

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Write an Opinion Essay

Directions: Read "Is Technology Messing With Your Brain?" on pages 20-21 of the January 10, 2011, issue of *Scope*. Fill in the chart on page 21. Then follow the steps below to write an essay explaining your opinion about how technology affects kids.

STEP 1: DECIDE WHAT YOU THINK

Do you think technology is hurting kids? Consider what you read in the article as well as your own experiences. **Check the box next to the point of view you will support in your essay. Or write your own opinion in the space provided.**

- Technology is hurting kids.
- Technology is not hurting kids.
- _____

STEP 2: FIND YOUR SUPPORT

Which of the arguments you wrote in the "Yes" and "No" columns on page 21 support your opinion? What are some other points that support your opinion? Find at least three support items and list them here:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE >

STEP 3: CRAFT YOUR THESIS

The thesis is where you tell readers what the essay is going to be about. It should be a clear, strong statement of the opinion you stated in Step 1. The rest of your essay should support your thesis.

Your thesis: _____

STEP 4: WRITE YOUR HOOK

The very beginning of your essay is called the hook because it "hooks" your readers' attention. The hook should relate to the topic of your essay, but it can take many forms. It can be an anecdote (very short story), a fact, a quote, or a rhetorical question (a question to which you don't expect an answer). Here are three ideas for hooks that could work for this topic. **Choose one of the ideas below, or use your own idea and write a hook on the lines provided (1-3 sentences).**

- 1. ANECDOTE:** Describe a time when you were using technology. For example, you could describe a time you were using several gadgets at once, a time when technology helped you accomplish something, or a time when technology distracted you from something you needed to do.
- 2. SURPRISING FACT:** Find a fact that will raise your readers' eyebrows. Several surprising facts are included in the article. You could also do some research and find a surprising fact that is not included in the article—like the average number of text messages teens send each month.
- 3. RHETORICAL QUESTION:** Ask a question about how technology affects kids.

Your hook: _____

STEP 5: SUMMARIZE THE ISSUE

Let readers know a little about the issue you will be writing about. This is not your point of view, it's just a very brief summary of the issue—in this case, the fact that some people are concerned about how technology affects kids.

Your summary of the issue: _____

STEP 6: START WRITING

Now that you have the key ingredients for your essay, you are ready to start writing. On the next page, you'll find guidelines for how to organize your ingredients and hints about what else you need to add.

Directions: Follow the guidelines below to write a strong essay on how you think technology affects kids. You will use what you wrote on the first two pages of this activity.

INTRODUCTION

Open with your hook from Step 4.



Write a transition sentence that relates your hook to the question of whether technology is helpful or harmful to kids. (See *Scope's* handout "Great Transitions" for some ways to link your ideas.)



Write your summary of the issue from Step 5.



Finish with your thesis from Step 3.

BODY PARAGRAPH(S)

Here's where you write your supporting points from Step 2. For each one, write 1-3 sentences that provide additional details. You can put all of your supporting points and detail sentences together in one paragraph, or you can break them into three separate paragraphs. It depends on how much you want to write about each point. Order your supporting points from the weakest to the strongest. Readers tend to remember best the details that are presented last.

CONCLUSION

Use 2-3 sentences to remind your readers of your main points.



For a strong final sentence, try addressing your readers directly. Ask a question, or encourage your readers to think about something or do something.

READ AND REVISE

Use *Scope's* "Persuasive-Essay Checklist" to evaluate and edit what you have written. Make any necessary changes and write a second draft.

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Great Transitions

Transitions are like bridges between your ideas—they help your readers move from one idea to the next. Here are some transition words and phrases you may wish to use in your essay. Keep in mind that they can be used at the beginning of a sentence or within a sentence.

If you are adding information or showing similarity between ideas:

- additionally
- besides
- so too
- first of all/secondly/thirdly
- in addition
- also
- likewise
- to begin with
- as well as
- another
- furthermore
- finally

If you are showing that one idea is different from another:

- however
- even though
- in contrast
- on the one hand/on the other hand
- yet
- despite
- still
- some people say/other people say
- but
- although
- in spite of
- regardless

If you are showing that something is an example of what you just stated:

- for example
- this can be seen
- to illustrate
- for instance
- specifically
- namely

If you want to show cause and effect:

- as a result
- consequently
- so
- it follows that
- therefore
- eventually

If you want to add emphasis:

- in fact
- of course
- truly
- even
- indeed

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Opinion-Essay Checklist

Directions: Use this guide to check your own essay. Or exchange papers with a classmate and use the list to check each other's essays. In the margins of the essay you are checking, make notes about anything that needs to be revised.

Introduction

- ✓ Does the first sentence grab readers' attention?
- ✓ Does the first paragraph provide a general overview of the topic the essay is about?
- ✓ Does the first paragraph include a thesis statement that strongly and clearly states the writer's point of view? Does the thesis clue readers in as to what the essay is going to be about?

Body Paragraphs

- ✓ Do they contain three points that support the thesis?
- ✓ Do they provide details to further explain each of the three supporting points?
- ✓ Are the supporting details presented in order from weakest to strongest?

Conclusion

- ✓ Does the last paragraph remind readers of all of the main points of the essay, without going into *too* much detail and repeating everything readers just read?
- ✓ Is the conclusion free of any new information (like another supporting point)?
- ✓ Does the last sentence leave readers with a strong final impression?

General

- ✓ Does one idea flow smoothly to the next?
- ✓ Do the sentence structures and lengths vary?
- ✓ Does every sentence relate to the thesis?
- ✓ Does everything make sense?
- ✓ Is the essay convincing?
- ✓ Are the grammar, punctuation, and spelling correct?