THE **WRITE IDEA**
SERIES

Topic Idea Banks for IELTS or TOEFL Writing & Speaking

Vol. 3
TECHNOLOGY & the INTERNET

VOCABULARY | SUBTOPICS | EXAMPLES | QUESTIONS | ESSAYS

in collaboration with

$12.00 (USD)

Introduction

The key to persuading readers not only to read an essay from start to finish, but to engage with the content is to provide them with concrete and effective ideas that support a strong thesis. This expression of ideas, moreover, must be presented in a clear, concise, and convincing manner.

The aim of this book is to help writers express strong arguments, solutions, explanations, descriptions, and so on in a timed situation (i.e., test) by offering a range of ideas about a topic. By working with keywords, questions, examples and essays, test takers will be prepared for any question on a topic that appears on a writing test. For those taking a speaking test, these ideas, vocabulary, and questions can also be used to present verbal description, arguments and more.

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HOW TO USE THIS E-BOOK

There are no shortcuts to learning; everyone needs to actively engage the language, be active in one's practice on a daily basis, and to work hard to achieve high scores on language tests. This applies especially to the idea bank. The idea bank is something that you need to constantly build up, add to, go back to, and practice using.

Here are the key steps to getting the most benefit from The Write Idea:

1. Look over the collected keywords. You will know many of these already, but there will also be many new words for you to learn. Label them as follows:

   1) words you already know

   2) words you have seen or heard before and can probably guess in context

   3) words that are completely new to you

   Look up new words in the dictionary and create sentences using them. Become comfortable and confident in using these words. (Start with the #2 words, then move on to the #3 words)

   There are also sets of synonyms and expressions for you to use to improve your lexical range, as certain words and expressions will often repeat themselves. For example, instead of using the word *new* several times, you can use *cutting-edge, innovative,* or *emerging*. Instead of *old*, you can use *outdated, obsolete,* or other verbs and expressions. Study these as well.

   You can categorize the keywords according to your own groupings. You can, and should, add other words to these lists.

   Go over these lists regularly. Try also connecting words to specific topics or questions to see how they might be used to create supporting arguments. Don't forget to try to use these keywords in different parts of speech (convert nouns to verbs, adjectives to adverbs, etc.).

2. Read over the questions to make sure you understand exactly what is being asked, i.e., what is the focus of the question? What are you being asked to do (give an opinion, answer yes or no, offer solutions, etc.)? Most importantly, become familiar with the question types.

   Try underlining key words in the questions to make sure you have the right focus, and then list some of the vocabulary you studied that could be useful in answering the question.

3. Create a plan for a full essay for every question. Answer the following questions:

   – What is the general topic?

   – What is the specific question, issue, debate, etc.?

   – What is your opinion, thesis?

   – Provide a general outline of how you will present your arguments/ideas.

   Practice until you can create a plan for any question within 3–4 minutes.

4. Look at the subtopics and the points associated with each. Try to create a variety of questions about these specific areas, then create a plan to answer them. Think of other subtopics that might come up.

5. Look over the examples and study their structures and general functionality. Connect these to the questions to which they may be applicable.

   Add your own examples, from your own experiences and knowledge (your own personal examples will likely be easier to recall on test day).

6. Practice writing full, timed essays every other day.

7. Look over the sample essays. These include high-end vocabulary, varied sentence structures, transitions and linking devices, and other important elements necessary for high scores on exam writing sections.

Remember: To pass the test, you must work hard. There are no shortcuts.

KEYWORDS

The following groups of words are meant to help you create mental pictures of ideas associated with Technology and the Internet. By no means should you try to memorize all the words below; however, these words will help you tap into a large pool of ideas related to all aspects of these general topics. Your own experiences in these areas will certainly provide you with material with which to write a few essays, yet there are many aspects of these fields that you may have never considered and that may have never been a part of your personal experience; for example—how might a cashless society work, the dangerous side of the internet, or how devices are changing education.

Moreover, strong essays use a variety of words. By immersing yourself in these keywords, you can increase your vocabulary range and thereby your score on language tests that specifically evaluate this aspect of your language ability.

PART 1: COMPUTING AND THE INTERNET

People

anonymous	hacker	technophile
technophobe	service provider	administrator
technical support	user	geek / nerd
techie	host	digital native
webmaster	engineer	end-user
expert	follower	specialist
first mover	developer	pioneer
inventor	revolutionary	netizen
millennial(s)	innovator	visionary
repairperson / technician	baby-boomer(s)	Gen-Xer(s), Yer(s)
other:		

Internet (issues)

censorship	surveillance	privacy
patent / copyright	phishing	net neutrality
streaming	piracy	cyberbullying
data mining	digital marketing	tracking
journalism	public domain	spam
malware	adware	fake news
virus	propaganda	intellectual property
other:		

Internet (websites, services, community)

e-learning	e-commerce	meetings
e-banking	e-publishing	hotspot
tag	open source	gaming
crowdfunding	shopping	hashtag
conferencing	collaboration	avatar
incognito	troll	trending
interactive	microblog	chatroom
podcast	emoji	bookmark
username	viral	sitemap
blog / vlog	profile	plugins
file sharing	forum	ranking
attachment	shopping cart	hosting
call-to-action	traffic	petition
thread	clickbait	email address
interconnected	proxy	crowdsourcing
other:	webinar	creative commons

Internet (general)

template	cybersecurity	vector
mobile	cybercrime	portal
search engine	website	cyber warfare
big data	online / offline	multimedia
meta / beta	simulation	web design
front-end	imaging	platform
homepage	cache	database
layout	default	back-end
history	analytics	domain
account	junk mail	keyword
connect	query	cookie
cloud	intranet	link
browser	cryptocurrency	firewall
bugs	remote access	security
server	issues	blockchain
icon	protocol	content marketing
cyberspace	netiquette	up / downtime
cyber espionage	knowledge management	electronic signature
other:		

Computers (hardware & equipment)

wearable device	gear	gadget
laptop	tablet	smartphone
e-reader	console	disk drive
ethernet	modem	router
processor	plug-n-play	memory card
camcorder	keypad	charger
monitor	pixel	mouse
microchip	component	terminal
semiconductor	circuits	storage
frequency	micro / macro	mode
grid	formatting	dial-up
version	resolution	graphics
broadband	bandwidth	thumb drive
hi-res (resolution)	webcam	accessory
notebook	peripheral	port
QWERTY keyboard	scanner	driver
matrix	motherboard	card reader
other:		

Computers (software)

application (app)	Photoshop	anti-virus
Adobe	Microsoft Office Suite	algorithm
byte (b)	data	bit
encryption	coding	programming
intuitive	malicious	content
spyware	torrent	spreadsheet
editor	kilo(kb)/mega/giga/terabyte	files (e.g., PDF, DOC, JPEG)
word processor		
other:		

Computing (general)

Wi-Fi	intranet	digital
analog	Windows / iOS	systems
feature	mass storage	cursor
configuration	mainframe	tools
icon	build	binary
options	hard copy	crash
infrastructure	methodology	font
integrated	password	computer science
(de)fragmentation	specs (specifications)	telecommunications
other:		

PART 2: OTHER TECHNOLOGY

Home (appliances & electronics)

dishwasher	refrigerator (fridge)	freezer
microwave	convection oven	rice cooker
electric stove	climate control	security camera
kettle	washer/dryer	coffee maker
hair dryer	blender	fan
smart home system	vacuum	juicer
air conditioner (A/C)	motorized	smart TV
home alarm		
other:		

Industry/Business/Products

radio	typewriter	floppy disk
carburetor	fuel injection	vinyl records
cassette	pager	rotary phone
film (cameras)	pen and ink	flip phone
manual	paper money	prototype
telecom	mass production	automated
assembly line	teleconference	workflow
robotics	telemarketing	
other:		

Prehistoric to Renaissance to Early Modern

fire	sharpened stone	stone tools
cloth	iron	wheel
pulley	plough	manual labour
language	pigments	writing
art	parchment	smelting
aqueduct	bridge	compass
paper	turbine	gunpowder
abacus	crane	gear
watermill/wheel	concrete	winch
screw	drainage	dam
wheelbarrow	windmill	indoor plumbing
sewage systems	coal power	printing press
sun dial	clock	oil
electricity	pyramids (engineering)	steam power
spectacles (glasses)	musical instruments	animal domestication
other:		

Industrial Revolution to Present

machination	steam engine	combustion engine
nanotechnology	battery	light bulb
3D printing	fiber optics	remote control
electromagnetism	3D movies	virtual reality
self-driving vehicle	ultrasonic	retinal scan
other:		

