

1 Gathering

DISCUSSION POINT

Discuss with a partner.

- 1 What type of events in the infographic seem to draw the biggest crowds?
- 2 What is the largest gathering you've been to?
- 3 Do you enjoy attending events that have large crowds? Why / why not?

LARGE GATHERINGS



867 PEOPLE dressed as Superman in 2013 in the UK.

5 MILLION PEOPLE celebrated the Chicago Cubs baseball World Series win in Chicago in 2016.

4.2 MILLION PEOPLE were in the largest ever concert audience in Rio de Janeiro in 1994. The performer was Rod Stewart.



5 MILLION PEOPLE attended World Youth Day in Manila in 1995.

1 MILLION PEOPLE gathered in Sydney Harbour, Australia on December 31, 1999 to welcome in the new millennium.

256 PEOPLE with the same name gathered in Serbia in 2023.



3 MILLION PEOPLE celebrated the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in London, in 1953.

22,810 PEOPLE connected their personal computers at a LAN party in Sweden in 2013.

100,000+ PEOPLE attended a women's soccer match between Mexico and Argentina in Mexico City in 1971.

VIDEO



WHERE NO ELVIS STANDS ALONE

BEFORE YOU WATCH

Match the words and phrases in bold with the correct synonyms.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 in close proximity (n) | a to be caused by |
| 2 congregate (v) | b to be more valuable |
| 3 stem from (phr v) | c near |
| 4 resilience (n) | d to gather |
| 5 outweigh (v) | e mental strength |



Hot air balloons at festival in New Mexico, USA

WHILE YOU WATCH

▶ Watch the video and identify the benefit of being in a crowd that is not mentioned.

- a The sense of belonging.
- b The improvement of communicative skills.
- c The greater feeling of purpose in life.
- d The sense of greater safety.
- e The enhancement of an experience.

AFTER YOU WATCH

Work in a group. Discuss the questions.

- 1 On what occasions do you find yourself in a crowd?
I tend (not) to ...
- 2 What benefits do you think you derive from being in a crowd?
I think for me personally, ...
- 3 Do you think the same benefits of being in a crowd face-to-face can be achieved online? Why / why not?
I'd say that ...

THE RISE OF CROWDFUNDING

A VOCABULARY PREVIEW

Complete the paragraph with the words in the box.

backers crowdfunding entrepreneur equity
philanthropic start-up tangible venture capital

Just over two decades ago, any ¹ _____ with a new idea would have had to go to a ² _____ company or somewhere similar to receive funding for their ³ _____ project, giving up a significant share of the ⁴ _____ in exchange. These days, they have another option—⁵ _____—a model that allows small businesses to attract online ⁶ _____ who each invest small amounts of money in return for either a ⁷ _____ reward, such as a copy of the finished product, or a ⁸ _____ reward, such as helping someone in need.

B BEFORE YOU READ

Activating prior
knowledge

Work with a partner. Discuss the questions.

- 1 What kind of projects do you know of that have been crowdfunded?
- 2 Why do you think crowdfunding is a popular means of gaining investment?
- 3 What do you think makes a successful crowdfunding campaign? What would encourage you to invest?

C GLOBAL READING

Preparing to read

Read *The rise of crowdfunding*. Complete the interview with the questions (a–f).

- a What else, other than a lack of video and updates, can result in a failed campaign?
- b What should users do to give their start-up the best chance of achieving their targets?
- c Why is crowdfunding a more attractive way of getting investors these days?
- d The Keep-it-all model is clearly more beneficial, but does it work for all campaign types?
- e What type of reward should entrepreneurs offer potential investors?
- f How sure can I be that I'll get the large amount of funding I want?

The rise of crowdfunding

Journalist Sarah Finch interviews the economist Thomas Kerr about the rise of crowdfunding and how to run a successful campaign.

Sarah:¹

Thomas: Crowdfunding allows entrepreneurs to bypass venture capital companies and reach a large number of potential investors online; where geography no longer matters. However, it's worth considering what level of investment you need. Last year, crowdfunding raised \$4 billion for entrepreneurs in the US, yet venture capital firms invested over \$60 billion. So, while crowdfunding may be an attractive option, investment from venture capitalists is still much higher. The latter is certainly something I'd recommend to entrepreneurs with large projects, or those who need expertise and support to help get their project off the ground.

