

Grade 7 Argument Writing Standard W.7.1

Grade 7 Argument

W.7.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.
- d. Establish and maintain a formal style.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

The Reading/Thinking/Writing Task

Students worked with half a dozen texts or so about the impact of social media on people, including on teenagers. All of the texts were relevant to the Focusing Question “*Overall, what is the impact of social media use on children and teenagers?*” Over a period of several weeks, the students read texts on both sides of this question with guidance, took notes on the content, and participated in a Socratic Seminar to consider the positive and negative impacts of social media. The instruction emphasized keeping an open mind on the issue, and using careful and logical reasoning to analyze evidence.

This is a question that requires inferential, cause-and-effect thinking and analysis of the texts, as well as synthesis in bringing evidence from multiple texts into a single well-focused and well-developed essay.

Focus of the Writing Task

“Overall, what is the impact of social media use on children and teenagers?”

The Writing Task in the Curriculum

How is it embedded in curriculum/content?

★ *Class: 7th/8th grade integrated ELA/social studies curriculum*

★ *Curriculum unit*

- students studied various aspects of the widespread use of social media and its impacts
- emphasis on “cause-and-effect” thinking
- emphasis on remaining open-minded until making a claim
- emphasis on reasoning

★ *Standards*

- Reading: RI.7.1, RI.7.3, RI.7.10
- Writing: W.7.1, W.7.9, W.7.10

How did students build the knowledge they needed?

★ *Texts*

- students read a variety of texts from credible sources, including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *CNN*.

★ *Reading and re-reading*

- teacher read texts aloud while students read along in their heads
- students re-read texts independently and discussed with a partner
- students began by taking teacher-guided notes, took notes more independently over course of unit
- students gathered specific evidence and formed reasons / categories with some guidance, always exploring and capturing notes for both sides of question (negative and positive)

What instructional approaches were used to teach writing?

★ *Craft lessons*

- students had already worked with expository structures (Painted Essay® in many forms and more) including such elements as introductions, transitions and conclusions
- use of counterclaim – students worked with a teacher-created model to see how counterclaim and rebuttal would work

★ *Writing approaches*

- students were reminded of the elements that make up a strong essay in the directions. They then wrote and proofread independently.

What was the timeframe?

Four week unit (total of 16 class periods, including writing)

Standard W.7.1
Grade 7
Proficient

Social Media

One of the most impossible questions to answer has to do with social media. Many people use social media, and sometimes they can be absorbed in it all the time. Others use it only occasionally. Social media has many different impacts on the people using it. Some of the more noticeable impacts it has are on children and teens.

In some ways, the impact of social media on children and teens can be harmful, but in other ways it can be beneficial.

After looking at the positive and negative impacts of social media use on children and teenagers, I believe that social media's impact on children and teenagers is mostly beneficial.

One reason that social media shows beneficial impacts is that it raises awareness and funds for good causes. One example of this is Fiona the hippo. When she was born, which was six weeks early, no one expected her to survive. The Cincinnati Zoo posted videos of Fiona, which got many views, and raised awareness about her. Local businesses have sold Fiona merchandise, from Cincy Shirts to the Listermann brewery – which donates part of their profits to Fiona's treatment (Symenov, 2017). Thanks to social media, which raised both funds and recognition for her, she has been able to survive.

Another reason that social media shows beneficial impacts is that it helps connect people with others that have similar interests. A platform called KidzVuz, co-founded by Rebecca Levey, is for kids seven to twelve to share videos. Kids were inspired to make videos beneficial to kids “who might feel slightly isolated to connect with other tweens and teens who share their same interests,” so “if you are living in a small town and you're the only kid who loves musical theater, instead of feeling like a freak about it, you can go online and find all these other kids that love musical theater” (Wallace, 2014). Social media helps kids connect with other people who share their interests, so they don't feel isolated and bad, but can feel happy and enjoy themselves more.

Now, some people disagree with this. They think that social media is harmful for kids and teens. They think that social media physically affects kids and teens. An example of this is “Text – Neck.” “Text- Neck” is when our heads are hung down to look down at our phones, in a

position similar to an ostrich, which leads to the loss of the curve in the spine, and it has started to become a medical issue for many people. It has other risks to the health as well (Popescu, 2018).

It is true that “Text Neck” has become an issue, however, if we change the way we look at our phones, then people wouldn’t be suffering from this problem. It is not strictly social media that is the problem, it is how we hold our phones that leaves the damage. If we have our heads tilted up a bit more, and hold our phones higher, we can get rid of this issue.