Vehicles

horse & carriage	sled	car
hybrid	space shuttle	canoe
standing scooter	motorcycle	cruise ship
spaceship / space rocket	autonomous	airplane / jet
truck	yacht	hydroplane
sailboat	submarine	jet pack
supertanker	manned space flight	helicopter
dual-purpose	hover jet	tram
amphibious	locomotive	bicycle / tricycle
train / bullet train	International Space Station	inline / roller-skate
electric walker		
other:		

Medicine

microscope	non-invasive surgery	test tube baby
CT scan	in vitro fertilization	prosthetics
laser eye surgery	assistive devices	fitness equipment
pacemaker	organ transplant	incubator
X-ray	defibrillator	cosmetic surgery
implants	silicone	
other:		

Military

bow & arrow	catapult	sword
slingshot	axe	musket
rifle	pistol	laser
machine gun	grenade	night-vision
napalm	incendiary bomb	semi-automatic
guided missile	precision bomb	phosphorous bomb
nuclear bomb	dirty bomb	chemical / biological
drone	infrared	bunker-buster
other:		

Exploration

telescope	rocket	space suit
genome mapping	microwave	solar system
other:	radio wave	identity theft

Technology (issues)

cryogenics	clean tech	facial recognition
cybernetics	augmented reality	robotics
artificial intelligence (AI)	transparency	virtual reality (VR)
other:		

Communication

telephone	World Wide Web	computer
telegraph	internet	typewriter
television	mobile	instant messaging
fibre optics	wireless	writing
satellite	Morse code	alphabet
film	facsimile	art/music
email	printing press	hieroglyph
post		
other:		

Talking about Tech

compact	latest	newest
user-friendly	hi/lo-tech	-powered
unproven	efficient	established
disruptive	practicable	-literate
cutting-edge	leading-edge	state-of-the-art
innovative	groundbreaking	obsolete
antiquated	-oriented	responsive
scalable	electronic	manual
automated	outdated	contemporary
anachronistic	ubiquitous	futuristic
outmoded	superior	inferior
indigenous	radical	backwards
nascent	breakthrough	labour-saving
polytechnic	know-how	hand-held
-generation	mobile	savvy
performance	organic	machinery
embedded	complicated	emerging
sophisticated	mechanical	complex
confusing	distracting	self-
other:		

Acronyms

RAM (random access memory)

R&D (research and development)

(D)SLR ((digital) single lens reflex

ROM (read only memory)

IP (internet protocol- web address)

PC (personal computer)

OS (operating system)

P2P (person to person)

Y2K (the year 2000)

AI (artificial intelligence)

ECG (electrocardiogram)

FTP (file transfer protocol)

CPU (central processing unit)

FAQ (frequently asked questions)

IT (information technology)

ISP (internet service provider)

UI (user interface)

WWW (world wide web)

MRI (magnetic resonance imaging)

B2B/C (business to business/consumer)

other:

CD (compact disk)

LCD (liquid crystal display)

HD (high definition)

SUV (sports utility vehicle)

CG (computer graphics)

GIF (graphic interchange format)

SEO (search engine optimization

HTML (hypertext markup language)

URL (uniform resource locator)

USB (universal serial bus)

VPN (virtual private network)

UX (user experience)

DVD (digital video disk)

LTE (long term evolution)

4G (fourth generation)

ATV (all-terrain vehicle)

LED (light-emitting diode)

RSS Feed (rich site summary)

AMOLED (active-matrix organic light-emitting diode

Idiomatic Language (idioms, phrasal verbs, expressions, collocations)

Note: these idioms can be used (sparingly) in formal academic writing for the IELTS, TOEFL, or other English language exams. However, be sure to use them correctly and in the appropriate context, or not at all. They can also be used in speaking test and informal letters of the IELTS General test.

information highway	wear and tear
grease the wheels	pull the plug
behind the times	keep in touch
gizmo	well-oiled machine
cog in the machine	hit the panic button
make something tick	reinvent the wheel
grind one's gears	run out of steam
light years ahead	get (our) wires crossed
fire on all cylinders	backup
keep up	catch up
plugged-in	print out / printout
pop-up	wipe out
hack into	log in/out/off/on
sign in/out/up	hook up / hookup
set up	filter out
shut down	boot up
clickbait	turn on/off
on the same wavelength	start up / startup
have (something) down to a science	
other:	

Collocations

get/go online	do a search
technological breakthrough	unfettered access
make advances	have an edge
wireless network	modern technology
the latest technology	medical / military technology
smart tech	shop online
visit a website	surf / search the internet
do an online search	search for something online
other:	

Technology & the Internet Verbs

access	install	innovate	telecommute
(re)configure	operate	spread	maintain
cut & paste	transfer	utilize	break down
crash	fuse	adjust	connect
navigate	patent	integrate	print
(re)boot	scroll	employ	infect
enter	crop	embrace	authenticate
edit	Photoshop	deploy	advance
execute	subscribe	manufacture	create
sync	mechanize	pioneer	program
troubleshoot	surf	input	invent
tweak	click	emerge	adopt
diagnose	browse	extract	invest
enhance	hack	digitize	license
queue	email	switch	record
calculate	upgrade	multi-task	absorb
authorize	search	Google	exploit
progress	decipher	shut down	draft
design	engage	equip	chat
initiate	restore	back up	network
expand	right/left click	(re)format	compile
transform	(un)zip	escape	load
implement	analyze	infect	miniaturize
adapt	encrypt	text	track
incorporate	fax	update	calibrate
rely on	scan	delete	outfit
facilitate	archive	drag & drop	swipe
fabricate	revolutionize	explore	reply / forward
perfect	develop	debug	import / export
download / upload	code	enable / disable	evolve / devolve
minimize / maximize	tweak	unfriend / unfollow	
other:			

COMMON TERMS & ALTERNATIVES

If you can avoid repeating words in an essay, do so. The following words are the most commonly used in essays on Technology & the Internet. You should not have to use the word "new" ten times in your essay. In fact, this will weaken your writing as there are other words that work just as well and can be applied in different contexts.

In the examples below, the underlined, *italicized*, or **bolded** words can be replaced with the words/expressions beneath them.

Note: You may have to make adjustments for syntax. Make sure you know which words are appropriate for which context.

Looking for information on the internet

These days, most people go on the internet to *search for* information.

surf the web	*find, look up*
go online	*access*

search the net for

Being connected

It is much easier to *maintain contact with* family and friends thanks to the internet.

keep in touch with

interact, communicate with

connect with

reach

Technology now allows professionals from all over the world to communicate more easily and *work together* on projects without being in the same place.

collaborate	interact
cooperate	connect
participate in	exchange information
team up / join forces	contact each other
coordinate	correspond

Discussing change

There is no doubt that *technology* has <u>completely changed</u> the way we do things.

modern advances (have)   <u>*revolutionized*</u>

computers, machines, new innovations (have)   <u>*drastically altered*</u>

devices, gadgets (have)   <u>*totally transformed*</u>

The way we live our lives today has <u>changed</u> considerably thanks to *advances* in technology.

<u>evolved</u>   *innovations*

<u>altered</u>   *progress*

<u>shifted</u>

Some members of the older generations find it difficult to *make the change* from analog to digital ways of doing things.

switch, transition, adapt, adjust, convert
(all of these are verbs)

With so many *changes to* current <u>models</u> of technology, some people feel they are being left behind and cannot catch up.

modifications to, alterations to   <u>versions</u>

transformations in, developments in   <u>editions</u>

recalibrations of, reconfigurations of   <u>forms</u>

Millennials often make the mistake of thinking their elders are *out of touch with the modern world*. In fact, the baby boomers are quite <u>aware of</u> what is happening in the world.

anachronistic   <u>plugged in to</u>

tuned out   <u>tuned in to</u>

old-fashioned   <u>conscious of</u>

dinosaurs   <u>in the know when it comes to</u>

archaic   <u>familiar with</u>

Problems

Most new devices *experience problems* in the first months of their use.

show defects, glitches, bugs, issues

Past and present

Jim's grandfather is *old-fashioned*: he still likes to write postcards to friends when he travels.

old-school, traditional, a dinosaur, analog

Jim's mother, on the other hand, is very *modern*.

current, progressive, contemporary

Usefulness

As so many devices become *old and useless* so quickly, many recycling plants simply cannot process them fast enough and they end up in garbage dumps.

outdated, obsolete, antiquated, redundant, irrelevant

Samsung just launched its <u>newest</u> smartphone. It uses *the most advanced* technology.

