Modern Technology

Technology has become an important part of our lives, creating solutions but also new problems.

Discuss It How does modern technology help us solve problems in new ways?
Write your response before sharing your ideas.

Dog Receives Prosthetic Legs Made by 3-D Printer
# UNIT 3

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION:
How is modern technology helpful and harmful to society?

### PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT

**Argument: Essay and Oral Presentation**

**PROMPT:**
Do we rely on technology too much?

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<th>SMALL-GROUP LEARNING</th>
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<td><strong>ANCHOR TEXT: SHORT STORY</strong></td>
<td><strong>SHORT STORY</strong></td>
<td><strong>NEWS ARTICLE</strong></td>
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<td>Feathered Friend</td>
<td>The Fun They Had</td>
<td>7-Year-Old Girl Gets New Hand From 3-D Printer</td>
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<td>Arthur C. Clarke</td>
<td>Isaac Asimov</td>
<td>John Rogers</td>
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<td><strong>ANCHOR TEXT: BLOG POST</strong></td>
<td><strong>BLOG POST</strong></td>
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<td>Teens and Technology Share a Future</td>
<td>Is Our Gain Also Our Loss?</td>
<td>Screen Time Can Mess With the Body’s “Clock”</td>
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<td>Stefan Etienne</td>
<td>Cailin Loesch</td>
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<td><strong>ANCHOR TEXT: BLOG POST</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Black Hole of Technology</td>
<td>Bored . . . and Brilliant? A Challenge to Disconnect From Your Phone</td>
<td>All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace</td>
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<td><strong>MEDIA: VIDEO</strong></td>
<td><strong>SHORT STORY</strong></td>
<td><strong>NEWS ARTICLE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Internet of Things</td>
<td>Feathered Friend</td>
<td>Teen Researchers Defend Media Multitasking</td>
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<td>IBM Social Media</td>
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<td><strong>PERFORMANCE TASK</strong></td>
<td><strong>PERFORMANCE TASK</strong></td>
<td><strong>PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT PREP</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WRITING FOCUS:</strong></td>
<td><strong>SPEAKING AND LISTENING FOCUS:</strong></td>
<td>Review Evidence for an Argument</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write an Argument</td>
<td>Deliver a Multimedia Presentation</td>
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**ANCHOR TEXT:** BLOG POST

- Teens and Technology Share a Future
  - Stefan Etienne

**ANCHOR TEXT:** SHORT STORY

- Feathered Friend
  - Arthur C. Clarke

**ANCHOR TEXT:** BLOG POST

- The Black Hole of Technology
  - Leena Khan

**MEDIA:** VIDEO

- The Internet of Things
  - IBM Social Media

**NEWS ARTICLE**

- 7-Year-Old Girl Gets New Hand From 3-D Printer
  - John Rogers

- Screen Time Can Mess With the Body’s “Clock”
  - Andrew Bridges

**POETRY COLLECTION**

- All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace
  - Richard Brautigan

- Sonnet, without Salmon
  - Sherman Alexie

**NEWS ARTICLE**

- Teen Researchers Defend Media Multitasking
  - Sumathi Reddy

**MEDIA:** PODCAST

- Bored . . . and Brilliant? A Challenge to Disconnect From Your Phone
  - NPR

**SHORT STORY**

- The Fun They Had
  - Isaac Asimov

**ANCHOR TEXT:** BLOG POST

- Is Our Gain Also Our Loss?
  - Cailin Loesch
Unit Goals

Throughout this unit, you will deepen your understanding of the impact of modern technology on society by reading, writing, speaking, listening, and presenting. These goals will help you succeed on the Unit Performance-Based Assessment.

Rate how well you meet these goals right now. You will revisit your ratings later when you reflect on your growth during this unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READING GOALS</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tr>
<td>Read and determine authors’ points of view and evaluate ideas expressed in both literary works and nonfiction texts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expand your knowledge and use of academic and concept vocabulary.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>WRITING AND RESEARCH GOALS</th>
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<th>2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Write an argument to support a claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct research projects of various lengths to explore a topic and clarify meaning.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE GOAL</th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claims and reasons.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPEAKING AND LISTENING GOALS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Engage in collaborative discussions, build on the ideas of others, and express your own ideas clearly.</td>
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<td>Integrate audio, visuals, and text in presentations.</td>
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**Academic Vocabulary: Argument**

Understanding and using academic terms can help you read, write, and speak with precision and clarity. Here are five academic words that will be useful in this unit as you analyze and write argumentative texts.

**Complete the chart.**

1. Review each word, its root, and the mentor sentences.
2. Use the information and your own knowledge to predict the meaning of each word.
3. For each word, list at least two related words.
4. Refer to the dictionary or other resources if needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>MENTOR SENTENCES</th>
<th>PREDICT MEANING</th>
<th>RELATED WORDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>convince</td>
<td>1. To convince the jury, the lawyer presented evidence of the woman’s innocence.</td>
<td></td>
<td>convincingly;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. I will try to convince my mother that I need new clothes, even though she bought me a new shirt last week.</td>
<td></td>
<td>unconvincing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certain</td>
<td>1. The band became famous for having a certain jangly sound in their music.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. I will be certain to study before the next test.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sufficient</td>
<td>1. We brought a sufficient amount of food and water for a week’s worth of camping.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Studying an hour a day during the week before the test is sufficient to do well.</td>
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<tr>
<td>declare</td>
<td>1. Many officials will declare their support of the mayor’s campaign by speaking at the press conference.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Ruthie was about to declare her innocence, but the chocolate stain on her face and the empty cookie jar told the truth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>various</td>
<td>1. There are various tips for effective public speaking, including speaking clearly and making eye contact.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. We discussed various places to host the event—many of which were close to home.</td>
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</table>
Social networking has become a big part of our lives, and its negative effects can be overlooked. But mental health experts are starting to notice—and what they are finding is disturbing. As the popularity of social media skyrockets, so do reports of “Facebook depression.” Like other kinds of depression, its common signs are anxiety, low self-confidence, and loneliness. This form of depression hits those who worry too much about what others think. It largely affects young people because they tend to worry most about others’ opinions. The constant need to see how they’re “measuring up” can cause people to feel huge amounts of stress.

Studies have found that people who get their sense of self-worth from others are more likely to keep checking their status. They want to monitor their updates, wall posts, and photos to see how well or how poorly they’re measuring up. The feeling that they’re missing out on something makes it hard to take a break. And they don’t have to—smartphones have made it possible to log in from any place at any time. The result is more stress.

Social networking can cause serious emotional problems. Everyone knows the effects of online bullying. There are other ways to damage a person’s self-confidence. “When ‘friends’
upload unflattering photos and post mean comments, it can seriously damage a person’s self-image,” says one mental health expert. In addition, getting no response to a post or not being “friended” can also be very painful.

6 The effects can be physical, too. Frequent users of social media often suffer from pain in their fingers and wrists. Blood vessels in their eyes and necks can narrow. Their backs can ache from being hunched over phones and computers for hours at a time.

7 Texting is another problem created by technology. Half the nation’s youth send 50 or more text messages a day. One study found that young people send an average of 34 texts a night after they get into bed! This loss of sleep can affect the ability to concentrate, problem-solve, and learn.

8 Not all experts agree with this analysis. Some point to the benefits of social media. Dr. Megan Moreno is an assistant professor of pediatrics and adolescent medicine. She believes that social networking helps develop a young person’s sense of community. She also believes that it can be used to identify youth who are most at risk for depression. “Our studies have found that adolescents often share feelings of depression on Facebook,” she says. “Social media is a tool; it cannot in and of itself cause mental illness,” says Dr. Moreno. She insists that young people had problems before computers came into being.

9 Maybe so. In the past, however, young people found ways to escape from their problems. Now, smartphones and other high-tech devices have made escape impossible. Is that progress?

10 Technology should simplify life, not complicate it. The danger of social media is that young users can eventually lose their ability to focus on what is most important in life—no matter what path they choose to follow.

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**WORD NETWORK FOR MODERN TECHNOLOGY**

**Vocabulary**
A Word Network is a collection of words related to a topic. As you read the selections in this unit, identify interesting words related to the impact of modern technology, and add them to your Word Network. For example, you might begin by adding words from the Launch Text, such as stress, status, and community. Continue to add words as you complete this unit.

**Tool Kit** Word Network Model
Summary

Write a summary of “That’s Not Progress!” A summary is a concise, complete, and accurate overview of a text. It should not include a statement of your opinion or an analysis.

Launch Activity

Conduct a Walk-Around Debate  Consider this statement:
Technology improves our lives by providing us with access to large amounts of information quickly.

- Prepare for the debate by thinking about the topic. Consider how access to smartphones and the Internet affects your life and the lives of people you know.
- Jot down your ideas about the topic.
- Decide whether you agree or disagree with the statement, and write your opinion on a sticky note that you stick to your clothes.
- Walk around the room, and share your ideas about the topic with at least two people who do not hold your opinion.
- At the end of the debate, determine how many people in the room changed their opinions, and why.
QuickWrite

Consider class discussions, the video, and the Launch Text as you think about the prompt. Record your first thoughts here.

PROMPT: Do we rely on technology too much?

Review your QuickWrite. Summarize your point of view in one sentence to record in your Evidence Log. Then, record evidence from “That’s Not Progress!” that supports your point of view.

After each selection, you will continue to use your Evidence Log to record the evidence you gather and the connections you make. This graphic shows what your Evidence Log looks like.

Title of Text: ____________________________ Date: __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONNECTION TO PROMPT</th>
<th>TEXT EVIDENCE/DETAILS</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL NOTES/IDEAS</th>
</tr>
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</table>

How does this text change or add to my thinking? Date: __________

Tool Kit
Evidence Log Model

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How is modern technology helpful and harmful to society?
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How is modern technology helpful and harmful to society?

Technology and social media have become central parts of today’s world—but are they truly improving our lives? You will work with your whole class to explore the impact of modern technology on society. The selections you will read present insights into its positive and negative effects.

Whole-Class Learning Strategies

Throughout your life, in school, in your community, and in your career, you will continue to learn and work in large-group environments.

Review these strategies and the actions you can take to practice them as you work with your whole class. Add ideas of your own for each step. Get ready to use these strategies during Whole-Class Learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>ACTION PLAN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listen actively</td>
<td>• Eliminate distractions. For example, put your cellphone away.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Keep your eyes on the speaker.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarify by asking questions</td>
<td>• If you’re confused, other people probably are, too. Ask a question to help your whole class.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If you see that you are guessing, ask a question instead.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>•</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitor understanding</td>
<td>• Notice what information you already know and be ready to build on it.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ask for help if you are struggling.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interact and share ideas</td>
<td>• Share your ideas and answer questions, even if you are unsure.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Build on the ideas of others by adding details or making a connection.</td>
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</table>
Write an Argument

The Whole-Class selections illustrate ways in which technology has affected our everyday lives. After reading the texts and watching the video, you will write an argument in the form of an editorial about the impact of modern technology.
About the Author

With more than one hundred million copies of his books in print worldwide, Arthur C. Clarke (1917–2008) may have been the most successful science-fiction writer of all time. He is known for combining his knowledge of technology and science with touches of poetry. Clarke once said, “The only way of finding the limits of the possible is by going beyond them into the impossible.”

Feathered Friend

Concept Vocabulary

You will encounter the following words as you read “Feathered Friend.” Before reading, note how familiar you are with each word. Then, rank the words in order from most familiar (1) to least familiar (5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>YOUR RANKING</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pathetically</td>
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<tr>
<td>distressed</td>
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<tr>
<td>mournfully</td>
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<tr>
<td>apologetically</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>lamented</td>
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After completing the first read, come back to the concept vocabulary and review your rankings. Mark changes to your original rankings as needed.

First Read FICTION

Apply these strategies as you conduct your first read. You will have an opportunity to complete the close-read notes after your first read.

Tool Kit
First-Read Guide and Model Annotation

STANDARDS
Reading Literature
By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
This story was written during the 1950s, a time of growth and technological advancement in the United States. The possibility of space exploration created a feeling of immense potential. This optimism about the future influenced all areas of the arts, especially popular literature, in what is now called the Golden Age of Science Fiction.

To the best of my knowledge, there’s never been a regulation that forbids one to keep pets in a space station. No one ever thought it was necessary—and even had such a rule existed, I am quite certain that Sven Olsen would have ignored it.

With a name like that, you will picture Sven at once as a six-foot-six Nordic giant, built like a bull and with a voice to match. Had this been so, his chances of getting a job in space would have been very slim. Actually he was a wiry little fellow, like most of the early spacers, and managed to qualify easily for the 150-pound bonus that kept so many of us on a reducing diet.

Sven was one of our best construction men, and excelled at the tricky and specialized work of collecting assorted girders as they floated around in free fall, making them do the slow-motion, three-dimensional ballet that would get them into their right positions, and fusing the pieces together when they were precisely dovetailed into the intended pattern: It was a skilled and difficult job, for a spacesuit is not the most convenient of garbs in which to work. However, Sven’s team had one great advantage over the construction gangs you see putting up skyscrapers down on
Earth. They could step back and admire their handiwork without being abruptly parted from it by gravity.

Don’t ask me why Sven wanted a pet, or why he chose the one he did. I’m not a psychologist, but I must admit that his selection was very sensible. Claribel weighed practically nothing, her food requirements were tiny—and she was not worried, as most animals would have been, by the absence of gravity.

I first became aware that Claribel was aboard when I was sitting in the little cubbyhole laughingly called my office, checking through my lists of technical stores to decide what items we’d be running out of next. When I heard the musical whistle beside my ear, I assumed that it had come over the station intercom, and waited for an announcement to follow. It didn’t; instead, there was a long and involved pattern of melody that made me look up with such a start that I forgot all about the angle beam just behind my head. When the stars had ceased to explode before my eyes, I had my first view of Claribel.

She was a small yellow canary, hanging in the air as motionless as a hummingbird—and with much less effort, for her wings were quietly folded along her sides. We stared at each other for a minute; then, before I had quite recovered my wits, she did a curious kind of backward loop I’m sure no earthbound canary had ever managed, and departed with a few leisurely flicks. It was quite obvious that she’d already learned how to operate in the absence of gravity, and did not believe in doing unnecessary work.

Sven didn’t confess to her ownership for several days, and by that time it no longer mattered, because Claribel was a general pet. He had smuggled her up on the last ferry from Earth, when he came back from leave—partly, he claimed, out of sheer scientific curiosity. He wanted to see just how a bird would operate when it had no weight but could still use its wings.

Claribel thrived and grew fat. On the whole, we had little trouble concealing our guest when VIPs from Earth came visiting. A space station has more hiding places than you can count; the only problem was that Claribel got rather noisy when she was upset, and we sometimes had to think fast to explain the curious peeps and whistles that came from ventilating shafts and storage bulkheads. There were a couple of narrow escapes—but then who would dream of looking for a canary in a space station?

We were now on twelve-hour watches, which was not as bad as it sounds, since you need little sleep in space. Though of course there is no “day” and “night” when you are floating in permanent sunlight, it was still convenient to stick to the terms. Certainly when I woke that “morning” it felt like 6:00 A.M. on Earth. I had
a nagging headache, and vague memories of fitful, disturbed dreams. It took me ages to undo my bunk straps, and I was still only half awake when I joined the remainder of the duty crew in the mess. Breakfast was unusually quiet, and there was one seat vacant.

“Where’s Sven?” I asked, not very much caring.

“He’s looking for Claribel,” someone answered. “Says he can’t find her anywhere. She usually wakes him up.”