It is true that there is no clear answer to whether social media is actually good or bad for children, because it has both effects, but in many situations there is not a clear solution. But, it seems that the positive impacts of children and social media outweigh the negative impacts.

Standard W.7.1
Grade 7
Approaching

Social Media: How It's Corrupting Kids

Social media has recently become the center of our lives. With our whole world revolving around these small apps and devices, people themselves are even being changed. Society today is being changed in a negative way, and it is believed that social media has some fault in this. Social media is a tool, but it can also be very addictive. Kids today tend to sit on their devices for hours and hours on end. They don't even realize what is happening to their bodies. I think that social media does more bad than good for kids and adults.

Tech is not good for young children. Using a lot of tech in front of children and giving them technology is changing the way they act. It is not teaching them the proper manners and interactions. Children grow not knowing the fundamental and easy things such as saying please when you would like something and, thank you when you receive an act of kindness. However, kids are growing up not knowing their non-verbal cues. Things are more seen than heard.

In today's society phones are becoming more of "appendages" than just tools. People these days seem to just always have their phone on them. Whether it's in their hand, purse, or pocket, it is always with them. In 2016 the average phone use was three hours and 40 minutes. However in 2017 it increased by about 42 minutes. Phones are being used way more often. People now seem to be depending on these little devices as they would a part of your body.

Some people disagree with this. They think that social media is more beneficial than harmful. This may be true but social media could also be the cause of someone's suffering. Cyberbullying is a huge problem in the United States that has been the cause of many people's suffering and even some deaths.

In conclusion, social media is having more negative than positive impacts on people today. It is harmful in several ways. The cons most definitely outweigh the pros in this situation. Social media is not being used for its intended purposes. To help people and to connect them to others.

Standard W.7.1
Grade 7
Beginning

No sample for this grade level

Standard W.7.1
Grade 7
Exceeds

The New World of Social Media

Social media has been around for about 20 years. Most people would agree to the fact that social media, by the definition of *websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking* has become a very considerable part of most people's lives in some places around the world in the less than quarter-century it has been around for – especially for those who are teenagers and older children. There is controversy as to whether all of the social media use is really a constructive way for people to spend a large portion of their life. It seems like a fine way to spend our free time, but in a larger sense it seems to be consuming the majority of our lives – without us really realizing. Studies have proven that daily average phone distractions have gone from 3 hours and 40 minutes in 2016 to 4 hours and 22 minutes in 2017 (Berdik, 2018). We are struggling to keep up with the advancements that the technological world is making. Through all of the pros and cons to social media, some people see through clearly to the side of doubt – that social media is currently more harmful than it is beneficial.

One reason part of the population might be against the extended use of social media is because it seems to have become a serious threat to learning. In some long classes during college and high school, there are designated times when the students have a break and are given permission to take out their phones and go on social media. In some classes, by the time they are out the door of the classroom, they are already looking through the notifications and new information on social media that has piled up while they are in class. Teachers are finding, though, just having these “tech breaks” doesn't stop kids in school from getting distracted by their devices. Some teachers say that phone usage in class has “graduated from a nuisance to a serious threat to learning” (Berdik, 2018). If social media continues to affect the academic lives of students who overuse social media then they will not have as fulfilling of an education as they could. Getting an education should not be taken for granted, and it is important to remember that not everyone has the privilege of getting an education.

Another reason as to why social media is harmful is the fact that technology and social media specifically affect your relationships with other humans. Some people say that “being on

your phone removes yourself from reality” (Popescu, 2018). This is true. When you are on your phone, sometimes you get sucked in and don’t realize what is going on around you. It makes your presence in the room completely absent. Someday, you may be so intent on chatting with a friend over social media that your true and physical friends may drift away from you. One day you may find that you need them more than you think – but they will no longer be there for you. In a nutshell, it is important to stay present in your life, and not be taken away into the endless world of social media.

Even through all of the harmful impacts that social media has on the population of children and teenagers, some people see that social media is actually more beneficial than it is harmful. One reason why these people may believe this is because you can hear about causes that are good to support. An example of this is that there was a premature hippo born named Fiona. Through social media, the zoo was able to collect money for the hippo, so she could get the special care she needed to stay alive. Posted on multiple platforms daily were images of her bouncing around in her cage. She made the day for some people, like a woman who was going through chemotherapy. Seeing Fiona made her feel better, and remember that there was still hope in life (Symenov, 2017).