<u>latest</u>	*cutting-edge*
<u>most recent</u>	*state-of-the-art*
<u>the latest version of</u> (its)	*leading-edge*

A successful tech company will continuously develop *creative new* technologies.

innovative, groundbreaking, transformative

Today's companies need to constantly *get better* equipment as technology becomes outdated so quickly.

upgrade, update, modernize (their)

The program is good, but it just needs a few *adjustments* to make it better.

alterations, tweaks

Note: If you find that your practice essays tend to repeat certain words, or if there are words you often confuse with other words, write them here and make sure you have synonyms for them and are aware of every word's meaning and contextual usage.

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TECHNOLOGY & THE INTERNET SUBTOPICS

Technology & the Internet are very broad fields. They involve much more than computers, the web, robots and machines. The following subtopics present varied aspects of Technology & the Internet that are often overlooked. By familiarizing yourself with these ideas, you should be prepared to view Technology & the Internet from varying perspectives and write about any topic that concerns them.

Internet: positives and negatives

Positives: shrinking world; social interactions; meeting new people (friends, partners, romantic interests); professional networking; access to information; speed of information sharing; educational opportunities such as distance learning; new business ventures; less reliant on mainstream media for news; great source of language learning and practice; unlimited potential (business, social, professional, activist, etc.); reach a wider audience; seniors and disabled can shop online

Negatives: plenty of false information (need to weed out the bad from the reliable); trolling; cyberbullying; exploitation; predators can find victims easily (especially children); privacy concerns; identity theft; addiction to negative online influences (games, pornography, social networks); bombarded by advertising; ease of manipulation; spread of hate; competition; superficial relationships

Finding a balance: limit one's time spent online; spend more time outdoors; interact with people in real life; read books; visit family; travel; write; take part in team sports; join meaningful online communities & webinars

Online Shopping

Positives: save time; save money (online stores do not need to pay rent for a store and can pass the savings on to customers); more convenient; don't need to wait in lines or compete with other shoppers; no salespeople pressuring you to buy; can compare other sellers' prices instantly; can get customer reviews on products; for the physically challenged or for bedridden (sick) people (who can't go out often) this provides a connection to the world

Negatives: too easy to buy (just click a button); addictive; can't get a sensory impression of the product (can't touch, smell, taste, etc.); refunds and exchanges are troublesome; not always sure you'll get the right product; a 2-dimensional view might not be the same as the real, 3-d item; many online scams; have to provide private information to a website (sites can be hacked and this info stolen)

Learning: on campus vs. distance (E-learning)

Online—advantages: learn other skills as byproduct (web searching, typing, coding/programming, web conferencing, etc.); instant access to supplementary resources; join forums (social interaction with a particular focus); save on expenses (dorms, food, commute, etc.); don't need to leave home; make own schedule; control the pace of studies; —*disadvantages*: need to be self-driven/motivated, self-reliant, and disciplined; self-studying can be lonely; virtual relationships (on screen only); no direct interaction with professors/teachers; limited opportunities to meet people from other fields of study

Offline—advantages: socialization (parties, teams, sports, clubs, etc.); networking with people on a more personal level; can speak directly with professors and let them know who you are; peer work on a personal level; support systems in place (writing lab, computer lab, guidance counsellors, mentors, etc.); chance to meet new friends, establish relationships; the "college experience"; school spirit; greater opportunities to find internships, apprenticeships, part-time work, etc.; possibilities of discovering new fields of study; — *disadvantages*: higher costs; may need to be away from family and friends; easy to be distracted (parties, girl/boyfriend, peer pressure, etc.), limited technical skills needed/learned

Digital vs. Analog

Analog: examples: reading a hard copy book; writing with pen and paper; searching for information through literature; drawing pictures and sketching; meeting for a chat; walking

Advantages: develops critical thinking skills, hand-eye coordination; increased creativity; more self-reliance; not a slave to machines and/or electricity; keeps a person active and engaged; deeper relationships

Digital: examples: reading on a screen; typing and printing; searching for information through a search engine (Google, Bing, etc.); taking pictures with phone and applying filters; texting; driving with computer aid

Advantages: speed, cost; convenience; less human error; better for business and professional growth; allows for the realization of human potential and intelligence

Home Appliances

What it is –any machine or device that reduces or eliminates manual labour in the home; increasingly becoming "smart" using the internet of things

Positives: convenience—allows people to have more free time; time to do more meaningful things; helps the economy in terms of consumer spending (people no longer fix, they simply buy new, replace); do a better job than manual approach (cleaning, cooking, sweeping, etc.)
Negatives: addiction, excuse to be lazy (gives people more free time, but watch TV, sleep, etc.); become dependent, less self-reliant; children do not do chores; do not learn responsibility and value of work; increases electricity use; most components of these machines are not recyclable and fill up waste dumps– increase pollution (carbon footprint)

Technology in the Classroom: helpful or harmful?

Help: students learn valuable technical skills needed in the modern workplace; can find supplemental information quickly; less reliance on teacher; can interact with students on a global scale and learn things not available in textbooks (culture, local sights, foods, etc.); multimedia can capture students' attention by making delivery of curriculum more varied and engaging; gives students a hands-on experience with learning; can adapt the technology to each student's level; students can learn to code, which is the language of the future; ensures teachers continuously learn and update their skills (so students don't need to teach them)

Harm: students may be easily distracted by online content; students rely on computers to do their thinking for them (spellchecker, Wikipedia, calculator, etc.); bullying can be done anonymously yet on a greater scale; not all parents can afford to provide the necessary technology outside the classroom, so some students will be left behind; loss of traditional educational approaches (reading, writing, etc.); teachers may become overly reliant on tech to keep students occupied in class rather than working hard (babysitting); easy to cheat on assignments

Social Media

Positives: allows people to meet a variety of contacts from all over the world; can follow and share with many people simultaneously; can keep in touch with family and friends from anywhere in the world; keep up with world news and events; find interesting local events and other information that would normally not appear in mainstream media sources; can become famous (go viral); very good way to advertise a business

Negatives: addiction; comparing oneself to others often leads to low self-esteem; lack of privacy; create a target for predators; disinformation; Photoshopped reality; spread hate; platforms often change based on what is in best interest of the tech company, not individuals; people become products; superficial beauty; governments increasingly taking control

Internet and Relationships

Positives: expand one's opportunities to meet new people (from all over the world); long-distance relationships have a better chance of lasting as couples can still communicate regularly and "face-to-face"; social media allows people to expand network of professional and social contacts; can find like-minded people to connect with; can share personal passions and ideas with those who will appreciate it; can reach more people more quickly

Negatives: people becoming more secluded in terms of real-world contacts; people satisfied with 2-dimensional encounters with people (on screen); easy to "unfriend" someone by simply clicking a button; people compare their lives to those they see online (e.g., Instagram), which in many cases leads to depression and loss of confidence; no "alone" time

Safer World or More Dangerous?

Safer: more access to information (knowledge is the greatest weapon); better medical technology to deal with variety of injuries and ailments; increased speed of reaction to individual injuries and big catastrophes (earthquakes, hurricanes, volcanoes, etc.); better predictions of these; can use technology to reduce fossil fuel use and increase use of effective clean energy; law enforcement better equipped to deal with threats; increased global communication leads to collaboration and tolerance; tech helps build a healthy global economy, which reduces violent confrontations if people are satisfied

More dangerous: more potent weapons; hackers are getting smarter and cybersecurity is a growing issue; identity theft is easier; people more dependent on machines to do their manual labours and as source of entertainment and are becoming less healthy due to lack of exercise; people becoming more disengaged from nature and each other; espionage easier and national security more at risk, economies too interdependent

Privacy & Accessibility

Cons: most, if not all apps are free on condition of giving up one's privacy; common saying: "If you are not paying for the product, you are the product."; problem: cannot be connected to the world without giving up privacy; companies are aware of your online activities; big data knows everything about you; AI (artificial intelligence) tells companies your habits and tendencies so that they can market their products to you; cookies and tracking; high risk of identity theft, fraud, scams (phishing); open to criticism from strangers; "the internet doesn't forget"—once you post something online, it is available for everybody to see, forever

Pros: you can connect with the world; the costs of today's tech would be too high otherwise; creates a level playing field where everyone has the same opportunities to benefit– example: YouTube provides a person access to the world and allows one's voice to be heard; keeps a check on people who might otherwise be hiding something; creates transparency and makes people more careful about what they say

Change in Everyday Life

Too fast: older people can't keep up with the pace of change; people are losing the ability to appreciate the simpler things in life; new technology costs money, so people are now working more to pay for their new gadgets, therefore not actually increasing their free quality time; technology makes us less connected to nature; need to spend too much time learning new tech; wealth gap increasing as the poor can't buy new tech

Not fast enough: the more you have, the more you want to have; technology has the potential to do tasks much more quickly and more accurately than humans, so need more technology to take over everyday activities; in order to stay competitive, in the workplace or globally, we need to be ahead of others; information travels fast, need to keep up

