

Chapter 7. Reading, Writing, and Technology

Communication technologies have been moving at an incredibly fast pace for decades now and show no signs of slowing down. For years, email has been seen as passé in the face of newer technologies such as Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat, which undoubtedly will be quickly replaced by other technologies—maybe even by the time you are reading this! Although you have likely heard people blame technology for decreasing literacy abilities, research shows that people are reading and writing more than ever before. A great deal of that writing may be happening online and, perhaps, in the form of text-messages. The reading may occur on Instagram or in eBooks rather than in hard-covered books. But, does that matter? Does that not “count?” Certainly what we read and write, as well as how we read and write, are affected by the technologies we use to do so. The selections in this chapter explore those relationships.

As you read the essays in this chapter, avoid the temptation to see the authors of these pieces as *either for or against* technology (see Chapter 4 for more on the problems with binary thinking). Instead, think about these authors as inquiring into technology. More often than not, to locate these authors as staunchly opposed to or in support of technology is to oversimplify their positions and the point of their pieces.

Prior to Reading Each Selection in This Chapter

Look at the questions after each reading. What are you expected to do after reading this selection? In other words, what are your purposes for reading? Although you will be asked to apply particular reading strategies in order to complete some of the tasks, others will leave the choice of strategy up to you. Refer to the descriptions of the reading strategies in Chapter 2 and decide which will be most useful in helping you accomplish those tasks. Remember that you will be reading each selection multiple times and, therefore, will have additional opportunities to apply different reading strategies.

Readings

The Book Stops Here

By Daniel H. Pink

This essay explores the origins of Wikipedia, as well as early critiques of the enormous online encyclopedia. Pink addresses how Wikipedia grew so quickly and how, in the process, it redefined what encyclopedias are and how they function.



You will be required to purchase a subscription after you visit *Wired* a certain number of times. Keep this in mind as you are working with this reading.

Visit <https://www.wired.com/2005/03/wiki/>

Questions about “The Book Stops Here”

Reading and Writing to Comprehend

1. **Rhetorically read and annotate.** In “The Book Stops Here,” Pink writes, “Wikipedia represents a belief in the supremacy of reason and the goodness of others.” What does he mean? Read and annotate Pink’s piece with specific attention to his argument and the types of evidence he uses to make his argument (see Chapter 2 for help with rhetorical reading).
2. **Summarize.** Looking back at your annotations, complete a paragraph-long summary of Pink’s argument and the evidence he uses to make it.

Reading and Writing to Respond

3. **Compose.** Using your summary and annotations (see questions 1 and 2), write an intellectual response to Pink. Where do you stand on these issues? (See Chapter 3 for help with writing intellectual responses.)

Reading and Writing to Apply and Reflect

4. **Apply and Reflect.** Pink’s article was written more than ten years ago, which

raises questions about its relevance today. Spend time browsing Wikipedia with Pink’s argument or one of his claims in mind. To what extent does what you find on Wikipedia support what Pink has to say? To what extent does today’s Wikipedia challenge Pink’s argument and claims?

5. **Multimodal Option.** Pink’s article was written more than ten years ago, which raises questions about its relevance today. Spend time browsing Wikipedia with Pink’s argument or one of his claims in mind. To what extent does what you find on Wikipedia support what Pink has to say? To what extent does today’s Wikipedia challenge Pink’s argument and claims? Develop a multimodal project that indicates your answers to these questions.

Scan this Book

By Kevin Kelly

This essay explores the digitization of books. Kelly describes how libraries and corporations around the world are digitizing printed books thereby allowing readers to read books online and to move seamlessly from one online book to another through links and tags. Kelly considers what this technology means for readers, reading, copyright law, and libraries.

The New York Times Magazine

Scan This Book!

You will be required to purchase a subscription after you visit *The New York Times Magazine* a certain number of times. Keep this in mind as you are working with this reading.

Visit <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/14/magazine/14publishing.html>

Questions about “Scan this Book”

Reading and Writing to Comprehend

1. **Rhetorically read and annotate.** In “Scan This Book!,” Kelly writes, “Indeed, the only way for books to retain their waning authority in our culture is to wire their texts into the universal library.” What does Kelly mean? Why does he use the term “waning?” Read and annotate his piece using one of the reading strat-

egies that you believe will help you understand this quote and its importance to his argument.

