

Social media bans

Protecting or restricting our children?

The New York Times
Australia Has Barred Everyone Under 16 From Social Media. Will It Work?
The law sets a minimum age for users of platforms like TikTok, Instagram and X. How the restriction will be enforced online remains an open question.

NEW YORK POST
Australia passes first-ever social media ban for children under 16
By Steve Janoski
Published Nov. 28, 2024, 11:03 a.m. ET

EL PAÍS
SOCIAL NETWORKS > Australia's social media ban for children under 16: Understanding the world-first law
Platforms that do not comply with the new rule may face fines of more than \$90 million

South China Morning Post
Australia passes social media ban for children under 16
The law, expected to take effect in November 2025, sets some of the toughest social media controls in the world

1 IN PAIRS: Read the headlines and state your immediate reaction.

KNOWLEDGE BOX

Objective vs. subjective writing

Objective writing is fact-based and does not contain any personal opinion or emotion. It relies on evidence to support claims and avoids using emotionally charged language. Examples of objective writing include scientific papers, research reports and news articles.

On the other hand, subjective writing is based on personal opinion and emotions. It is characterised by the use of first-person narratives, emotive language and personal anecdotes which help to convey the writer's personal stance or feelings on a subject. Examples of subjective writing include opinion pieces, reviews and personal essays.

Based on: <https://www.tffn.net/what-is-objective-writing/>

2

a ON YOUR OWN: Read the article published by FORBES magazine on pages 34/35.

Sum up the different perspectives on banning social media by adding two aspects to each of the prompts.

b IN PAIRS: Check with a partner. Make additions and corrections.

support for the ban:

-

-

criticism of the ban:

-

-

privacy concerns:

-

-

potential of social media:

-

-

author's view:

-

-

3

Complete the exercise in the → DICTIONARY Summary on page 52.

4

Write a revised version of the summary provided in the DICTIONARY.

Use a separate sheet of paper.

→ KNOWLEDGE BOX
Communicative strategies, p. 37

→ KNOWLEDGE BOX
Stylistic devices, p. 38

→ SKILL BOX
P-E-E chart method, p. 37

→ WORD BOX
Describing effects, p. 41

→ WORD BOX
Giving examples, p. 41

- 5 a Study the → KNOWLEDGE BOX *Objective vs. subjective writing* on page 32. Then classify the article as either an objective or subjective piece of writing.

- b Analyse the author's stance on that matter and examine communicative strategies and the use of language. Fill in the P-E-E chart on page 36.

- c IN PAIRS: Exchange your findings.

- 6 Complete the exercise in the → DICTIONARY *Varying sentence beginnings* on page 53.

- 7 Based on your P-E-E chart, write two coherent paragraphs, each focusing on a different stylistic device or communicative strategy used by the author.

Write your paragraphs on a separate sheet of paper.

The introduction is already given:

The author uses several stylistic devices and communicative strategies to engage readers, balance arguments, and appeal to emotions as well as to reason.

Australia's Social Media Ban: Protection Or Overreach?

by JEETENDR SEHDEV, 28 NOV 2024

¹ bold leap – a daring and risky step forward

² sextortion scams – blackmail using explicit content

It's hard to believe, but Australia has taken a bold leap¹ with a world-first law to ban children under 16 from accessing social media platforms. On the surface,

the legislation [...] looks like a well-meaning shield to protect vulnerable children from horrendous harms like online sextortion scams² and age-restricted content.

5 I get it. But is it really that black and white?

Efforts to protect Australian children are admirable, but this controversial social media ban legislation is packed with complexities. [...] Policies like this risk leaving children "digitally isolated" in a world where exposure isn't just about risk – it's vital for connection, learning, and staying relevant in today's fast-changing digital era.

I would agree with other digital media experts, who point out, this policy might inadvertently create a brick wall between kids and their essential sense of connection. Cutting off access for children without providing adequate digital alternatives risks turning the internet into an exclusionary space, one where young

15 Australians are left behind.

Marketers now face three critical challenges in the wake of this ban:

The reliance on digital identification credentials, such as government-issued identity documents, introduces thorny³ ethical dilemmas. This raises privacy concerns, as highlighted by a study from the University of California, Berkeley, which found that digital identification systems can lead to data breaches⁴ and misuse of personal information. The study emphasizes the need for robust data protection measures when implementing such systems. Brands must now find ways to align with age verification purposes while protecting minor users and respecting parental consent. This calls for rigorous evaluation of age assurance trials and investments in privacy-first innovations.

The ban shifts power back to the authority of parents. If Australian parents share similar concerns to their American counterparts, this legislation could resonate positively. A report from the Pew Research Center reveals that 66 % of parents worry about their children's screen time, highlighting an audience eager for campaigns that champion safe, balanced, and mindful online engagement. For marketers, this means building strategies that appeal to Australian parents, not just their kids. Campaigns must tread carefully, addressing mental health and fostering trust while ensuring that children from harm remain a priority.