Major Technological Advances in Past 150 Years

Communication: telephone; facsimile (fax) machine; texting, email; fiber optics; satellites; video chat; instant messaging

Military: airplanes; automatic guns; nuclear weapons; drones; satellite reconnaissance; lasers; night-vision glasses; supersonic jets; nuclear-powered submarines; precision-guided missiles; smart bombs

Medicine: MRI scanner; non-invasive surgery using lasers; genetic engineering; mass production of generic medicines; chemotherapy; radiation treatment; cyber warfare; fewer and smaller ground invasions; surgical strikes

Business: Big Data; AI; targeted advertising; content marketing; streamlined processes; global economy; increased job opportunities in tech, though lowers employment in areas such as manufacturing

Social networking: connects the world instantly; sharing; new journalism; level playing field for smaller businesses

Industry: agriculture (irrigation, land reclamation); manufacturing (automation, robotics); entertainment (computer graphics, 3D films, HD, animation); retail (online shopping, content marketing, targeted advertising)

Nature: desalination (sea water turned into potable water); cloning; cross-breeding; Energy: hydro; wind; solar; nuclear; electro-magnetic, tidal, thermal

Materials: plastics; PVC (polyvinyl chloride); graphene; aluminum; plasma; recyclables; titanium

Crutch: (does work for people rather than forcing them to make an effort): calculator; spellchecker; dishwasher; computer; robotics

Automation/Robotics

Benefits: increased productivity (fewer man-hours lost to injury, illness, etc.; they don't need breaks, don't strike, etc.); reduces costs for companies, thereby increasing profits long term; fewer errors; creates jobs for technical specialists; makes corporations and nations more competitive in a global market

Demerits: job losses for unskilled labour; expensive initial setup; makes humans redundant and corporations less caring for their staff; lack instinct; create paranoia; need constant learning to keep up with upgrades

Miscellaneous

Digital natives: people born into the age of digital technology; familiar with the internet and other digital tools from a young age; these kids and young adults do not know a world without the internet or fast sharing, appliances, or other devices that do their manual tasks for them

Smartphones: mini computers; the phone feature is a minor part of the usage (in fact, less than a third of a person's time spent on smartphones is in actual conversations)– mostly texting, emails, and using apps; people now surf the internet and shop online via their phone more often than on a desktop or laptop; smartphones can also be used to pay for things, much like a credit card; allows people to stay connected 24 hours a day; there has been an increase of accidents caused by smartphones (distracted driving being a very serious issue in many countries, as well as accidents taking selfies, walking with head down, etc.); young people are increasingly detached from society as they spend more and more time on their smartphones

Hacking / Cybersecurity: a growing problem globally; private information is increasingly difficult to protect; identity theft; national security concerns; growing industry for IT specialists; military spending in this area growing annually; Anonymous (hacking group claims to show the "truth"); making international borders meaningless

Cashless world: cryptocurrency; Bitcoin; hackers can steal more easily than muggers on the street; trusting our livelihood to machines and computers; essentially not real (not supported by any commodity, such as gold); smartphone will become our wallet

Internet of Things: devices and equipment all interconnected and communicating on an internet-based infrastructure; reduces human involvement (i.e., connect the devices and let them take care of things, for example, home security system will connect a camera to the owner's smartphone and the security company's system. It can set light switches to turn on and off, etc.); this is a growing trend globally

Open source: free computer applications and tools; people sharing their work for no charge; cybersecurity gives people tools to use for personal development and to start up their own business; reduces the power of corporations; provides artists and programmers credit and promotion of their work

Driverless vehicles: adv: eliminates human error; fewer accidents, deaths; better for the environment (more efficient); new industry that creates jobs and helps the economy; *disadv*: removes instinct from the process; eliminates many low-wage jobs for unskilled workers; not enough testing to ensure viability (not sure it can work on a large scale)

other:

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

By knowing what to expect, you can prepare for any scenario. These questions are varied enough to cover many aspects of technology & the internet such that you can draw on the ideas you have prepared to answer these questions and apply them to any that may appear on a test. Also, you will notice that some of the questions cover similar topics, yet these are presented differently according to the question type.

Make sure to distinguish between those questions that ask for an opinion, those that do not, and those that are hybrid.

Yes / No (don't forget the *why* or *how* questions that may be included)

1. "Digital natives" is a term used to describe those people who were born into a world run by machines and computers. Some people believe that digital natives are lacking in certain analog skills, such as handwriting, basic math calculations, and even social interaction. Does this situation present a danger to society as we head into the future? Why?

2. Should high school students be allowed to use the internet to do research for course projects? Why? Why not?

3. We are becoming increasingly dependent on computers. These machines are used in business, medicine, crime detection and even transportation, and some people worry about the pace of change in our world due to the increased use of technology in everyday life. Is this dependence on computers a good thing or should we be more suspicious of them?

4. As devices increasingly become a part of our lives many people, especially the young, spend most of their time indoors on computers. Some people worry that this has made us lose our connection to nature. Has our dependency on technology in general affected how we interact with the natural world around us?

5. Do technologically advanced nations have a duty to help less developed countries advance their technological infrastructures so that they can catch up with the rest of the world and compete?

6. As the world becomes increasingly competitive, many parents want their young children to start developing certain skills at an earlier age, especially technological ones. Should children be given a smartphone at a younger age so that they can adapt to the modern world of technology as soon as possible?

7. Has an overreliance on technology made young people more or less creative these days?

8. Should governments take control of the internet and issue licenses for people to use it?

9. Are friendships made online as real as those made offline?

10. Do you think social network companies like Facebook and Twitter should be held responsible for the negative effects of cyberbullying on their platforms?

other:

Agree / Disagree

Do you agree or disagree with the following:

Do you agree or disagree with this statement/belief/idea?

To what extent do you agree with this statement/belief/idea?

Do you agree that _____?

11. Technology has made the world a better place to live.

12. Over the past 20 years, significant developments in the field of information technology (IT), for example the internet and mobile technology, have changed the way we communicate. These developments are likely to have more negative effects than positive ones in the future.

13. With the help of technology, students nowadays can gain more knowledge and gain it more quickly.

14. Online shopping has many negative implications on people, such as making them lazy and allowing them to spend money without responsibility.

15. As a country's technology develops and advances, it loses its traditions, native skills, and ways of life. However, as this evolution is unavoidable it should be allowed to proceed and there is no point fighting it.

16. All inventions and discoveries from the dawn of humanity to the present, like the manipulation of fire, electricity, and the internet, have impacted our lives so much that people can no longer live without them.

17. Modern technology, especially the internet, is helping erase cultural boundaries and is creating a single world culture.

18. Young people have no appreciation for nature and for human relationships because they view the world through a two-dimensional screen.

19. Engineers are working hard to create safe driverless cars. They believe that computers operating these vehicles will remove human error from the act of driving and will help save many lives and reduce traffic congestion.

20. As the world becomes increasingly automated, young people would be better off going to a technical college to learn computer skills than to a university to learn theoretical knowledge.

21. Technological devices, such as smartphones and laptops, are full of materials that are not recyclable. With people buying new devices on a more regular basis these days and discarding their old ones, some argue that this is causing great harm to the environment. People should therefore be limited to purchasing a new phone or laptop only once every three years.

other:

Compare / Contrast / Discuss

22. Over the last decade or so, technology, especially the computer, has drastically changed the way people work and the ways companies run their businesses. Discuss some of these changes and say whether you think these changes have had more benefits or drawbacks.

23. Some people argue that the internet is making the world smaller by bringing people together. Others believe that it is making people more isolated and lonely. Discuss both views (and give your own opinion).

24. Students these days are heavily dependent on technology to help them study. Some people argue that this has lowered the quality of education, while others believe mastery of technology is an added skill today's students have that their parents lack. Compare these views and say which you agree with.

25. Some people think computers have become a problem as we have become too dependent on them and can no longer live without them. Others view computers simply as tools to make life easier and are therefore beneficial. Discuss both opinions and state your own.

26. The internet has made it possible to explore the entire globe without having to leave the comfort of one's desk. Some people consider this a benefit as everyone can experience all the wonders of the world. Others believe that a virtual experience is not the same as the real thing and the internet actually harms us by limiting our experiences. Compare and contrast these views and say which you agree with.

27. Some people believe that machines cannot be trusted to do certain things, such as drive cars or manage nuclear weapons because they lack instincts and emotions. Others argue that machines are more reliable than humans, who can make errors in judgment because of their emotional involvement or simply because they are tired. Discuss both views and say which you agree with.

