UNIT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Grade 11, Unit 5

Essay: Digital Natives

For the first piece of your Unit Accomplishments, you will write an argument paper in which you develop a claim about current culture as it has been influenced by digital connectivity. In the unit, you will confront several arguments about the effects of digital technology on our culture, particularly its influence on our minds and our ability to connect to one another. From those arguments and your own experience, you will develop your own vision of the most productive ways for people to relate to the technology in their lives.

In 1,000 words or fewer, you will make an evidence-based argument to persuade your reader that you have the most useful, productive way to understand our relationship to technology. What kind of human has the digital era created, and how are people who grew up digitally connected differently than those who began connecting later in life?

First, you will need an introduction that defines the concepts you wish to debate in your essay. Your introduction will also contain a thesis, a concise, specific, challenging statement of the purpose—the central argument—of an essay. In this essay, the thesis is your concise, specific, challenging sentence that defines the most productive ways for contemporary humans to think about the roles that technology has played in shaping our culture and identity.

Each of your body paragraphs will break off a piece of that overall argument and draw claims from key evidence that you’ve chosen. Be sure that your reader can follow a clear line of valid reasoning that connects your evidence to your claims, and make sure your claims are precise. Each body paragraph should also connect clearly to the one before it and the one after it with clear relationships between the claims you’re making. One way to make these clear connections is to have the first sentence—the topic sentence—of each body paragraph make a clear statement of the purpose of the body paragraph. If those topic sentences are all clearly related to the thesis and to each other, your essay will be more cohesive. You also need to consider what kind of relationship your reader might have with technology so you can make sure your essay is persuasive and relevant to many different kinds of readers from different backgrounds.

In the conclusion, you’ll emphasize your central argument. Your first attempt at writing a good conclusion is a great time to learn if your argument is truly interesting and
persuasive. If you can make thoughtful, unobvious claims in the conclusion, especially claims that a reader wouldn’t understand or agree with without having read the rest of the paper, then you know your paper truly made an argument. If you find yourself with nothing to say in the conclusion, or only vague general statements that nobody could really disagree with, you need to go back and revise your analysis in your body paragraphs.

A great essay makes honest points based on clear evidence. It acknowledges the strength of its arguments and bases them on facts. It never twists evidence to fit its points. Instead, it follows the evidence to the truth. Be sure that your essay uses evidence from at least three different sources, and provide properly formatted citations of those sources at the end.