Some people agree with facts and benefits like this, but I see some downsides to social media attractions like this. For instance, students may be looking at charities like Fiona the hippo during class, or school hours because she is a cute and nice break from learning. This would affect the academic lives of students even more. Another reason why these types of social media attractions may not be good is because people may be donating money to causes that are fake. Donating to Fiona the hippo seems like a good thing to give money to, but we have to think of all the possibilities. Some people may advertise and want money for something that looks perfectly acceptable to support, while really it is just a fake website set up just to gather money for harmful use.

All in all, the vast world of social media has many different benefits and harmful impacts, and many people recognize the harmful impacts as outweighing the beneficial impacts. Social media platforms and the usage of social media have a large impact on our life, and some are so harmful that they will never go away. So, for the future of our world and society, the usage of social media may not be the best use of our time and life.

Standard W.7.1
Grade 7
Proficient

Social Media

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Another reason that social media shows beneficial impacts is that it helps connect people with others that have similar interests. A platform called KidzVuz, co-founded by Rebecca Levey, is for kids seven to twelve to share videos. Kids were inspired to make videos beneficial to kids “who might feel slightly isolated to connect with other tweens and teens who share their same interests,” so “if you are living in a small town and you’re the only kid who loves musical theater, instead of feeling like a freak about it, you can go online and find all these other kids that love musical theater” (Wallace, 2014). Social media helps kids connect with

Introduces the topic clearly: the writer gives appropriate, objective context which summarizes the topic for a reader.

Establishes and maintains a formal style and respectful tone throughout

Introduces the claim: the writer responds directly and appropriately to the Focusing Question.

Organizes reasons and evidence clearly: the writer organizes by reason.

Supports claim with clear reasons and evidence from the text: the **evidence is accurate and relevant**, and shows **understanding of the text** and issue. The writer develops the evidence with **logical reasoning**.

Wrap-up statement helps make **organizational** structure clear, also synthesizes reasoning

Uses words, phrases and clauses to clarify the relationships among claims and reasons

other people who share their interests, so they don't feel isolated and bad, but can feel happy and enjoy themselves more.

Now, some people disagree with this. They think that social media is harmful for kids and teens. They think that social media physically affects kids and teens. An example of this is "Text – Neck." "Text- Neck" is when our heads are hung down to look down at our phones, in a position similar to an ostrich, which leads to the loss of the curve in the spine, and it has started to become a medical issue for many people. It has other risks to the health as well (Popescu, 2018).

It is true that "Text Neck" has become an issue, however, if we change the way we look at our phones, then people wouldn't be suffering from this problem. It is not strictly social media that is the problem, it is how we hold our phones that leaves the damage. If we have our heads tilted up a bit more, and hold our phones higher, we can get rid of this issue.

It is true that there is no clear answer to whether social media is actually good or bad for children, because it has both effects, but in many situations there is not a clear solution. But, it seems that the positive impacts of children and social media outweigh the negative impacts.

Supports claim with clear reasons and evidence from the text: the **evidence is accurate and relevant**, and shows **understanding of the text**. Here, the reason and evidence are in the form of a **counterclaim**. The counterclaim is fully and respectfully developed, using clear reasoning. (This depth of counterclaim use is above the standard. See end note.)

Provides a concluding section that follows from the argument presented: the writer reflects on the overall complexity of the topic.

Final Thoughts
(Gr 7 Argument: Proficient)

Overall, this essay shows solid understanding of the topic of the impact of social media, and the texts she used. The writer responds to the prompt (“What is the impact of social media?”) with a clear and specific claim. The writer develops that claim, supplying reasons and accurate, relevant evidence from several texts, using a combination of paraphrasing and quoting. In all evidence paragraphs, the writer uses logical reasoning as she uses and explains the evidence, making her thinking clear.

In the essay, the writer thoughtfully uses a counterclaim to support her claim (though this full counterclaim is above the standard for this grade level), helping to show her strong understanding of the text). The writer consistently uses a respectful tone when acknowledging disagreement.

All of this thinking is done within a clear structure, including clear transitions, that makes the thinking well-connected and easy for the reader to follow. The writer finishes with a reflective conclusion, which also helps show her understanding of the issue and her recognition of the complexity of the topic.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 7 Argument: Proficient)

Control of Conventions: Although there are some errors, the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.

Standard W.7.1
Grade 7
Approaching

Social Media: How It's Corrupting Kids

Social media has recently become the center of our lives. With our whole world revolving around these small apps and devices, people themselves are even being changed. Society today is being changed in a negative way, and it is believed that social media has some fault in this. Social media is a tool, but it can also be very addictive. Kids today tend to sit on their devices for hours and hours on end. They don't even realize what is happening to their bodies. I think that social media does more bad than good for kids and adults.

