

## *Argument and Advocacy: Researching Debatable Issues*

### Grade 5: Nonfiction, Unit 3

Readers, today you will read three texts about teens using social media. Read text 1, then answer questions 1 and 2 on a separate sheet of paper. Then read the rest and finish up.

<p>1. Summarize text 1, “Social Media May be Harmful to Health.”</p> <p>When summarizing, remember to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• write about more than one main idea</li> <li>• include carefully selected details to support each main idea</li> <li>• keep your summary brief</li> <li>• write about the ideas in the text, not your own opinions.</li> </ul> <p><i>Main Idea(s) and Supporting Details/Summary</i></p>	<p>2. Read lines 10–11 from text 1, “Social Media May be Harmful to Health.”</p> <p>In 2015, the AAP found that children spend an average of seven hours a day on entertainment media.</p> <p>Why is this passage important to the text?</p> <p>When writing about how one part of the text fits with another, remember to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain how the part in question fits into the whole structure of the text and with the main ideas</li> <li>• use academic language: <i>This part explains/ describes/supports/ introduces ...</i></li> <li>• include evidence or details from the text to support your explanation</li> <li>• write just a few sentences.</li> </ul> <p><i>Analyzing Parts of a Text in Relation to the Whole</i></p>
<p>3. What is the author’s point of view in text 3, “All 13-Year-Olds Should Get to Have Accounts on Social Media Sites!”? How does your knowledge of the point of view help you think about the text’s content?</p> <p>When analyzing point of view, remember to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• name who the author is, as well as his role/ age or the group he belongs to</li> <li>• discuss how the author’s points are influenced by the above</li> <li>• write about why the narrator probably thinks or feels the way he does.</li> </ul> <p><i>Analyzing Perspective</i></p>	<p>4. Based on this packet of texts, decide whether thirteen-year-olds should be allowed to have accounts on sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others. Imagine you are going to write a letter to a parent of a thirteen-year-old in order to convince the parent that your position makes the most sense. Map out the plan for your persuasive letter to the parent, making sure you reference the texts. (<u>You do not need to write the actual letter, just write your plan.</u>)</p> <p>When synthesizing among texts, remember to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pull together relevant and important information from different texts (or different parts of a longer text)</li> <li>• organize that information.</li> </ul> <p><i>Cross Text(s) Synthesis</i></p>

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<p>1. Summarize text 1, "Social Media May be Harmful to Health."</p>	<p>2. Read lines 10–11 from text 1, "Social Media May be Harmful to Health."</p> <p>In 2015, the AAP found that children spend an average of seven hours a day on entertainment media.</p> <p>Why is this passage important to the text?</p>
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## Social Media May Be Harmful to Health

by Jordan Smith

Teens love social media. They love to connect with their friends. They love sites like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. More than half of American teens visit sites like these every day. Some teens feel they *need* to go online. Thirteen-year-old Gia, for example, says, “I would rather not eat for a week than get my phone taken away.”

But some researchers are concerned. They think that social media may harm kids’ health. Kids who are on social media too much may not be active enough. When you are staring at a screen, you are not getting exercise. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is a group of children’s doctors. In 2015, the AAP found that children spend an average of seven hours a day on entertainment media. This includes computers, phones, and tablets. Too much screen time can also be harmful in other ways. It can lead to sleep problems, attention problems, and trouble in school.

Researchers have also learned that using social media may hurt kids’ social skills. Children who spend a lot of time staring at screens have less time to interact face-to-face with people. A Pew Research Center study confirmed this. It found that only 25% of teens spend time every day with friends outside of school. This means that kids may be worse at figuring out how other people are feeling. They don’t see people’s expressions or gestures. They don’t hear their voices. They miss all of those clues about how people are feeling. Researchers at the University of California confirmed this. They studied two groups of sixth graders from the same school. One group had access to electronic devices for five days. One group did not. The sixth graders who did not were better at figuring out how people were feeling.

Social media can also make it easier to be mean and to bully. It is easier to post a mean comment than to say it to someone’s face. Hurtful words can be posted quickly. Everyone can see them. It’s impossible to take them back. Social media use can put kids at risk of depression and cyberbullying.

Teens clearly love social media. They spend almost as much of their lives online as they do offline. But parents need to think about health concerns before they let their teens use social media.

