

A Changing Student Body

Many of today's high schools may *look* the same as the high schools of 40 years ago, but their learning environments have changed dramatically. Many classrooms use smart boards instead of chalkboards. Many teachers use Web-based e-books instead of heavy paper textbooks. And many students no longer use notepads and pencils; they use laptops and smartphones. According to data compiled by the research firm Nielsen, 58 percent of Americans between the ages of 13 and 17 owned a smartphone as of July 2012—an increase of more than 60 percent over the previous year.

While the technologies of past generations have not completely disappeared, and the content of what students learn has not necessarily changed, the formats of communication and learning have been altered significantly. One question remains: Will today's parents and educators be able to adapt to new technologies and enable students to use them in the best ways possible?

Because of new technologies, the world has opened up to students at an amazing pace. Instead of having to search for books in a library, students can surf the Internet to find research sources, information about almost any topic, and many more educational aids. New technologies have also changed the way students communicate with one another. Social media and smartphones have become almost essential in the social lives of the modern American student.

So how can educators balance the opportunities of new technologies with the distractions and diversions that they inevitably bring? Should students be allowed to carry their cell phones with them to class? Their tablets? Their laptops?

The answer is yes. Instead of blocking off new technologies, educators should embrace them. According to a nationwide survey, 51 percent of high school students are already bringing their smartphones to school. Educators should take advantage of these tools. Many education-friendly apps and resources boost student learning. By allowing students full access to their handheld devices, teachers can instruct students on proper and polite technology use while enabling them to tap in to powerful resources. There is little difference between a student who is daydreaming or doodling in his notebook and a student who is off-task and fiddling with her phone. By requiring phones to be easily visible, teachers can monitor their appropriate use. We cannot control every aspect of the students' environment; we can only teach them the best learning methods and study habits we know and hope that they become motivated to apply them.

Smartphones can actually increase organization and productivity. Students are becoming accustomed to text-message reminders and apps that help them manage their time and schedules. Ken Halla, a U.S. history teacher, said he was “stunned by how many more kids started doing the homework” after he introduced them to the app Remind101. With this app, students can snap a picture of the day's homework or take a short video from a class lecture for later reference. Smartphones may be tools that extend the hours of learning beyond time in the school building.

Finally, ownership of a smartphone has become a matter of safety and well-being. Students use smartphones not only to communicate with each other but also to communicate with their families and others in cases of emergencies or necessity. Online social engagement is important to the overall emotional development of students today. We simply cannot ask students to be separated from their main mode of communication.

Just as a talented and engaging teacher of 40 years ago inspired students to pay attention to their learning goals, a similar teacher of today encourages students to use technology to enhance their education.

New Technologies Require New Rules

The use of technology in the classroom has increased at an amazing pace in recent years. It is not uncommon to see students using tablets, writing on laptops, and surfing the Internet during class. While these technologies can provide many wonderful learning opportunities, they also can make it difficult for students to focus on the content they must master. Students should not be allowed to use handheld devices like tablets and smartphones in the classroom merely because these technologies exist.

When students are allowed to surf the Internet and to use their smartphones in class, teachers have little to no control over what the students are looking at or learning. According to a study by Harrison Interactive, 27 percent of smartphone users use their devices for educational purposes (explicitly *not* texting or social networking) two to three times per week, indicating that a majority of students use their smartphones only for texting or social networking. Even adults have difficulty staying on task in meetings when their smartphones are only a swipe away. If teachers want their students to use the Internet or other media, they can present the information to the class via a smart board. There is no need for individual students to have access to the Internet.

For many generations, students have thrived without being able to surf the Internet or contact their friends and family during school hours. Technology use only adds to the many distractions that students face, from peer pressure to extracurricular activities. In a school environment, distractions such as loud ringtones and near-constant texting are unnecessary and undesirable.

High school students are simply too young to be granted full leeway with their handheld devices. Students should be required to leave smartphones and other handheld devices in their lockers or at home. That way our schools can be dedicated learning environments instead of places of distraction and constant media bombardment.

Item 10

Selected-Response

What is the central idea of “A Changing Student Body”?

- A. “And many students no longer use notepads and pencils. . . .”
- B. “Instead of blocking off new technologies, educators should embrace them.”
- C. “Smartphones can actually increase organization and productivity.”
- D. “We simply cannot ask students to be separated from their main mode of communication.”

Item 11

Selected-Response

In “New Technologies Require New Rules,” which claim does the author make in the passage and support with valid reasoning and relevant evidence?

- A. Students use handheld devices mainly for texting and social networking.
- B. Teachers must do more to ban the use of handheld devices in the classroom.
- C. Technology is rarely needed for students to do research for their assignments.
- D. Students in high school are too young to properly use the latest technology.

Item 13

WRITING TASK

There is currently an ongoing debate about the use of technology such as smartphones in the classroom.

Think about BOTH sides of the debate. Should smartphones be allowed in the classroom or should schools be smartphone free? Write an **argumentative essay** in your own words supporting either side.

Be sure to use information from BOTH passages in your **argumentative essay**.