2. **Summarize.** Using your annotations in response to question 1, summarize Kelly’s argument.
3. **Consider.** Kelly spends a lot of time talking about copyright in this piece. How and why does this matter to his argument?

Reading and Writing to Respond

4. **Compose.** Using your annotations and your answers to questions 1 through 3, write an intellectual response to address Kelly’s argument (see Chapter 3 for help with intellectual responses).

Reading and Writing to Apply and Reflect

5. **Reread and compose.** Reread Kelly’s text twice in order to apply the Believing/Doubting Game reading strategy. Referring to your annotations from these readings, write a letter to a specific audience of your choice that supports (i.e. “believes”) Kelly’s argument. You may choose to write to a friend, a parent, or a professor, for example (see Chapter 2 for help with the Believing/Doubting Game strategy).
6. **Compose.** Referring to your annotations indicating your “doubts,” write a letter to the author, Kelly, explaining these doubts. Now, look back at your two letters, as well as your intellectual response if you completed one. How do they compare? *So what?*

A Head for Detail

By Clive Thompson

This essay tells the story of seventy-two-year-old computer scientist Gordon Bell whose goal is to never forget anything. With the help of technology, including tiny cameras and audio


 The logo for Fast Company, featuring the words "FAST COMPANY" in a bold, white, serif font against a black rectangular background.

recorders, Bell is conducting an experiment in “lifelogging” by capturing every aspect of his day-to-day existence. Bell’s lifelogging experiment allows Thompson to raise questions about the role of human memory in a world where technology can remember for you.

Visit <https://www.fastcompany.com/58044/head-detail>

Questions about “A Head for Detail”

Reading and Writing to Comprehend

1. **Choose.** In this piece, Thompson describes Gordon Bell’s experiment in lifelogging. Choose a reading strategy that you believe will help you understand what is involved in lifelogging.
2. **Consider.** As Thompson describes Bell’s experiment, there are moments where Thompson’s feelings about and attitude toward the experiment emerge, feelings and attitudes that likely affect the reader. Rhetorically read Thompson’s piece with an eye toward the kinds of appeals he makes to readers (see Chapter 2 for help with rhetorical reading). What does Thompson want readers to think? How do you know?
3. **Read and reannotate.** Thompson not only develops his position on lifelogging, but he includes what memory experts and others in related fields have to say about similar experiments. Reread and re-annotate Thompson’s piece applying a reading strategy that allows you to write a brief summary of the positions he describes.

Reading and Writing to Respond

4. **Consider.** Using the summary you developed for question 3, write an intellectual response to Thompson’s and the others’ positions. Where do you stand on these issues? (see Chapter 3 for help with writing intellectual responses)

Reading and Writing to Apply and Reflect

5. **Reflect** on Thompson’s statement toward the end of his piece: “Whatever it all means, Bell will likely be the first person on the planet to find out.” What do

you think the implications of “it all” is? Why do you think Thompson doesn’t define or more precisely explain what he means by “it all?”

Escape the Echo Chamber

By C.Thi Nguyen

Focusing on echo chambers and epistemic bubbles, this essay explores how the Internet has made it especially easy for like-minded people to engage only with each other and circulate ideas and perspectives among themselves with which they all already agree. The essay also address why it is so hard to escape this phenomenon.

The logo for 'aeon' is written in a dark blue, serif font. The letters are lowercase, with the 'a' and 'e' being slightly larger than the 'o' and 'n'. The 'o' is a simple circle, and the 'n' has a small serif at the bottom.

Visit <https://aeon.co/essays/why-its-as-hard-to-escape-an-echo-chamber-as-it-is-to-flee-a-cult>.

Questions about “Escape the Echo Chamber”

Reading and Writing to Comprehend

1. **Consider.** In “Escape the Echo Chamber,” Nguyen writes, “All it takes to enter an echo chamber is a momentary lapse of intellectual vigilance.” What does he mean?
2. **Rhetorically read and annotate** Nguyen’s piece with specific attention to his argument and the types of evidence he uses to make his argument (see Chapter 2 for help with rhetorical reading).
3. **Summarize.** Looking back at your annotations, complete a paragraph-long summary of Nguyen’s argument and the evidence he uses to make it.

