

UNIT 1 – GATHERING

Writing task model answer

“Outline the social and economic impacts of social media.”

Facebook, LinkedIn, Snapchat, and WhatsApp are just a few of the social networks that have certainly changed many people’s lives. The interconnectedness facilitated by social media has had positive and negative social and economic impacts.

One major social effect is on relationships and communication. It is now easy to forge ties and develop a global network of acquaintances and contacts. These relationships can be maintained by instant communication on messaging apps. Though this can be beneficial, some worry that as we are hyper-connected, we are losing key social skills. Some people nowadays struggle to establish and maintain in-depth or in-person relationships. They have actually become more anti-social and have less face-to-face communication as they focus more on their devices.

A second social effect is on people’s health. Patients and medics can connect with people in similar situations through Facebook groups, for instance. This can provide information and support, and can even aid recovery. Nevertheless, social media can have disconcerting repercussions for mental health too. Studies have shown an increase in cyber bullying¹ among adolescents, for instance.

There have also been significant economic impacts. Facebook and businesses both derive financial benefits from advertising, and now sales. LinkedIn is now used by companies to advertise for staff. It has evolved into a key tool for hiring the best candidates to ensure a company’s success. However, despite these benefits, employees can be distracted by social media, to the detriment of workplace productivity. There is empirical evidence of companies losing money because staff use social media on company time.

It is true that there are social and economic downsides to social media. In spite of these, many assert that we should embrace it, as the huge advantages far outweigh the disadvantages.

Comments

The essay analyzes the question well, and successfully outlines both social and economic impacts of social media, dividing them into advantages and disadvantages. The student uses the appropriate register and successfully includes concessive and contrastive structures. In addition, the essay contains lots of the unit vocabulary and synonyms.

¹ Cyber bullying occurs when the Internet, mobile phones etc are used to send or post texts or images that are deliberately meant to hurt or embarrass someone. Cyber bullying is particularly common among teenagers.

UNIT 2 – GAMES

Writing task model answer

“The graph shows current and predicted trends in the gaming industry. Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where necessary.”

The graph indicates the number of hours spent per week on four types of gaming, showing the trends from 2010 to 2017, and predictions for 2018. Overall, people spent more time on both types of multiplayer gaming and mobile gaming, but fewer hours on the single console form. The single console started out vastly more popular than the others, but is predicted to be the least used. The reverse is true for online multiplayer gaming, which is set to see a staggering rise in popularity.

Turning first to multiplayer gaming, the number of hours people devote to this remained stable at two for online and six for offline until 2014. At that point, popularity of the online form saw a sizeable increase, from two to a projected ten hours in 2018. A differing trend is seen for the offline variety. The number of hours players spent on this stayed approximately the same until 2016, but then rose slightly. It is expected to end the period at around seven.

Mobile and solo console gaming saw opposing trends in the first four years. In 2010, people spent ten hours playing alone, but this number had fallen to around eight by 2014. However, mobile gamers only spent around three hours on their games initially, but this number had gone up to six, the same as for multiplayer gaming, in 2014. From that year, solo gaming became less popular, with people dedicating four hours to it two years later. Mobile gaming shot up in popularity from 2014 to 2015, exceeding all other forms in that year, at ten hours. However, after this peak, as the amount of time fell to eight in 2016. After that, the numbers flatten out.

Should these trends continue, online multiplayer gaming will dominate the gaming sector. Were that to happen, there would be greater demand for high-speed Internet and reliable wifi. Should this not be available, from the data collated here, it can be inferred that the offline multi-player version will instead account for the bulk of use.

Comments

The piece successfully summarizes, compares and highlights the main features of the information presented. The student organizes the report logically, and uses data as the basis of predictions, which incorporate inverted conditionals. The essay also includes a range of vocabulary to describe the data.

UNIT 3 – ENERGY

Writing task model answer

“The diagram illustrates how hydroelectric energy is produced. Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where necessary.”

