Shut Down Your Screen

Dear Teachers,

I believe that we should participate in shutdown your screen week. I think that everyone in the school should not use any electronics for one week. Since the invention of the computer, cellphone and other electronics, people have been using them more and more and more. These electronics have big upsides, you’re never alone if you have cell service and Facebook allows people to talk to multiple friends at once when they’re not in the same room, town, state, or country. But they also have their downsides. What makes us truly great is our ability to think deeply and focus, but when we use electronics or the internet we aren’t doing either of these things. In fact, using these things makes us think more shallow and focus less. I think that we should participate in shut down your screen week.

One reason is that using electronics and multi-tasking causes focus problems, on and off computers. In Attached to Technology and Paying a Price by Matt Richtel, it says, “Scientists say juggling email, phone calls, and other incoming information can change how people think and behave. They say our ability to focus is being undermined by bursts of information.” This ability to focus is enormously important, it’s one of the things that we depend on almost every day. Like when you’re driving a car to work or flying a plane. If you’re distracted while doing one of these things it can have dire consequences for yourself and for others. Multi-tasking can also affect creativity, deep thought, causing problems for work and family life. By participating we could give
people a chance to develop new habits of not using their phone or computer all the time.

A second reason that we should participate is that heavy multitaskers have trouble filtering out irrelevant information on and off the computer. In Attached to Technology and Paying the Price by Matt Richtel it says the multitaskers “had trouble filtering out the blue ones – the irrelevant information.” If we participated, we could give these people a chance to develop new habits that would help them filter out irrelevant information and only pay attention to the things that are important. For example, if someone’s playing with their daughter, they would check their email every time they received an email instead of focusing on playing with their daughter.

Now, some people say that we shouldn’t participate because technology makes you smarter, why stop doing something that’s helping yourself. In an imaging study by Dr. Small, he found that “Internet users showed greater brain activity than nonusers, suggesting they were growing their neural circuitry.” While they may be growing their neural circuitry, they were also changing a characteristic of the brain that was thought to be unchangeable, the ability to only process one stream of information at a time. This ability allows humans to think deeply, an important characteristic in today’s society. By changing it, they were preventing themselves from having the ability to think deeply.

Technology is a new thing, and it has many advantages and conveniences. But for many it becomes more than a convenience, it becomes an obsession. For this reason I believe that we should participate in shut down your screen week, to give people a chance to make new habits and make technology a convenience again, not a necessity.
In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether their school should participate in the national "Shut Down Your Screen Week." This writer begins by offering specific, well-developed context concerning the issue and then asserts the claim that, in his view, the school should participate.

The writer develops his claim with several reasons, which he supports with some relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating his understanding of the topic and the texts he has read. The evidence in this piece comes from those texts. The writer organizes his ideas clearly and supports his claim with logical reasoning. In addition, he acknowledges a counterclaim, distinguishes it from his own claim, and refutes it with support for his own position, even though this development of a counterclaim is not stated in the Standards at this grade level, and again includes evidence from the texts. Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from and supports the argument presented.
High School Should Not Participate

To whom it may concern:

L__________ High School should not participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” Technology can be beneficial, especially to students. A vast majority of students finds it helpful to have access to technology. Technology makes quicker, more efficient work. Without the advancements of technology, we are no farther along than school children in the 1960’s.

The internet and social media, such as Facebook, improve the social lives of those who use it. In the article Information, Communication and Society, a survey found that whether the participants were married or single, people who used social media had more close friends. An average American who uses social media is half as likely to be socially isolated. They also know more diverse people. Also, users of social media never lose ties because of relocating, because you can always keep your friends on social media.

Internet search engines allow us better access to information. In my experience, information is far more accessible and quick than searching through books. That allows for time to complete other class assignments. According to Peter Norvig, director of research for Google, Inc., in an article for the New York Times, “The internet contains the world’s best writing, images, and ideas; Google lets us find the relevant pieces instantly.” Some argue that ads and irrelevant sites may be distracting, but more find that the
benefits are worth it. Eighty-one percent of experts polled by the Pew Internet Research Project support this opinion.

The internet also makes a good learning tool. In an article by Matt Richtel for the New York Times, he proves that it helps our brains. “Imaging studies show the brains of Internet users become more efficient at finding information.” Basically, the more we use online resources to learn, the better our brains become at learning. Also, in the same article, it says, “Internet users showed greater brain activity than non-users…” The internet even develops our brain to think more! Technology is improving our brains.