Reading and Writing to Respond

4. **Consider.** Using your annotations and summary, write from a position you occupy—whether that of a student, a parent, an American, an activist— and explore the implications of Nguyen’s argument for you and others that occupy that position (see Chapter 3 for help with intellectual responses).

5. **Multimodal Option.** Using your annotations and summary, and responding from a position you occupy—whether that of a student, a parent, an American, an activist— develop a response to Nguyen that brings in more than one mode to explore the implications of his argument for you and others that occupy that position.

Reading and Writing to Apply and Reflect

6. **Reread and apply.** Reread Nguyen’s piece using a reading strategy that helps you understand the distinction and importance of the distinction between epistemic bubbles and echo chambers. Apply these terms to an event (political or otherwise), phenomenon, or a trend. How helpful are these terms in thinking about your subject? To what extent does the distinction between echo chambers and epistemic bubbles (as Nguyen describes it) matter.

The Pace of Modern Life

Anonymous

This comic is comprised of a series of quotations dating back to the 1800s on the subject of modern life. Since the term “modern” itself is relative, this comic allows readers to imagine connections among different periods in history.

Published by xkcd.com.

Visit <https://xkcd.com/1227/>

The screenshot shows the xkcd website interface. At the top left is a navigation menu with links: ARCHIVE, WHAT IF?, BLAG, STORE, and ABOUT. The xkcd logo is in the top center, with the tagline 'A WEBCOMIC OF ROMANCE, SARCASM, MATH, AND LANGUAGE.' Below the logo is a promotional message: 'THERE ARE FOUR NEW SHIRTS IN THE XKCD STORE, ALONG WITH POSTERS AND LOTS OF OTHER STUFF!'. The main content area is titled 'THE PACE OF MODERN LIFE' and features navigation buttons: '<', '< PREV', 'RANDOM', 'NEXT >', and '>'. The comic text is presented in two panels. The first panel, dated 1871, reads: 'THE ART OF LETTER-WRITING IS FAST DYING OUT. WHEN A LETTER COST NINE PENCE, IT SEEMED BUT FAIR TO TRY TO MAKE IT WORTH NINE PENCE. NOW, HOWEVER, WE THINK WE ARE TOO BUSY FOR SUCH OLD-FASHIONED CORRESPONDENCE. WE FIRE OFF A MULTITUDE OF RAPID AND SHORT NOTES, INSTEAD OF SITTING DOWN TO HAVE A GOOD TALK OVER A REAL SHEET OF PAPER.' The second panel, dated 1884, reads: 'IT IS, UNFORTUNATELY, ONE OF THE CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN BUSINESS TO BE ALWAYS IN A HURRY. IN OLDER TIMES IT WAS DIFFERENT.'

THE ART OF LETTER-WRITING IS FAST DYING OUT. WHEN A LETTER COST NINE PENCE, IT SEEMED BUT FAIR TO TRY TO MAKE IT WORTH NINE PENCE ... NOW, HOWEVER, WE THINK WE ARE TOO BUSY FOR SUCH OLD-FASHIONED CORRESPONDENCE. WE FIRE OFF A MULTITUDE OF RAPID AND SHORT NOTES, INSTEAD OF SITTING DOWN TO HAVE A GOOD TALK OVER A REAL SHEET OF PAPER.

THE SUNDAY MAGAZINE

1871

IT IS, UNFORTUNATELY, ONE OF THE CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN BUSINESS TO BE ALWAYS IN A HURRY. IN OLDEN TIMES IT WAS DIFFERENT.

THE MEDICAL RECORD

1884

WITH THE ADVENT OF CHEAP NEWSPAPERS AND SUPERIOR MEANS OF LOCOMOTION ... THE DREAMY QUIET OLD DAYS ARE OVER ... FOR MEN NOW LIVE THINK AND WORK AT EXPRESS SPEED. THEY HAVE THEIR *MERCURY* OR *POST* LAID ON THEIR BREAKFAST TABLE IN THE EARLY MORNING, AND IF THEY ARE TOO HURRIED TO SNATCH FROM IT THE NEWS DURING THAT MEAL, THEY CARRY IT OFF, TO BE SULKILY READ AS THEY TRAVEL ... LEAVING THEM NO TIME TO TALK WITH THE FRIEND WHO MAY SHARE THE COMPARTMENT WITH THEM ... THE HURRY AND BUSTLE OF MODERN LIFE ... LACKS THE QUIET AND REPOSE OF THE PERIOD WHEN OUR FOREFATHERS, THE DAY'S WORK DONE, TOOK THEIR EASE ...