With gaming platforms and crowd-sourced content sites excluded from the ban, these online spaces will become vital avenues for engagement. Brands must seize this opportunity to create spaces safer for young audiences while tapping into community engagement opportunities.

Many of you may know that over the past decade, I've had the privilege of leading the conversation about the rise of a new generation of celebrities and influencers, bringing their impact to the forefront and helping to shape how we view their role in culture and connection. [...] Influencers like Ryan Kaji of Ryan's World, who has turned toy reviews into a multi-million-dollar empire, or Anastasia Radzinskaya, better known as Like Nastya, whose educational and entertaining content inspires millions, are prime examples⁵ of this brilliance. While the ban doesn't extend to YouTube, it's platforms like this that showcase the transformative power of combining youth with social media. These young superstars are far more than just influencers – they are innovators who have transformed how we think about content, connection, and communication. [...]

There is no doubt in my mind that Australia's social media ban is as controversial as it is consequential. While it seeks to address dangers for children, it also risks sidelining Australian users and leaving them out of the digital conversation. For those of you familiar with my book, *The Kim Kardashian Principle*, you know I am not an advocate of censorship and believe in embracing the full spectrum of possibilities that come with an open mind. So for marketers, this ban on children isn't just about compliance⁶ – it's about taking a stance on the role of exposure in shaping young minds.

³ thorny – difficult, complicated

⁴ data breaches – unauthorised access to private data

⁵ prime examples – clear, typical examples

⁶ compliance – following rules or laws

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In: Forbes of 28.11.2024, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jheetendrsehdev/2024/11/28/australias-social-media-ban-protection-or-overreach-what-you-must-know/>.
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Jeetendr Sehdev is a renowned internet celebrity, an award-winning marketer and author of the book *The Kim Kardashian Principle*. He advocates for gender equality and fighting modern slavery.

An Australia-style social media ban in Germany?

- 1 A 2024 survey revealed different views on whether a social media ban, like the one in Australia, should be implemented in Germany.

a IN PAIRS: Guess the percentages related to public opinion on social media bans for minors in Germany.

- a. The percentage of German respondents who support legislation similar to social media bans in other countries.

Your guess: _____

- b. The percentage of German respondents who believe that both harmful content and social media addiction equally contribute to the negative effects on young people.

Your guess: _____

- c. The percentage of German respondents who are absolutely or somewhat certain that social media use is harmful for children and teenagers.

Your guess: _____

- d. The percentage of German people who oppose stricter regulations for social media in Germany.

Your guess: _____

b IN CLASS: How close were your guesses to the actual percentages?

Comment on which result surprised you the most.

Give reasons.

Discussion points

- 2 GROUP WORK: Discuss whether Germany should ban social media for minors.
Take notes in the T-chart (p. 43).

Consider the following discussion points:

- Should parents or the government be more responsible for controlling minors' social media use?
- What examples from other countries, like Australia's social media ban, could Germany learn from?
- How could stricter regulations improve the well-being of young people?
- Could education about responsible social media use be more effective than bans or strict regulations?
- How might stricter social-media regulations affect freedom of expression for young people?
- What alternative solutions, besides stricter regulations or bans, could address the risks?

arguments for
a social media ban in Germany

arguments against
a social media ban in Germany

SKILL BOX

How to write effective AI prompts

STEP 1: Identify the purpose of your prompt.

STEP 2: Give clear, specific instructions.

STEP 3: Ask open-ended questions.

STEP 4: Check your grammar and spelling.

STEP 5: Include contextual information.

AI brainstorming

- 3 IN PAIRS:** Gather additional arguments about whether Germany should ban social media for minors.

Use internet research or ask a chatbot to find at least three new arguments supporting or opposing a social media ban in Germany.

Focus on credible sources such as articles, studies and expert opinions.
Research numbers and figures.

Take notes in a digital text editor.

As some countries have already adopted a social media ban, you have been invited to an international forum to discuss whether Germany should ban social media for minors. You are asked to contribute an online article to share your perspective and engage with a global audience.

Planning and structuring

- 4** Read the frame situation above. Then, use the writing frame on page 46 to plan your response.



Tip: Decide on a topic for each paragraph. Include clear topic sentences and detailed supporting arguments that connect to your main idea.

Think about situations or observations from your own life that support your arguments, such as how social media has positively or negatively affected you or someone you know. Your story can make your arguments more relatable, credible and engaging for readers – something chatbots cannot provide.

First draft

- 5** Write the first draft of your online article discussing whether Germany should ban social media for minors.

Make sure that you complete this draft without the assistance of AI tools.

Use a laptop to draft your article, as this will make it easier to revise and refine your text several times.