*Jordan Smith is a fitness and health coach.*

## A New Documentary Shows What Teens Do On Social Media

Social media can have many benefits to teens. It can also be harmful. 1  
 CNN made a special report about how kids use social media. It is  
 called *#Being13: Inside the Secret World of Teens*.

More than 200 eighth graders took part in the study. They answered 5  
 surveys about how they used social media. Their parents answered similar  
 surveys about how their kids used social media. Then teens went online. An  
 app tracked what they actually did. Researchers found that the more teens  
 look at social media, “the more distressed they can become.”

The researchers found that many teens “lurked” on social media. 10  
 Lurking means that they read what others posted but didn’t post anything  
 themselves. On weekends, more than one third of the teens checked  
 social media at least 25 times a day without posting anything. Some were  
 checking to see if the posts they did make got any likes or comments.  
 Others saw pictures of their friends doing things without them. Many said 15  
 those pictures made them feel left out.

The study also found that social media can help teens. It gives them a 20  
 way to connect. One researcher, Dr. Marion Underwood, says that social  
 media is “a way for teens to see what people are doing. It’s a way for them  
 to feel affirmed, supported, lifted up. Young people use social media to  
 exercise positive leadership all the time.” 20

Other research supports this idea. Common Sense Media did a survey 25  
 in 2012. It found that 20% of teens said that social media made them  
 feel more confident. And half of the teens said social media made their  
 friendships better. The Pew Research Center also confirms this. More than  
 half the teens they surveyed had made a new friend online. 25

But social media doesn’t just let kids connect to friends. It can also help  
 kids learn. Kids can join virtual study groups with others from around the  
 globe. Students can work together on group projects. They can talk with  
 experts.

Some kids have even used social media to fight for change. When 30  
 Isadora Faber was 13-years-old, she was a student in Brazil. Her school was  
 in disrepair. The bathrooms had broken doors and dangerous electrical  
 wires. She showed photos of these problems on her Facebook page. The

problems were fixed. She continues to post about problems at the school. By early 2016, her page had more than half a million likes. Isadora has inspired other students to take action. Others have made their own Facebook pages to help raise awareness of problems in Brazil's public schools. 35

Isadora's story is not unique. Many other teens are making a difference through social media. There is even an award for teen activists who use social media. It is called The Social Media Shorty Award for Best Teen Activism. 40

Parents have many concerns about social media. Some feel that 13 is too young to have accounts on sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Parents are concerned about their kids' safety online. They worry about advertising aimed at their kids. They are concerned that social media is simply too distracting. But social media is here to stay. There are many benefits to kids using social media. But they need to use it wisely. Parents can help by teaching their teens how to avoid certain problems. They should set rules for kids to follow and monitor their teens' social media use. 45

*article from a local newspaper*

## All 13-Year-Olds Should Get to Have Accounts on Social Media Sites!

I'm making this speech because all kids should be able to have social media accounts. Some kids, like me, are not allowed to have accounts on these sites. That's not fair. All of the adults in the world are looking at new photos their friends post and reading about all the new things their friends are doing. It's not fair that kids can't do that. We have friends, too, and we would like to know what they are doing. Just because we're kids doesn't mean that we don't need to keep in touch with our friends. Going on social media lets us be more connected with our friends. Parents should let their kids be on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and any other sites we want.

Sometimes we make friends with people we don't get to see a lot. Social media could help us to stay in touch with those friends. For example, last summer I went to visit my grandparents and I made a new friend, Rose. I never get to see her because she lives far away. If I was allowed to go on social media, I could see photos and stay in touch with her.

Even kids who don't really talk that much in class can feel included on social media. You can look at someone's picture and like it. You don't have to say anything. Or you can ask a question about a post someone made. Sometimes it is easier to ask a question online than it is to ask a question in person. But if you are not allowed to go on social media, like me, you feel totally left out.

Social media can also help teens do better in school. For example, it can help you with homework. If you have a question about your homework, you can post the question. Other people in your class can respond and help you. Or you can have a conversation about something you are learning. You can join groups or follow people who are interested in the same things you are and can learn more from them. Social media can help kids do well in school.

Some people say that kids are mean when they go on social media. Only one person I know has been mean online and everyone else told him to stop. Some people even unfriended him.

Parents, you should let your teens have accounts to different social media sites as soon as they turn 13 and I think even earlier than that.

*Jess, age 13*