*WILLIAM SMITH, MORLEY:
ANCIENT AND MODERN*

1886

CONVERSATION IS SAID TO BE A LOST ART ... GOOD TALK PRESUPPOSES LEISURE, BOTH FOR PREPARATION AND ENJOYMENT. **THE AGE OF LEISURE IS DEAD, AND THE ART OF CONVERSATION IS DYING.**

FRANK LESLIE'S POPULAR MONTHLY, VOLUME 29

1890

INTELLECTUAL LAZINESS AND THE HURRY OF THE AGE HAVE PRODUCED **A CRAVING FOR LITERARY NIPS.** THE TORPID BRAIN ... HAS GROWN TOO WEAK FOR SUSTAINED THOUGHT.

THERE NEVER WAS AN AGE IN WHICH SO MANY PEOPLE WERE ABLE TO WRITE BADLY.

ISRAEL ZANGWILL, THE BACHELORS' CLUB

1891

THE ART OF PURE LINE ENGRAVING IS DYING OUT. WE LIVE AT TOO FAST A RATE TO ALLOW FOR THE PREPARATION OF SUCH PLATES AS OUR FATHERS APPRECIATED. IF A PICTURE CATCHES THE PUBLIC FANCY, THE PUBLIC MUST HAVE AN ETCHED OR A PHOTOGRAVURED COPY OF IT WITHIN A MONTH OR TWO OF ITS APPEARANCE, THE DAYS WHEN ENGRAVERS WERE WONT TO SPEND TWO OR THREE YEARS OVER A SINGLE PLATE ARE FOR EVER GONE.

JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF JAMAICA, VOLUME 1

1892

SO MUCH IS EXHIBITED TO THE EYE THAT **NOTHING IS LEFT TO THE IMAGINATION.** IT SOMETIMES SEEMS ALMOST POSSIBLE THAT THE MODERN WORLD MIGHT BE CHOKED BY ITS OWN RICHES, **AND HUMAN FACULTY DWINDLE AWAY AMID THE MILLION INVENTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED TO RENDER ITS EXERCISE UNNECESSARY.**

THE ARTICLES IN THE *QUARTERLIES* EXTEND TO THIRTY OR MORE PAGES, BUT **THIRTY PAGES IS NOW TOO MUCH**. SO WE WITNESS A FURTHER CONDENSING PROCESS AND, WE HAVE THE *FORTNIGHTLY* AND THE *CONTEMPORARY* WHICH REDUCE THIRTY PAGES TO **FIFTEEN PAGES** SO THAT YOU MAY READ A LARGER NUMBER OF ARTICLES IN A SHORTER TIME AND IN A SHORTER FORM. AS IF THIS LAST CONDENSING PROCESS WERE NOT ENOUGH THE CONDENSED ARTICLES OF THESE PERIODICALS ARE **FURTHER CONDENSED** BY THE DAILY PAPERS, WHICH WILL GIVE YOU A **SUMMARY OF THE SUMMARY** OF ALL THAT HAS BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT EVERYTHING.

THOSE WHO ARE DIPPING INTO SO MANY SUBJECTS AND GATHERING INFORMATION IN A SUMMARY AND SUPERFICIAL FORM LOSE THE HABIT OF SETTLING DOWN TO GREAT WORKS.

EPHEMERAL LITERATURE IS DRIVING OUT THE GREAT CLASSICS OF THE PRESENT AND THE PAST ... **HURRIED READING CAN NEVER BE GOOD READING.**

G. J. GOSCHEN, *FIRST ANNUAL ADDRESS
TO THE STUDENTS, TOYNBEE HALL, LONDON*

1894

THE EXISTENCE OF **MENTAL AND NERVOUS DEGENERATION AMONG A GROWING CLASS OF PEOPLE**, ESPECIALLY IN LARGE CITIES, IS AN OBVIOUS PHENOMENON ... THE MANIA FOR STIMULANTS ... DISEASES OF THE MIND ARE ALMOST AS NUMEROUS AS THE DISEASES OF THE BODY ... THIS INTELLECTUAL CONDITION IS CHARACTERIZED BY A **BRAIN INCAPABLE OF NORMAL WORKING ... IN A LARGE MEASURE DUE TO THE HURRY AND EXCITEMENT OF MODERN LIFE**, WITH ITS FACILITIES FOR RAPID LOCOMOTION AND ALMOST INSTANTANEOUS COMMUNICATION BETWEEN REMOTE POINTS OF THE GLOBE ...