Before I could retort that she usually woke me up, too, Sven came in through the doorway, and we could see at once that something was wrong. He slowly opened his hand, and there lay a tiny bundle of yellow feathers, with two clenched claws sticking pathetically up into the air.

“What happened?” we asked, all equally distressed.

“I don’t know,” said Sven mournfully. “I just found her like this.”

“Let’s have a look at her,” said Jock Duncan, our cook-doctor-dietitian. We all waited in hushed silence while he held Claribel against his ear in an attempt to detect any heartbeat.

Presently he shook his head. “I can’t hear anything, but that doesn’t prove she’s dead. I’ve never listened to a canary’s heart,” he added rather apologetically.

“Give her a shot of oxygen,” suggested somebody, pointing to the green-banded emergency cylinder in its recess beside the door. Everyone agreed that this was an excellent idea, and Claribel was tucked snugly into a face mask that was large enough to serve as a complete oxygen tent for her.

To our delighted surprise, she revived at once. Beaming broadly, Sven removed the mask, and she hopped onto his finger. She gave her series of “Come to the cookhouse, boys” trills—then promptly keeled over again.

“I don’t get it,” lamented Sven. “What’s wrong with her? She’s never done this before.”

For the last few minutes, something had been tugging at my memory. My mind seemed to be very sluggish that morning, as if I was still unable to cast off the burden of sleep. I felt that I could do with some of that oxygen—but before I could reach the mask, understanding exploded in my brain. I whirled on the duty engineer and said urgently:

“Jim! There’s something wrong with the air! That’s why Claribel’s passed out. I’ve just remembered that miners used to carry canaries down to warn them of gas.”

“Nonsense!” said Jim. “The alarms would have gone off. We’ve got duplicate circuits, operating independently.”
“Er—the second alarm circuit isn’t connected up yet.” His assistant reminded him. That shook Jim; he left without a word, while we stood arguing and passing the oxygen bottle around like a pipe of peace.

He came back ten minutes later with a sheepish expression. It was one of those accidents that couldn’t possibly happen; we’d had one of our rare eclipses by Earth’s shadow that night: Part of the air purifier had frozen up, and the single alarm in the circuit had failed to go off. Half a million dollars’ worth of chemical and electronic engineering had let us down completely. Without Claribel, we should soon have been slightly dead.

So now, if you visit any space station, don’t be surprised if you hear an inexplicable snatch of birdsong. There’s no need to be alarmed; on the contrary, in fact. It will mean that you’re being doubly safeguarded, at practically no extra expense.
Comprehension Check

Complete the following items after you complete your first read.

1. Where does the story take place?

2. How does the narrator discover Claribel’s presence?

3. Why does Sven bring Claribel onboard?

4. What causes Claribel to pass out?

5. Notebook  Confirm your understanding of the story by writing a summary.

RESEARCH

Research to Clarify  Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from the text. Briefly research that detail. In what way does the information you learned shed light on an aspect of the story?

Research to Explore  Choose something from the text that interests you, and formulate a research question. For example, you may want to learn more about canaries or space stations.
Close Read the Text

1. This model, from paragraph 3 of the story, shows two sample annotations, along with questions and conclusions. Close read the passage, and find another detail to annotate. Then, write a question and your conclusion.

**ANNOTATE:** Some of these details are very technical, but others are very poetic.

**QUESTION:** Why does Clarke use different types of language to describe Sven’s movements?

**CONCLUDE:** These details suggest that working in space is both freeing and beautiful, and exacting and scientific.

Sven was one of our best construction men, and excelled at the tricky and specialized work of collecting assorted girders as they floated around in free fall, making them do the slow-motion, three-dimensional ballet that would get them into their right positions, and fusing the pieces together when they were precisely dovetailed into the intended pattern. . . .

2. For more practice, go back into the story, and complete the close-read notes.

3. Revisit a section of the text you found important during your first read. Read this section closely, and annotate what you notice. Ask yourself questions such as “Why did the author make this choice?” “What can you conclude?”

Analyze the Text

**Notebook** Respond to these questions.

1. (a) **Infer** How do the crew members feel about Claribel? (b) **Draw Conclusions** What is the benefit of having a pet in the space station?

2. (a) **Synthesize** What events or factors help the narrator figure out that something is wrong with the air? (b) **Make a Judgment** Who is responsible for saving the crew’s lives: Claribel or the narrator? Explain.

3. (a) **What causes the failure of the alarm that was intended to warn about air quality? (b) Speculate** What are some potential problems with using a canary instead of an electronic alarm system? (c) **Evaluate** Which is a more reliable form of alarm? Explain.
Analyze Craft and Structure

**Determine Theme** The theme of a short story is the message or insight about life that it expresses. Sometimes, the narrator states the theme directly. More often, the theme is implied, or suggested by details in the text. To figure out the implied theme of a story, look closely at details, think about how they fit together, and consider what larger meaning they convey. To determine the theme of “Feathered Friend,” focus on the following elements:

- the story’s title
- the characters’ thoughts and feelings
- the setting of the story, or when and where the story takes place
- the knowledge and insights that characters gain in the course of the story
- the outcome of the conflict and the effect the outcome has on the characters

Readers may interpret a story’s theme in different ways. In order for an interpretation to be valid, it must take into account all of the story’s important details.

**Practice**

**Notebook** Respond to these questions.

1. This diagram lists key details from “Feathered Friend” that suggest a theme. Consider the details. Then, write the theme they suggest.

   | KEY DETAIL: The station has advanced systems to protect the air quality. |
   | KEY DETAIL: One of the space-station workers smuggles aboard a canary. |
   | KEY DETAIL: The canary alerts the men when the air quality gets dangerously bad. |

   **THEME:**

2. Here is another possible theme expressed in “Feathered Friend”: Advanced technology leaves a void that people try to fill with companionship. What details from the text connect to support this theme? Explain.

3. (a) What is the setting of “Feathered Friend”? (b) How does the setting contribute to the themes you explored in questions 1 and 2?
Concept Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pathetically</th>
<th>mournfully</th>
<th>lamented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>distressed</td>
<td>apologetically</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Why These Words?** These concept vocabulary words all relate to feelings of sadness, suffering, or regret. For example, when something is wrong with Claribel, the crew members are *distressed*, and her owner speaks *mournfully*.

1. How does the concept vocabulary help readers appreciate Claribel’s importance to the crew?

2. What other words do you know that connect to this concept?

**Practice**

**Notebook** Indicate whether the concept vocabulary word is used correctly in each sentence. Explain your answers.

1. The frightened cat hid in the corner and mewed *pathetically*.
2. We *lamented* the loss of our favorite teacher when she moved to another state.
3. The baby was so *distressed* by the attention that she grinned widely and clapped her hands.
4. The dog was old and sick, but I still cried *mournfully* when she died.
5. “I’m so happy that I won!” Kara cheered *apologetically*.

**Word Study**

**Greek Root: -path-** The Greek root *-path-* means “feeling” or “suffering.” In “Feathered Friend,” when Claribel is unwell, her claws stick up *pathetically* in the air. Claribel’s claws are sticking up in a way that causes the crew members to feel sadness for her suffering.

1. Write a definition of the word *sympathy* that shows your understanding of the Greek root *-path-*. Then, use the word *sympathy* correctly in a sentence.

2. Use a dictionary to find the meaning of the word *empathy*. Write the definition. Then, explain how the definition connects to the meaning of the Greek root.
Conventions

**Compound Words**  “Feathered Friend” contains a wide assortment of compound words, words that are made up of two or more other words. They sometimes appear in closed form as a single word, as in heartbeat. In other cases, they are hyphenated, as in three-dimensional. Some compound words appear in open form as two separate words, as in free fall.

Compound words can function as various parts of speech, depending on how they are being used. Here are some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART OF SPEECH</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>noun</strong></td>
<td>The space station was running low on supplies. Skyscrapers were visible from far away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>verb</strong></td>
<td>The engineer dovetailed the girders. Alarms safeguarded the crew from danger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>adjective</strong></td>
<td>Earthbound passengers boarded the shuttle. The technicians worked in twelve-hour shifts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>adverb</strong></td>
<td>The bird jumped sideways when startled.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Read It**

1. Reread paragraph 3 of “Feathered Friend,” and mark the compound words you see. List the words.

2. Read each passage from “Feathered Friend,” and mark the compound word or words. Then, identify each compound word’s part of speech.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PASSAGE</th>
<th>PART OF SPEECH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. . . . you will picture Sven at once as a six-foot-six Nordic giant, built like a bull and with a voice to match.</td>
<td>noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. She was a small yellow canary, hanging in the air as motionless as a hummingbird. . . .</td>
<td>verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. So now, . . . don’t be surprised if you hear an inexplicable snatch of birdsong.</td>
<td>adjective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Write It**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>three-dimensional</th>
<th>bulkhead</th>
<th>spacesuit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>breakfast</td>
<td>headache</td>
<td>doorway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notebook**  Write three sentences in which you use compound words. You may use the words in the chart, which appear in “Feathered Friend,” or come up with words of your own.
Writing to Sources

An argument is a form of writing in which a writer states a claim, develops it with reasons, and supports it with evidence. The purpose of an argument is to convince readers to agree with the claim.

Assignment

One theme of “Feathered Friend” is that it is risky for people to become dependent on technology. Write a brief argumentative essay in which you take a position on that theme. Do you think the story expresses valid concerns about the risks of technology? Use details from the story, as well as your own observations and insights, to support your claim and craft a convincing argument.

Your essay should include:

• a claim, or clear statement of your position
• a logical organization, with words and phrases that show how your claim, reasons, and evidence connect
• relevant details from the story that support your claim
• a concluding statement that emphasizes the strength of your claim

Vocabulary and Conventions Connection In your argument, consider using several of the concept vocabulary words. If you use any compound words, look them up in a dictionary to see whether they should be hyphenated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pathetically</th>
<th>mournfully</th>
<th>lamented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>distressed</td>
<td>apologetically</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflect on Your Writing

After you have written your argument, answer the following questions.

1. How did writing your argument strengthen your understanding of the story’s theme?

2. Is your argument clear and easy to follow? If not, how might you improve the organization and support?

3. Why These Words? The words you choose make a difference in your writing. Which words did you specifically choose to make your argument persuasive, or convincing?
ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How is modern technology helpful and harmful to society?

Speaking and Listening

Canaries were used in coal mines as a low-tech way to detect deadly gases, before the invention of high-tech devices. In “Feathered Friend,” Arthur C. Clarke shows the benefits of high-tech and low-tech methods working together.

Assignment

Work with a partner to create a multimedia presentation. In your presentation, explain another way in which high-tech and low-tech methods can work well together. Conclude your presentation by reflecting on whether your research has changed your opinions about modern technology.

1. **Research the Topic** Research ways in which high-tech and low-tech methods can work together. Then, identify one example to be the focus of your presentation.

2. **Organize Your Multimedia** Your presentation should explain how high-tech and low-tech methods work together in the example you present. Make sure you present your multimedia components in the order that makes the most sense. They should help clarify the information you present.

3. **Consider Your Conclusion** Consider the new knowledge you have gained from your research. What have you learned? Have your opinions about modern technology changed? Share your thoughts with the class at the end of your presentation.

4. **Prepare Your Delivery** Practice delivering your presentation with your partner. Remember to do the following:
   - maintain eye contact with your audience
   - speak with enough volume that everyone can hear you
   - speak with clear pronunciation

5. **Evaluate Multimedia Presentations** Listen closely as your classmates deliver their presentations. Use an evaluation guide like the one shown to rate their deliveries.

### EVALUATION GUIDE

Rate each statement on a scale of 1 (not demonstrated) to 5 (well demonstrated).

- [ ] The information and media were placed in a logical order.
- [ ] The presentation clearly addressed both high- and low-tech methods.
- [ ] The presentation ended with a strong conclusion.
- [ ] The speakers maintained eye contact and spoke clearly and with enough volume.
Comparing Texts

In this lesson, you will read and compare two arguments, in the form of blog posts, about the impact of modern technology. First, you will complete the first-read and close-read activities for “Teens and Technology Share a Future.”

Teens and Technology Share a Future

Technical Vocabulary

You will encounter the following words as you read “Teens and Technology Share a Future.” Before reading, rate how familiar you are with each word. Rank the words in order from most familiar (1) to least familiar (3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>YOUR RANKING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>microchips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trigonometry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pixels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After completing the first read, come back to the technical vocabulary and review your rankings. Mark changes to your original rankings as needed.

First Read NONFICTION

Apply these strategies as you conduct your first read. You will have an opportunity to complete the close-read notes after your first read.

Tool Kit

First-Read Guide and Model Annotation

STANDARDS

Reading Informational Text

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
BACKGROUND
The Internet puts an enormous amount of information at your fingertips. However, it only became widely available in the 1990s. It was first developed by the United States Defense Department as a communication tool in the 1970s. By the 2000s, about 360 million people, or 6% of the world’s population, were connected to the Internet. This blog post discusses the impact of those changes.

Perhaps it is the years of experience I’ve had in front of a computer, a laptop, or some sort of device with a screen. Talking about technology, attending press events in NYC, and meeting the industry’s most interesting people—all older than me, but all with the same childish hunger to see what comes next.

With its microchips, input methods, operating systems, and everything in between, technology of the twenty-first century is a window into a new world for all of humanity, but especially for teenagers. Are you curious about something no one you know has even heard of? Then, search for it online—and maybe even come across the wrong answer, initially.

You do more research and eventually uncover the truth. Inside, you feel a little like Indiana Jones, finding information that you believe will make you a more complete human being. In the grand scheme of things, you’ve done us all a great service: You’ve turned over a small stone of information, one in a river of millions. With every stone turned, our picture of the world becomes clearer.

1. NYC New York City.
2. operating systems basic software that allow devices to run applications.
3. Indiana Jones classic movie character, known for being an explorer and archaeologist.
It’s similar to my experience with the polar vortex\(^4\) that has been plaguing New York for more than a month: Only when the sun breaks out for a moment do I realize how beautiful the snow can be. That’s what computer technology can do—like sunshine breaking through the cold, it changes how we see things. When you filter out the useless Facebook messages, out-of-context tweets, and all the GIFs from Reddit,\(^5\) you see that you—yes, you—are in control of your own information network. Best of all, you can do anything you want to do with it. There’s no excuse to be confused by that math problem in trigonometry, or lack a source to cite in an essay. It’s all on you now.

Of course, right off the bat, you may be thinking: “Here comes a geek, obsessed with technology, preaching about its effectiveness and adaptability, and how it’s great for everyone who is currently a teenager.”

You’re absolutely right. But even if you are not as much of a geek as I am, you are still immersed in technology. How else would you be reading this blog? How else would you understand what “LOL” means, or be able to send a text message without even thinking about it?

The world is facing many problems, but young people—using the power of technology—have the opportunity to solve them. Technology connects us in ways no one has ever been connected before. As Henry David Thoreau\(^6\) put it in an age before the Internet, “Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other’s eyes, for just an instant?” If only Thoreau had known that we would be able to look into another person’s eyes—even if they are actually just pixels on a screen—thousands of miles away! What superpower could one possibly want when we have technology that lets us meet new people, invent new things, and help others?

Today’s teenagers (as of 2014) have the potential to be the most influential and informed generation of human beings ever seen. But that will only happen if we step up to the challenge, wake up, and be prepared to take charge in an informed, responsible, and powerful way. (Hopefully, we will not make our problems worse.)

What is better than a will to do great things? The actual actions that will make those great things happen.

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4. polar vortex extremely cold wind near the North or South Pole. When this blog post was written, the cold air from the north polar vortex was affecting New York.
5. GIFs . . . Reddit animated digital images from an entertainment- and news-based social-networking website.
6. Henry David Thoreau nineteenth-century writer, known for his love of nature and living simply.
Comprehension Check

Complete the following items after you finish your first read.