Sarah: Let's imagine I decide to go down the crowdfunding route.

Thomas: Firstly, you need to be realistic about how much money people will be willing to invest in your project. Kickstarter—one of the best-known crowdfunding sites—says that of the total projects that have been successfully funded on the site to date, 69% have raised less than \$10,000. Only 3% of projects have raised over \$100,000 and just 0.2% have raised \$1 million. That suggests crowdfunding is more appropriate for smaller projects than large companies, even if it's the latter that get more attention in the media. It's also important to consider that Kickstarter campaigns currently have around a 35% success rate, meaning that 65% of projects fail to get the funding they need.

Sarah:³

Thomas: Research has shown that when it comes to more traditional types of investment, perception of quality is highly significant as investors use it to predict how much of a return they may get on their investment. Research carried out by Mollick at the University of Pennsylvania has indicated that the same is true of crowdfunding projects—those that were perceived to be of a higher quality were far more likely to hit their investment goals. Successful campaigns were also aided by videos explaining the product and frequent updates, particularly in the early stages. In fact, for many projects, a well-produced video pitch is a necessity. For example, I recently saw a campaign for a product called Flic—a small button in your house that allows you to wirelessly control apps on your phone. Now, read or hear that description and it means very little, but watch the video and within the first ten seconds you know exactly what it is and how it can benefit you. Of course, it's important to remember that not all campaigns involve start-ups—existing entrepreneurs have been known to turn to crowdfunding to get funding for new ideas. There are notable examples in gaming where designers wanted to pursue passion projects that publishers didn't want to make. There are also experienced scientists looking to fund research.

Sarah:⁴

Thomas: Mollick found that spelling errors, asking for too much investment, and having too long a deadline gave the perception that the project was low in quality and this reduced the success rate. However,



it's not just quality that has an impact. Several studies have shown that without an effective network, an entrepreneur is likely to be unsuccessful in his or her campaign. This is true whether you're seeking venture capital or crowdfunding. With the latter, it's your social, online network that can make the difference. 30% of a crowdfunding campaign's investment comes from friends and family, showing just how vital they are. They start off the bidding and then tell others about it. If you don't know enough people to do that for you, your campaign won't develop much momentum.

Sarah:⁵

Thomas: There are four types of campaigns, not all of them offering a tangible benefit. Lending-based campaigns and donation-based campaigns are more philanthropic, especially the latter where the money goes towards scientific research or humanitarian projects. Equity-based campaigns, where investors get a share of the company in return for their investment, and reward-based campaigns are those which offer tangible rewards. The latter are the most common type and generally offer the investor a copy of the product they've backed or the opportunity to consume it; for example, to see the film that was produced. Researchers from the University of North Carolina have found that offering different tiers of rewards also helps to attract funding. Tiers give people the opportunity to decide how much money to invest and what they'd like to receive in exchange. For example, backers at higher tiers often receive limited editions of the product or promotional merchandise. Interestingly, a study in Asia found that people motivated by helping others tended to invest early, whereas those motivated by the promise of reward were late investors, so adding late rewards in the final days of the campaign can help projects get across that investment goal line.

Sarah:⁶

Thomas: With a Keep-it-all model, entrepreneurs keep any money invested, even if the target investment isn't reached. Although this sounds more beneficial to the entrepreneur, these campaigns are perceived as riskier and tend to be less successful as a result. Backers invest on the understanding that if the project doesn't reach its target, the product may never be made and they will lose their money. All-or-nothing campaigns are perceived as less risky as investors know that if the campaign doesn't achieve its target, they get their money back. I'd say that it's worth selecting the Keep-it-all model for small projects, but I would definitely recommend the All-or-nothing model for larger projects that are looking for greater investment.

Understanding assumptions in questions

D CLOSE READING

Interviewers often use assumptions in questions to encourage the interviewee to give a desired answer. Sometimes this works, and the interviewee confirms the assumption. However, sometimes the assumption is false and the interviewee corrects it. For example:

Q: *How can women compete successfully against men when running a crowdfunding campaign?*

(assumes that women are less able to run a successful campaign)

A: *Research shows women attract less venture capital funding. However, one study suggests they are around 10% more likely to achieve their target investment than men when crowdfunding.*

(interviewee corrects the false assumption using research and a statistic)

1 Read the questions in *The rise of crowdfunding* again (see *Global reading*). Identify the assumption the journalist makes in each.