Tech is not good for young children. Using a lot of tech in front of children and giving them technology is changing the way they act. It is not teaching them the proper manners and interactions. Children grow not knowing the fundamental and easy things such as saying please when you would like something and, thank you when you receive an act of kindness. However, kids are growing up not knowing their non-verbal cues. Things are more seen than heard.

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Some people disagree with this. They think that social media is more beneficial than harmful. This may be true but social media could also be the cause of someone's suffering. Cyberbullying is a huge problem in the United States that has been the cause of many people's suffering and even some deaths.

Introduces the topic:
the writer gives some appropriate, objective context which summarizes the topic for a reader. However, she also begins to frontload evidence for the claim she is about to make. This detracts from an objective, thoughtful tone.

Introduces the claim:
the writer responds directly and appropriately to the Focusing Question.

Organizes by reasons

Attempts to **support claim with reasons and evidence** from the texts: The reason is clear (*tech is not good for young children*). The **evidence is relevant**, but it is not specific, and its connection to the reason and claim is not clear. While the evidence shows some **understanding of the text** and issue, the reasoning is not **logical**.

Establishes and maintains a reasonably formal style throughout

Attempts to **support claim with reason and evidence** from texts: the reason (*phones are becoming appendages*) is supported by evidence, though uncited. **Reasoning** is appropriate.

In conclusion, social media is having more negative than positive impacts on people today. It is harmful in several ways. The cons most definitely outweigh the pros in this situation. Social media is not being used for its intended purposes. To help people and to connect them to others.

Attempts to use a **counterclaim:** the counterclaim is acknowledged respectfully, but not developed using clear reasoning. The statement about cyberbullying has no evidence. (Note: at this grade level, counterclaim need only be acknowledged)

Provides a concluding section that follows from the argument presented: the writer attempts to reflect on the overall complexity of the topic.

Final Thoughts **Gr 7 Argument: Approaching**

Overall, this essay shows some understanding of the topic of the impact of social media, and the texts she used. The writer responds to the prompt (“What is the impact of social media?”) with a clear but general claim. The writer develops that claim, supplying reasons and some relevant evidence. She does not cite evidence. In all evidence paragraphs, the writer attempts to use reasoning as she uses and explains the evidence, but there are gaps and her thinking is not always clear.

In the essay, the writer does use a counterclaim, which she attempts to develop, to support her claim (though this full counterclaim is above the standard for this grade level). This helps to show her understanding of the texts. The writer uses a largely respectful tone when acknowledging disagreement.

All of the writer’s thinking is done within a clear structure, including clear transitions, that makes the thinking well-connected and easy for the reader to follow. The writer finishes with a reflective conclusion, but it is not clear to the reader how the reflection follows from the argument.

This writer would benefit from instruction in citing evidence. She would also benefit from more time orally talking through her reasoning so that its meaning is more clear.

A Word About Language and Conventions **(Gr 7 Argument: Approaching)**

Control of Conventions: Although there are some errors, the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.

Standard W.7.1
Grade 7
Exceeds

The New World of Social Media

Social media has been around for about 20 years. Most people would agree to the fact that social media, by the definition of *websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking* has become a very considerable part of most people’s lives in some places around the world in the less than quarter-century it has been around for – especially for those who are teenagers and older children. There is controversy as to whether all of the social media use is really a constructive way for people to spend a large portion of their life. It seems like a fine way to spend our free time, but in a larger sense it seems to be consuming the majority of our lives – without us really realizing. Studies have proven that daily average phone distractions have gone from 3 hours and 40 minutes in 2016 to 4 hours and 22 minutes in 2017 (Berdik, 2018). We are struggling to keep up with the advancements that the technological world is making. Through all of the pros and cons to social media, some people see through clearly to the side of doubt – that social media is currently more harmful than it is beneficial.

One reason part of the population might be against the extended use of social media is because it seems to have become a serious threat to learning. In some long classes during college and high school, there are designated times when the students have a break and are given permission to take out their phones and go on social media. In some classes, by the time they are out the door of the classroom, they are already looking through the notifications and new information on social media that has piled up while they are in class. Teachers are finding, though, just having these “tech breaks” doesn’t stop kids in school from

Introduces the topic clearly: the writer gives appropriate, objective, fully developed context which summarizes the topic for a reader.