The illustration shows how hydroelectricity – a form of electricity generated from water – is produced. At the beginning of the process, naturally occurring water is stored in a reservoir, contained by a dam, or a wall, which prevents the water flowing out of the reservoir. Vertical sluice gates allow the water to flow down into the power house, which is an energy production facility. There, the flow of water powers a turbine, which turns a shaft and propels kinetic energy up to a generator within the power house. This energy is sent to a transformer, which converts it into a useable source. It then flows through parallel horizontal power cables to its destination and end user. After flowing through the turbine, the water runs into a river.

Proponents of this system of energy cite many studies to show that it is one of the most environmentally friendly forms of energy production. They claim it is sustainable, carbon-neutral, and involves no drilling or use of additives which could contaminate rivers or the environment.

Comments

The essay summarizes the information effectively and accurately, and also includes accurate definitions and appropriate commentary. The student makes good use of the unit vocabulary to describe the process and comment on it, and uses transitive and intransitive verbs well.

UNIT 4 – RISK

Writing task model answer

You are going to write a summary in response to the following:
“Write a summary of ‘Risk-takers: Who are they?’ on pages 69 & 70.”

Wittman (2012) suggests that age, gender, brain, and biology cause risk-taking. He cites the work of Giedd (2008), who found that, before the age of 25, the area of the brain responsible for perceiving risk was not fully developed. This, along with being susceptible to peer pressure meant that younger people were more likely to be risk-takers.

In terms of gender, Wittman (2012) refers to work done by the Columbia Business School (2011). Researchers there discovered subtle differences. While they acknowledge that gender per se² did not play a role in whether the participants took risks, it appears to have affected the type of risks they were willing to take, with women taking predominantly social, and men financial, risks. This risk-taking behavior could also be linked to people’s life experiences preceding that point; if they were more familiar with the situation they faced, they were less likely to perceive it as risky.

Wittman (2012) contends that the brain and psychological factors also play a role. His view is supported by the work of Zuckerman (1964), who underlines the importance of so-called “sensation seeking”. Zuckerman argues that some people yearn for thrill, adventure, and the chance to disregard their inhibitions. These people have a very low tolerance for boredom.

The final factor mentioned by Wittman (2012) is biology. Zuckerman claims in a later study (2007) that personality traits like risk-taking appear to have come from the genes, as it was found in identical twins. Researchers at Vanderbilt University and Albert Einstein College (Zaid, 2008) also found that risk-takers find the dopamine rush which can be triggered by risk-taking addictive. They therefore repeatedly push themselves in order to repeat this ‘high’.

Wittman (2012) concludes by arguing that it is a combination of all these factors which determines who the risk-takers actually are.

Comments

The writer summarizes the text effectively, including all the main points Wittman mentions, without copying from the original. The piece integrates and cites sources correctly, also using attributive language well. The student also uses unit vocabulary and infinitive phrases appropriately.

² considered by itself: used for emphasizing that you are not considering something in relation to anything else

UNIT 5 – SPRAWL

Writing task model answer

“Suburbanization is increasing as people move out of cities into suburban areas. Is it better to build more homes in existing suburbs or create new modern suburbs in rural areas?”

Suburbs are booming. People are relocating from cities because housing is often cheaper, communities are closer, and the quality of life overall seems somewhat better. The dilemma now is whether, in order to meet the housing demand, it is better to build in existing suburbs than in the countryside. Many assert that existing suburbs should be restructured.

Developing existing suburbs is the best option firstly because infrastructure and facilities already exist. Construction of new transit connections to currently inaccessible locations, new schools, new shopping malls, and new leisure facilities would be extremely costly, wasteful, and unnecessary. A further benefit is that both an economy and a community are often already in place. This may offer employment in local businesses and organizations, and close ties between neighbors. New people coming to reside in that community can invest in it, preventing situations like what happened in the Rust Belt in the U.S. Due to lack of investment, it “has come to be characterized by economic decline, population loss, and urban decay” (*Suburbs of the Future*).

Another factor to consider is the potential consequences of building in rural areas instead. This could benefit the environment by allowing building of eco-friendly homes. As Katayama (n.d.) points out, “By integrating energy-saving features into new buildings in new developments, it is possible for the area to have a much less significant impact on the world around us”. However, this could ultimately be unsustainable, as the supply of land in many countries is insufficient. More worryingly, should such development commence, neither vital protected green space, nor vital habitats for wildlife, would be safe.