Writer’s Checklist

Be sure to:

- Introduce your claim.
- Support your claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, including facts and details, from the passages.
- Acknowledge and address alternate or opposing claims.
- Organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- Identify the passages by title or number when using details or facts directly from the passages.
- Develop your ideas clearly and use your own words, except when quoting directly from the passages.
- Use appropriate and varied transitions to connect your ideas and to clarify the relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Establish and maintain a formal style.
- Provide a conclusion that supports the argument presented.
- Check your work for correct usage, grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

Now write your argumentative essay on your answer document. Refer to the Writer’s Checklist as you write and proofread your essay.

Blank writing area with horizontal lines for the student to write their argumentative essay.

Seven-Point, Two-Trait Rubric

Trait 1 for Argumentative Genre

Writing Trait	Points	Criteria
<p>Idea Development, Organization, and Coherence</p> <p>This trait examines the writer’s ability to effectively establish a claim as well as to address counterclaims, to support the claim with evidence from the text(s) read, and to elaborate on the claim with examples, illustrations, facts, and other details. The writer must integrate the information from the text(s) into his/her own words and arrange the ideas and supporting evidence in order to create cohesion for an argument essay.</p>	4	<p><i>The student’s response is a well-developed argument that develops and supports claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence based on text as a stimulus.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively introduces claim(s), acknowledges and counters opposing claim(s), and engages the audience • Uses an organizational strategy to establish clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaim(s), reasons, and relevant evidence • Uses specific and well-chosen facts, details, definitions, examples, and/or other information from sources to develop claim(s) and counterclaim(s) fully and fairly and to point out strengths and limitations of both while anticipating the audience’s knowledge and concerns • Uses words, phrases, and clauses that effectively connect the major sections of the text and clarify relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaim(s) • Uses and maintains a formal style and objective tone that is appropriate for task, purpose, and audience • Provides a strong concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented
	3	<p><i>The student’s response is a complete argument that relates and supports claims with some evidence based on text as a stimulus.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly introduces claim(s) and attempts to acknowledge and counter opposing claim(s) • Uses an organizational strategy to present claim(s), reasons, and evidence • Uses multiple pieces of relevant information from sources adequately to develop claim(s) and counterclaim(s) and to clarify relationships between claim(s), reasons, evidence, and counterclaim(s) while attempting to attend to the audience’s knowledge or concerns • Uses words and/or phrases to connect ideas and show relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence • Uses an appropriate tone and style fairly consistently for task, purpose, and audience • Provides a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented
	2	<p><i>The student’s response is an incomplete or oversimplified argument that partially supports claims with loosely related evidence.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to introduce claim(s), but claim(s) may be unclear; makes reference to opposing claim(s) • Attempts to use an organizational structure, which may be formulaic • Develops, sometimes unevenly, reasons and/or evidence to support claim(s) and present opposing claim(s), but shows little awareness of the audience’s knowledge or concerns • Attempts to use words and/or phrases to connect claim(s), counterclaim(s), reasons, and evidence, but cohesion is inconsistent or weak • Attempts to use an appropriate tone and style are not consistently appropriate for task, purpose, and audience • Provides a weak concluding statement or section that may not follow the argument presented
	1	<p><i>The student’s response is a weak attempt to write an argument and does not support claims with adequate evidence.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not introduce claim(s), or the claim(s) must be inferred; does not reference or acknowledge opposing claim(s) • May be too brief to demonstrate an organizational structure, or no structure is evident • Provides minimal information to develop the claim(s), little or none of which is from sources, and fails to attend to the audience’s knowledge or concerns • Makes no attempt to use words and/or phrases to connect claim(s) and reasons, reasons and evidence, and claim(s) and counterclaim(s) • Uses a style and tone that are inappropriate and/or ineffective • Provides a minimal or no concluding statement or section
	0	<p><i>The student will receive a condition code for various reasons:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blank • Copied • Too Limited to Score/Illegible/Incomprehensible • Non-English/Foreign Language • Off Topic/Off Task/Offensive

Seven-Point, Two-Trait Rubric

Trait 2 for Argumentative Genre

Writing Trait	Points	Criteria
Language Usage and Conventions <i>This trait examines the writer's ability to demonstrate control of sentence formation, usage, and mechanics as embodied in the grade-level expectations of the language standards.</i>	3	<i>The student's response demonstrates full command of language usage and conventions.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses clear and complete sentence structure, with appropriate range and variety • Makes an attempt to attribute paraphrases and direct quotations to their sources via in-text or parenthetical citations • Has no errors in usage and/or conventions that interfere with meaning*
	2	<i>The student's response demonstrates partial command of language usage and conventions.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses complete sentences, with some variety • Attributes paraphrases and direct quotations inconsistently to their sources via in-text or parenthetical citations • Has minor errors in usage and/or conventions with no significant effect on meaning*
	1	<i>The student's response demonstrates weak command of language usage and conventions.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has fragments, run-ons, and/or other sentence structure errors • Makes little, if any, attempt to attribute paraphrases and direct quotations to their sources • Has frequent errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning*
	0	<i>The student will receive a condition code for various reasons:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blank • Copied • Too Limited to Score/Illegible/Incomprehensible • Non-English/Foreign Language • Off Topic/Off Task/Offensive

*Students are responsible for language conventions learned in their current grade as well as in prior grades. Refer to the language skills for each grade to determine the grade-level expectations for grammar, syntax, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Also refer to the "Language Progressive Skills, by Grade" chart in the Appendix for those standards that need continued attention beyond the grade in which they were introduced.