2 Read the economist's response to each question.

- 1 In which does he correct the journalist's assumptions?
- 2 What evidence does he provide to support each correction?

3 Complete the sentences below with one word from the interview.

- 1 Crowdfunding makes _____ irrelevant when finding possible backers.
- 2 Research indicates that crowdfunding best suits _____ campaigns.
- 3 Effective campaigns include video pitches and regular updates in the _____ stages.
- 4 An entrepreneur needs a good _____ to help promote and invest in their campaign.
- 5 Studies suggest that having reward _____ makes a campaign more attractive.
- 6 Investors see Keep-it-all campaigns as _____ than All-or-nothing campaigns.

E CRITICAL THINKING

In a group, discuss why you think women tend to attract less capital investment than men, but have shown they can attract more investment through crowdfunding than men.

ACADEMIC SKILLS

LOCATING THE AUTHOR'S VOICE

An academic text generally includes several voices: the author's own voice (in bold below) and the voices of external authors used to support the author's ideas or provide material for discussion. External voices are direct (i.e., in quotation marks) or indirect (i.e., paraphrased) and are referenced correctly to avoid plagiarism. It is important to identify the different voices in an academic text in order to be able to identify and evaluate the author's position.

The amount of crowdfunding used in academic research is increasing. Despite there being "challenges for researchers in creating crowdfunding campaigns" (Gordon, 2022), **there is the benefit of having more control over how it's spent due to the** "many rules involved in government funding" (Sherrin, 2020). **Crowdfunding is therefore a route that all researchers may wish to pursue in the future.**

1 Read the extract below and match the ideas (1–5) to the voices (a–c).

- a the author's own voice _____
- b a direct external voice _____
- c an indirect external voice _____

¹The amount of multimedia in a crowdfunding campaign can positively affect its outcomes. In a study, it appeared that ²"successful campaigns featured more images, links, and gifs and more frequently included a project video" (Carradini & Fleischmann, 2023). However, ³it may be that such multimedia negatively impact on other aspects of the campaign. For instance, ⁴the benefits achieved by the length of a product description can be overshadowed by too many images (Yang et al., 2020). ⁵A balance between the two is therefore desirable.

2 Look at the extract again. Match the ideas (1–5) to their purpose (a–e).

- a exemplify a point _____
- b draw a conclusion _____
- c state an objection to a claim _____
- d make a claim _____
- e provide evidence to support a point _____

3 Work with a partner. Are the statements T (True) or F (false)? Give reasons.

- 1 An academic text should focus on the work and voice of others. T / F
- 2 Authors of academic texts should avoid critiquing the external voices that are included in the text. T / F
- 3 An author's voice needs to control the other voices in a text. T / F
- 4 An author's voice is needed between external voices in a text. T / F

THE ROLE OF FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNICATION IN A DIGITAL WORLD

A VOCABULARY PREVIEW

Complete each definition in a–h with a phrase in bold from sentences 1–8.

- 1 **Anti-social** behavior seems to be common online.
 - 2 Digital tools allow us to develop social **ties** with others.
 - 3 An online friend is an **acquaintance**, not a real friend.
 - 4 People tend to start using social media as **adolescents**.
 - 5 Social media can help to promote **empathy**.
 - 6 Social media seems to be turning us all into **narcissists**.
 - 7 Living in a **hyper-connected** world has its challenges.
 - 8 Social media can help us **nurture** our relationships.
- a _____ (n) relationships or connections with a person or place
- b _____ (v) to help someone or something to develop
- c _____ (n) someone you know a little, who isn't a close friend
- d _____ (adj) always linked to people via technology
- e _____ (n) people who admire themselves too much
- f _____ (n) children who are changing into young adults
- g _____ (adj) showing a lack of care for others or society in general
- h _____ (n) the ability to understand or imagine how someone feels

B BEFORE YOU READ

Discuss the benefits of face-to-face communication vs digital communication.

C GLOBAL READING

To identify the writer's position on a topic, locate the writer's voice and look for:

- evaluative adjectives or adverbs (e.g., *not credible*, *disappointingly*)
- evaluative verbs and modal verbs (e.g., *fail to*, *may well*, *could possibly*)
- opinion language (e.g., *agree*, *disagree*, *true*, *untrue*, *believe*, *view*)
- linking phrases and signposts (e.g., *however*, *therefore*, *although*, *in fact*).