1. According to the author, how is technology a “window into a new world”?

2. What does the author suggest people need to do to be in control of their own information network?

3. According to the author, in what way is technology like a superpower?

4. According to the author, what must this generation do to fulfill the potential it has to influence the world in a positive way?

5. What does the author say is better than wanting to do great things?

6. Notebook List three important ideas from the selection to show your understanding.

RESEARCH

Research to Clarify Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from the text. Briefly research that detail. In what way does the information you learned shed light on an aspect of the blog post?

Research to Explore Choose something that interested you from the text, and formulate a research question.
Close Read the Text

1. This model, from paragraph 4 of the text, shows two sample annotations, along with questions and conclusions. Close read the passage, and find another detail to annotate. Then, write a question and your conclusion.

   **ANNOTATE:** These are all very specific examples of different kinds of information we get from computer technology.
   **QUESTION:** Why does the author mention such specific items?
   **CONCLUDE:** Using specific terms helps make a connection to readers—they may recognize their own use of technology in these examples.

   **ANNOTATE:** The author repeats the word you.
   **QUESTION:** Why does the author put so much emphasis on you?
   **CONCLUDE:** He is stressing the idea that we are all personally responsible for our uses of technology.

   When you filter out the useless Facebook messages, out-of-context tweets, and all the GIFs from Reddit, you see that you—you, yes, you—are in control of your own information network. Best of all, you can do anything you want to do with it.

2. For more practice, go back into the text, and complete the close-read notes.

3. Revisit a section of the text you found important during your first read. Read this section closely, and annotate what you notice. Ask yourself questions such as “Why did the blogger make this choice?” What can you conclude?

Analyze the Text

**Notebook** Respond to these questions.

1. (a) **Paraphrase** Explain the blogger’s comparison of technology to the polar vortex. (b) **Evaluate** Is his comparison effective? Explain.

2. **Speculate** Why do you think he specifically addresses teens?

3. **Interpret** What does the blogger mean when he says that teens must “take charge in an informed, responsible, and powerful way”?

4. **Essential Question:** *How is modern technology helpful and harmful to society?* What have you learned about the ways that technology can help or harm society from reading this blog post?
Analyze Craft and Structure

**Author’s Perspective: Argument** This blog post is an example of an argument, a type of writing in which an author tries to persuade readers to think or do something specific. All persuasive writing presents a main claim, which is the author’s position or opinion. The writer may include other claims that relate to the main one. Most writers use different types of details to support their claims. These supporting details are called evidence, and they may be any of the following types:

- logical reasons
- facts, or statements that can be proved true
- quotations from experts
- examples that help illustrate ideas

The author’s claim reflects his or her perspective, or viewpoint. An author’s perspective relates to his or her attitudes and experiences. For example, this blogger enjoys technology. His claim shows that perspective.

**Practice**

Answer the following questions.

1. (a) What is Etienne’s main claim? (b) Identify two reasons he offers to support his claim.

2. (a) Identify a quotation from another author that Etienne uses to support his claim. (b) How does the quotation help strengthen his argument?

3. (a) Note two points at which Etienne says that technology can cause harm. (b) Why does he admit something that goes against his claim? (c) How does this actually strengthen his argument?

4. Etienne compares computer technology to a variety of different things. Use the chart to analyze whether each comparison makes his ideas clearer or has another effect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPARISON</th>
<th>EFFECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>windows into a new world</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stones in a river</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>superpowers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Technical Vocabulary

microchips  trigonometry  pixels

**Why These Words?** Like other fields, the technology industry has its own specialized vocabulary. These three technical vocabulary words are part of this specialized vocabulary.

1. How does the technical vocabulary sharpen the reader’s understanding of the blogger’s opinion about technology?

2. What other words in the blog post connect to this concept?

**Practice**

**Notebook** The technical vocabulary words appear in “Teens and Technology Share a Future.”

1. Use each technical word in a sentence that demonstrates your understanding of the word’s meaning.
2. With a partner, take turns listing as many words related to the technical vocabulary words as you can.

**Word Study**

**Greek Suffix: -metry** The Greek suffix -metry means “process of measuring.” *Trigonometry* is a type of mathematics that uses the properties of triangles to determine unknown angles and lengths. Knowing the meaning of -metry can help you determine the meanings of other words.

1. The Greek root -hor- means “time.” What kind of tool or device might someone use in the field of *horometry*?

2. The Greek root -opt- means “eye” or “sight.” Why might someone visit a person who practices *optometry*?
Conventions

**Appositives and Appositive Phrases** Writers use appositives to add information that helps the reader understand certain nouns. An appositive is a noun or pronoun that identifies, renames, or explains another noun or pronoun next to it. An appositive phrase includes an appositive and its modifiers.

- If the information in an appositive or appositive phrase is restrictive, which means that it is essential to understanding the sentence, *do not* set it off with commas or dashes.
- If the information in the appositive or appositive phrase is nonrestrictive, or nonessential, *do* set it off with commas or dashes.

My friend Marcos is great at using technology. (essential)

I bought clothes from the website, an online shop. (nonessential)

### Read It

1. Read these sentences. Mark each example of an appositive or an appositive phrase. Label each as essential or nonessential.

   a. Examples of texting symbols include emoticons, picture portrayals of the writer’s mood.

   b. We replay GIFs—funny images of cats, usually—and laugh every single time.


2. Read this passage from the selection. Mark the appositive or appositive phrase, and label it as essential or nonessential.

   You’ve turned over a small stone of information, one in a river of millions.

### Write It

**Notebook** Write a paragraph explaining when and how you usually use the Internet. Use at least two appositives or appositive phrases.
Comparing Texts
Read this blog post and complete the first-read and close-read activities. Then, compare the blogger’s argument to the one expressed in “Teens and Technology Share a Future.”

About the Author

Leena Khan (b. 2001) is an aspiring author. Khan lives in Saudi Arabia.

The Black Hole of Technology

Concept Vocabulary
You will encounter the following words as you read “The Black Hole of Technology.” Before reading, rate how familiar you are with each word. Rank the words in order from most familiar (1) to least familiar (5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>YOUR RANKING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>devouring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>absorbing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>digesting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After completing the first read, come back to the concept vocabulary and review your rankings. Mark changes to your original rankings as needed.

First Read NONFICTION
Apply these strategies as you conduct your first read. You will have an opportunity to complete the close-read notes after your first read.

- NOTICE the general ideas of the text. What is it about? Who is involved?
- ANNOTATE by marking vocabulary and key passages you want to revisit.
- CONNECT ideas within the selection to what you already know and what you have already read.
- RESPOND by completing the Comprehension Check and by writing three important ideas from the selection.

STANDARDS
Reading Informational Text
By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
The black hole of endless, unimportant streams of technology-enabled information is *devouring* everyone living in the twenty-first century. No matter how much people may look at information, it does not mean they are *absorbing* it. Equating quality with speed and volume, people may read thousands of news headlines broadcasted across the world daily, yet they will forget them in a couple of hours. No one stops to *process* information anymore to determine its significance or importance. No one appreciates the value of personal interaction or nature. Everything is go, go, go. Not once do we stop. Before being introduced to my phone and computer, I had been more appreciative of the world around me. Now, I’m always *consumed* by my “tech,” and I never stop to take a break.

“Did you guys see what Miley Cyrus\(^1\) posted?” My friend Fouly only peeled her eyes away from her iPhone screen to ask us that question. I glanced around at my friends, and they all quickly checked Instagram\(^2\) in the hopes that they hadn’t missed Miley’s latest update. I, on the other hand, glanced out the window separating us from the beautiful weather outside. We were 15 friends sitting inside under artificial lighting and with our hands

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1. Miley Cyrus celebrity who has achieved fame as an actress and a singer.
2. Instagram online social-media platform.
glued to our phones on a Friday, when the enticing warmth of the sun and delicate breeze were begging us to run around outside. Of course, our ears were deaf to nature’s pleas, just like any other teenager nowadays. I put my phone down to shut the curtains, then I continued to mindlessly scroll through Miley’s Instagram page.

I found myself longing for that Instagram page a week later, in an entirely different country. The scorching sun baked the back of my neck as my family and I walked along the wide, crowded dirt path on our way to visit yet another Cambodian temple. I slipped my phone out of my bag to check for a signal, but before I could even unlock it, it was snatched out of my hands.

“Leena, you’re heading toward one of the most well preserved ancient wonders in the world. It would do you well to appreciate your surroundings!” my dad scolded.

My phone was wailing at me from the tight grip his hands had on it, but I had no choice but to ignore it, like I had been forced to do for the entire fall break. Huffing, I looked up and drank in our surroundings. There were tents perched on the sides of the sandy roads, and a couple of half-naked boys were jumping into a murky lake nearby. A toddler was laughing her head off, playing with an old man who I assumed was her grandfather. I missed all of this liveliness, the beauty of a community, because I was trapped in the black hole of technology. Everyone around me was smiling, despite having to live their lives in poverty. Then I noticed something I hadn’t before: no one had a cellphone on them. There were no TVs, no radios, and their music came from live instruments instead of mp3 players and iPods. These people had nothing. Some of them were even walking around without shoes! How could they look so happy? Then I thought . . . Maybe it’s because they don’t have all that modern technology. They aren’t subjected to the black hole of endless information.

I carried my insightful observations all the way to the temple, and my breath caught in my throat when we got there. It was stunning. When the guide started a long speech about the origin of the temple, I turned to face him. Then I realized I was inside of the black hole again. I was paying attention to the information the guide was throwing at me instead of also recognizing this once-in-a-lifetime experience. When would I be able to visit one of the seven wonders of the world again? The answer was pretty clear, so keeping one ear with the guide, and turning the rest of myself to the temple, I soaked in the extraordinary sight before me. For once, I wasn’t digesting useless information. I wasn’t typing into my phone, or watching any screen at all. In a life of go, go, go I had finally stopped.
It was then that I vowed that the next time my friends and I are absorbed in our phones on a sunny day, I won’t close the curtains. Next time I’m walking along any road, I’ll value my surroundings instead of texting on a device. From now on, I will make sure that the endless information flying my way won’t go in one ear and out the other. I will find the significance in things and recognize it, because that’s something many people fail to do—by falling into the technology trap. Escape the black hole of technology, because when you do . . . you feel free.

Comprehension Check
Complete the following items after you finish your first read.

1. What does the author do when a friend points out a new Miley Cyrus post?

2. Where do the author and her family go on vacation?

3. Why does the author’s father take away her cellphone?

4. Notebook Write three important ideas from the selection.

RESEARCH
Research to Clarify Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from the text. Briefly research that detail. In what way does the information you learned shed light on an aspect of the blog post?
Close Read the Text

1. This model, from paragraph 5 of the text, shows two sample annotations, along with questions and conclusions. Close read the passage, and find another detail to annotate. Then, write a question and your conclusion.

   **ANNOTATE:** This concept is repeated.
   **QUESTION:** Why does the blogger repeat this concept?
   **CONCLUDE:** The repetition emphasizes how startled the blogger is when she notices people without technology.

   There were *no* TVs, *no* radios, and their music came from live instruments instead of mp3 players and iPods. These people had *nothing*. Some of them were even walking around without shoes! How could they look so happy?

   **ANNOTATE:** The blogger ends a paragraph with an exclamation and a question.
   **QUESTION:** Why does the blogger use these punctuation marks?
   **CONCLUDE:** The punctuation emphasizes her emotions. She is both startled and amazed.

2. For more practice, go back into the text, and complete the close-read notes.

3. Revisit a section of the text you found important during your first read. Read this section closely, and *annotate* what you notice. Ask yourself *questions* such as “Why did the blogger make this choice?” What can you *conclude*?

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### Analyze the Text

**Tool Kit**

**Close-Read Guide and Model Annotation**

**STANDARDS**

Reading Informational Text
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.
- Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.
- Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

Language
- Interpret figures of speech in context.

### Analyze the Text

**Notebook**  Respond to these questions.

1. **Analyze**  Why does Leena Khan feel the urge to check her cellphone for a signal when she is walking toward a temple in Cambodia?

2. (a) **Analyze**  Why does she draw a connection between listening to the guide and accessing data on her cellphone? (b) **Evaluate**  Do you agree that the two things are similar? Why or why not?

3. **Speculate**  Leena Khan vows to “find the significance in things.” Explain whether you think this will be easy to do once she returns home.

4. **Essential Question:** *How is modern technology helpful and harmful to society?* What have you learned about the ways that technology can harm society from reading this blog post?
Analyze Craft and Structure

Persuasive Techniques  In a persuasive text, a writer attempts to convince readers to see a topic in a new way. The writer states a position, or claim, and then includes facts and other evidence to support it. Persuasive writers also use a variety of techniques to make their ideas more convincing. Here are some of those techniques:

- Repetition: Repeating a word or phrase—this emphasizes the word or idea and makes it more memorable.
- Appeal to Emotion: Words, phrases, or stories that make readers feel something—readers can be influenced by words that create positive feelings for the author’s position and ones that create negative feelings for an opposing position.
- Appeal to Reason: Facts and reasons that are organized in a clear way—readers can follow a writer’s thought process and be convinced by strong, well-connected logic.

Each of these techniques has strengths and weaknesses, so writers often use them in combination. Also, some techniques may be more effective for certain types of ideas or readers than others.

Practice

Notebook  Respond to these questions.

1. (a) What does Leena Khan want readers to do or think? (b) What position, or claim, does she express?

2. (a) Give three examples of words or phrases from the blog post that have positive associations. Explain your choices. (b) Note three examples of words or phrases that have negative associations. Explain your choices. (c) How do these word choices help Khan make her argument?

3. Besides emotional appeals, what other types of techniques from the list above are present in the blog post? Provide examples, and explain each choice.

4. (a) In your opinion, how well does Khan support her claim? Use details from the text to support your answer. (b) Do you think her argument would work as well for adults as it does for teenagers? Why or why not?
Concept Vocabulary

- devouring
- process
- digesting
- absorbing
- consumed

Why These Words? These concept words all relate to eating and taking in nutrients, but also apply to the way we take in information. For example, the same person who is devouring a plate of scrambled eggs in the morning could be later devouring an article about why people should limit the number of eggs they eat each week.

1. How does the concept vocabulary sharpen the reader's understanding of the blogger's attitude toward technology?

2. What other words in the selection connect to this concept?

Practice

Notebook The concept vocabulary words appear in “The Black Hole of Technology.”

1. Use as many concept words as you can in a paragraph about the blog to demonstrate your understanding of each word's meaning.

2. Use a thesaurus to find two synonyms for each word.

Word Study

Multiple-Meaning Words A multiple-meaning word has more than one definition. In this text, Leena Khan uses the word process, which has more than one meaning. She describes how “no one stops to process information anymore,” meaning “understand” or “make sense of.” You most likely determined which meaning she intended by using context clues. You could also verify a word’s meaning by using a dictionary.

1. Using the dictionary, find two more meanings of process. Then, use the word in two sentences that reflect the two meanings.

2. Assimilate is another multiple-meaning word that relates to the other concept vocabulary words. Use a dictionary to identify two meanings of assimilate. Then, write two sentences that use the word and reflect its distinct meanings.
Conventions

**Independent and Dependent Clauses** Understanding clauses is key to well-structured writing because clauses are used to build sentences. A clause is a group of words with its own subject and verb. The two major types of clauses are independent clauses and dependent clauses. An independent clause expresses a complete thought and can stand alone as a sentence. A dependent clause—also known as a subordinate clause—cannot stand alone as a complete sentence.