28. In the past, people had to go to the library to search for information they needed. Today, the internet provides anyone access to information about any topic at any time at the touch of a button. Compare these two approaches to acquiring information and say whether you think this is a positive development.

29. In the past, people had to make an effort to communicate with distant relatives and friends. Today, everyone is accessible around-the-clock and for free. Some people say that this has made relationships less meaningful as a result, while others claim that it has made people closer. Compare these views and say which you agree with.

30. The internet allows everyone to have a voice, with some people using this platform to spread messages of hate while others spread messages of hope and unity. Some people think that only positive messages should be allowed on the internet. Discuss and provide your own opinion.

31. Technology companies are increasingly shaping society by providing us with tools to connect with each other, do business, and stay informed. Because of this, some people believe that these companies have a moral duty to look out for their customers' best interests. Others argue that companies have a duty only to their shareholders to make a profit. Discuss both views and state your own opinion.

32. Some people believe that the effects of technological changes in this century are much more impactful than those of past centuries. Compare and contrast two major developments of the last two centuries and say which had a greater impact on society.

other:

Advantages and/or Disadvantages

33. The internet is changing our world. While this change may be positive, such as bringing people closer together through communication, it also has negative aspects such as blurring distinctions between cultures. Do these benefits outweigh the potential harm to the global society?

34. As mobile devices become more widespread, we are connected to information on a round-the-clock basis. Many people think this is a positive development. What are some possible disadvantages of this development?

35. Telecommuting, or working from home on a computer, is a growing trend in many countries and may even become the norm for most office workers in the near future. Do the advantages of this trend outweigh the disadvantages?

36. More and more social, business, and political leaders are calling for school curricula to include computer skills, especially coding skills, from an early age as this is the language of the future. What might be the advantages and disadvantages to a child's development of doing this?

37. Students these days have many options when it comes to obtaining an education. They can study at home online, or study at traditional brick-and-mortar schools. Compare these two approaches to education. Which has greater benefits?

38. The entry of advanced machines into the home has made daily chores easier, thereby providing parents with more free time to spend with their children. What might some disadvantages of this be?

39. The internet provides people the opportunity to meet others, not only for professional reasons but for romantic ones as well. In fact, more and more married couples these days met their spouses on a dating site. What are the pros and cons of online dating?

40. The internet is a free platform where anyone can upload and download information. Some people worry that this provides people the opportunity to spread hateful messages and it should therefore be controlled by governments. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of censoring the internet?

41. The rate at which technology changes today is so fast that many people barely have time to adjust to one new gadget when another appears on the market. This is why Artificial Intelligence is growing to help people adjust. Do you think the advantages of machines helping us use machines outweigh the disadvantages?

42. Cyberbullying is an increasing phenomenon on the internet. Some people believe that this can be greatly reduced by forcing everyone who gets online to do so with their identity open for all to see. What might some disadvantages of this be?

other:

Open What (cause, reason, effect, solution)? Why? How? Who? When?

43. Nowadays, more than half the world's population has access to computers. As a result, many children have the opportunity to play computer games. Some people consider this a negative development. Others argue that this is a good thing. What are some negative and positive effects on society of having children play computer games? Should this phenomenon be a concern for society?

44. Some people worry that modern technology, such as the internet and smartphones, is changing the way young people acquire information. They believe these devices will someday replace books and magazines as a source of information and knowledge. What are some possible dangers of the disappearance of books? Is this evolution unavoidable? Why? Why not?

45. Our society is increasingly dependent on computers for business, healthcare, law enforcement, and even to operate vehicles. What other functions might they serve in the future? Is this dependence on computers a positive or negative trend?

46. Nowadays the way many people interact with each other has changed because of technology. In what ways has technology affected the types of relationships people have? Has this been a positive or negative development?

47. What technological invention of the past century has provided people in your country with the most benefits?

48. Young people these days spend many hours online playing games. Many parents worry that this is unhealthy, both physically and otherwise. What are some potential long-term problems these kids might face? How can parents help their children avoid these problems?

49. Technology has changed the modern home. Today's children grow up with machines and devices that make life easier, more convenient, and less demanding. How might these changes affect the family unit in the long run? How might they affect society at large?

50. Children are increasingly able to access the internet without adult supervision. Why might this be problematic? What can parents do to protect their children while they are online?

51. How has technology impacted modern society's view of free time?

52. How has technology changed people's attitudes towards money and spending?

Choice / Preference

53. Has modern technology made life easier and more convenient or was life better when technology was simpler?

54. Many people believe that a country should invest more in technology in order to increase its competitive edge, while others believe the government's role is to promote and preserve culture. Should governments spend more of the national budget on technological research and development or should more funds be allocated to developing the arts and promoting tradition?

55. Technological devices have changed the way we live our everyday lives. Which of the following do you think has had the greatest impact on our day-to-day living:

Smartphone

Wi-Fi

Artificial Intelligence

Internet of Things

56. Many people these days hear the word technology and immediately think of computers and electronics. Technology, however, comes in many forms and has varying degrees of impact. Which of the following technological innovations do you think have had the greatest impact on humanity? Why?

The wheel

The electric lightbulb

The steam engine

The computer

57. Some people look at the future of technology with fear. Others look the future of technology with excitement. Which view do you hold? Why?

58. Some people believe that technological advances make people lazy as they rely on machines to think and act for them. Others believe that this technology provides people with more free time to pursue activities that they like. Which view do you agree with? Why?

59. These days, people can buy almost anything online and have it delivered to their homes. Some people believe that certain items should be purchased in person while others can be bought online. Discuss some items that you would never buy online.

60. As more and more concepts from science fiction become reality, people expect more interesting inventions to become part of everyday life. Which of the following concepts do you think are most likely to become real in the near future? Which do you most want to become real?

Self-driving vehicles

Intelligent robots

Colonies on Mars

Flying cars

other:

EXAMPLES

Examples are used in all essay types to support an argument or a point made. They should be concrete, that is, real and specific, not abstract and vague, and they must be relevant to the context of the essay and especially the paragraph they are in.

It is very important to note that examples can be personal, they can come from related fields (technology examples for a technology topic), or even unrelated fields as long as the light they shed on the argument/point is clear. Test takers should keep in mind that examples must appear real and true but do not necessarily have to be so. For example, you may reference research that doesn't exist, or the results of surveys that were never presented to anyone. The key is to present the ideas in these "examples" in a way that supports the point made and that has a sense of authority (i.e., it "sounds" believable, realistic).

Don't forget to introduce your example:

For example, for instance, to illustrate, in fact, this is idea is supported by, take _____ as an example; etc.

Scientific examples

Research, Studies, Surveys, Polls—conducted, presented, held, looked into, released by; found, concluded, backed up, supported, reinforced the idea that…,

Researchers, Sociologists, Engineers, Scientists, Technicians, CEOs, … at place/ organization/school

Statistics—numbers, percentages, 120 per 1000, twice/four times more likely to, half as many

According to a survey of the country's top retailers, nearly half of all online visitors these days access the companies' sites via a mobile device.

Research conducted at MIT's Faculty of Computer Sciences found that people who understand even basic coding are 80% less likely to call Technical Support to fix bugs in their websites, saving them an average of 27 hours per year.

A recent report released by the Office of the Surgeon General claims that doctors who grew up playing video games make 37% fewer mistakes.

This idea is supported by scientific polls in which participants were asked whether they would be more inclined to buy the latest devices every time they were released if the prices were more affordable; over 60% of respondents said they would.

Researchers at the University of Toronto, who have been monitoring the effectiveness of spamming as a marketing tool, concluded that spammers receive roughly 1 reply for every 12 million emails sent.

Psychologists at a leading research center have recently coined the term *phantom vibration syndrome*, which occurs when a person thinks his or her phone is vibrating when it is not. This may develop into more serious negative effects in the future.

(Note: Not all of the examples above are true. The schools named in these examples may or may not have conducted the research cited. These examples are presented to illustrate ways to present supporting evidence in your essays.)

Personal examples

To illustrate, take my uncle Frank. Though he is an engineer, even he cannot keep up with all the latest gadgets on the market these days. Every time he gets a new phone, he needs to ask his daughter to give him a tutorial on the latest apps and features.

To support this idea, I need only look as far as my boss. After spending fifteen years as a junior accountant in a large firm, he decided to use his skills with numbers and apply them to data mining. He now owns his own firm and recruits the top IT professionals in the city.

My next door neighbour is a perfect example of this. His grades had dropped considerably and his teachers were concerned; it turned out that he had been bullied online for several weeks and all his school mates witnessed this happening on social networking sites.

My own experience with this is a perfect example. I used to be an avid reader, but since I got my smartphone, I rarely open a book. I listen to talks and watch video clips, which are educational and often more engaging than printed books.