THE CHURCHMAN, VOLUME 71

1895

IF WE TEACH THE CHILDREN HOW TO PLAY AND ENCOURAGE THEM IN THEIR SPORTS ... **INSTEAD OF SHUTTING THEM IN BADLY VENTILATED SCHOOLROOMS**, THE NEXT GENERATION WILL BE MORE JOYOUS AND WILL BE HEALTHIER THAN THE PRESENT ONE.

PUBLIC OPINION: A COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY OF THE PRESS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, VOLUME 18

1895

THE CAUSE OF THE ... INCREASE IN NERVOUS DISEASE IS **INCREASED DEMAND MADE BY THE CONDITIONS OF MODERN LIFE UPON THE BRAIN**. EVERYTHING IS DONE IN A HURRY. WE TALK ACROSS A CONTINENT, TELEGRAPH ACROSS AN OCEAN, TAKE A TRIP TO CHICAGO FOR AN HOUR'S TALK ... WE TAKE EVEN OUR PLEASURES SADLY AND MAKE A TASK OF OUR PLAY ... WHAT WONDER IF THE PRESSURE IS ALMOST MORE THAN OUR NERVES CAN BEAR.

G. SHRADY (FROM P. C. KNAPP)
"ARE NERVOUS DISEASES INCREASING?" *MEDICAL RECORD*

1896

THE MANAGERS OF SENSATIONAL NEWSPAPERS ... DO NOT TRY TO EDUCATE THEIR READERS AND MAKE THEM BETTER, BUT TEND TO CREATE PERVERTED TASTES AND DEVELOP VICIOUS TENDENCIES. THE OWNERS OF THESE PAPERS SEEM TO HAVE BUT ONE PURPOSE, AND THAT IS TO INCREASE THEIR CIRCULATION.

MEDICAL BRIEF, VOLUME 26

1898

TO TAKE SUFFICIENT TIME FOR OUR MEALS SEEMS FREQUENTLY IMPOSSIBLE ON ACCOUNT OF THE DEMANDS ON OUR TIME MADE BY OUR BUSINESS ... WE ACT ON THE APPARENT BELIEF THAT ALL OF OUR BUSINESS IS SO PRESSING THAT WE MUST JUMP ON THE QUICKEST CAR HOME, EAT OUR DINNER IN THE MOST HURRIED WAY, MAKE THE CLOSEST CONNECTION FOR A CAR RETURNING ...

LOUIS JOHN RETTGER,
STUDIES IN ADVANCED PHYSIOLOGY

1898

IN THESE DAYS OF INCREASING RAPID ARTIFICIAL LOCOMOTION, MAY I BE PERMITTED TO SAY A WORD IN FAVOUR OF A VERY WORTHY AND VALUABLE OLD FRIEND OF MINE, MR. LONG WALK?

I AM AFRAID THAT THIS GOOD GENTLEMAN IS IN DANGER OF GETTING NEGLECTED, IF NOT FORGOTTEN. WE LIVE IN DAYS OF WATER TRIPS AND LAND TRIPS, EXCURSIONS BY SEA, ROAD AND RAIL—BICYCLES AND TRICYCLES, TRAM CARS AND MOTOR CARS ... BUT IN MY HUMBLE OPINION, GOOD HONEST WALKING EXERCISE FOR HEALTH BEATS ALL OTHER KINDS OF LOCOMOTION INTO A COCKED HAT.