Many dependent clauses begin with subordinating conjunctions, such as when and if. A relative clause is one kind of dependent clause and begins with a relative pronoun, such as who or that.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY WORDS</th>
<th>EXAMPLES OF CLAUSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subordinating Conjunctions after, although, because, before, if, since, unless, until, when, whether</td>
<td>after we got home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>since I bought my new phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Pronouns that, which, who, whom, whose</td>
<td>whom I met at the airport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that we often ignore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Place a comma after a dependent clause that opens a sentence. If the dependent clause is nonrestrictive, or not necessary to understand the main idea of the sentence, set it off with commas, dashes, or parentheses.

EXAMPLE: When I have time, I’ll check her social media for any updates.

EXAMPLE: She wrote an opinion piece, which was posted online.

**Read It**

**Notebook** Mark the dependent, or subordinate, clause in each sentence. Label the ones that are relative clauses.

1. I will find the significance in things, because many other people will fail to do so.
2. I was digesting information that was completely useless.
3. When the guide started a long speech on the origin of the temple, I turned to face him.

**Write It**

**Notebook** Write a paragraph about the selection using subordinate clauses, including one or more relative clauses. Remember to set off nonrestrictive clauses with commas, dashes, or parentheses.
Writing to Compare

You have read two blog posts that express different views of technology. Consider the arguments conveyed in “Teens and Technology Share a Future” and “The Black Hole of Technology.” Which one presents a stronger case?

Assignment

Write an argumentative essay in which you compare and contrast the two blog posts and decide which one is more convincing. It does not need to be the blog you agree with personally, but the one you believe presents a stronger case. Consider the following questions:

- Which blogger presents stronger supporting evidence?
- Which blogger makes better use of persuasive techniques, including repetition and appeals to emotion and reason?
- Which blogger makes a stronger connection with the reader?
- Which blogger does a better job dealing with opposing opinions?

Prewriting

Analyze Arguments With a partner, take notes on each blogger’s perspective, and discuss what you notice. Use the chart to capture your observations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEENS AND TECHNOLOGY SHARE A FUTURE</th>
<th>THE BLACK HOLE OF TECHNOLOGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strongest reasons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>persuasive techniques used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opposing opinions addressed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weaknesses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drafting

Organization  After you have finished your discussion, decide on a position statement, or thesis, stating which blog post you found to be more effective. Then, plan how you will present your judgment. When you are writing about two subjects, block and point-by-point are two effective ways to organize your ideas.

Block Organization

I. Topic: “Teens and Technology Share a Future”
   A. Blogger’s perspective and the reasons and examples used to support it
   B. Strengths and weaknesses of the argument

II. Topic: “The Black Hole of Technology”
   A. Blogger’s perspective and the reasons and examples used to support it
   B. Strengths and weaknesses of the argument

III. Topic: Judgment
   A. Which blog is more effective
   B. Reasons for your judgment

Point-by-Point Organization

I. Topic: Points of View
   A. Blogger’s point of view in “Teens and Technology Share a Future” and the reasons and examples used to support it
   B. Blogger’s point of view in “The Black Hole of Technology” and the reasons and examples used to support it

II. Topic: Strengths and Weaknesses
   A. Strengths and weaknesses of “Teens and Technology Share a Future”
   B. Strengths and weaknesses of “The Black Hole of Technology”

III. Topic: Judgment
   A. Which blog is more effective
   B. Reasons for your judgment

Review, Revise, and Edit

Once you have finished writing, review and revise your essay. Refer back to your thesis. Make sure you have supported your thesis with solid reasons. Also, make sure you have included details from the blogs to support your reasons. If you see any weaknesses in your reasons or supporting evidence, go back and clarify your ideas or add more convincing details. Once you have finished, reread your essay to make sure you have spelled words correctly and used proper grammar.
The Internet of Things

Media Vocabulary

These words will be useful to you as you analyze, discuss, and write about videos.

| images or graphics: representations of a person or thing | • Images or graphics, such as a map of a country, show a visual representation of what people, objects, or ideas look like. |
| animation: process of making films or cartoons from drawings, computer graphics, or photos | • Animation can make certain scenes more lively or help an audience understand a process. |
| audio: recorded sound | • Listening to audio in a video or on a website allows listeners to hear actual sound effects or voices. |
| voiceover: voice commenting on the action or narrating a film off-camera | • Voiceovers may provide additional background information for viewers or listeners. |
| narrator: person who tells a story | • In an informational video, the narrator reads or relates descriptions or explanations. |

First Review MEDIA: VIDEO

Apply these strategies as you watch the video.

WATCH
- who speaks, what they say, and how they say it.

NOTE
- elements that you find interesting and want to revisit.

CONNECT
- ideas in the video to other media you've experienced, texts you've read, or images you've seen.

RESPOND
- by completing the Comprehension Check.

STANDARDS

Reading Informational Text

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Language

Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Notebook

As you watch, write down your observations and questions, making sure to note time codes so you can easily revisit sections later.
The IBM “Smarter Planet” program promotes and discusses how global leaders can use new technologies and types of data to create a “smarter planet”—a world in which the smart use of information can matter as much as any other natural resource. This video was produced as part of their “Smarter Planet” series.

BACKGROUND

The IBM “Smarter Planet” program promotes and discusses how global leaders can use new technologies and types of data to create a “smarter planet”—a world in which the smart use of information can matter as much as any other natural resource. This video was produced as part of their “Smarter Planet” series.
Comprehension Check
Complete the following items after you finish your first review.

1. What enables us to capture data from natural and human systems?

2. According to the pyramid graphic, what is the ultimate goal of the data we get from the many sensors that stream information?

3. Where are some of the sensors that we might find in a city?

4. According to the video, how can connectivity, or “The Internet of Things,” help create a smarter planet?

Close Review
Watch the video or parts of it again. Write any new observations that seem important. What questions do you have? What can you conclude?

Analyze the Media

1. Evaluate Do the narrators explain the concept of “The Internet of Things” clearly? Explain your position.

2. (a) Analyze Revisit the scene that shows the world map made up of devices. What does this scene add to the video? (b) Evaluate In your opinion, which images are most effective in helping the viewer understand the important ideas? Explain.

3. Interpret The narrator explains that the planet has “grown a central nervous system.” What does this statement mean?

4. Essential Question: How is modern technology helpful and harmful to society? What have you learned about how technology helps or hurts society from watching this video?
Writing to Sources
Writing a summary can help you identify the most important points in an informational video.

**Assignment**
Write a brief **objective summary** of the video. An objective summary is a retelling of the most important ideas in an unbiased way.

To write an objective summary, follow these steps:

1. Watch the video, and take notes on the most important ideas.
2. Put the ideas in the correct order, and restate them in your own words.
3. Include important details from the video that help explain each main idea.
4. Use an objective tone in your writing. *Objective* means that you do not include your opinion.

Speaking and Listening
The video is a brief description of the concept of “The Internet of Things” and shows how being electronically interconnected benefits society.

**Assignment**
Prepare and deliver an **oral report** about the video.
To prepare your oral report, take notes on the following:

- Identify the source of the video. *Who* is delivering the information, and *what* is the purpose of the message?
- Determine whether the information presented in the video is supported by facts or opinions. A *fact* is something that can be proved. An *opinion* can be supported, but not proved.
- Consider the message the video conveys: What do the video makers want viewers to think or do? Is this message convincing?

Once you have taken notes, organize your information into **talking points**—a list of brief statements you can refer to while sharing your findings. Then, practice delivering your talking points. To do so, glance at your talking points, but then make eye contact with your audience. In addition, speak expressively, pausing to emphasize key words.
Write an Argument

In this section, you have examined four perspectives on technology. “Feathered Friend” shows the advantages of both high-tech and low-tech safety measures. In “Teens and Technology Share a Future,” blogger Stefan Etienne argues that technology improves our lives. In “The Black Hole of Technology,” blogger Leena Khan argues the opposite. “The Internet of Things” examines the complex systems that have resulted from improvements in technology.

Assignment

Write a brief argument, in the form of an editorial, in which you state and support your position on this question:

Do electronic devices and online access really improve our lives?

Draw evidence from the texts in this section to support your ideas.

Elements of an Editorial

An editorial is a kind of argument that is published in a print or digital newspaper or magazine. In an editorial, an author offers an opinion about an issue. A well-written editorial uses valid reasons and evidence to convince readers to agree with the author’s position.

An effective editorial contains these elements:

- a precise claim, or position
- clear reasons and evidence that support the claim
- a logical organization that makes clear connections among claims, reasons, and evidence
- a concluding statement or section that logically completes the argument
- a formal and objective language and tone
- use of transitions to show the relationships between ideas

Model Argument

For a model of a well-crafted argument, see the Launch Text, “That’s Not Progress!”

Challenge yourself to find all of the elements of an effective argument in the text. You will have an opportunity to review these elements as you prepare to write your own editorial.
Prewriting / Planning

Write a Claim  After you have reviewed the selections, write a thesis statement—one sentence in which you state your claim. As you continue to write, you may revise your claim or even change it. For now, it will help you choose reasons and supporting evidence.

Claim: ____________________________________________________________

Plan Your Argument  An effective argument successfully addresses counterclaims, or opposing positions. Plan to include evidence to show why those counterclaims are not strong enough to change your position. Complete these sentences to address a counterclaim.

An opposing view is ________________________________________________.

The evidence that supports this is ________________________________________.

The reason I don’t find the opposing view convincing is ____________________.

Gather Evidence From Sources  You can use different types of evidence to support your argument:

• facts: statements that can be proved true
• statistics: facts presented in the form of numbers
• anecdotes: brief stories that illustrate a point
• quotations from experts: statements from people with special knowledge of a subject
• examples: facts, ideas, or events that illustrate a general idea

A variety of evidence can make your argument stronger. For example, in the Launch Text, the writer uses facts and statistics:

*Half the nation’s youth send 50 or more text messages a day. One study found that young people send an average of 34 texts a night after they get into bed! This loss of sleep can affect the ability to concentrate, problem-solve, and learn.*

—from “That’s Not Progress!”

Take notes on the sources of your information. You will need to give credit to any words or ideas that are not your own.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How is modern technology helpful and harmful to society?

STANDARDS

Writing  Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

a. Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.
b. Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

Performance Task: Write an Argument 229
Drafting

Organize Your Editorial To keep your organization simple and easy to follow, your editorial should include three parts:

- **the introduction**, in which you state your claim
- **the body**, in which you provide analysis, reasons, and evidence
- **the conclusion**, in which you summarize or restate your claim

Each part of your editorial should build on the part that came before, and every point should connect directly to your main claim. This outline shows the key sections of the Launch Text. Notice how the author traces the argument from its introduction through its conclusion. Note specific claims and evidence that support the argument. Create your outline.

**Model: “That’s Not Progress!” Outline**

**INTRODUCTION**

Paragraphs 1 and 2 introduce topic and state claim: Social networking can lead to anxiety, low self-confidence, and loneliness in teens.

**BODY**

Paragraphs 3–6 present support for claim: Social networking affects mostly teens because they tend to worry about what others think. It also causes stress and lack of confidence.

Paragraphs 7 and 8 present additional information: Frequent users of social media may experience aches in areas such as fingers and eyes, as well as loss of sleep.

Paragraphs 9 and 10 present a counterargument: Social media can help prevent and identify depression.

Paragraph 11 refutes, or disproves, counterargument: Before social media, teens found ways to escape from their problems.

**CONCLUSION**

Paragraph 12 restates claim: Social media has negative effects for teenagers.

**Argument Outline**

**INTRODUCTION**

**BODY**

**CONCLUSION**

**Write a First Draft** Use your outline to help organize your first draft. Include a precise claim in your introduction and offer evidence and support in the body of the editorial. Provide a strong conclusion that follows from your claim. As you write, make sure to keep your readers in mind. Define words they may not know. Also, explain situations or summarize texts so that your readers have the information they need to understand your ideas.
TRANSLATION: STYLE

Transitions

Transitions are words and phrases that show how ideas relate to one another. Transitional words and phrases perform an essential function in an editorial because they help guide readers through the writer’s thinking.

Read It

These sentences about the Launch Text use transitional expressions to show specific connections among ideas.

• Also, she believes that it can be used to identify youth who are most at risk for depression. (shows addition)
• Facebook however depression has its own features. (shows contrast)
• For one thing, it hits those who worry too much about what others think; for another, it mostly affects young people. (illustrates or shows)

Write It

As you draft your argument, choose transitional words and phrases that accurately show specific relationships among your ideas. Transitions are especially important when connecting one paragraph to the next.

If you want to . . . consider using one of these transitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>list or add ideas</th>
<th>first, finally, next, last, also, in addition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>show similarity</td>
<td>similarly, likewise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>show contrast</td>
<td>however, in contrast, although, on the other hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emphasize</td>
<td>indeed, in fact, of course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>show effect</td>
<td>therefore, consequently, thus, as a result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>illustrate or show</td>
<td>for example, for instance, specifically</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PUNCTUATION

Punctuate transitions correctly.

• Use a comma after most transitions at the beginning of a sentence.
• Use a comma before and after a transition in the middle of a sentence unless the transition follows a semicolon. In that case, add a comma only after the transition.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How is modern technology helpful and harmful to society?

STANDARDS

Writing

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.
Revising

Evaluating Your Draft

Use the following checklist to evaluate the effectiveness of your first draft. Then, use your evaluation and the instruction on this page to guide your revision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS AND ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>EVIDENCE AND ELABORATION</th>
<th>CONVENTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides an introduction that leads to the argument.</td>
<td>Cites facts from credible and reliable sources to support the argument.</td>
<td>Attends to the norms and conventions of the discipline, especially the correct use and punctuation of transitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduces a precise claim.</td>
<td>Demonstrates an understanding of the topic by providing adequate examples for each central idea.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports the claim with clear reasons and relevant evidence.</td>
<td>Uses vocabulary that is appropriate for the audience and purpose.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides a conclusion that follows from the argument.</td>
<td>Establishes and maintains a formal style and an objective tone.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishes a logical organization and develops a progression throughout the argument.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses transitional words and phrases to clarify the relationships between and among ideas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revising for Focus and Organization

Identify and Support Claim  Reread your editorial, and make sure your claim is clear and specific. Ask yourself: What do I want to convince readers to do or think? If necessary, rewrite your claim to make it clearer. Then, make sure all your reasons and evidence relate directly to your claim and support it. If you see any ideas or evidence that do not have strong, clear connections to your main claim, rewrite or delete them.

Revising for Evidence and Elaboration

Clarify Relationships  If any of the connections between your ideas are vague, add or replace transitional words or expressions to make them clearer. Consider using these transitional phrases: in addition, on the other hand, as a result, or in fact.

Use Formal Style  Editorials are more persuasive when they are written in a formal style. When presenting evidence and examples, mix in longer sentences and harder words. Avoid slang or informal language that will take away from the force of your argument.

Informal language: Technology is really messing up our lives.

Formal language: Technology is having a negative impact on our lives.
Editing and Proofreading

**Edit for Conventions** Reread your draft for accuracy and consistency. Correct errors in grammar and word usage. Be sure that you have included transitional words and phrases that clarify the relationships among the claims and reasons in your editorial.

**Proofread for Accuracy** Read your draft carefully, looking for errors in spelling and punctuation. If you have any short sentences with related ideas, consider combining them with coordinating conjunctions such as and, so, but, and or.

Publishing and Presenting

Create a final version of your essay. Share it with your class so that your classmates can read it and make comments. In turn, review and comment on your classmates’ work. Consider other students’ editorials and the claims they express. Think about how theirs are similar to and different from your own. Remember to maintain a polite and respectful tone when commenting.