Concrete, real-world examples

Brands: Many brands have become household names, meaning everyone knows them and can understand when someone speaks of them. Keep in mind that people can be considered brands when their products or services are associated with the person. For example, Steve Jobs was Apple and Apple was Steve Jobs.

Tech companies: Apple, IBM, Microsoft, Google (Alphabet), Bing, Yahoo, Craigslist, EBay, PayPal, Myspace, Dropbox, SpaceX, Dell, WordPress, Groupon, Kickstarter, Adobe, Kindle, Firefox, Nokia, Pirate Bay, Ted, Uber, Airbnb, IBM (International Business Machines), Samsung, Intel, Sony (Walkman)

Entrepreneurs: Elon Musk (Tesla), Steve Jobs (Apple), Bill Gates (Microsoft), Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook), Jack Ma (Alibaba), Jeff Bezos (Amazon)

Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, G+, Tumblr, Reddit, Snapchat, Pinterest, WhatsApp

Products & Services: Skype, Edge, Microsoft Office Suite (Word, PowerPoint), Gmail, Mac, Chrome, Wiki, Bluetooth, Google Earth, Hubble Space Telescope, Photoshop, iPad, Blu-Ray, Android, Bitcoin, Hummer (Humvee), Concord, Uzi, AK-47, Hoover

Video/Online Games: Grand Theft Auto, Nintendo, Ps3, PlayStation, Xbox, Angry Birds, Call Of Duty, Minecraft, Hearthstone, Candy Crush, Fruit Ninja, Fortnite

These companies and people, and many like them, have changed the way we live, the way we work and do business, and, increasingly, the way we think and view our world. They have taken leadership away from governments and mainstream media sources and have given it to the "man on the street."

Famous projects: Mars Rover, Sputnik, Manhattan Project, Human Genome Project

Famous scientists (especially physicists): Isaac Newton (Laws of Thermodynamics), Albert Einstein (Relativity, E=MC2), Stephen Hawking (Black Holes), Marie Curie (radium)

Famous online groups: Anonymous, Wikipedia, WikiLeaks

Concrete, yet general examples

Take for instance a young North American girl whose parents come from a culture that views housework as a means to develop character; she may see her friends' families' reliance on appliances and automated tools and question her parents' insistence on doing manual labour.

To illustrate, consider the veteran factory worker who has been replaced by a robot: this person will find it very difficult to find new employment without returning to school for some technical training in another field.

For example, a child who relies exclusively on his phone to do basic calculations will likely grow into an adult with limited financial success. Moreover, this person has a higher chance of being a victim of fraud.

Facts

Bill Gates (co-founder of Microsoft), Steve Jobs (co-founder of Apple), and Mark Zuckerberg (founder of Facebook) were all college dropouts.

Technology spreads much more quickly these days: the radio took 38 years to reach a market audience of 50 million users; the television took 13 years to reach the same number; the iPod took just 3 years.

www.symbolics.com was the first registered domain name on the internet. It was registered on March 15th, 1985.

Google processes over 35 billion searches every month.

It is believed that 1 in 8 married US couples met online.

Quotes

Technology is anything that wasn't around when you were born. — *Alan Kay* (Computer Scientist)

It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity. — *Albert Einstein* (scientist)

One machine can do the work of fifty ordinary men. No machine can do the work of one extraordinary man. — *Elbert Hubbard* (writer)

Computers are useless. They can only give you answers. — *Pablo Picasso* (artist)

Terms

Google it — do a search online; people use this as the catch-all phrase when someone asks a question to which the listener does not know the answer.

Tech savvy — a person who is knowledgeable about and comfortable with technology

Computer-literate — similar to tech savvy, though specifically regarding computer use

Think outside the box / out-of-the-box thinking — not limiting oneself to traditional or standard views or approaches

SAMPLE ESSAYS

The invention of the printing press in the 15th century changed the world by allowing more and more people to afford and access books and information. Today, however, books are becoming the latest victim of technology's move toward digital storage and accessibility. In fact, some people believe that the world will soon stop printing books and everything will be read off a screen.

Do you agree that printed books will eventually disappear? Why or why not?

Technology is changing the way we share information. Mass storage devices have replaced many media forms and have more capacity to store data than any amount of paper can. While some believe this threatens the publishing industry, I do not believe books will suffer the same fate as other media, like vinyl records and photographs, because the printed word connects readers more to the text.

Unlike music and photography, both of which require the use of technology to capture a moment in time, writing began with plant pigments and fingers. Cave dwellers painted on walls and later societies followed suit by painting their temples and tombs. The advent of pen, paper, and the printing press simply made written works more widespread and accessible. Even with today's publishing, done on a massive scale, most quality books are available in both electronic and print editions. This is because most people still prefer to read books on paper rather than a screen, as can be evidenced by the number of print copies sold throughout the world.

This is not to say technology isn't changing the industry. Sales of e-readers are steadily climbing, and publishing houses are increasingly offering older books in electronic editions. There are certainly benefits to this, such as not having to carry heavy books in one's bag to school or the café. However, recent surveys have shown that when one wants to settle into a chair and escape reality for a bit, most opt to do so with a paper copy whose corners they can fold, whose pages they can flip, even whose smell and touch adds flavor to the story. As such, books will always offer an escape not only for the mind, but for the eyes and fingers as well.

In conclusion, books will not likely face extinction as have their counterparts in other media. This is because books offer a nostalgic feeling and a sense of permanence.

(320)

These days, computers seem to be everywhere. Almost everything we do somehow involves the use of a computerized or automated system. Some people are grateful for this, while others feel they are being left behind as technology takes over.

Have computers made our lives easier, or has the world become too complicated?

The modern world seems to be run by machines. While some people worry the world has become too complex, others feel life has become simpler, letting us do more in less time. Personally, I find that automation has indeed simplified certain aspects of modern life, though this is not so for everyone.

Before computers came along, tasks we take for granted and that require mere seconds to complete today used to occupy much of our time and cost us a lot. We spent more time adding up our bills every month, or looking up words in a dictionary to check their spelling. Correspondences took weeks, phone calls to relatives overseas were expensive and often unclear, and travel was a guessing game. Today, the entire world is at our fingertips; we can communicate with anyone instantly, anywhere, at any time, and for free. Computers do our adding for us, check our writing, and allow us to make sure the weather is going to be agreeable when we go someplace for vacation.

However, not everyone has benefitted from these advancements. While digital natives, those born into the digital world, have no problem keeping up with its almost daily changes, baby-boomers recall the days when they would write letters to a friend or a lover by hand and then wait impatiently for a reply. Instead, these people must now spend their time learning new programs, keep up with password change requests, or spend hours on the phone with Technical Support so they can get back on Skype because that is the only chance they get to see their grandkids. To them it might seem that the world is quickly spinning on while they lag behind.

In conclusion, it would be easy to say that life has become easier thanks to computers. However, it will take a few more generations for this idea to be a more common opinion.

(315)

The internet provides people with access to a whole world of knowledge and also allows them to connect with others all over the world. On the other hand, it can be used as a tool for bad purposes. Some thus argue that governments should control the internet, just as they do TV and radio. Others believe the internet should remain free.

Do you agree that governments should take control of the internet and monitor its contents to make sure only proper material can be shared and accessed?

Technology, from the first sharpened stone to today's internet, has always had potential for both good and evil. Yet technology's scope is much greater now, and many people believe it is a government's duty to protect its citizens by exercising some measure of control over it. For instance, some believe that politicians should censor internet content. I disagree with this on the grounds that those wanting to do evil will achieve their goals regardless of politicians' efforts; meanwhile, the majority of people, who are generally good, would suffer from censorship.

Firstly, governments comprise human beings who are by nature fallible. As such, it would be dangerous to give them the power to decide what can and cannot be viewed by others online. Doing so would inevitably lead to their passing judgment on what is acceptable and what is not based on their own personal beliefs, which, people may argue, is a bad thing in and of itself. A perfect example of this would be a person in authority who allows his religious views to limit the content that a secular person may access, thus oppressing the latter for his worldview.

Secondly, a person who wants to do something bad will find a way to do it regardless of laws and limitations set by government; murderers and thieves, for instance, commit crimes despite the existence of police. Simply adding a layer of control might make it more difficult to do evil, but it will not change one's ability to act unlawfully. We can see this on a daily basis with news reports of hackers engaged in cybercrimes or spreading propaganda.

Lastly, the internet has more good to offer than bad. It allows people who would otherwise not have the opportunity to study at a school to learn a subject online; it allows people with common interests from all over the world to connect and share their passions; it allows people to know of the hardships of others and help. Overall, the internet can do so much good that limiting it would be counterproductive.