Despite the benefits, and problematic alternatives, there are also significant disadvantages of building in existing suburbs. Employment and communities are not always in place. If there is no work and people do not feel safe, people will not relocate, and new housing may stand empty. New building developments can also cause property price increases. As people move from cities, or downsize, demand for affordable property rises. Local people may not be able to afford housing in the area they were raised in. They may even resent newcomers, leading to tension.

Although not a perfect solution, development of existing suburbs, with all the potential social and economic benefits, can be extremely beneficial. It is certainly a better alternative than building on rural areas.

Comments

The writer gives a great deal of information and a balanced viewpoint, including both benefits and drawbacks of both options. The student shows consideration of the arguments and comes to a clear conclusion, referring to experts to support points, and including direct quotations appropriately. The essay also contains a range of academic language, unit vocabulary, and parallel structures.

UNIT 6 – BEHAVIOR

Writing task model answer

“Critically evaluate whether the cause of delinquent behavior in teenagers is mainly genetic or environmental. Analyze the effects this behavior has on society.”

Juvenile³ delinquency has life-changing consequences for individuals and societies. Most agree that a combination of nature and nurture brings about this deviant behavior. This essay will evaluate the role of both factors, and the serious impact such behavior can have.

In terms of genetic factors, some research suggests that people can inherit criminality from their parents. Farrington et al. (2013) found that rates of criminality were higher among those with convicted parents than those whose parents had no convictions. Similarly, studying twins, Iacono, (2002) found “remarkable similarities in those raised apart—strongly suggesting that genetics, not upbringing, determines behavior and personality”. That said, the methodology of both these studies has been criticized, and may have distorted the truth about the extent to which personality and behavior are influenced by genetics.

To avoid oversimplification, then, it is essential to examine environmental factors that also exert a direct influence on teenagers. The first is the adults around them. Bryant and Zimmerman (2003) found that had some of the boys in their study had positive role models, they would not have exhibited “problem behaviors”. Equally important is peer pressure. Esiri (2016) found the teenagers she studied desired conformity, and had the delinquent teenagers had different friends, they probably would not have turned to crime. It would seem that criminality stems more often from these factors than from genes per se.

There can be devastating effects of delinquency. Victims, and those around them, may suffer physical or psychological harm. The delinquent themselves will also be affected. The punishment may be severe – either financially or by separation from society. The offender may experience feelings of guilt or remorse stemming from their actions. There is also the potential for breakdown of family and other relationships prompted by their behavior.

Criminality is a serious, but not a simple phenomenon. As Zigler et al. (1992) put it, “the risk factors that make a child prone to delinquency are based in ... many systems, including the individual, the family, and community networks”. This implies that everyone in society has a role in preventing it.

³ relating to young people who have committed a crime or who are accused of committing a crime

References:

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- Farrington, D.P., Piquero, A.R. and Jennings, W.G., 2013. *Offending from childhood to late middle age: Recent results from the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development*. Springer Science & Business Media, New York
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- Zigler, E., Taussig, C. and Black, K., 1992. Early childhood intervention: a promising preventative for juvenile delinquency. *American psychologist*, 47(8), p.997. Available: <http://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2F0003-066X.47.8.997> [Accessed: November 26, 2017]

Comments

The writer answers the question clearly, covering the role of nature and nurture, and the effects of criminality. The piece contains sources and includes references in the required Harvard style. The writer uses the unit vocabulary, phrases to express causation, anaphoric, and cataphoric referencing, and inverted conditionals correctly.

UNIT 7 – EXPANSE

Writing task model answer

“An international charity believes education for all children is necessary in the fight against overpopulation. What do you consider to be the major reasons for this?”

The world's population has seen exponential growth recently. Many contend that we are now reaching the point of overpopulation, leading to density and congestion, unsustainable demands on the world's resources, and widespread inequality. Some organizations have made tackling overpopulation a priority, and education is part of this. Studies have shown that those with less education tend to have larger families. However, research by The World Bank (2012) shows that 70 million children are not in school. Added to this, millions start but do not complete their studies, often because of poverty, instability, or unrest in their countries. Were all children to be able to go to school, more of them would be able to receive formal education about sexual health, how babies are conceived, and family planning. This would allow people to make informed choices, and would have a profound impact on population growth.