Dialogue with AI

- 6 Once your first draft is complete, ask an AI tool to provide feedback on two key areas:

- 1) Content: Does the article include strong arguments, personal examples and supporting arguments? Is the article logical, coherent and well-organised?
- 2) Correctness: Are there errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation?

grammarly



Tip: To make AI feedback more effective, take a photo of the feedback form (p. 48) and paste it into a chatbot. This will ensure that the AI focuses on the specific areas shown on the feedback sheet.

Learn from the AI feedback by identifying recurring patterns in your mistakes. Write down specific tips for improvement on a separate sheet or use the notes function on your phone to keep track of areas where you can improve. Keeping a record will help you avoid similar mistakes in the future and improve your writing skills over time.

Revision

- 7 Based on the AI's feedback, revise your article.

Focus on improving the clarity of your arguments, refining your language and correcting any errors identified.

Feedback

- 8 Exchange your article with a classmate or group. Give feedback.

Let students glow: What works well in the article? Highlight strong arguments, clear writing and compelling examples.

Let students grow: What could be added or clarified? What have you discussed in class from the beginning of the semester until now? Point out areas where the argument could be stronger and where examples are missing.

Feedback sheet

	++++	+++	++	+
Content				
The discussion begins with a clear and engaging introduction. The introduction presents the issue of whether Germany should ban social media for minors.				
The introduction makes general remarks on social media and briefly hints at its potential benefits and downsides.				
Each paragraph begins with a strong topic sentence that clearly introduces the main idea of the paragraph.				
Each paragraph is focused and organised around a single, well-developed argument.				
Arguments are supported by relevant examples, including personal examples and referenced sources.				
Each argument is supported by explanations and examples.				
Some of the following aspects are considered:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • risks of social media, e. g. addiction, harmful content etc. • benefits of social media, e. g. learning opportunities, social connection, self-expression etc. • perspectives from experts and surveys • examples from other countries • challenges in enforcing stricter regulations • the role of parents, schools and tech companies 				
The article discusses both the advantages and challenges of banning or regulating social media for minors.				
The article concludes with a logical, well-reasoned summary.				
Language				
The article makes use of topic-related vocabulary (here: social media).				
Sentences are smoothly linked with logical sentence connectives.				
The writing style is formal and uses long forms.				
Spelling and punctuation are correct.				
Grammar and word order are correct.				
Sentences are varied in terms of length and structure (e. g. participle construction, adverbial clauses, gerunds, passive voice etc.).				

Writing an article

Content

Headline

- Formulate a short and precise headline which can be also done after you have written the article.

Introduction

- Start off your article by grabbing the reader's attention. You may tell a personal story, an anecdote, use a quotation, etc.
- State the topic as well as your opinion. *The problem of...has met with a lot of attention lately./ The issue has been heatedly debated./ There are many reasons for...*

Main part

- You may organise the main part a) chronologically, b) topically (*first you write a paragraph one aspect, then you turn to other two aspects*) or c) causally (*show cause and effect*).
- Each paragraph consists of a well-developed argument (**P-E-E model**).
- Employ a topic sentence (**POINT**). *Many people believe/claim that ...; Experts say that ...*
- Provide evidence, such as statistics, events, own experience, etc. to illustrate and explain your argument (**EXAMPLES/ELABORATION**). *Let me illustrate this idea by giving an example: ... For example, ...; such as ... Therefore, we should all ...; Thus, we need to ...; As a result, action is needed.*
- Wrap up each paragraph (**WRAP UP**). *As one can see from this example, ...; As I have mentioned, ...; Taking into consideration what has been said so far, I believe that ...*
- Include three paragraphs in the main body of your article. Leave a blank line to indicate a new paragraph.
- In one of your paragraphs, include counter-arguments to show that you see the whole picture.

Conclusion

- Refer to the given task. *As I have discussed, there are ...; In conclusion, I would like to say that ...; After weighing up the arguments ...*
- Summarise the most important reasons for your opinion. *Apparently ...; Obviously ...*
- Make a moral/social observation and give your final position on the topic. Use conditionals and the will-future for emphasis. *If more people kept this in mind, the world would be ...*

Language

- Use topic-relevant vocabulary.
- Writing your article in a neutral or formal register depends on the target audience.
- Make use of powerful adjectives and avoid simplistic, overused words such as *good/bad* or *happy/sad*.
- Use sentence connectives to link one idea/sentence with the next. Use connectives of e.g. *reason/result, addition, giving examples, etc.*
Therefore, ...; Thus, ...; In addition to that, ...; Furthermore, ...
- Watch out for spelling and punctuation.
- Bear in mind the grammar rules (*present perfect vs. simple past, simple past vs. present progressive, singular vs. plural, adjective vs. adverb, there vs. their, who vs. which, etc.*).
- Vary your sentences in terms of length and structure (*use parataxis and/or hypotaxis, participle clauses, adverbials in front position, inversion, passive voice, gerunds, etc.*).