Public Communication

**Note:** The starting point for this project is **the main source you analyzed in Project 2**. Instead of analyzing the argument or narrative, now you write your own opinion piece based on the same topic.

# Unit 12: Opinion Piece

## Set the Foundations

### Identify Type

State whether you will be writing an Editorial, Op-ed, or Column

Column

### State Issue, Thesis and Key Reasons

State the overarching, debatable question you are answering, your answer to that question (your central argument or thesis), and 2-3 key reasons (the “because” that explains why you believe your thesis is true).

Issue: Does social media ruin relationships?

Thesis: Excessive amounts of social media consumption exceed our natural limit for meaningful relationships, contributes to loneliness and a decline in well-being, and the absence of non-verbal cues when interacting over social media causes relationships to suffer.

Reasons:

Dunbar’s Number theory

Loneliness and reduced well-being

Non-verbal cues during face-to-face interactions

### List Sources

List 1-2 (or more) sources

**Note: These can be drawn from the sources you used for your Research-driven Critique Essay—but you are also free to use new sources.**  
  
Stieger, S., Lewetz, D. & Willinger, D. Face-to-face more important than digital communication for mental health during the pandemic. *Sci Rep* 13, 8022 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-34957-4

## Brainstorm Rhetorical Appeals

List logical, emotional, and ethical appeals you will use in your opinion piece:   
  
Logical:

Statistics on social media use and its effect on mental health

Emotional:

I have experienced social media overconsumption in my past romantic relationship, and it negatively impacted it by setting standards of living and gift-giving higher than that of the average person despite getting below average treatment.

Ethical:

It’s up to each individual to recognize the importance of cultivating relationships face-to-face as the potential individual and societal impacts could change social landscapes

## Write the Opinion Piece

### Outline

Introduction

* Hook:   
    
  Millions of people scrolling through social media, commenting without a hint of a smile, liking posts to show their care, and viewing to stay with the latest trend. All to satisfy their need for meaningful connections.
* Background information:   
    
  In the modern world, social media has changed how we interact daily, offering the ability to instantly connect with people across the world and to reach hundreds, thousands, or millions by the push of a button. While we are fed the belief that social media platforms are to bring us together, it is common for many to experience the opposite. The average person spending hours on social media, the quality of relationships intertwined with social media and the affect they have on individual’s well-being is to be questioned.
* Thesis statement  
    
  Excessive amounts of social media consumption exceed our natural limit for meaningful relationships, contribute to loneliness and a decline in well-being, and the absence of non-verbal cues when interacting over social media causes relationships to suffer.

Point 1

We can only handle so many meaningful relationships. Anthropologist Robin Dunbar’s research found that we can only manage 148 significant connections, commonly rounded up to 150. This is known as Dunbar’s number. Dunbar’s number is also just an average for each person. For you or me, it could very well be much less. In my life, I find it hard to keep up relationships with a dozen people outside of my immediate family. Ask yourself how many meaningful relationships are you able to uphold? After this limit, a person can no longer keep up the same quality of relationships anymore. Seeing how social media encourages users to maintain hundreds, if not thousands of online “relationships”, it is clear that social media is not a place for relationships to flourish.

Point 2

The decline in face-to-face communication has been significant in increased feelings of loneliness and a decline in well-being. With the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing people to frequent social media even more than before, it became clear that online relationships were not enough. I have experienced this firsthand as I was in a romantic relationship during the COVID pandemic, forced to stay at home. Social media was the frequent medium of communication which caused us to inevitably fall into a “doom scroll” mode on Instagram as we waited for the other to respond. During this doom scrolling, it was common to see unrealistic beauty, relationship, financial, and social standards. This bled into conversation and created issues between us. I believe social media to be a large reason for that relationship to end. The end of this relationship was a large reason I do not use social media as much anymore. Don’t just listen to me though, a study by S. Stieger, D. Lewetz, and D. Willinger called “Face-to-face more important than digital communication for mental health during the pandemic” has also found that it was absolutely crucial for people’s well-being to have face-to-face interaction.

Point 3

Non-verbal cues can say a lot about what a person is feeling and can add gravity to one’s dialogue. Some of these cues consist of body language, voice pitch, and eye movements. With body language you can tell if someone is relaxed or tense. With voice pitch we can tell if someone is excited or sad. With darting eyes, we can infer that someone is anxious and with solid eye contact, we can infer that someone is serious. When communicating over social media, none of these cues can be seen and so the nature of our conversations is duller and does not provide the same emotional depth as in person interaction. Again, from the studies done in “Face-to-face more important than digital communication for mental health during the pandemic”, it was found that “face-to-face communication was much more important for lockdown mental health than digital communication” (S. Stieger et al). They continue that even video conferencing was hardly helpful with mental health. Mental health strains cause people to act differently towards each other and in turn this causes rifts in relationships. In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was not much we could do when we were

Conclusion

* Opposing viewpoints
* Rebuttal

### Draft

Draft an opinion piece of about 400-500 words.

## Revise, Edit and Proofread

Copy and paste your draft from above. Leave it in its “rough” form above, and revise and edit the copy below. **This is what will be graded for the opinion piece part**.

# Unit 13: Digital Presentation

## Analyze a Digital Presentation (see eCentennial for details)

1.

2.

3.

4.

## Script Your Presentation

Turn your opinion piece you wrote above into a **200-300** word script--pare it down, shorten sentences, make it a “spoken” text. **Tip**: speak it out loud as you write, to make sure it “lifts off the page” well!

The script concludes the written part of the unit. You will also build, record and submit the presentation itself, using slideware.

**At the end of Unit 13:**

* Upload this completed file to Assessments/ Assignment/ Public Communication Folder.
* Post your **digital presentation** (mp4 by default) *and* **script** to the Discussion Board for the final Unit 14 peer review