Another underlying cause of overpopulation is poverty, as people in poorer areas tend to have larger families. One way of tackling poverty is through education. UNESCO research (2006) shows that the more schooling people have, the higher the country's GDP per person. With higher education levels, people may opt to develop their career prospects, rather than having large families. Education also means people can command higher salaries, and therefore afford birth control. This would also help reduce birth rates.

Cutler and Lleras-Muney (2006) claim that education is fundamental in improving health. This in turn can impact population. People learn how their bodies work, how to take care of them, and what to do when they fall ill. Without this knowledge, families may have large numbers of children because they do not know how many are likely to survive and contribute to the family income.

Overpopulation can have devastating effects on the planet, whether this is in richer or poorer areas. It is easy to see why some organizations have made education their prime focus in tackling this. Schooling is not an extravagant luxury. It should be available for everyone, everywhere.

Comments

The essay answers the question persuasively, in an organized and clear format, and the writer makes good use of the references and brainstorming notes from the book. The student uses nominal clauses and collocations well, and paraphrases appropriately.

UNIT 8 – CHANGE

Writing task model answer

“Write a business report about forthcoming changes to a supermarket. Make recommendations as to how the company can ensure supermarket staff are prepared for and support the changes.”

Recommendations:

- Paid Town Hall Meeting⁴, to include the following core points:
 - The issue:
 - Change in the market has given rise to new challenges.
 - Company is not turning a profit, meaning jobs may be in jeopardy.
 - Failing to keep up with technological changes can be fatal. Blockbuster exemplifies an unsuccessful business model because they fell behind the times – we do not want to follow suit.
 - Importance of and impact on staff:
 - Staff are one of our best assets, receiving excellent customer feedback.
 - Company does not wish to maximize profits at the expense of staff morale. In making these changes, we aim to make sure our valued employees benefit.
 - New training opportunities will empower staff to embrace the changes.
 - Introducing the new app and delivery service will mean new job opportunities.
- Q and A session

Managing the transition period:

- Provide weekly paid staff training sessions for all new positions and for use of new scanners.
- After training, team staff up with a work buddy⁵ so everyone is supported.
- Incentivize implementing the changes (with financial bonuses and added benefits for reaching targets).

⁴ a meeting between managers and employees where developments in the business are discussed in a relaxed and informal atmosphere

⁵ someone who forms an arrangement with another person in which they help each other

Ongoing support:

- Provide free change counseling for those with concerns.
- Initiate election of dedicated liaison representatives, to relay⁶ issues and concerns from the shop floor⁷ to management and vice versa, along with feedback from the leadership team on progress and updates.

Review of changes

- To happen across the board after one month, three months, six months, and one year. All staff should be consulted, and allowed input.
- Having introduced the changes, schedule another Town Hall Meeting in a year to report on progress.

Concluding remarks

- Investment in staff, as well as technology and equipment, will be crucial going forward. Implemented successfully, the above recommendations should enable smooth transition.

Comments

The writer makes a variety of relevant recommendations, incorporating these into a well-structured report, using bullet points to convey the ideas efficiently and clearly. The report contains a good mix of unit vocabulary, academic phrases, and participle clauses.

⁶ to communicate information, news, or a message to someone

⁷ the workers in a factory, not the managers

UNIT 9 – FLOW

Writing task model answer

“Global warming is one of the biggest threats to our environment. What problems are associated with global warming and how could they be tackled at a national level?”

Global warming is a major threat to the Earth and everything on it. While we cannot reverse the damage already done, we can at least attempt to limit future harm. National governments have a major role to play in this.

Harris et al. clearly outline several problems resulting from this phenomenon: “effects range in scope from melting polar ice to raising sea levels, from collapse of marine ecosystems to increasingly severe water stress in large parts of the world, (...) changing weather patterns accompanied by more frequent and more violent climactic episodes (hurricanes, floods, droughts).” (2017: p.2). Undoubtedly, the seas are badly affected. The polar ice caps are receding at an unprecedented rate, leading to flooding of low-lying areas. Ongoing rises in temperatures mean both marine and terrestrial⁸ species which need the cold, such as penguins and polar bears, are now endangered. Some experts have cast doubt on whether global warming has actually caused the increased occurrence of hurricanes Harris et al. mention, as these do not occur frequently enough for systematic study. However, there is no doubt that drought and forest fires are a direct result of the higher temperatures which cause soil and vegetation to dry out.