Reflecting

Think about what you learned by writing your editorial. What could you do differently the next time you need to write an editorial to make it easier and to make your argument stronger?
ESSENTIAL QUESTION:
How is modern technology helpful and harmful to society?

Modern technology has made our lives easier in many ways. It has also raised our expectations about how quickly tasks can be completed. You will read selections that examine the presence of modern technology and social media in our daily lives. You will work in a group to continue your exploration of living in a world that is increasingly dependent on technology.

Small-Group Learning Strategies
Throughout your life, in school, in your community, and in your career, you will continue to learn and work with others.

Review these strategies and the actions you can take to practice them as you work in teams. Add ideas of your own for each step. Use these strategies during Small-Group Learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>ACTION PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepare</td>
<td>• Complete your assignments so that you are prepared for group work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Organize your thinking so you can contribute to your group’s discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate fully</td>
<td>• Make eye contact to signal that you are listening and taking in what is being said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use text evidence when making a point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support others</td>
<td>• Build on ideas from others in your group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Invite others who have not yet spoken to join the conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarify</td>
<td>• Paraphrase the ideas of others to ensure that your understanding is correct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ask follow-up questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SHORT STORY

The Fun They Had
Isaac Asimov
What will the children of the future say about our schools today?

BLOG POST

Is Our Gain Also Our Loss?
Cailin Loesch
As people get older, do their views on the benefits of technology change?

MEDIA: PODCAST

Bored . . . and Brilliant? A Challenge to Disconnect From Your Phone
NPR
Can being bored actually inspire you?

PERFORMANCE TASK

SPEAKING AND LISTENING FOCUS
Deliver a Multimedia Presentation
After reading the selections, your group will plan and deliver a multimedia presentation about the benefits or disadvantages of modern technology.
Working as a Team

1. **Take a Position** In your group, discuss the following question:

   Does having instant access to information always make our lives easier?

   As you take turns sharing your positions, be sure to provide examples or other support for your ideas. After all group members have shared, discuss the ways in which instant access to information changes people’s expectations.

2. **List Your Rules** As a group, decide on the rules that you will follow as you work together. Two samples are provided. Add two more of your own. You may add or revise rules based on your experience together.

   - Everyone should participate in group discussions.
   - People should not interrupt.

   •
   •

3. **Apply the Rules** Share what you have learned about technology. Make sure each person in the group contributes. Take notes and be prepared to share with the class one thing that you heard from another member of your group.

4. **Name Your Group** Choose a name that reflects the unit topic.

   Our group’s name: ________________________________

5. **Create a Communication Plan** Decide how you want to communicate with one another. For example, you might use online collaboration tools, email, or instant messaging.

   Our group’s decision: ________________________________
Making a Schedule
First, find out the due dates for the small-group activities. Then, preview the texts and activities with your group, and make a schedule for completing the tasks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELECTION</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Fun They Had</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is Our Gain Also Our Loss?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored . . . and Brilliant? A Challenge to Disconnect From Your Phone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Working on Group Projects
As your group works together, you’ll find it more effective if each person has a specific role. Different projects require different roles. Before beginning a project, discuss the necessary roles, and choose one for each group member. Here are some possible roles; add your own ideas.

- **Project Manager:** monitors the schedule and keeps everyone on task
- **Researcher:** organizes research activities
- **Recorder:** takes notes during group meetings

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________
Isaac Asimov (1920–1992) became a science-fiction fan after reading fantastic stories in magazines. Asimov’s father discouraged his son’s early interest, and described the magazines he loved as “junk.” Still, Asimov’s interest in science fiction continued, and he started writing his own stories at age eleven. At first, his stories were rejected, but Asimov developed into a visionary writer and became one of the most influential science-fiction authors of the twentieth century.

The Fun They Had

Concept Vocabulary

As you perform your first read of “The Fun They Had,” you will encounter these words.

- sorrowfully
- loftily
- nonchalantly

Context Clues To find the meanings of unfamiliar words, look for clues in the context, which is made up of other words and phrases that surround the unknown word. There are different types of context clues that may help you as you read. Consider these examples:

**Synonyms:** The director blamed and criticized Andre and Gaby for missing band rehearsal.

**Elaborating Details:** Terry could be arrogant—he really thought he was superior—when he had the right answer.

Apply your knowledge of context clues and other vocabulary strategies to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words you encounter during your first read.

First Read FICTION

Apply these strategies as you conduct your first read. You will have an opportunity to complete a close read after your first read.

- **NOTICE** whom the story is about, what happens, where and when it happens, and why those involved react as they do.
- **ANNOTATE** by marking vocabulary and key passages you want to revisit.
- **CONNECT** ideas within the selection to what you already know and what you have already read.
- **RESPOND** by completing the Comprehension Check and by writing a brief summary of the selection.

**STANDARDS**

**Reading Literature**
By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

**Language**
Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

a. Use context clues as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
The Fun They Had

Isaac Asimov

BACKGROUND

New methods of learning have been influenced by changes in technology. During ancient times, the Romans wrote on wax tablets. Children in the 1700s read and practiced writing on slates, or blackboards. In the 1900s, educational radio programs were introduced. In today’s society, online education has become popular.

Margie even wrote about it that night in her diary. On the page headed May 17, 2155, she wrote, “Today Tommy found a real book.”

It was a very old book. Margie’s grandfather once said that when he was a little boy, his grandfather told him that there was a time when all stories were printed on paper.

They turned the pages, which were yellow and crinkly, and it was awfully funny to read words that stood still instead of moving the way they were supposed to—on a screen, you know. And then, when they turned back to the page before, it had the same words on it that it had had when they read it the first time.
“Gee,” said Tommy, “what a waste. When you’re through with the book, you just throw it away, I guess. Our television screen must have had a million books on it and it’s good for plenty more. I wouldn’t throw it away.”

“Same with mine,” said Margie. She was eleven and hadn’t seen as many telebooks as Tommy had. He was thirteen.

She said, “Where did you find it?”

“In my house.” He pointed without looking, because he was busy reading. “In the attic.”

“What’s it about?”

“School.”

Margie was scornful. “School? What’s there to write about school? I hate school.” Margie always hated school, but now she hated it more than ever. The mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test in geography, and she had been doing worse and worse until her mother had shaken her head sorrowfully and sent for the county inspector.

He was a round little man with a red face and a whole box of tools with dials and wires. He smiled at her and gave her an apple, then took the teacher apart. Margie had hoped he wouldn’t know how to put it together again, but he knew how all right and, after an hour or so, there it was again, large and ugly, with a big screen on which all the lessons were shown and the questions were asked. That wasn’t so bad. The part she hated most was the slot where she had to put homework and test papers. She always had to write them out in a punch code they made her learn when she was six years old, and the mechanical teacher calculated the mark in no time.

The inspector had smiled after he was finished and patted her head. He said to her mother, “It’s not the little girl’s fault, Mrs. Jones. I think the geography sector was geared a little too quick. Those things happen sometimes. I’ve slowed it up to an average ten-year level. Actually, the overall pattern of her progress is quite satisfactory.” And he patted Margie’s head again.

Margie was disappointed. She had been hoping they would take the teacher away altogether. They had once taken Tommy’s teacher away for nearly a month because the history sector had blanked out completely.

So she said to Tommy, “Why would anyone write about school?”

Tommy looked at her with very superior eyes. “Because it’s not our kind of school, stupid. This is the old kind of school that

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1. **punch code** card containing data that was used to program computers during the 1940s, when this story was written.
they had hundreds and hundreds of years ago.” He added **loftily**, pronouncing the word carefully, “Centuries ago.”

Margie was hurt. “Well, I don’t know what kind of school they had all that time ago.” She read the book over his shoulder for a while, then said, “Anyway, they had a teacher.”

“Sure they had a teacher, but it wasn’t a **regular** teacher. It was a man.”

“A man? How could a man be a teacher?”

“Well, he just told the boys and girls things and gave them homework and asked them questions.”

“A man isn’t smart enough.”

“Sure he is. My father knows as much as my teacher.”

“He can’t. A man can’t know as much as a teacher.”

“He knows almost as much I betcha.”

Margie wasn’t prepared to dispute that. She said, “I wouldn’t want a strange man in my house to teach me.”

Tommy screamed with laughter, “You don’t know much, Margie. The teachers didn’t live in the house. They had a special building and all the kids went there.”

“And all the kids learned the same thing?”

“Sure, if they were the same age.”

“But my mother says a teacher has to be adjusted to fit the mind of each boy and girl it teaches and that each kid has to be taught differently.”

“Just the same, they didn’t do it that way then. If you don’t like it, you don’t have to read the book.”

“I didn’t say I didn’t like it,” Margie said quickly. She wanted to read about those funny schools.

They weren’t even half finished when Margie’s mother called, “Margie! School!”

Margie looked up. “Not yet, Mamma.”

“Now,” said Mrs. Jones. “And it’s probably time for Tommy, too.”

Margie said to Tommy, “Can I read the book some more with you after school?”

“Maybe,” he said, **nonchalantly**. He walked away whistling, the dusty old book tucked beneath his arm.

Margie went into the schoolroom. It was right next to her bedroom, and the mechanical teacher was on and waiting for her. It was always on at the same time every day except Saturday and Sunday, because her mother said little girls learned better if they learned at regular hours.

The screen was lit up, and it said: “Today’s arithmetic lesson is on the addition of proper fractions. Please insert yesterday’s homework in the proper slot.”
Margie did so with a sigh. She was thinking about the old schools they had when her grandfather’s grandfather was a little boy. All the kids from the whole neighborhood came, laughing and shouting in the schoolyard, sitting together in the schoolroom, going home together at the end of the day. They learned the same things so they could help one another on the homework and talk about it.

And the teachers were people... 

The mechanical teacher was flashing on the screen: “When we add the fractions ½ and ¼...”

Margie was thinking about how the kids must have loved it in the old days. She was thinking about the fun they had.
Comprehension Check
Complete the following items after you finish your first read. Review and clarify details with your group.

1. What does Tommy find in the attic?

2. Why does Margie hate school now more than ever?

3. Why does Margie's mother send for the county inspector?

4. What surprises Margie about teachers of the past?

5. Notebook  Write three to five sentences to summarize the story.

RESEARCH

Research to Clarify  Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from the text. Briefly research that detail. In what way does the information you learned shed light on an aspect of the story?

Research to Explore  Choose something that interested you from the text, and formulate a research question that you might use to find out more about the topic.
Close Read the Text

With your group, revisit sections of the text you marked during your first read. Annotate details that you notice. What questions do you have? What can you conclude?

Analyze the Text

Complete the activities.

1. Review and Clarify With your group, review the selection. How is Margie’s school different from schools of the past?

2. Present and Discuss Share with your group the passages from the selection that you found especially important. Take turns presenting your passages. Discuss what you noticed in the selection, what questions you asked, and what conclusions you reached.

3. Essential Question: How is modern technology helpful and harmful to society? What has this article taught you about the impact of modern technology on society? Discuss with your group.

Concept Vocabulary

sorrowfully  loftily  nonchalantly

Why These Words? The three concept vocabulary words from the text are related. With your group, determine what the words have in common. How do these word choices add to the impact of the text?

Practice

Notebook Write a paragraph using the three concept vocabulary words. Your paragraph can be based on Asimov’s characters and setting or it can be completely new.

Word Study

Anglo-Saxon Suffix: -ful The suffix -ful means “full of” or “having the qualities of.” When added to a noun that names an emotion, the suffix creates an adjective that describes someone who feels that emotion. Use your knowledge of the suffix -ful to complete these activities.

1. When the suffix -ly is removed from the adverb sorrowfully, it becomes the adjective sorrowful. Define sorrowful.
2. Write three other words that end in -ful or -fully. Write their meanings.
ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How is modern technology helpful and harmful to society?

Analyze Craft and Structure

Science-Fiction Writing  Science fiction is a form, or genre, of fiction that imagines the technology and science of the future. Science-fiction stories balance technological and scientific ideas with realistic elements—characters, events, and situations that are true to life. These realistic details help readers relate to a story that may take place in very unfamiliar places. Most science fiction includes these types of elements:

- scientific ideas
- imaginary beings, such as futuristic robots or aliens from distant planets
- settings that are different from Earth or from Earth right now—These may be non-Earthly places, such as spaceships, other planets, or alternate universes. Or, they may be Earth, but in the future.
- plots that reflect issues in society today, such as the impact of technology or even political ideas—Science-fiction writers often place familiar issues into unfamiliar settings in order to explore their complexities and understand them better.

Like all other types of literature, science fiction conveys themes, or insights into life. These themes may relate to science and technology, or they may simply relate to human nature and society.

Practice

1. Use the chart to identify passages from “The Fun They Had” that reflect each element of science fiction. Work individually, and then share your responses with your group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE FUN THEY HAD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCIENCE-FICTION ELEMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific Ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imaginary Beings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment on Issues in Society Today</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notebook  Answer the questions.

2. Consider this possible theme for the story: Nothing, not even great technology, can replace human interaction. Which story details support this theme? Explain.

3. In what ways might this story be considered a warning about the future? Explain your response.
Conventions

**Action Verbs and Linking Verbs** Verbs are an essential element of all sentences and clauses. A *verb* expresses action or indicates a state or condition.

An *action verb* can express a physical action, such as *shake* or *laugh*, or a mental action, such as *hope* or *learn*.

A *linking verb* connects a subject to a word in the predicate that renames, identifies, or describes it. The most common linking verb is *be*, with forms such as *are, was, were, is being,* and *have been*. Other common linking verbs include *appear, become, feel, look,* and *seem*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION VERBS</th>
<th>LINKING VERBS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Her mother <em>had shaken</em> her head.</td>
<td>Tommy and Margie are students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(The action is <em>shaking</em>.)</em></td>
<td><em>(Are links Tommy and Margie to students. Students renames Tommy and Margie.)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the kids <em>laughed</em> in the schoolyard.</td>
<td>The girl <em>became</em> curious about the old book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(The action is <em>laughing</em>.)</em></td>
<td><em>(Became links girl to curious. Curious describes the girl.)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Read It**

Identify the verb(s) in each sentence from the selection. Then, label each verb as an action verb or a linking verb.

1. Margie even wrote about it that night in her diary.
2. He was a round little man with a red face and a whole box of tools with dials and wires.
3. “. . . Actually, the overall pattern of her progress is quite satisfactory.”
4. “Please insert yesterday’s homework in the proper slot.”

**Write It**

*Notebook* Imagine that you are Margie’s friend in the year 2155. Write a journal entry describing your feelings about your mechanical teacher. Use at least three action verbs and two linking verbs in your writing.
Writing to Sources

**Dialogue** is the conversations that take place among characters in literary works. Authors use dialogue to move the plot forward, as well as to provide insights into characters’ personalities and the ways they change.

**Assignment**

With your group, write a **scene with dialogue** in which Margie describes finding the old book to one of her friends. Choose one of the following options:

- Write the scene in dramatic form with characters’ names appearing at the beginning of each new line of dialogue. Place in brackets any descriptions or lines not spoken by the characters.
- Write the scene in short-story form. All descriptions will appear in paragraphs. Indicate who is speaking, and set lines of dialogue in quotation marks.

**Project Plan**

First, discuss Margie’s character and what one of Margie’s friends would be like. Then, describe how other aspects of this future time might be different from today and how to pull these ideas into the scene. Brainstorm for a few sample lines of dialogue that feel true to Margie’s character and how you think her friend would react. Take notes during the discussion.