Establishes and maintains a formal style and respectful tone throughout

Introduces the claim: the writer responds directly and appropriately to the Focusing Question.

Organizes reasons and evidence clearly: the writer organizes by reason.

Supports claim with clear reasons and evidence from the text: the **evidence is accurate, relevant**, and in depth - it shows deep **understanding of the text** and issue. The writer develops the **evidence** with **logical** and thoughtful **reasoning**.

getting distracted by their devices. Some teachers say that phone usage in class has “graduated from a nuisance to a serious threat to learning” (Berdik, 2018). If social media continues to affect the academic lives of students who overuse social media then they will not have as fulfilling of an education as they could. Getting an education should not be taken for granted, and it is important to remember that not everyone has the privilege of getting an education.

Another reason as to why social media is harmful is the fact that technology and social media specifically affect your relationships with other humans. Some people say that “being on your phone removes yourself from reality” (Popescu, 2018). This is true. When you are on your phone, sometimes you get sucked in and don’t realize what is going on around you. It makes your presence in the room completely absent. Someday, you may be so intent on chatting with a friend over social media that your true and physical friends may drift away from you. One day you may find that you need them more than you think – but they will no longer be there for you. In a nutshell, it is important to stay present in your life, and not be taken away into the endless world of social media.

Even through all of the harmful impacts that social media has on the population of children and teenagers, some people sees that social media is actually more beneficial than it is harmful. One reason why these people may believe this is because you can hear about causes that are good to support. An example of this is that there was a premature hippo born named Fiona. Through social media, the zoo was able to collect money for the hippo, so she could get the special care she needed to stay alive. Posted on multiple platforms daily were images of her bouncing around in her cage. She made the day for some people, like a woman who was going through chemotherapy. Seeing Fiona made her feel better, and remember that there was still hope in life (Symenov, 2017).

Some people agree with facts and benefits like this, but I see some downsides to social media attractions like this. For instance, students may

Supports claim with clear reasons and evidence from the text: the **evidence is accurate, relevant**, and in depth - it shows deep **understanding of the text** and issue. The writer develops the evidence with **logical** and thoughtful **reasoning**.

Supports claim with clear reasons and evidence from the text: the **evidence is accurate and relevant**, and shows **understanding of the text**. Here, the reason and evidence are in the form of a **counterclaim**. The counterclaim is deeply and respectfully developed, using clear and insightful reasoning. (This depth of counterclaim use is above the standard. See end note.)

be looking at charities like Fiona the hippo during class, or school hours because she is a cute and nice break from learning. This would affect the academic lives of students even more. Another reason why these types of social media attractions may not be good is because people may be donating money to causes that are fake. Donating to Fiona the hippo seems like a good thing to give money to, but we have to think of all the possibilities. Some people may advertise and want money for something that looks perfectly acceptable to support, while really it is just a fake websites set up just to gather money for harmful use.

All in all, the vast world of social media has many different benefits and harmful impacts, and many people recognize the harmful impacts as outweighing the beneficial impacts. Social media platforms and the usage of social media have a large impact on our life, and some are so harmful that they will never go away. So, for the future of our world and society, the usage of social media may not be the best use of our time and life.

Provides a concluding section that follows from the argument

presented: the writer reflects on the overall complexity of the topic, by pointing out the benefit to future society.

Final Thoughts
(Gr 7 Argument: Exceeds)

Overall, this essay shows the writer’s deep understanding of the topic of the impact of social media, and the texts she used. The writer responds to the prompt (“What is the impact of social media?”) with a clear and specific claim. The writer develops that claim, supplying reasons and accurate, relevant evidence from several texts, using a combination of paraphrasing and quoting. In all evidence paragraphs, the writer uses logic and reasoning as she explains the evidence, making her thinking clear.

In the essay, the writer thoughtfully uses a counterclaim to support her claim (though this full counterclaim is above the standard for this grade level), helping to show her strong understanding of the text). The writer consistently uses a respectful tone when acknowledging disagreement.

All of this thinking is done within a clear structure, including clear transitions, that makes the thinking well-connected and easy for the reader to follow. The writer finishes with a reflective conclusion, which also helps show her understanding of the issue and her recognition of the complexity of the topic.

In addition, the writer uses particularly thoughtful and insightful reasoning. Her word choice, depth of evidence, and reasoning throughout the essay suggest an unusual awareness of the need to be both objective, respectful, and clear.

A Word About Language and Conventions
(Gr 7 Argument: Exceeds)

Control of Conventions: Although there are some errors, the writer shows *overall control* over grade-level language and conventions.