T. THATCHER, "A PLEA FOR A LONG WALK",
THE PUBLISHERS' CIRCULAR

1902

THE ART OF CONVERSATION IS ALMOST A LOST ONE. PEOPLE TALK AS THEY RIDE BICYCLES—AT A RUSH—WITHOUT PAUSING TO CONSIDER THEIR SURROUNDINGS ... WHAT HAS BEEN GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD AS CULTURED SOCIETY IS RAPIDLY DETERIORATING INTO BASENESS AND VOLUNTARY IGNORANCE. THE PROFESSION OF LETTERS IS SO LITTLE UNDERSTOOD, AND SO FAR FROM BEING SERIOUSLY APPRECIATED, THAT ... NEWSPAPERS ARE FULL, NOT OF THOUGHTFUL HONESTLY EXPRESSED PUBLIC OPINION ON THE AFFAIRS OF THE

NATION, BUT OF VAPID PERSONALITIES INTERESTING TO NONE SAVE GOSSIPS AND BUSY BODIES.

MARIE CORELLI,
FREE OPINIONS, FREELY EXPRESSED

1905

THERE IS A GREAT TENDENCY AMONG THE CHILDREN OF TODAY TO REBEL AGAINST RESTRAINT, NOT ONLY THAT PLACED UPON THEM BY THE WILL OF THE PARENT, BUT AGAINST ANY RESTRAINT OR LIMITATION OF WHAT THEY CONSIDER THEIR RIGHTS ... THIS FACT HAS FILLED WELL MINDED PEOPLE WITH GREAT APPREHENSIONS FOR THE FUTURE.

REV. HENRY HUSSMANN,
THE AUTHORITY OF PARENTS

1906

OUR MODERN FAMILY GATHERING, SILENT AROUND THE FIRE, EACH INDIVIDUAL WITH HIS HEAD BURIED IN HIS FAVOURITE MAGAZINE, IS THE SOMEWHAT NATURAL OUTCOME OF THE BANISHMENT OF COLLOQUY FROM THE SCHOOL ...

THE JOURNAL OF EDUCATION, VOLUME 29

1907

PLAYS IN THEATRES AT THE PRESENT TIME PRESENT SPECTACLES AND DEAL OPENLY WITH SITUATIONS WHICH NO PERSON WOULD HAVE DARED TO MENTION IN GENERAL SOCIETY FORTY YEARS AGO ... THE CURRENT REPRESENTATIONS OF NUDE MEN AND WOMEN IN THE DAILY JOURNALS AND THE ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINES WOULD HAVE EXCLUDED SUCH PERIODICALS FROM ALL RESPECTABLE FAMILIES TWO DECADES AGO ... THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN DIVORCED ... FORTY AND FIFTY YEARS AGO LOST AT ONCE AND IRREVOCABLY THEIR

STANDING IN SOCIETY, WHILE TO-DAY THEY CONTINUE IN ALL THEIR SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS, HARDLY CHANGED ...

EDITORIAL, *THE WATCHMAN*, BOSTON

1908

WE WRITE MILLIONS MORE LETTERS THAN DID OUR GRANDFATHERS, BUT THE INCREASE IN VOLUME HAS BROUGHT WITH IT AN AUTOMATIC ARTIFICIAL MACHINE-LIKE RING ... AN EXAMINATION OF A FILE OF OLD LETTERS REVEALS NOT ONLY A REMARKABLE GRASP OF DETAILS, BUT A **FITNESS AND COURTLINESS TOO OFTEN TOTALLY LACKING** IN THE MECHANICAL CURT CUT AND DRIED LETTERS OF TO-DAY.

FORREST CRISSEY, *HANDBOOK OF MODERN BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE*

1908

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO IT TOOK SO LONG AND COST SO MUCH TO SEND A LETTER THAT IT SEEMED WORTH WHILE TO PUT SOME TIME AND THOUGHT INTO WRITING IT. NOW THE QUICKNESS AND THE CHEAPNESS OF THE POST SEEM TO JUSTIFY THE FEELING THAT A BRIEF LETTER TO-DAY MAY BE FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER NEXT WEEK—A "LINE" NOW BY ANOTHER TO-MORROW.

PERCY HOLMES BOYNTON, *PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION*

1915

Questions about “The Pace of Modern Life”

Reading and Writing to Comprehend

1. **Choose.** Although not as clearly as the more traditional reading selections in

this chapter, “The Pace of Modern Life” makes an argument. Choose a reading strategy that will allow you to summarize this argument and complete a brief summary.