Then, use your discussion notes and the story as background to develop the scene. Decide on a logical sequence of events. Use narrative techniques, such as **pacing**. Pacing is similar to rhythm. You can either slow down the action of the scene or speed it up. Slow down action by adding more description and longer sentences. Speed up action by using short sentences that make things seem to happen quickly. When writing your scene, use precise words, vivid details, and descriptive language to show the setting and action.

**Revise and Edit**

Work together to revise and edit the scene. Keep the following elements in mind:

- Are the events arranged in a logical order?
- Are the word choices descriptive, and do they capture the futuristic setting in which the conversation takes place?
- Does the dialogue contribute to the reader’s understanding of the characters and plot?
- Do you use appropriate pacing to point out an important idea or to build suspense?

**Present and Discuss**

Present your group’s scene to the class and answer any questions your classmates may have.
Is Our Gain Also Our Loss?

Concept Vocabulary
As you perform your first read of “Is Our Gain Also Our Loss?” you will encounter these words.

- gradually
- nostalgic
- continuation

Base Words If these words are unfamiliar to you, analyze each one to see whether it contains a base word you know. Then, use your knowledge of the base, or “inside,” word, along with the context, to determine the meaning of the word. Here is an example of how to apply the strategy.

Unfamiliar Word: considerate

Familiar “Inside” Word: consider, with meanings including “think”

Context: When we were too late to catch the bus, our neighbor was kind and considerate enough to drive us to the meeting.

Conclusion: The neighbor is described in a positive way, and the word considerate is paired with the word kind. Considerate might mean “thinking about the needs or feelings of others.”

Apply your knowledge of base words and other vocabulary strategies to determine the meanings of other unfamiliar words you encounter during your first read.

First Read NONFICTION
Apply these strategies as you conduct your first read. You will have an opportunity to complete a close read after your first read.

- NOTICE the general ideas of the text. What is it about? Who is involved?
- ANNOTATE by marking vocabulary and key passages you want to revisit.
- CONNECT ideas within the selection to what you already know and what you have already read.
- RESPOND by completing the Comprehension Check and by summarizing the main idea of the selection.

STANDARDS
Reading Informational Text
By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Language
Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
New technology changes our daily world with ever-increasing speed, often causing things to become obsolete, or out-of-date. These changes can leave older people longing for what they feel was the simpler, less complicated world of their youth. Is every generation destined to long for the past?

"When I was your age, I had to wait for the hourly report on TV in order to get the information that you have right at your fingertips. That’s the problem with the world today."

It was the summer of 2012, and I was standing in the kitchen with my dad and sister—holding my iPhone—a towel and bathing suit thrown over my shoulder. I had just finished reading aloud the full-day weather report, and, until my dad spoke, had nothing on my mind but the gleaming pool water that seemed to be calling my name. I waited a moment for his comment to process, then looked down at my phone, analyzing it in a way that I had never before: feeling the cold, hard metal in my palm, and the smooth, sleek screen underneath my thumb.

I asked Dad to elaborate on his comment.

“When I was a young boy, we had a pool in our backyard. My brothers and I weren’t allowed to go swimming until the temperature reached 75 degrees—not one degree less. And so we boys spent our summer mornings waiting by the TV for the hourly report that read the temperature, praying that it would say the number we wanted it to so that we could dive in. I have vivid memories of those mornings.”

Suddenly, life in the 1970s seemed distant, and people detached. It occurred to me that my dad has experienced life like I will never know it, and that I have experienced life like my children will never know. I even started to think about how things have changed in the years that I’ve been alive. It’s not just technology that’s changing, either: It’s our way of living. I’ve seen it with my own eyes, and it’s only becoming clearer as the years go by.
Gradually, evenings spent doing homework at lamp-lit desks covered in pencils, paper, and textbooks are turning into late nights under bedsheets and blankets, a Google Docs page pulled up, fingers typing aggressively on a keyboard that can barely be seen in the dark. It seems as though I am part of the last generation that will know the satisfied feeling of stapling together a completed research paper, pages still warm from the printer. People of the next generation will never go on a family trip to the local Blockbuster in search of candy and a comedy for movie night. They might miss out on handwritten letters from their grandparents, available to read and reread for years. Do we even realize what we’re all leaving behind?

This morning, I was sitting at the breakfast table eating cereal when my dad came in to say goodbye before he left for work. When he saw that I was eating Life cereal, a huge smile immediately crept across his face, and he started excitedly reciting a commercial that he remembered from his childhood. He called me into his office, where he threw himself down in front of his desktop computer to search for the ad on YouTube, eager to take me back in time with him.

Watching the commercial, my modernly-adjusted ears picked up on a faint hum in the background of the actor’s voices. There were no snappy graphics or fast-paced cuts. In fact, the colors were a bit faded and the actors’ faces were only highlighted in dim lighting. Then I turned to my dad, who was still beaming, as if all the happy memories from his childhood were flashing before his eyes. Judging by his enthusiastic clapping at the end, he sure didn’t seem to miss modern technology during those 30 seconds.

In a world of iPhones and missions to Mars, is it even possible that my childhood will ever be looked at in the way that I look at my dad’s? By then, will our TV shows be even crisper? Will it be unimaginable that we needed long, easily tangled wires in our ears in order to listen to music? Will my kids marvel at the idea of us old-fashioned teenagers having to wait by wall outlets for our phones to get out of the dreaded red battery zone before heading out for the night? Will they laugh at us for using pieces of green paper to buy things?

The thing that has really stayed with me, though, is my dad’s comment about how all these new technologies are a “problem.” One day, will we late-millennials feel nostalgic as we look back on our simpler days, where we sometimes got a 10-minute homework break when our laptops lost battery life, giving us an excuse to sit in peace in front of a warm fire while

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1. **Blockbuster** chain of stores where people rented movies in the form of physical DVDs or VHS tapes.
2. **YouTube** video-sharing website.
3. **late-millennials** people born between the early 1990s and the early 2000s.
we waited for them to charge? Will a lack of instant-charging mechanisms become the new lack of a weather.com app? Will we pull out our old Nintendo 3DS XLs to smile at what was once the hottest new piece of technology, recalling memories of online play with friends, in the same way that my dad smiled at an old commercial? Will we wish that things had never changed? They say that you should never try to fix what’s not broken. Does the charm of the way things are now trump the need for things that are fresher, newer, and more advanced? Will we ever reach a point where there is no possible way to make any more “improvements”? And does this possibly inevitable peak signal impending doom or the continuation of tradition?

In my last-period sociology class the other day, the teacher ended a class discussion about the impact of changing technology on society with a statement that summarized my thoughts on the matter and left me with something to think about:

“I don’t know how new technology will affect future generations, and I don’t know if it will do more good or bad.”

I couldn’t have said it better myself.

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11. sociology (soh see OL uh jee) n. study of social behavior.

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Comprehension Check

Complete these items after you finish your first read. Review and clarify details with your group.

1. Why were television weather reports significant to the author’s father as a child?

2. Notebook Summarize the main idea of the selection.

RESEARCH

Research to Clarify Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from the text. Briefly research that detail. In what way does the information you learned shed light on an aspect of the selection?
Close Read the Text
With your group, revisit sections of the text you marked during your first read. Annotate details that you notice. What questions do you have? What can you conclude?

Analyze the Text
Complete the activities.

1. Review and Clarify With your group, reread paragraphs 6–9 of the selection. Discuss how the author’s conversations with her father changed her perspective on technology. Has reading this selection changed your own perspective on technology?

2. Present and Discuss Share with your group the passages from the selection that you found especially important. Take turns presenting your passages. Discuss what you noticed in the selection, what questions you asked, and what conclusions you reached.

3. Essential Question: How is modern technology helpful and harmful to society? What has this article taught you about the impact of modern technology on society? Discuss with your group.

Concept Vocabulary
gradually nostalgic continuation

Why These Words? The concept vocabulary words from the text are related. With your group, determine what the words have in common. Write your ideas, and add another word that fits the category.

Practice
Notebook Confirm your understanding of these words by using them in sentences. Give context clues that hint at the word’s meaning.

Word Study
Latin Suffix: -ation The Latin suffix -ation means “the condition or process of.” Adding this suffix changes a verb to a noun. In this text, the blogger refers to the “continuation of tradition.” Using your knowledge, make an inference about what that phrase means. With your group, brainstorm for other verbs that can be turned into nouns with the suffix -ation. Then, find another example of a noun with the suffix -ation in the text.
Analyze Craft and Structure

Development of Ideas: Reflective Writing

A reflective essay is a brief prose work in which an author presents his or her thoughts and feelings—or reflections—about an experience or an idea. Most reflective writing includes the following elements:

- descriptions of a specific event, time period, or person that leads to new ways of seeing something
- dialogue and other storytelling elements that convey experiences in vivid ways
- informal language with a thoughtful quality
- discussion of the insights gained from the experience

In “Is Our Gain Also Our Loss?” Cailin Loesch thinks deeply about her father’s experiences growing up at a time when technology was not as advanced. She compares and contrasts her father’s experiences and attitude toward his childhood with her own feelings about growing up in a world increasingly dependent on technology.

Practice

Using this chart, list the ways in which Loesch’s observations of her father influence her own perspective. Work individually. Then, share your responses with your group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IS OUR GAIN ALSO OUR LOSS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What memories of technology does Loesch’s father have from his youth?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do her father’s memories contrast with Loesch’s experiences during her own childhood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What thoughts about the future do these contrasts inspire in Loesch?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

️ Notebook

Write a one-paragraph response to Loesch’s thoughts at the end of the blog. Consider these questions:

- Do you think people will continue to look back fondly on the technology of their youth?
- Will they view current technology as a “problem,” as Cailin’s father does?

Share your responses with the group.
Conventions

**Comparative and Superlative Degrees**  An adjective describes a person, a place, a thing, or an idea. An adverb describes a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Adjectives and adverbs can be used to compare two or more items or actions. There are two degrees of comparison: **comparative degree** and **superlative degree**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEGREE OF COMPARISON</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
<th>ADJECTIVE EXAMPLES</th>
<th>ADVERB EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparative</td>
<td>compares two items or actions</td>
<td><em>smaller, more</em></td>
<td>*more quickly,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>frightened</em></td>
<td><em>more easily</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superlative</td>
<td>compares three or more items or actions</td>
<td><em>smallest, most</em></td>
<td>*most quickly,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>frightened</em></td>
<td><em>most easily</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If an adjective has only one or two syllables, you can often add the suffixes -er and -est to form the comparative and superlative degrees. If the adjective is a longer word, use the words *more* and *most*. For most adverbs, use *more* and *most*. Do not use both forms (a suffix and the word *more* or *most*) at the same time.

Incorrect: We saw the *most largest* whale model at our local museum.

Correct: We saw the *largest* whale model at our local museum.

**Read It**

In each item from the text, identify the adjective or adverb used to make a comparison. Label each word as an adverb or an adjective. Then, write whether it is comparative or superlative.

1. Will we pull out our old Nintendo 3DS XLs to smile at what was once the hottest new piece of technology. . . .

2. By then, will our TV shows be even crisper?

**Write It**

**Notebook**  Rewrite each sentence to include the type of modifier indicated in parentheses.

1. Suddenly, life in the 1970s seemed (distant), and people (detached).  
   (comparative adjectives)

2. . . . late nights under bedsheets and blankets, a Google Docs page pulled up, fingers typing (aggressively) on a keyboard that can barely be seen in the dark.  
   (comparative adverb)
At the end of “Is Our Gain Also Our Loss?” Cailin Loesch asks several questions about whether the technology of her own youth will become outdated. Follow up on this question in a group activity.

**Assignment**

Take part in a **group discussion** about changing technology. Think of an example of an invention or a device you once thought was wonderful, but now think is outdated—like the video-game platform that Loesch mentions at the end of her blog. With your group, compare and contrast your feelings about this example of “progress” with examples offered by other members of the group and with Loesch’s blog post.

**Discussion Preparation** Use the chart to organize your thoughts and plan what you will say during the group discussion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHANGING VIEWS TOWARD TECHNOLOGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What example of outdated technology will you discuss?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When was it popular? What purpose did it serve?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you feel when you first heard about it and saw it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel about it now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why have your feelings about it changed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel the technology left a lasting impact on you or on society? Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assign Tasks** Before beginning the discussion, take a moment to assign jobs to individual group members. This could include a moderator to ensure everyone stays on topic and speaks in turn, a timekeeper to ensure the discussion doesn’t dwell on a single topic for too long, and a recorder to take notes.

**STANDARDS**

**Speaking and Listening**

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

b. Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
Bored . . . and Brilliant?
A Challenge to Disconnect From Your Phone

Media Vocabulary
These words will be useful to you as you analyze, discuss, and write about podcasts.

| **podcast:** digital audio or video file or recording, usually part of a series, that can be downloaded from the Internet | • Many podcasts invite listeners to leave comments or share their thoughts about the shows.  
• Some podcasts are accompanied by a transcript, or the text of the spoken words. |
| **host:** someone who introduces and talks to the guests on a television or radio program | • Most hosts prepare for a program by learning about the background of the guests. |
| **interview:** recorded conversation in which someone is asked questions about his or her life, experiences, or opinions | • An interesting interview usually reveals new information about the person being interviewed.  
• The person conducting an interview typically creates a list of questions prior to the interview, but asks unplanned follow-up questions based on the interviewee’s responses. |

First Review MEDIA: AUDIO
Apply these strategies as you listen to the podcast.

LISTEN and note who is speaking, what they’re saying, and how they’re saying it.

NOTE elements that you find interesting and want to revisit.

CONNECT ideas in the audio to other media you’ve experienced, texts you’ve read, or images you’ve seen.

RESPOND by completing the Comprehension Check.

Listening Strategy: Take Notes

Notebook As you listen, write down your observations and questions, making sure to note time codes so you can easily visit sections later.
Bored . . . and Brilliant?  
A Challenge to Disconnect From Your Phone

BACKGROUND
According to a survey by the research group Flurry, which is cited in this podcast, smartphones have taken over television as the most-watched kind of screen in the United States. In 2014, the average American spent almost three hours a day on his or her phone, just a little more than the average American spent watching television.
Comprehension Check
Complete the following items after you finish your first review. Review and clarify details with your group.

1. On average, about how long do cellphone users spend on their phones each day?

2. What are we really doing “when we think we’re doing nothing”?

3. What did Dr. Sandi Mann research? What did she find out?

Close Review
With your group, listen to the podcast again. Write any new observations that seem important. What questions do you have? What can you conclude?

Analyze the Media
Notebook Respond to these questions.

1. Present and Discuss Choose a quote from the podcast that you found interesting or powerful. Explain what you notice, what questions it raises for you, and what conclusions you reached about it.

2. Review and Synthesize Do you agree that there is value in being bored? Should we use our cellphones less? Explain.

3. Essential Question: How is modern technology helpful and harmful to society? What has this podcast taught you about the impact of modern technology on society? Discuss with your group.
Research

Assignment
At the end of the podcast, Manoush Zomorodi issues listeners a challenge: “Start observing your own phone behavior, and get ready to rethink it.” With your group, choose from these two options:

- Create a multimedia slide show to showcase interesting findings of the Bored and Brilliant challenge.
- Create a brochure to promote implementing the Bored and Brilliant challenge in your classroom.

Plan the Project
To prepare your slide show or brochure, consider the following:

- Consult at least three credible online or print sources. To find online sources you can trust, consider looking for information published on educational or government sites—those with “.edu” or “.gov” at the end of their Web addresses.

- Conduct research to find relevant information, such as statistics and quotations from experts. Take notes on the sources of your information. You need to give credit to any words or ideas that are not your own.

- Assign everyone in your group a specific job, such as researching, writing, editing, presenting, or organizing multimedia.