I have heard it argued that children “rot” their brains with video game systems. In the previously mentioned article by Matt Richtel, he says, “At the University of Rochester, researchers found that players of some fast-paced video games can track the movement of a third more objects on a screen than nonplayers…games can improve reaction time and the ability to pick out details amid clutter.” It seems that the more people play fast-paced video games, the more efficient they become at finding important details. These games may not be so “brain rotting“ after all. They could even be argued as beneficial.

Some also argue that because of new technologies, people limit how much they associate together, even in the same area. Social media disproves this argument. Not only can people associate easily with friends, they can also chat with relatives. They can also show relatives photos, even if they are states away. People who use social media are more likely to know more diverse people, according to the article by Keith Hampton. People still associate with people just as much as before, if not more. They are merely doing it in a different manner than before social media was in use.

Cyber bullying has now become an issue. I would like to bring to attention that all bullying is a big issue. I do not think that technology has caused bullying. It has just allowed for a new way to bully someone. I
have never been cyber-bullied. I personally was bullied in a face-to-face manner. A bully will take any chance to bully a target. Social media has not caused bullying.

Like most tools, technology is useful if used correctly. Work quality on a computer can be better, because people have more time to check over their work and improve it. Unfortunately, some people are lazy, and use that extra time they could use for editing for other things. That is not a problem with the tools, it is a problem with the people. People who use such technology correctly and efficiently should still have access. If our screens are shut down, there is no access. We should not participate in “Shut Down Your Screen Week.”

Sincerely,

responding to arguments by attacking a person's character - NEVER do that!
In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether their school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” This writer begins by asserting the claim that, in his view, the school should not participate and then discusses technology in a broad and substantive sense to provide context concerning the issue.

The writer develops his claim with several reasons, which he supports with sufficient, relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating his understanding of the topic and the texts he has read. The evidence in this piece comes from those texts and from the writer’s experience. The writer organizes his ideas clearly and supports his claim with logical reasoning. In addition, he acknowledges multiple counterclaims, distinguishes them from his own claim, and refutes them with support for his own position, which again includes evidence from the texts. In some cases, the writer introduces counterclaims specifically to anticipate the concerns of the likely audience (other students, parents, teachers, school board members). However, the writer does not develop the counterclaims or acknowledge their strengths, and he resorts to *ad hominem* (“people are lazy”) in the closing paragraph—approaches inconsistent with the Standards at this grade level. Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style and objective tone throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from the argument but does not significantly support it.
To Teachers and Whom It May Concern:

A proposal has been brought to the school board concerning the possibility of participating in “Shut Down Your Screen Week,” a movement in which students do not use any electronic media for a seven day duration. Technology and electronic media have been shown to have a variety of negative impacts on people, especially youth. For this reason, I believe that participating in “Shut Down Your Screen Week” would benefit our students in a variety of ways.

There are many negative impacts of electronic media upon our students, but among the most severe is its effects on the brain. According to the article, “Attached to Technology and Paying a Price,” technology is “rewiring our brains.” Technology has been proven to have significant effects on the way brains take in and process information. That’s not surprising considering people use an average of 12 hours a day (one half of every day) of media each day. The brain behaves hyperactively while using electronic media, as it is presented with a “deluge of data.” This hyperactivity transfers into one’s daily life, causing troubles focusing, forgetfulness, and boredom. A break from social media and technology would help students become more focused and attentive, giving their brains a break from technology.

Additionally, students could better obtain information without technology or social media. High-result-yielding search engines are not the most productive way for students to take in information. When a brain is using a computer, it is taking

Introduces a precise claim: The introduction gives context about the subject of technology, acknowledging it as a substantive topic, and then states a claim.

Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships between claim and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim and counterclaims.

Creates an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline.

Develops the claim fairly, supplying evidence for it, using valid reasoning in form of text-based evidence.
in a great amount of information quickly. According to the article, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” deep thinking “happens only when our minds are calm and attentive.” With an overload of information, the brain is not at all calm and does not deeply interpret information. Although search engines like Google may present much information, with its use, little information will be internalized, and little knowledge will be gained. During a week without technology, students could gain and truly internalize knowledge.

I do understand that there are many benefits of technology in education. I understand that technology can help students efficiently find information, and technology has even shown signs of “growing neural circuitry” in brains, according to “Attached to Technology and Paying the Price.” Additionally, according to the article “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” the efficiency of search engines “outweigh the distractions.” Due to the positive aspects of technology and social media, I would not suggest that the school remove technology or social media for good. I believe that, since technology is so addictive, it would be beneficial to students to experience a week without it. During this time, students would be more focused, attentive, and better internalize information, along with innumerable other benefits.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that you will consider my proposal.
In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether their school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” To provide context concerning this substantive issue, this writer begins by noting that technology has harmful effects. He then asserts the claim that, in his view, the school should not participate.

