

## 6

## Identifying the purpose of a text

In this chapter, you will:

1. read articles from academic sources.
2. identify the purpose of texts.

Reading articles in academic sources serve different purposes and convey different messages. The three main purposes of academic reading are to: describe, discuss and defend.

|          | Purpose   | Example  |
|----------|---|--|
| Describe | To describe a topic or aspects of the topic   | Compare and contrast the position and powers of the internet.  |
| Discuss  | To argue the case for two or more positions on an issue and evaluate these positions, perhaps even stating the position they support. | Discuss the merits of students receiving loans from the industries and scholarships from the government. |
| Defend   | To put forward a particular position on a topic, or to challenge a position given.  | “Students should be able to be employed part-time as a source of semi-professional labour”. Discuss.     |

*A. Which passage types are questions 1-3: describe, discuss or defend?*

1. Discuss the impact of technology on urban and rural families. **Discuss**
2. It has been claimed that the Internet is the best technology ever existed. How far do you agree? **Describe**
3. “Newspapers should not identify a person by their race, colour or religion unless this information is relevant to the news story.” Discuss. **Defend**

*B. Read the following sentences. Is the purpose of the passage to: describe, discuss or defend?*

1. Discuss the impact of out-of-town shopping centres on the regions in which they occur. **Discuss**
2. It has been claimed that democracy is the best form of government in the modern state. How far do you agree? **Describe**
3. Discuss the ways that politeness is achieved in English and another language you are familiar with. **Discuss**

4. “Newspapers should not identify a person by their race, colour or religion unless this information is relevant to the news story.” Discuss. **Defend**
5. To what extent does the media influence how the general public views scientists and their work? **Describe**
6. What factors affect people’s choice of career? **Describe**

*Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.*

### **SMARTPHONES IN THE CLASSROOM: LEARNING TOOL OR DISTRACTION**

1 These days, more and more students are bringing smartphones to class. Even elementary school-aged students have smartphones in their pockets and backpacks. However, the news of Ontario’s decision to ban smartphones in classrooms opens again the debate about whether or not students should have smartphones in school. It also brings up the question of whether it’s possible for technology to exist in the classroom as a learning tool—rather than simply a distraction.

2 The new ban means elementary and secondary school students won’t be able to use their smartphones in the classroom unless it is for educational purposes, medical reasons, or as a support for students with special needs. By banning smartphones, Ontario’s Education Ministry hopes to remove distractions so students can focus on acquiring foundational learning skills they need, including reading, writing and math. The decision and renewed debate has many teachers and parents left wondering: can smartphones ever really benefit students in class, or are they best left tucked away?

### **3 SMARTPHONE USE IN THE CLASSROOM**

Students check their phones in the classroom an average of more than 11 times a day. That can add up to a lot of time spent distracted from schoolwork. And when students are distracted, it’s a recipe for extra stress, frustration, and catch-up time for everyone. With students spending up to 20% of their in-class time texting, emailing, and checking social media, it’s no wonder the debate about smartphones in the classroom is alive and well. Students check their smartphones in the classroom more than 11 times a day.

4

### **HOW SMARTPHONES CAN BE USED EFFECTIVELY IN THE CLASSROOM**

If properly managed, smartphones can be used as tools to help children learn in the classroom. The following are some of the pros of allowing smartphones in school:

5

Smartphones give students access to tools and apps that can help them complete and stay on top of their class work. These tools can also teach students to develop better study habits, like time management and organization skills.

6

Using social media can keep students interested in class and encourage them to participate in the discussion. Some teachers create twitter hashtags or message boards students can use during class discussions to share thoughts and ideas. This can be

7 especially helpful for students who might not be comfortable speaking in class.

Teachers can take advantage of smartphones by providing students with resources to find more information about a topic. This can include videos, news stories, online discussion groups, and more. Allowing students to access these resources in class can help encourage participation and discussions.

8

Smartphones can give students access to more information, letting them research more about a topic while having class discussions. This is especially true for current events that have not yet been covered in school textbooks.

9

### THE DRAWBACKS OF ALLOWING SMARTPHONES IN CLASSROOMS

While smartphones can be used as learning tools, it is a challenge to make sure students are using them for school-related tasks. A cell phone can easily turn from “classroom learning tool” into “classroom disruption”. Cons of allowing smartphones in school include:

10

When students use their smartphones to check social media and text their friends in class, it leads to distractions for those students as well as for their peers. This can cause disruptions in class, particularly if the teacher is constantly telling students to turn their devices off.

11

Smartphones can also lead to increased problems with bullying on the school ground. Cyberbullying can be harder to see than other forms of bullying, making it difficult for teachers to identify and stop when it is happening.

12

Smartphones can be a helpful learning tool in class. But they can also be used by students to access information while taking a test, leading to cheating. Even if a student isn’t caught, this can lead to him or her having a poor understanding of the material in the future, and is unfair to students who studied hard to do well.

13

While smartphones can help encourage participation by offering different channels, this can also lead to less in-person discussion and fewer learning opportunities. Learning to work together with others is an important part of students’ education, and can be lost with too much dependence on smartphones and other digital technology.

14

### THE BOTTOM LINE: SHOULD STUDENTS HAVE SMARTPHONES IN SCHOOL?

There’s no easy answer: there are both pros and cons to students having smartphones in school. Although they can be used as a learning tool in the classroom, this only works as long as students use them effectively. This means for teachers who decide to

use smartphones (or any other digital device) as part of their lessons, it's important to set ground rules and keep a close eye on how they are being used.

SMARTPHONES IN THE CLASSROOM: LEARNING TOOL OR DISTRACTION. (2019, April 22). Retrieved October 3, 2019, from <https://www.oxfordlearning.com/should-cell-phones-be-allowed-classrooms/>

*C. Label each main idea to the paragraphs they correspond to.*

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Using educational learning apps              | 5  |
| Supplementing lessons with digital materials | 7  |
| Distractions and interruptions               | 10 |
| Cyberbullying                                | 11 |
| Disconnection from face-to-face activities   | 13 |
| Incorporating digital platforms into lessons | 6  |
| Providing easy access to more information    | 8  |
| Cheating                                     | 12 |

*D. Which type is the passage above: describe, discuss or defend? **Discuss***