Internet Research
A search engine is a useful tool for finding information on the Internet. However, with millions of websites available, you can get overwhelmed by long lists of results. Use these tips to narrow down your searches. Note that they may not work for all search engines.

- **Minus Operator (−)** Add a minus sign before a term to indicate that you don’t want results that include it. For example, typing “ Bat -baseball” will give you information about the flying mammals, but not baseball bats. “NOT” may also be used instead of a minus sign.

- **Exact Phrases** If you want to search for an exact phrase, put it in quotation marks. Searching for “ judge a book by its cover” will give you results that have those exact words, but will leave out other sites.

Present and Discuss
Share your multimedia slide show or brochure with the rest of the class. Give your classmates an opportunity to ask questions, and support your answers with evidence from both your research and the podcast.

EVIDENCE LOG
Before moving on to a new selection, go to your Evidence Log and record what you learned from “Bored . . . and Brilliant? A Challenge to Disconnect From Your Phone.”

STANDARDS
Writing
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.

Speaking and Listening
Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.
Performance Task: Speaking and Listening Focus

Sources

- THE FUN THEY HAD
- IS OUR GAIN ALSO OUR LOSS?
- BORED . . . AND BRILLIANT? A CHALLENGE TO DISCONNECT FROM YOUR PHONE

Deliver a Multimedia Presentation

Assignment

You have read about the effects of technology in the selections in this section. Work with your group to develop a multimedia presentation that addresses this question:

Do the benefits of technology outweigh its disadvantages?

Plan With Your Group

Analyze the Text With your group, discuss the selections you have read. Take notes on the effects of technology presented in each selection. Then, determine what each selection suggests about the effects of technology on society: Does technology have mostly positive effects? Or, do the disadvantages outweigh the benefits? Record your ideas in a chart like the one shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>BENEFITS OF TECHNOLOGY</th>
<th>DRAWBACKS OF TECHNOLOGY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Fun They Had</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is Our Gain Also Our Loss?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored . . . and Brilliant? A Challenge to Disconnect From Your Phone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gather Evidence and Media Examples Scan the selections to record specific examples that support your group’s claim. Use reliable print and online source materials to find evidence, such as statistics or quotations from experts, that supports your argument. Then, brainstorm for types of media you can use to illustrate and elaborate on each example. Consider including relevant photographs, illustrations, music, charts, graphs, and video clips. Allow each group member to make suggestions.

Standards

Writing

- Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
  a. Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.
  b. Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
**Organize Your Ideas** To organize your presentation, first, rank your arguments from least important to most important. Once you have a sense of the arguments you want to make, write an introduction that will capture your audience’s attention. Clearly state your position in the introduction. Then, explain the reasons for your position, providing at least two pieces of evidence for each reason. Finally, end with a strong restatement of your position. After you have organized your argument, decide the most effective way to incorporate multimedia components into your presentation.

**Rehearse With Your Group**

**Practice With Your Group** Rehearse your presentation with your group, and use this checklist to evaluate the effectiveness of your group’s first rehearsal. Then, use the evaluation and these instructions to guide revisions to your presentation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>USE OF MEDIA</th>
<th>PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The argument begins with a clearly stated claim.</td>
<td>The multimedia components logically connect to and support the argument.</td>
<td>The speaker makes eye contact, and speaks clearly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The argument is supported with strong reasons and evidence.</td>
<td>The multimedia components are well-timed and interesting.</td>
<td>The speaker adjusts volume and tone as appropriate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fine-Tune the Content** If your argument does not begin with a clearly stated claim, revise to make your position clear.

**Improve Your Use of Media** For each piece of multimedia, ask yourself: *What aspect of the argument does this multimedia component support?*

**Brush Up on Your Presentation Techniques** Practice delivering your portion of the presentation. Then, practice delivering the entire presentation as a group and use feedback to tighten the presentation so that it has a good pace and rhythm.

**Present and Evaluate** When it is your group’s turn to present, be prepared to respond to questions and comments from your classmates. As you watch the other groups, consider the strength of their reasons and evidence, as well as their use of multimedia.

**STANDARDS**

**Speaking and Listening**
- Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
- Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.
ESSENTIAL QUESTION:
How is modern technology helpful and harmful to society?

People use and rely on technological devices every day in different ways. In this section, you will complete your study of the impact of modern technology by exploring an additional selection related to the topic. You’ll then share what you learn with classmates. To choose a text, follow these steps.

**Look Back** Think about the selections you have already studied. What more do you want to know about the topic of modern technology?

**Look Ahead** Preview the texts by reading the descriptions. Which one seems most interesting and appealing to you?

**Look Inside** Take a few minutes to scan through the text you chose. Choose a different one if this text doesn’t meet your needs.

### Independent Learning Strategies

Throughout your life, in school, in your community, and in your career, you will need to rely on yourself to learn and work on your own. Review these strategies and the actions you can take to practice them during Independent Learning. Add ideas of your own for each category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>ACTION PLAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create a schedule</td>
<td>• Understand your goals and deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Make a plan for what to do each day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice what you’ve</td>
<td>• Use first-read and close-read strategies to deepen your understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learned</td>
<td>• After you read, evaluate the usefulness of the evidence to help you understand the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Consider the quality and reliability of the source.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take notes</td>
<td>• Record important ideas and information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review your notes before preparing to share with a group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Choose one selection. Selections are available online only.

**NEWS ARTICLE**

7-Year-Old Girl Gets New Hand From 3-D Printer

*John Rogers*

3-D printing gives a young girl a new way of living.

**NEWS ARTICLE**

Screen Time Can Mess With the Body’s “Clock”

*Andrew Bridges*

Tired? Turn off that tablet!

**POETRY COLLECTION**

All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace

*Richard Brautigan*

Sonnet, without Salmon

*Sherman Alexie*

Does technology restore our relationship with nature or tear it apart?

**NEWS ARTICLE**

Teen Researchers Defend Media Multitasking

*Sumathi Reddy*

Does media multitasking have an effect on teens?

**PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT PREP**

Review Evidence for an Argument

Complete your Evidence Log for the unit by evaluating what you’ve learned and synthesizing the information you’ve recorded.
First-Read Guide

Use this page to record your first-read ideas.

Selection Title: ____________________________

NOTICE new information or ideas you learn about the unit topic as you first read this text.

ANNOTATE by marking vocabulary and key passages you want to revisit.

CONNECT ideas within the selection to other knowledge and the selections you have read.

RESPOND by writing a brief summary of the selection.

STANDARD
Reading  Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.
## Close-Read Guide

Use this page to record your first-read ideas.

Selection Title: _______________________

### Close Read the Text

Revisit sections of the text you marked during your first read. Read these sections closely and **annotate** what you notice. Ask yourself **questions** about the text. What can you **conclude**? Write down your ideas.

### Analyze the Text

Think about the author’s choices of patterns, structure, techniques, and ideas included in the text. Select one and record your thoughts about what this choice conveys.

### QuickWrite

Pick a paragraph from the text that grabbed your interest. Explain the power of this passage.

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### STANDARD

**Reading** Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.
Seven-Year-Old Girl Gets New Hand From 3-D Printer

John Rogers

About the Author

John Rogers is a pop culture writer at the Associated Press (AP), a cooperative 24-hour news agency. Member newspapers have access to the stories AP journalists write in exchange for supporting the agency. The modern AP was founded in 1900 and has established an extensive network of news bureaus around the world to collect and distribute news articles rapidly.

BACKGROUND

3-D printing is a relatively new technology in which an actual three-dimensional object can be made using a machine. A 3-D printer builds objects by adding small amounts of plastic or other similar materials layer-by-layer.

Seven-year-old Faith Lennox never thought much about putting a prosthetic limb where her missing left hand had once been.

Not until the little girl learned she could design her own. And that she could strap it on easily. Then she could jump on her bike and pedal away.

With family members occasionally shouting “Be careful” and “Watch out for that car,” Faith firmly placed her new hand’s bright blue and pink fingers on her bike’s left handlebar. Then she took off. She rode around the Build It Workspace. Inside, just a short time before, that hand had rolled off a 3D printer that built it overnight.

“I don’t think we’ll ever get her off it,” said her mother, Nicole. She was smiling with resignation as she watched her daughter.

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1. prosthetic  (pros THEHT ihk) n. something that replaces a lost body part.
continue to circle the parking lot in Los Alamitos. It is a suburb in Orange County, California.

The prosthetic that had just made such a task immediately easy represents a breakthrough in small, lightweight hands. They are easy for children to use. It weighs only a pound and costs just $50 to construct. It is made out of the same materials used to make drones and automobile parts.

When Faith outgrows it in six months or a year, a replacement can be made just as cheaply and easily. That’s according to Mark Muller, a prosthetics professor at California State University, Dominguez Hills. He helped with the design. He said a heavier adult model with sensors attached to a person’s muscles would run $15,000 to $20,000.

Faith manipulates her hand without sensors. Instead, as she demonstrated after the bike ride, she moves her upper arm back and forth. That in turn opens and closes its blue and pink fingers. “My favorite colors,” she noted with a smile. She uses the fingers to grasp objects. One was the plush toy she brought with her.

The oldest of three children, Faith had compartment syndrome when her position during childbirth cut off the flow of blood to her left forearm. The issue damaged tissue, muscle, and bone. After nine months of trying to save the limb, doctors determined they had to amputate just below the elbow.

She had tried a couple more traditional—and more expensive—prosthetics over the year. She found them bulky, heavy and hard to use.

Her parents were working with the nonprofit group E-Nable to get her a 3-D printed hand. But the technology is so new there’s a waiting list, her mother said. Then she learned from a friend what Build It Workspace could do. His son had visited with his Scout troop. The small studio teaches people to use high-tech printers. It provides access to them for projects and does its own commercial printing.

The company was founded less than a year ago by mechanical engineer Mark Lengsfeld. The firm has printed out everything from pumps for oil and gas companies to parts for unmanned aerial vehicles. But this was the first hand Lengsfeld and his employees had built.

So he used E-Nable’s open-source technology and called in Cal State, Dominguez Hills’ experts for guidance.

When Faith quickly strapped on their new creation and headed out to ride, as TV cameras captured the moment, Lengsfeld

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2. drones (drohns) n. remote-controlled flying machines.
3. tissue n. material bodies are made from.
4. open-source freely available for other people to copy or modify.
admitted he was nervous. After being up all night finishing the hand, he wanted to test it himself to be sure it worked.

“But she did fine with it,” he said, chuckling.

She noted it did fine by her as well.

“I didn’t have to lean so much,” she said of the difficulty of navigating and steering a bike with just one hand.

Afterward, as onlookers crowded into Build It’s small studio, the little girl sat shyly in front of a huge poster. “Hand It To Faith,” it read. Lengsfeld had made it for her.

But when asked to demonstrate how she can use the hand to help with things like schoolwork, she got busy. She placed her new hand firmly on a piece of paper. The hand held it in place as she drew a picture.

And just what did she draw?

Her new hand, of course, complete with robot fingers in perfect detail.
Screen Time Can Mess With the Body’s “Clock”

Andrew Bridges

About the Author

Andrew Bridges is a reporter, writer, and editor who has written many science articles for newspapers and websites. He has also published several juvenile nonfiction books about space travel, information technology, and the environment. Bridges is currently a fifth-grade teacher.

BACKGROUND

Modern technology includes many handheld devices that feature electronic display screens, such as smartphones, tablets, and laptop computers. LCDs, or liquid crystal displays, are a common type of electronic display and they were introduced in the 1960s. Researchers are still studying the possible effects that electronic displays might have on people.

For a good night’s sleep, here is some expert advice: Turn off, turn in, and drop off.

Anyone who does the opposite—say, turning on an iPad or other similar electronic reader1 in bed—may have a harder time both dropping off to sleep and shaking that groggy feeling the next morning. That’s the conclusion of a new study. Sleep experts at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, Mass., found that the light from a tablet computer upsets the body’s internal clock. And that can create real health and safety risks, the researchers say. Reading a printed book did not have the same effect. They reported their findings January 27 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

An internal “clock” helps regulate when we eat, sleep, and wake. Exposure to the light of day and darkness of night keeps its timing set to a roughly 24-hour cycle.

1. electronic reader any handheld device that displays text on a screen.
For instance, starting about two hours before bedtime, our brains start to produce a hormone called melatonin. It signals our internal clock that darkness has fallen. It also prepares the body for sleep.

Scientists long have known that light at night can disrupt that internal clock. And it does so by suppressing melatonin. This prevents the body from getting the message that bedtime is near.

Electronic devices with lit screens are now hugely popular. They have added another source of artificial light at night. The new study looked specifically at the iPad. Apple has sold more than 225 million of these tablets since their introduction in 2010.

For their new study, the researchers recruited six men and six women, all in their mid 20s. Over two weeks, each spent four hours reading each evening before a 10 p.m. bedtime. The volunteers read on an iPad for five nights in a row. On another five consecutive evenings they read a printed book.

The researchers noted how long it took the volunteers to fall asleep, how long they spent asleep and how long they remained in each stage of sleep. The experts also took blood samples to measure melatonin levels.

People took nearly 10 minutes longer to fall asleep, on average, after reading on the iPads. They also spent less time in rapid-eye movement (or REM) sleep. This sleep phase appears important for learning and storing memories.

There was no difference in hours spent sleeping after reading from either the iPad or a printed book. But how volunteers felt the next day did differ.

“Our most surprising finding was that individuals using the e-reader would be more tired and take longer to become alert the next morning,” says sleep researcher Anne-Marie Chang. “This has real consequences for daytime functioning,” she says. “And these effects might be worse in the real world as opposed to the controlled environment we used.” A co-author of the study, she works at Pennsylvania State University in University Park. Previously, she worked at Brigham and Women’s Hospital.

Lighting scientist Mariana Figueiro calls the study thorough. She also finds its results unsurprising. Figueiro, who was not connected to this new study, works at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y. Her research has shown that spending even two hours on an iPad before bedtime can cut down the brain’s release of melatonin.

While she generally liked the study, she was concerned about “its applicability to real life.” This experiment was done in a

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2. **hormone** (HAWR mohn) *n.* natural substance that is produced in the body and that affects the way the body develops.
laboratory setting under very dim lights. And that, she says, may not mimic how most people use e-readers—or read printed books. “It’s not necessarily true,” she says, “that books are okay but e-readers are not.” She notes that “If you turn on a very bright light to read, it may have the same effect.”

What’s more, she points out, spending plenty of time exposed to natural light during the day can reduce the body’s sensitivity to artificial light at night. “The same iPad may have a much stronger effect on kids who stay indoors during the day, in dim light,” Figueiro says, “than on kids who play outdoors.”

Regularly getting too little sleep can pose important health risks. For instance, studies have shown that it can up the risk of everything from obesity, diabetes, and depression to car accidents.

3. obesity (oh BEE suh tee) n. condition of being extremely overweight.
4. diabetes (dy uh BEE teez) n. inability to process blood sugars.
All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace

Richard Brautigan

I like to think (and the sooner the better!)
of a cybernetic meadow where mammals and computers live together in mutually programming harmony like pure water touching clear sky.

I like to think
(right now, please!)
of a cybernetic forest filled with pines and electronics

1. cybernetic (sy buhr NEHT ihk) adj. related to the scientific study of how people, animals, and machines control and communicate information.
2. mammals (MAM uhlz) n. warm-blooded animals with hair or fur, including humans.

BACKGROUND
This poem first appeared in a collection also titled All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace, published in 1967. At the time, people were just becoming aware of the rapid advances of technology—and its possible harmful effects on society.