In conclusion, there are two sides to every coin, just as there are two aspects to every invention. Most technology can be used for both good and bad, yet we do not stop its use. The internet should be no exception, and people should strive to use this powerful tool for good.

(394)

More and more people are shopping online these days. Some people worry that online marketing companies increasingly target young people who spend more time on the internet and are more easily influenced to spend. Others argue that it is up to individuals to have self-control, just as they would in brick-and-mortar stores.

Who should be responsible for one's spending habits?

What can a person do to control his or her spending habits online?

Changes in technology often lead to shifts in habits. For instance, many people nowadays, especially the young, prefer the convenience of shopping from home. Many people worry that marketers are taking advantage of these people by luring them into making impulse purchases without proper consideration. I feel, however, that anyone with access to a credit card or online banking should bear the responsibility of his or her spending choices.

Firstly, though advertisers may cleverly attract consumers to a website and bait them to purchase something there, the consumer still has the final say on expenditures. As internet shopping is largely based on credit card purchases or via accounts such as PayPal, there are certain steps to take between deciding to buy something and finalizing a sale. In fact, online retailers ask for several confirmations before a sale is complete, leaving a person sufficient time to reconsider and cancel the order. This suggests that a person who does finally buy something online does so deliberately. It is therefore each person's choice, and as every choice implies a consequence, this is also his to bear.

Moreover, marketers cannot be blamed for the consumer's having access to a credit card, regardless of age. It is the issuing bank's duty to ensure its customers can afford their habits. Beyond that, one must accept that sellers simply do their jobs, as do store window designers and bakery owners who deliberately blow the sweet scents of baked goods through their windows. It is up to the buyer, ultimately, to beware of these sellers' traps. One way to do this, especially on the internet, is to place blocks on retail sites. Even if a person can unblock these, the added steps required to make a purchase might be bothersome enough to make it off-putting. Another option is to simply get rid of one's credit cards. If one cannot pay for an item, one should not buy it.

In conclusion, online shopping should be no different than shopping on the street. One needs to have self-control, weigh one's options, and consider all expenditures before taking out one's wallet.

(350)

Many companies these days offer technological applications for free in return for access to their users' information. Some argue that this trade-off is dangerous and that governments need to step in to protect consumers.

Discuss some ways consumers can protect themselves.

Do you think the trade-off is fair or does it need government regulation?

As technology increasingly pervades our lives, people question the trade-off between sacrificing privacy and the conveniences this technology offers. Some argue that forfeiting one's information is too risky and that laws are needed to protect consumers. Others, myself included, believe that free access to these applications is a necessary evil in the modern world, but this does not require government intervention. Moreover, with a little care, risks can be minimized.

Firstly, a person can protect himself by refusing participation in areas that require surrendering personal information. For example, no one is forced to join Facebook; whoever does, though, does so with the understanding that his data is no longer exclusively his. Moreover, if one must join a social network for business, for instance, this person can study the privacy controls that most applications provide and utilize them to carefully choose what to share.

That being said, one cannot escape the idea that if you do not pay for the product, you are the product. Google, for instance, gives users access to free products, which would otherwise cost thousands of dollars, while making a profit from the data it collects and sells to others. Yet Google is simply doing what a business is meant to do— make a profit. Knowing this, consumers have the option to buy the needed products and not divulge any information, or, if they cannot afford it, to weigh the costs and benefits of this relationship and act accordingly.

Lastly, in terms of government involvement, one need only think of Edward Snowden's revelations about the NSA to recall that governments actually encourage data sharing for their own purposes. As such, not only is their commitment to protecting citizens questionable, it is also not worth our tax dollars. Thus, if one claims that nude photos of celebrities' stored on their smartphones should be protected by laws, another may counter by saying that this is not the government's job and that these celebrities are solely responsible for their actions.

To conclude, free technology is both useful and unavoidable these days. A person simply needs to exercise common sense to reduce the risks and, above all, he needs to take personal responsibility for his actions rather than rely on the government.

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Technology has changed the way we communicate in business, educational, and even social situations. Discuss some ways that technology has changed modern communication, and state whether you think these changes have had a positive or negative effect on society as a whole.

<u>**TOEFL version**</u>

Not long ago, international communication depended on the various postal services and the quality of the telephone lines that connected people across the globe. The delivery of correspondences that spanned thousands of miles and took weeks at a time was dependent on the weather and its effects on roads, satellites, and cables. Today, in contrast, a business person in China can ask a colleague in Brazil a question via a handheld device and receive a response in seconds. In essence, borders have disappeared, and time has become a matter of personal priorities.

This change is not limited to business: technology has made campuses obsolete as students living in Spain, for instance, can study in the U.S. The internet allows them to connect with peers and professors through emails, webinars, and other tools. Furthermore, satellite technology allows scientists at various university departments around the globe to work simultaneously in virtual labs to conducted joint research projects.

Beyond education and business, however, technology has had its most significant impact on communication in the social realm. Having global friends no longer necessitates an expensive trip abroad—one simply has to log on to a social network. Romantic partnerships do not need to form during a night out at a loud bar—passions can now be magically ignited through a dating site, or chatroom.

While all of this might suggest technology has made life easier and more convenient, there are nevertheless some negative aspects to the way we communicate nowadays. Firstly, there are the security risks involved. Hackers cleverly find ways to listen in on our conversations, read our emails and posts, and even peek at our private pictures. This would be much more difficult were we to continue using pen and paper, envelopes and stamps. In schools, students can use modern devices to help each other cheat on tests without being caught and rely on anonymity to bully others. Lastly, some would argue that a friendship that does not involve face-to-face contact is superficial at best.

Thus, in the final analysis, I believe that while modern communication has largely benefitted society overall in terms of progress and bringing the world together, it has also changed certain aspects of human behaviour for the worse. Namely, it has slowly eroded the "human" element of human relations, making them somewhat mechanical and 2-dimensional, and has introduced dangers that had not previously existed.

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Technology has changed the way we communicate in business, educational, and even social situations. Discuss some ways that technology has changed modern communication, and state whether you think these changes have had a positive or negative effect on society as a whole.

<u>**IELTS version**</u>

Until recently, international communication was conducted via the postal and telephone systems and was very slow as it depended heavily on the weather's effects on roads, satellites, and cables. Today, in contrast, a businessman in China can ask a colleague in Brazil a question via his smartphone and receive a response in seconds. In essence, technology has eliminated time and distance in terms of business correspondence.

Moreover, this change is not limited to business as education and society in general have also been greatly affected. To illustrate, technological advances have made campuses obsolete as the internet allows students all over the world to connect with peers and professors through emails, webinars, and other tools. Meanwhile, scientists at universities around the globe can conduct joint research projects using satellite technology in virtual labs. Most significant, however, is technology's impact in the social realm; having global friends no longer necessitates an expensive trip abroad—one simply has to log on to a social network. Romantic partnerships do not need to form during a night out at a loud bar—passions can now be magically ignited through a dating site, or chatroom.

While some will suggest these innovations have improved life overall, there is no denying their negative impacts. For one, our security is threatened by hackers who can listen in on our conversations, read our emails, and even peek at our private pictures. Another danger exists in schools, where students can use modern devices to cheat on tests or rely on their anonymity to bully others. Lastly, some would argue that a friendship that does not involve face-to-face contact is superficial at best.

To conclude, then, I believe that while modern gadgets have largely benefitted society in terms of bringing us closer together, they have also changed human behaviour for the worse. Namely, they increase security risks and make it easier for us to do each other harm.

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Some websites have become the new social meeting place for individuals from all over the world. A person can now be friends with people in faraway countries who may have different cultural, educational, and social backgrounds. Some people believe these relationships are meaningful and real, while others think they are superficial and that virtual friends are not real friends.

Which of these opinions do you agree with? Why?

Friendships come in many forms. For some, a friend is their next door neighbor with whom they grew up. For others, friends exist online. Whatever the source of the friendship, one must first define for himself what a friend is before deciding whether a friendship established online can be considered real. As for myself, a friend is someone with whom I feel a connection and with whom I want to carry on a relationship, regardless if it is face-to-face or on-screen.

First and foremost, a friend is someone you can relate to and with whom you have things in common. Having this kind of relationship transcends time and space, such that age is not so relevant nor is physical location. There is no reason, for instance, for a person in his 60s not to be friends with someone in his 40s if both people have common experiences and topics to discuss which add value to their relationship. Nor does the fact they live in different countries have to limit them. If each enjoys the other's company, even if via Skype or emails, then the bond is as real as that of those who can shake hands.