The writer develops his claim with several reasons, which he supports with sufficient, relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating his understanding of the topic and the texts he has read. The evidence in this piece comes from those texts and from the writer’s experience. The writer organizes his ideas clearly and supports his claim with logical reasoning. In addition, he acknowledges a counterclaim, distinguishes it from his own claim, and acknowledges the limitations this places on his own position. In this case, the writer introduces the counterclaim specifically to anticipate the concerns of the likely audience (other students, parents, teachers, school board members). Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style and objective tone throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from the argument but does not significantly support it.
Proposal to Shut Down Screen

To whom it may concern:

A group of parents, and some teachers, have made a proposal to the school board. They would like the school to participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” A week without any electronics is what parents believe the school needs. Technology is a big contradiction. It is useful with all the tools it has, yet it can be a distraction, or addicting. Our school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week” because of the following issues with technology.

“Based on a representative survey of 2,500 Americans…those who used social media had more close confidants,” says Keith Hampton. Facebook, Twitter, and other social media allow people to connect with each other and have social interactions, but through the web. The web, or a phone, that allows people to be more social is a major issue today. Kids, especially high school students, feel no need to talk to a friend in person. They can just text them. The problem with Facebook, or texting, is that people interact differently than they would in person. Cyberbullying is one of the biggest issues with the web today. People say things on the web that they wouldn’t say to the person’s face. Bullies feel safe when hidden behind a screen. Whether or not the survey of 2,500 people was accurate, it still did not account for the differences in interactions for media and in person. Having no electronics for a week would allow students to see that difference.

Although technology allows students to do research, that research isn’t helping students to do strategic and logical thinking. “What really
makes us intelligent isn’t our ability to find lots of information quickly. It’s our ability to think deeply about that information, “ says Nicholas Carr, author of the book *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*. Brain scientists have researched and found out that deep thinking only happens with a calm mind. “The greater our concentration, the richer our thoughts,” Nicholas Carr says. The internet is a useful search engine, but does not allow students to go deeply into thought. Google allows people to find anything by the click of a button. This isn’t the way students should learn. Nicholas Carr says, “If you’re really interested in developing your mind, you should turn off your computer and your cellphone – and start thinking. Really thinking.”

Technology can be distracting, but most of all it is addictive. Scientists say that using email, texting, or searching the web can change how someone thinks or behaves. “The stimulation [of technology use] provokes excitement – a dopamine squirt – that researchers say can be addictive. In its absence, people feel bored,” says Matt Richtel of the New York Times. Addiction to technology may not compare to the addiction of certain drugs, but being a student who is addicted to something that creates different social interactions, and doesn’t allow deep thought, could be very bad. “In 2008, people consumed three times as much [technology] each day as they did in 1960,” Matt says. This rate has already increased, and a break from it wouldn’t be a bad thing. Researchers worry that constant digital stimulation like this creates attention problems for children with brains that are still developing, who already struggle to set priorities and resist impulses,” Matt says. Students in high school, or even in college, have brains that are still developing. A week off from the technology would allow these students to develop skills, with their growing brains, that could be used instead of electronics.

Our school should start participating in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” It would allow students to see the difference in social interactions of electronics and in person. The week would allow students...
to go into deep thought and understand subjects and ideas that Google cannot. Lastly, technology is addictive and a break is what students need to understand the consequences of it being addictive. By our school doing this national movement, we could change the way school is taught to better help each and every student.

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether or not his school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” This student gives an introduction about technology in a broad and substantive sense as context on the issue and makes a claim that in his view the school should not participate.

The writer reminds the reader of the significance of his claim by pointing out one of the reasons to support that claim ("Cyber bullying is one of the biggest issues with the web today"), then develops the overall claim with several reasons, which he supports with sufficient relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating his understanding of the topic and the texts he has read. The evidence in this piece comes from those texts and from the writer’s experience. The writer organizes his ideas clearly and supports his claim with logical reasoning. In addition, he acknowledges and treats fairly multiple counterclaims, distinguishes them from his own claim, and refutes them with support for his own position, which again includes evidence from the texts. The writer introduces counterclaims specifically to anticipate the concerns, values, and possible biases of the likely audience (other students, parents, teachers, school board members). Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style and objective tone throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from and supports the argument presented, reminding the reader of the significance of the topic and claim to this particular audience (other students, teachers, parents, school board members).