About the Author
Richard Brautigan (1935–1984) was an American author and poet, whose works include 11 novels, 10 books of poetry, numerous nonfiction pieces, and one collection of short stories. Considered a fixture of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Brautigan’s work influenced a generation and continues to be popular today. His works have been translated into more than 12 languages.
where deer stroll peacefully
past computers
as if they were flowers
with spinning blossoms.

I like to think
(it has to be!)
of a cybernetic ecology³
where we are free of our labors
and joined back to nature,
returned to our mammal
brothers and sisters,
and all watched over
by machines of loving grace.

3. ecology (ee KOL uh jee) n. relationships between a group of living things and their environment.
Sonnet, Without Salmon

Sherman Alexie

Background
Dams are structures that are built across a river or stream to stop water from flowing. Dams are used to increase the amount of water available for generating hydroelectric power, or electricity. However, dams are also the cause of environmental concerns because they change the shape of rivers and can block the migratory patterns of fish, such as salmon.

1. The river is empty. 2. Empty of salmon, I mean. 3. But if you were talking to my grandmother, she would say the water doesn’t matter if the salmon are gone. 4. She never said that. I just did. But I’m giving her those words as a gesture of love. 5. She’s been gone for thirty-one years. 6. The water doesn’t matter if my grandmother is gone. 7. She swam wearing all of her clothes, even her shoes. 8. I don’t know if that was a tribal thing to do, or if she was just eccentric. 9. Has anybody ever said that dam building is an act of war against Indians? 10. And, yet, we need the electricity, too. 11. My mother says the reservation needs a new

1. eccentric (ehk SEHN trihk) adj. strange or unusual.
2. war against Indians many Native American nations have fishing rights in their reservations. These fishing rights have been reserved for the tribes by treaties that can be seen as broken by the construction of dams.

About the Author

Sherman Alexie (b. 1966) grew up on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Washington State. As a child, Alexie suffered from seizures and spent much of his time in bed reading. After college, his career as a writer took off. Since then, Alexie has won numerous awards for his novels, stories, screenplays, and poems, including a PEN/Hemingway Award and the National Book Award.
electrical grid because of all the brown- and blackouts. 12. “Why so many power outages?” I ask her. 13. “All the computers,” she says. 14. Today, in Seattle, I watched a cute couple at the next table whispering to their cell phones instead of to each other. But, chivalrous, he walked to the self-service coffee bar to get her a cup. Lovely, I thought. She was busy on her phone while he was ten feet away. When he sat back down, she said, “Oh, I was texting you to tell you to get me sugar and cream.”

3. chivalrous (SHIH Vuhl ruhs) adj. respectful and polite to women.
Teen Researchers Defend Media Multitasking

Sumathi Reddy

About the Author

Sumathi Reddy is a reporter for the Wall Street Journal and writes a weekly column on consumer health called “Your Health.” She previously wrote for the Journal's Greater New York section as a metro columnist. Reddy lives in New York City.

BACKGROUND

The word multitask is a term for a computer running more than one program at a time. “Multitasking” can also describe people who do more than one task at a time. According to research on the subject, the main challenge of multitasking is not physical, but mental.

Doing Homework With Music, Texts, Tweets Works Better for Some

Some teens doing homework while listening to music and juggling tweets and texts may actually work better that way, according to an intriguing new study performed by two high-school seniors.

The Portland, Ore., students were invited to the annual conference of the American Academy of Pediatrics in San Diego this past weekend to present a summary of their research, which analyzed more than 400 adolescents. The findings: Though most teens perform better when focusing on a single task, those who are “high media multitaskers”—about 15% of the study participants—performed better when working with the distractions of email and music than when focusing on a single activity.

The results are a surprise. Previous research generally has found that people who think they are competent multitaskers
actually perform worse than others who try to focus on one thing at a time. But the latest study looked only at teens and is one of the few multitasking-research projects focused on this age group. The student researchers suggest this may explain the different outcomes.

“We really wanted to see how media multitasking is affecting young people,” said Sarayu Caulfield, 17 years old, as she stood beside the poster presentation of the study at the AAP conference.

“What our research is suggesting is that maybe our brains as adolescents and digital natives have adapted to this media influence and because we’ve grown up with it we’re able to cope with all these different stimuli,” said 18-year-old Alexandra Ulmer.

Ms. Caulfield and Ms. Ulmer, who say they aren’t heavy multitaskers themselves, conducted the study as part of the Oregon Episcopal School’s science-research program. The project, which took two years to complete, placed second in the behavioral-science category at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in May in Los Angeles, the world’s largest precollege science competition. The teens over the summer presented their research at the National Institute on Drug Abuse in Washington, D.C., part of the National Institutes of Health.

Nora Volkow, director of NIDA, said she was impressed with the teenagers’ research. “This study explored whether experience with multitasking affected behaviors controlled by the prefrontal cortex, an area involved in self-control,” she said. “As more studies of the kind that Alexandra and Sarayu carried out so successfully become published, and as more young people become exposed to these new cognitive modalities, we may find that multitasking is not necessarily always bad,” she said.

In the study, participants were classified as high, medium or low media multitaskers, using a standardized test developed by researchers at Stanford University. Those rated at the high level reported spending an average of three hours a day multitasking, including at least 50% of the time they were doing homework. Students at the low level spent 20 minutes a day multitasking on average, and barely at all while doing homework.

Of the 403 total participants, 60 were classified in the high group, 50 in the low group, and the rest were moderate media multitaskers.

The students, whose average age was 14½, were randomly sent into one of two rooms where they did a variety of cognitive tests on a computer to make use of their working, or short-term, cognitive modalities.

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1. *stimuli* (STIHM yuh ly) n. sensations that cause reactions.
2. *cognitive* (KOH nuh tihw) adj. having to do with thinking.
3. *modalities* (moh DAL uh teez) n. ways of being or functioning.
memory. In one room, called the multitasking room, students were required to do the tests while listening to music. They were told they could do whatever they wanted on their phone or computer and to expect one or more emails, which they should respond to as quickly as possible. Not everyone actually received an email.

The students in the nonmultitasking room did the same computer tests but without any distractions.

“What we found is on average most people perform better when focusing on one single task,” said Ms. Ulmer. “But this one group of people—the high media multitaskers—performed best when they are in a multitasking environment. The high media multitaskers actually excelled in the multitasking room.”

Another finding: Participants in the multitasking room who didn’t receive an email, after being told to expect one, performed worse. “It was the anticipation of receiving an email that was more detrimental to their performance than actually receiving the email,” said Ms. Ulmer.

The tests used in the study involved simple tasks such as identifying whether a particular colored rectangle had moved when scenes on a computer screen were changed. It isn’t clear if the findings would pertain to more demanding situations, such as multitasking while doing calculus homework.

Ms. Ulmer and Ms. Caulfield said they have begun seeking a scientific journal interested in publishing their study. They said they would like to continue doing scientific research when they enter college.

The teens received guidance on their research from Clifford Nass, a communications professor at Stanford and a leading researcher on multitasking, who died while the project was under way. The teens were then aided by Donald Roberts, a professor emeritus in communications at Stanford and an authority on media and youth.

Dr. Nass and colleagues had conducted an earlier study with 100 college-age students. It found heavy media multitaskers were less effective than people doing one task at a time in such functions as controlling memory, switching between activities, and paying attention. The study was published in 2009 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

“Heavy media multitaskers’ ability to focus on relevant information and not be captured by the irrelevant was worse,” said Anthony Wagner, a psychology and neuroscience professor at Stanford and a co-author of the 2009 study. Dr. Wagner said the study and subsequent work by other researchers haven’t been able to answer the question whether the act of heavy media

4. detrimental (deht truh MEHN tuhl) adj. damaging.
5. professor emeritus (ih MEHR uh tuhs) professor who has retired from teaching.
multitasking affects attention and impairs a person’s ability to filter out distractions, or whether the people themselves are naturally that way.

Other research has considered whether media multitasking can change the brain’s structure. In a study published in September in the online journal PLOS One, researchers from the University of Sussex in England found people who juggle multiple media devices have a lower density of gray matter in the anterior cingulate cortex, a region of the brain involved in cognitive and emotional processing, compared with people who use one media device at a time. The study, which took brain scans of 75 adults, didn’t prove multitasking was responsible for the differences in brain structure, the study said.

Some research has indicated there may be a genetic component to people who multitask well.

A 2010 study, conducted at the University of Utah, found there may be a category of people the researchers labeled “supertaskers” who perform extremely well at multitasking. The study tested 200 participants in a driving simulator and tested them again while also subjecting them to a demanding audio test that included math problems and other challenges. Most participants showed a significant decline in driving performance when the audio test was added. But for 2.5% of the people—the supertaskers—there was no change.

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6. **gray matter** brain tissue.
7. **genetic** (juh NEHT ihk) adj. biological; passed down by one’s parents.
Share Your Independent Learning

Prepare to Share

How is modern technology helpful or harmful to society?

Even if you read something independently, your understanding continues to grow when you share what you have learned with others. Reflect on the text you explored independently, and write notes about its connection to the unit. In your notes, consider why this text belongs in this unit.

Learn From Your Classmates

Discuss It  Share your ideas about the text that you explored on your own. As you talk with your classmates, jot down ideas that you learn from them.

Reflect

Review your notes, and mark the most important insight you gained from these writing and discussion activities. Explain how this idea adds to your understanding of the impact of modern technology.
Review Evidence for an Argument

At the beginning of this unit you discussed the following statement with your classmates:

Do we rely on technology too much?

EVIDENCE LOG

Review your Evidence Log and your QuickWrite from the beginning of the unit, and use your own knowledge. Has your position changed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify at least three pieces of evidence that convinced you to change your mind.</td>
<td>Identify at least three pieces of evidence that supported your initial position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State your position now: ____________________________________________

___________________________________________

Identify a possible counterargument: _________________________________

___________________________________________

Evaluate the Strength of Your Evidence  Consider your argument. Do you have enough evidence to support your claim? Do you have enough evidence to address a counterargument? If not, make a plan.

☐ Do more research

☐ Talk with my classmates

☐ Reread a selection

☐ Ask an expert

STANDARDS

Writing

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

a. Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.
PART 1
Writing to Sources: Argument
In this unit, you read, watched, and listened to selections about modern technology. These texts acknowledged the benefits of technology, but they also address the dangers of being dependent on and consumed by technology.

Assignment
Write an argumentative essay in which you state and defend a claim in response to the following question:

Do we rely on technology too much?

Use convincing evidence from at least three of the selections that you read in this unit to support your claim. Support your ideas with strong reasons and relevant evidence. Organize your ideas effectively so that your argument is easy to follow. Establish and maintain a formal tone. Include a conclusion that clearly relates to the main idea you expressed.

Reread the Assignment Review the assignment to be sure you fully understand it. The assignment may refer to some of the academic words presented at the beginning of the unit. Be sure you understand each of the words given here to complete the assignment correctly.

convince certain sufficient
declare various

Review the Elements of Effective Argument Before you begin writing, read the Argument Rubric. Once you have completed your first draft, check it against the rubric. If one or more of the elements is missing or not as strong as it could be, revise your essay to add or strengthen that part.

STANDARDS
Writing
• Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
• Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
  a. Apply grade 6 Reading standards to literature.
  b. Apply grade 6 Reading standards to literary nonfiction.
• Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
## Argument Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus and Organization</th>
<th>Evidence and Elaboration</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The introduction is engaging and states the claim in a compelling way.</td>
<td>Sources are credible and accurate.</td>
<td>The argument correctly uses standard English conventions of usage and mechanics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The claim is supported by clear reasons and relevant evidence, and opposing claims are addressed.</td>
<td>The argument demonstrates an understanding of the topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning and evidence are logically organized so that the argument is easy to follow.</td>
<td>The tone of the argument is formal and objective.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The conclusion clearly follows from the argument presented.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The introduction is somewhat engaging and states the claim clearly.</td>
<td>Sources are mostly credible and accurate.</td>
<td>The argument mostly demonstrates accuracy in standard English conventions of usage and mechanics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The claim is supported by reasons and evidence and opposing claims are acknowledged.</td>
<td>The argument mostly demonstrates an understanding of the topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning and evidence are organized so that the argument can be followed.</td>
<td>The tone of the argument is mostly formal and objective.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The conclusion mostly follows from the argument presented.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The introduction states the claim.</td>
<td>Some sources are credible.</td>
<td>The argument demonstrates some accuracy in standard English conventions of usage and mechanics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The claim is supported by some reasons and evidence, and opposing claims may be briefly acknowledged.</td>
<td>The argument somewhat demonstrates an understanding of the topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning and evidence are organized somewhat logically.</td>
<td>The tone of the argument is occasionally formal and objective.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The conclusion somewhat follows from the argument presented.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The claim is not clearly stated.</td>
<td>There is little or no credible evidence.</td>
<td>The argument contains mistakes in standard English conventions of usage and mechanics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The claim is not supported by reasons and evidence, and opposing claims are not addressed.</td>
<td>The argument does not demonstrate an understanding of the topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasoning and evidence are disorganized and the argument is difficult to follow.</td>
<td>The tone of the argument is informal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The conclusion does not follow from the argument presented.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART 2
Speaking and Listening: Oral Presentation

**Assignment**
After completing the final draft of your argument, use it as the foundation for a brief oral presentation.

Do not simply read your argument aloud. Take the following steps to make your presentation lively and engaging.

- Reread your argument and mark the claims and reasons from your introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion. Refer to the annotations to guide your presentation.
- Use appropriate eye contact. Make sure to speak loudly enough for people to hear you and pronounce words clearly.
- Deliver your argument with confidence.

**Review the Rubric** Before you deliver your presentation, check your plans against this rubric. If one or more of the elements is missing or not as strong as it could be, revise your presentation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Presentation Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The introduction is engaging and establishes the claim in a convincing way.</td>
<td>The speaker uses time effectively, spending the right amount on each part. Ideas progress logically, with clear transitions so that the argument is easy to follow.</td>
<td>The speaker maintains appropriate eye contact and speaks clearly and with adequate volume. The speaker presents the argument with energy and strong conviction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentation includes clear reasons and relevant evidence to support the claim.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The conclusion follows from and restates the claim.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The introduction partially establishes a claim.</td>
<td>The speaker uses time somewhat effectively, spending the right amount of time on most parts. Ideas progress logically, with some transitions between ideas. Listeners can mostly follow the speaker’s argument.</td>
<td>The speaker sometimes maintains appropriate eye contact and speaks somewhat clearly and with adequate volume. The speaker presents with some energy and confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentation includes some clear reasons and relevant to support the claim.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The conclusion restates some important information about the claim.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The introduction does not clearly state a claim.</td>
<td>The speaker does not use time effectively and focuses too much time on some parts and too little on others. Ideas do not progress logically. Listeners have trouble following the argument.</td>
<td>The speaker does not maintain appropriate eye contact or speak clearly with adequate volume. The speaker’s argument lacks energy or confidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentation does not include reasons or evidence to support a claim.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The conclusion does not restate important information about a claim.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflect on the Unit

Now that you’ve completed the unit, take a few moments to reflect on your learning.

Reflect on the Unit Goals

Look back at the goals at the beginning of the unit. Use a different colored pen to rate yourself again. Think about readings and activities that contributed the most to the growth of your understanding. Record your thoughts.

Reflect on the Learning Strategies

Discuss It Write a reflection on whether you were able to improve your learning based on your Action Plans. Think about what worked, what didn’t, and what you might do to keep working on these strategies. Record your ideas before a class discussion.

Reflect on the Text

Choose a selection that you found challenging, and explain what made it difficult.

Describe something that surprised you about a text in the unit.

Which activity taught you the most about the impacts of modern technology on society? What did you learn?