In response to this, virtually all national governments have introduced legislation and allocated resources to mitigate the damage attributable to climate change. Indeed, Nachmany et al. found that, in 66 countries, nearly 500 such laws had been introduced. Measures⁹ prioritize curbing¹⁰ the emission of greenhouse gases, the primary cause of global warming. Many governments aim to reduce demand for polluting fossil fuels, by encouraging people to use less energy, or switch to cleaner forms of energy. Laws also limit the particle emissions cars, for instance, can produce. Nachmany et al. describe the introduction of such laws, especially in developing countries, as “encouraging”, which implies that these steps have been effective.

Global warming has already done irreversible damage to our planet. It is the duty of national governments, as well as individuals and international organizations, to avoid exacerbating this, and to make every effort to slow the decline.

⁸ existing on the Earth, or happening on the Earth, instead of in the sky or ocean

⁹ an action that is intended to achieve or deal with something

¹⁰ to control or limit something that is harmful

References:

Harris, J.M., Roach, B. and Codur, A.M., 2007. *The economics of global climate change*. Global Development And Environment Institute Tufts University. Available: http://www.ase.tufts.edu/gdae/education_materials/modules/The_Economics_of_Global_Climate_Change.pdf [Accessed: November 28, 2017]

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Comments

The piece answers the question clearly, outlining several problems and suggesting national solutions. The writer integrates and comments on sources well, makes good use of the vocabulary related to climate change, and uses verb patterns effectively.

UNIT 10 – CONFLICT

Writing task model answer

“Some people think that cooperation with others makes a successful team. Others feel that conflict is necessary for better team performance. Discuss both views and give your opinion.”

Ever since Janis (1972) coined¹¹ the term Groupthink there has been debate about whether cooperation or conflict is preferable in teams. Both unquestionably have merits, but this essay will argue that cooperation is preferable due to the psychological effects of conflict. Differing views should be welcomed, but conflict should be avoided.

Janis (1972) asserts that cooperation can be detrimental to decision-making because team members focus more on their relationships than evaluating options and views. Peer pressure can constrain participants, so opinions are not expressed or considered. It can also lead to intolerance of, or hostility towards, other teams. However, collaboration is natural, and does not inevitably lead to uniformity. As Leeson (2006) claims, “peaceful cooperation characterizes most heterogeneous group interaction.” Nor does being cohesive hinder progress. Arguably, whenever there is consensus from a diverse but unified group, there is greater support for a decision.

Nevertheless, some claim that conflict, rather than collaboration, is desirable, as it “serves a communication function of signaling potential problems, clarifying misunderstandings, and exchanging information” (Puttnam 1994, p. 284).

Arguments can instruct decision-making because differing perspectives and opposing views are aired and more alternatives are considered. That said, others point to the downside of conflict. De Dreu (2008) found it was relatively rare that conflict was positive. It can have lasting psychological effects on those involved, intimidating or hurting others, and making them reluctant to express their views. It can therefore be extremely damaging to whoever is involved.

An optimum solution would be the respectful exchange and thoughtful consideration of all views whenever possible. Restraint is preferable to full-blown¹² confrontation and conflict. This would ensure good decision-making, and a positive working environment.

¹¹ to use a word or phrase that no one has used before

¹² in its most complete and developed form

References:

- De Dreu, C.K., 2008. The virtue and vice of workplace conflict: Food for (pessimistic) thought. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 29(1), pp.5–18. Available: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/job.474/full> [Accessed November 29, 2017]
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- Putnam, L.L., 1994. Productive conflict: Negotiation as implicit coordination. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 5(3), pp.284–298. Available: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/eb022748> [Accessed November 29, 2017]

Comments

The writer discusses both views in detail, and expresses their view clearly. The piece includes a complete and accurate reference list and incorporates findings from research to support each point made. It also makes good use of vocabulary related to collaboration and conflict, adverbs of stance, and conjunctions.