With the above in mind, there is no logic in viewing friendships made online as any different from those made over a cup of coffee. While "friending" someone on Facebook, for instance, is arguably too easy, it does not take away from the reality that a bond created and nourished over time is real. Of course, some online friendships are superficial; but, then again, many that are made in person are no less so. In fact, a person makes many acquaintances in one's lifetime, both physical and cyber, yet few develop into meaningful, long-lasting relationships.

To conclude, the question should not be whether online friendships are real; the real questions are what is a real friendship and where can it flourish? The answers are, thankfully, whatever you feel is real, and anywhere.

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It seems that every day we are allowing machines to take a more important role in our lives. Some people believe that we should therefore get our children accustomed to these technological devices as early as possible. Others, however, feel that children are losing their abilities to think for themselves and adapt to an ever-changing world because they are too reliant on computers, smartphones, and other gadgets.

Do you think that parents should limit the amount of time their children spend with technological devices?

How might a smartphone benefit or harm a young child?

Technology has changed the way we parent. Whereas previous generations occupied their kids with books and outdoor activities, today's parents rely on gadgets to act as artificial babysitters. Many people view this trend as simply the way of the future. Others, myself included, believe that overexposure to technology harms a child's development and adults have a responsibility to monitor their children's contact with certain devices. This is especially true of smartphones, which can help kids, but harm them as well.

Children need to develop many skills before reaching adulthood. Among these are literacy, social interaction, and hand-eye coordination, to name just a few. These skills require the active use of the brain and body, which is achievable through sports, reading, solving riddles, and so on. As such, it is up to adults to encourage kids to play outside rather than sit at home pretending to play a sport. Playing hockey on PS3, for instance, is nowhere near equivalent to strapping on ice skates and playing on a frozen pond in the middle of winter. Moreover, video games cannot teach children how to endure the cold, how to accept defeat and prepare for victory, or how to fall and pick themselves up again and go on.

This is not to suggest that using these devices is all bad. Today's children will eventually enter a highly digitized workplace and therefore need training for that reality. However, parents should balance the digital and analogue experiences children have so that, for example, the child will not panic when lightning cuts out the power and the internet. Take smartphones as further illustration; albeit a child can access all kinds of information with a tap of his fingers, he also has an excuse not to think for himself and overcome problems. Thus, if he loses his phone or otherwise cannot use it, he is left vulnerable to the world around him and incapable of facing it securely.

To conclude, technological devices certainly have their uses, yet they can also limit a child's abilities. It is up to adults, then, to make sure children receive a balanced exposure to both gadgets and the 'real' world. This will help them better cope with whatever life brings them.

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Although more adults play video games these days, many still believe that gaming instead of going outside to play or socialize is unhealthy and that young people who play these games are wasting their time.

To what extent do you agree with this view?

As online gaming becomes increasingly popular there is a growing tendency for young people to spend long hours indoors glued to their consoles. While there are some benefits to this, I mostly agree with adults who argue that this is time poorly spent. In the long run, being outdoors is more advantageous in terms of a person's professional life and health.

Being technologically literate is certainly crucial to securing good employment. A gamer who can navigate the internet and keep up with new technologies might have better job prospects than someone who cannot. However, there is more to a good employee than being technologically savvy. Increasingly, companies look for staff with strong soft skills rather than superior technical skills. The former include getting along with others, contributing to a discussion, and accepting instructions and criticism. These skills cannot be learned by someone who spends countless hours alone online. Conversely, children who often play outside with others learn to interact with strangers and to collaborate, making them better able to integrate into any work environment and succeed. A gamer, however, might be stifled by a job's social demands.

Moreover, young people who participate in sports often develop better habits when it comes to health. While gamers generally maintain sedentary lifestyles, those who exercise are in better physical and mental conditions and are less prone to problems such as obesity. Over the course of one's life, this can have tremendous health benefits as one is less likely to develop diabetes or heart disease. Furthermore, a person who actively engages nature also gains from the fresh air, the physical exertion, and an appreciation for that nature, which is essential for a strong mind.

In conclusion, those who spend quality time outside while young are better equipped for the real world of adulthood and have thereby spent their time wisely. Those who hide behind monitors, unfortunately, will likely continue to do so throughout their adult lives.

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As technology advances and machines do more and more of our work, life will become simpler and more enjoyable.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

The Industrial Revolution changed people's lives by reducing their manual labours and providing them more leisure time and better health. While this seems to have made life easier, I believe that the rampant use of machines has actually made everyday life more complicated as people are becoming increasingly dependent on technology and in fact have to work harder than before.

Admittedly, people now live longer and have more access to information and technological devices. However, one must consider what has been sacrificed for this. Today's youth, or digital natives, don't know what it means to write letters to friends, research a topic in the library, or even build a fire; they simply open their laptops and the world is at their fingertips. Consequently, if these youngsters were somehow lost in a forest during a camping trip, for instance, they would likely not survive because they would not know how to fend for themselves in a place where machines cannot support them. People have thus forfeited their connection to nature and have come to depend on machines to complete tasks that were common to their ancestors, a dependence that only makes life more complicated.

Furthermore, those who claim that machines allow us to work less fail to consider the fact that machines cost money. New gadgets enter the market almost daily, meaning that an iPhone released today will be obsolete in less than a year. Thus, to fully exploit the technology that supposedly makes life easier and more pleasurable means having to work harder in order to afford it. In essence, the opposite situation has emerged: if one wants a better dishwasher, one needs to work twice as hard to replace his current one, thus suggesting a lack of pleasure.

In conclusion, while machines have positively affected people's lives, they have hardly made life simpler. People have become dependent on machines and have to spend all their time working in order to enjoy their benefits.

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Many people today believe that everything online is free and legal to access. The entertainment industry, meanwhile, is trying to make people understand that piracy (stealing) is a crime. Hollywood executives, for example, want to heavily fine anyone who downloads copyrighted materials (e.g. movies) for free as a form of punishment and as a way to discourage others.

To what extent do you agree with this solution?

As internet use spreads globally, incidents of illegal sharing of copyrighted materials increase. Some believe that only by threatening downloaders with punitive damages can this be stopped. I personally doubt this approach would work and that companies should instead target the distributors of these materials while educating the public about intellectual property and the law.

As most parents can confirm, young people are not easily frightened off certain activities. Teenagers rely on their age as a defense against most acts they may or may not know are illegal. Moreover, as it is difficult to prosecute young offenders, it would not be worthwhile for companies to chase after them. Alternatively, these companies should pursue those responsible for making the copyrighted materials available online. Companies such as Pirate Bay, which facilitates the sharing of copyrighted materials for free amongst millions of users, are the ones the entertainment industry needs to aim for. By making them criminally liable for their actions, the industry will make piracy less appealing and subsequently deter others from attempting it.

That being said, the entertainment industry should also strive to reduce the market for pirated materials by educating young people on the reality and consequences of their actions. For example, a young boy who downloads Taylor Swift's album for free might feel less inclined to do so if he realizes this is actually theft and that it hurts her directly. Showing this person that he is in fact stealing the livelihood of someone he respects and admires might be a more effective tactic in the long run.

In conclusion, corporations affected by piracy need to change their focus to the real perpetrators of this crime while making young people aware that their actions are not as innocent as they might believe.

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Some people believe that children should be given a smartphone as soon as they begin their elementary school studies. Others believe this may harm a child's development and parents should wait until their children are older and mature enough to handle the responsibilities of having a smartphone.

Which view do you agree with?

What might some consequences be of giving a young child a smartphone?

Many adults these days are glued to their smartphones and think their children should have one as well. While some children may benefit from this, the negative impacts, such as stunted creativity and critical thinking skills, are not, in my opinion, worth the convenience it provides their parents. Thus, children should only have a mobile device once they begin high school.

Children need to acquire many skills on their journey to adulthood. Giving them a device that removes the need to learn basic skills, such as completing simple math equations and spelling new words, harms them in the long term because they cannot fully develop their brain functions properly. They will also not broaden their natural creativity if they are constantly engaged in passive activities like watching YouTube videos or playing mindless games.

That being said, there are benefits to learning to use a smartphone. These include technical skills associated with a computerized tool, as well as modern social skills, including texting, emailing, and chatting online. However, these aspects of a child's education should only be encouraged once a child has a base of mental competency and a level of maturity to handle the many influences that exist on the internet. By the time a child reaches high school, he or she is likely ready to prepare for the adult world in which all of these aspects manifest themselves.

To conclude, parents should help their children gain the intellectual and imaginative tools they require for success in life, and only then provide them the tools of the modern world that they certainly need to learn.

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NOTES

Did you discover some new vocabulary in this book?

Write these new words below. Practice using them in sentences:

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