2. **Apply** the mapping strategy to this reading to help you understand how the different quotations work together (see Chapter 2 for help with mapping).

Reading and Writing to Respond

3. **Reread and Synthesize.** Re-read “The Pace of Modern Life” using a reading strategy of your choice in order to consider how you could connect this text to the others in this chapter. Write a synthesis of at least 3 selections in the chapter, including “The Pace of Modern Life” (see Chapter 3 for help with syntheses). Be sure to include your intellectual response (see Chapter 3 for help with intellectual responses) in the synthesis.

Reading and Writing to Apply and Reflect

4. **Reread and Compile.** Re-read “The Pace of Modern Life” using the RLW strategy in order to develop your own text using the same techniques. Compile a series of quotations that allow you to make an argument on a subject of your choice.
5. **Reflect.** How does the form of the text, which is comprised of unattributed quotations, affect how you read the text? Did you approach this text differently from other texts? Explain your answer.
6. **Multimodal Option.** Develop a multimodal project that compiles a series of quotations allowing you to make an argument on a subject of your choice.

Long Writing Assignments Based on Readings in Chapter 7: Reading, Writing, and Technology

1. The authors of the selections in this chapter are concerned with the contemporary place of technology, as well as the future role of technology. Yet, many

authors consistently look to the past, to history, as well. In order to inquire into the role that history plays in this larger discussion about technology, **write** an essay that explores how at least two of the authors address history. **Develop** an academic argument that addresses why history is so important to the discussion about current and future technologies (see Chapter 4 for help with developing an academic argument). **Revisit** the annotations you already have on the texts to determine how helpful those are. It is likely that you will need to **reread** the selections by applying a reading strategy that you think will be most effective for completing this particular assignment.

2. **Multimodal Option.** Develop a multimodal project that allows you to make an argument about the importance of history to these more contemporary discussions of technology.
3. Whether exploring Wikipedia or digital libraries, several of the selections in this chapter describe how technology breathes life into otherwise static objects. Reread the selections in this chapter in order to see how authors describe the difference between the static object and the more dynamic product. Choose a technological advance that you believe has created a more dynamic version of something. Make sure your object is not addressed in this chapter of readings. View this advance through the lens of the authors' arguments from this chapter. To what extent does the object support what the authors have to say? To what extent does it challenge the authors' argument? **Revisit** the annotations you already have on the texts to determine how helpful those are. It is likely that you will need to **reread** the selections by applying a reading strategy that you think will be most effective for completing this particular assignment.
4. The authors of the selections in this chapter rely on the three rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, and logos) to differing degrees. **Write** an essay in which you explore which method of persuasion seems most common, and develop an argument as to why that type of appeal is the preferred one when it comes to this subject (see Chapter 2 for help with rhetorical appeals). **Revisit** the annotations you already have on the texts to determine how helpful those are. You will likely need to **reread** the selections by applying a reading strategy that you think will be most effective for completing this particular assignment.

5. Many of the selections in this chapter were written about a decade ago. **Develop** an essay—using one of the author’s arguments as a lens—in which you explore a current technology or a handful of related, current technologies in order to discover what the author might say about these. In other words, extend the author’s argument so that it addresses a current technology. What would the author notice about your chosen technology? What observations might the author make? What position might the author take in relation to its use(s)? Ground your answers to these questions in evidence from the text. **Revisit** the annotations you already have on the texts to determine how helpful those are. You will likely need to **reread** the selections by applying a reading strategy that you think will be most effective for completing this particular assignment.
6. **Multimodal Option.** Explore a current technology or a handful of related, current technologies in order to discover what an author of one of the texts in this chapter might say about these. In other words, extend the author’s argument so that it addresses a current technology. What would the author notice about your chosen technology? What observations might the author make? What position might the author take in relation to its use(s)? Use the very form of technology that you have chosen in order to extend the author’s argument so that it addresses this technology.

Reflecting on Your Reading Strategies and Annotations

Consider the different reading strategies you applied while reading the selections in this chapter. Which were most useful for understanding the text? For writing a summary? For figuring out what you think? For responding to the text? For imitating an author’s style? Anticipate future uses of these reading strategies in this class, in other classes, and in other contexts. Consider previous courses and contexts in which these strategies would have been helpful.