active on social platforms might can come at the cost of having real life interactions, further increasing pressure and stress levels as well as a sense of isolation from their real selves. (Yahia). Social media is used every day and people text each other which made communication easier to the people. According to Roeder, A. (2020). using social media as part of everyday routine and responding to content that others share is positively associated with all three health outcomes, Social media could be beneficial and useful for its users for whom use it in the right way which it could increase the connection between the people and knowing new people through social media but it could also bad when it comes to you talk too much with people you don't know and trust them also the social media is not good all the time it could be a waste time to the person and also there is a lot of cyberbullying which affects their mental health and make them feel unconfident about themselves also the rumours around the social media could lead to disasters and make people trust news that isn’t real at all. (Omar) In addition, Joseph Turow, a communication professor at Annenberg school for communication, states that any piece of information shared online can be used by hackers trying to break in private accounts since years of graduation, cities lived at, and even car models can be valuable information to hackers as they can be answers to popular security questions to retirement funds and back accounts. As people are freely sharing their everyday life online, it is easier than ever for anyone with malicious intent to gather the information necessary information to access someone’s account or even be able to cause physical harm. Not only can hackers use that information found online to access accounts, but they can also create customized “phishing” messages which are messages designed to trick the victim into giving away sensitive information which they can use to their advantage. While freedom of speech on social media is seen as a great method to connect people the risks including mental health issues, exposure to cyberbullying, spread of misinformation and the vulnerability to hackers are strong reasons to why posting on social media should be restricted to only reserved verified members. (Yahia)

In conclusion, restricting posting privileges on social media platforms to verified individuals, ensuring the accuracy and truth of information and news while fostering a safe, non-toxic community is a measure that can contribute significantly to a more trustworthy and constructive online environment. (Yahia) The freedom of posting on social media has its harms which it makes a big challenge especially for the young people as the ability to post freely can help to spread fake news or misleading information, also cyberbullying and harassment leads to anxiety, depression and mental issues to the people especially to teenagers. (Omar) While opinions may vary, prioritizing truthfulness and safety through verified and monitored posting combats the challenges of misinformation and toxicity, therefore benefiting both users and society. (Yahia)

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**Argumentative Essay Rubric – FALL 2023**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Item** | **Grade** |
|  | **Task Response** |  |
| **3** | * Essay ranges from 1200 to 1500 words (10% more or less). = 1 * S writes the essay in the APA format and layout (double-spaced, 12 Times New Roman, Paragraph style, Indentation). = 1 * S writes a good title that reflects his/her claim. = 1 | |
|  | **Introduction** |  |
| **6** | * + It includes an attractive hook that clearly relates to the topic. = 1   + It has rich and well-developed background sentences. = 1   + There is a controversial statement (or counterclaim). = 1   + A strong thesis statement that is debatable, assertive, reasonable and focused is included which shows the position of the writer stating his position clearly (either with or against). = 1   + Two 2 clear, specific reasons that logically support the thesis statement are included (completing the thesis statement or separately written). = 1   + The paragraph is written in correct order (hook, background sentences, controversial statement, thesis and reasons). = 1   **NB. If any item of the above is missing, deduct 1 mark.** | |
|  | **Body Paragraph 1 (BP 1)** |  |
| **5** | * BP 1 has a clear topic sentence that relates to Reason 1/Claim 1 as mentioned in the thesis statement, with the same order. = 1 * BP 1 includes two (or more) strong and varied pieces of evidence that directly support the first reason. = 1 * A clear and detailed reasoning sentence(s) is included to explain the evidence and to show the relation between the reasoning and the evidence. = 2 * A concluding sentence is included which restates Reason 1 and its explanation briefly with no redundancy and cleverly introduces Reason 2. = 1   **NB. If any item of the above is missing, deduct 1 mark.** | |
|  | **Body Paragraph 2 (BP 2)** |  |
| **5** | * BP 2 has a clear topic sentence that relates to Reason 2/Claim 2 as mentioned in the thesis statement, with the same order. = 1 * BP 2 includes two (or more) strong and varied pieces of evidence that directly support the second reason. = 1 * A clear and detailed reasoning sentence(s) is included to explain the evidence and to show the relation between the reasoning and the evidence. = 2 * A concluding sentence is included which restates Reason 2 and its explanation briefly with no redundancy. = 1   **NB. If any item of the above is missing, deduct 1 mark.** | |
|  | **Counterargument** |  |
| **5** | * A topic sentence clearly introduces the counterargument [which must be directly opposing the main argument] with an appropriate cohesive device or verb. = 1   **OR**  A topic sentence starts with a concession statement followed by an opposing cohesive device that signals the transition and introduces the counterargument statement.   * A relevant and relatively short quotation/support is included to support the counterargument. =1 * An effective refutation sentence which logically and strongly disproves the counterclaim is included. = 1 * A valid, reliable evidence is included to support the refutation sentence. =1 * A brief concluding sentence that summarizes the counterclaim and its refutation is included. = 1   **NB. If any item of the above is missing, deduct 1 mark.** | |
|  | **Conclusion** |  |
| **3** | * A topic sentence restates the thesis statement with special attention to emphasizing the writer’s position, without mirroring the original thesis statement. = 1 * Two sentences are included that summarize the topic sentence of each body paragraph with special attention to rewording the two reasons, with no redundancy. =1 * A logical and well-thought recommendation/suggestion sentence (or more) is included at the end, which relates to the main argument and shows high-level of evaluation of the argument. = 1 | |
|  | **Style, Language & Mechanics** |  |
| **3** | * Writing is smooth, skillful, and coherent. * Sentences are strong and expressive with varied structure. * Consistent and appropriate tone and word choice is used throughout the paragraph. * Transitions are appropriate and add to the effectiveness of the paragraph. * No errors in punctuation, spelling, grammar, or capitalization. * Effective use of appeals (ethos/pathos/logos) all through the essay. | |
|  | **Integration of Sources and APA Citation** |  |
| **5** | * Three relevant sources, or more, are correctly inserted intext with all details = 1 * Three relevant sources, or more, are included in the reference list corresponding to the sources included intext. = 1 * Correct and complete entries in the Reference list of all 3 sources = 1 * Proper integration of quotes, paraphrases and summaries in the essay. No copying and pasting or AI use= 1 * The integration of sources reflects deep understanding and analysis of the readings. = 1   **NB. If any item of the above is missing, deduct 1 mark.** | |
| **Grade:** | | **/35** |
| **Final Grade:** | | /20 |
| **Comments:** | | |