Read the text. Which statement best describes the writer's overall position?

- 1 Digital communication is an effective substitution for meeting face to face.
- 2 Face-to-face communication contributes significantly to a person's well-being.
- 3 It is inevitable that new technologies will change online interactions.

Activating prior knowledge

Identifying the writer's position

The role of **face-to-face** communication in a digital world



¹We live in a hyper-connected world where regular digital communication plays a significant role within the family, among friends, in the workplace, and in education. It is estimated that around 100 billion messages are sent each day on Whatsapp alone (Ceci, 2022). People reach for their phones to share their (or their pet's) news, maintain contact with colleagues, and read announcements from tutors. As a result, face-to-face interactions are seemingly disappearing, with more people working remotely and teenagers, in particular, placing significantly less value on in-person communication (Common Sense Media, 2018). This begs the question: Does face-to-face communication continue to have a role within our society?

²To answer this question, let us consider possible benefits of face-to-face communication over digital communication. One is the strength of connection. Although social media gives us the opportunity to maintain regular ties with a large number of people, it appears those ties are not as strong as the ones we develop face to face. An empirical study of familiarity between people who met in different ways showed that connections in our brains are much stronger when we meet someone face to face, despite the fact that the face-to-face interactions in the study were shorter than the other types of interactions tested (Ambrus et al., 2021).

³If face-to-face connections are stronger, it would appear that a decrease in face-to-face interactions results in a reduction in strong connections with people. Certainly, in my experience, online discussions tend to be much more superficial than they are offline, as it is easier to supply basic information than it is to provide more complex information in a short text or voice message. The type of communication we engage in is likely to determine the quality of our relationships. Online communication allows us to have breadth in friendships, but it

fails to allow us depth, turning many friends into little more than acquaintances. This is disconcerting, as strong connections with people are vital for our mental health. This starts young. In a study by Achterhof (2022), adolescents reported feeling more positive and less lonely during face-to-face interactions than during online interactions. They were least happy and loneliest when online alone. These feelings appear to continue into adulthood, when strong connections are a key factor in happiness (Waldinger [n.d.], cited in Mineo, 2017).

⁴On the flip side, face-to-face friendships can be unpredictable: To quote psychologist Shelly Turkle (2016) on this topic, face-to-face friendships are “risky” and involve “real-life emotions.” The fact that digital communication is easily controlled differentiates it from face-to-face communication. The ability to postpone a reply and features like the “delete conversation” button permit us to avoid conflict. Nevertheless, face-to-face interactions are arguably more effective as they comprise both verbal and non-verbal clues. Consider the effectiveness of voice and text conversations vs. face-to-face conversations you have had. The lack of non-verbal clues creates a greater chance of miscommunication in text and voice communication, as it can be difficult to identify the speaker's tone and emotion.

⁵Holly Tired (2023), Educator at Michigan State University in the United States, believes a key element of successful communication is empathy, often demonstrated through non-verbal communication. Unfortunately, one well-known study of college students over a 30-year period proved that empathy is falling (Konrath et al., 2010), with some experts claiming that we have become narcissists due to our online behavior, some of which can be distinctly anti-social. Whether or not we are losing our empathy, it appears that we can convey and

recognize emotions such as empathy through the use of non-verbal communication while video conferencing. However, it seems that we often fail to do so. Chen (2021), who was part of a team which studied US and Chinese business people, concludes that it is only possible to take visual clues on board if you are actively looking for them. Failure to actively identify non-verbal clues in communication increases the chances of miscommunication. We can never eradicate miscommunication, but while it is occurring in face-to-face communication, we can usually spot it quickly and modify what we say next to clarify meaning and solve the problem.

⁶Trust is another factor to consider when comparing digital and face-to-face relationships. Anthony Baker (2018), in his study of teams within the aeronautical industry collaborating on a task, concluded that trust was negatively impacted when the teams were virtual. Trust is critical for team success, whether it is a family, a group of friends, a sports team, or a commercial team. Without trust, there is no safety and therefore no risk-taking; no challenging of decisions, and misunderstandings can more quickly lead to conflict. A lack of trust and face-to-face interactions might also result in reduced creativity in the workplace. Business leader Ulrich Kellerer (cited in Goman, 2018) asserts that despite technology enhancing creativity and productivity, our unhealthy use of it renders communication less effective. This is something other business leaders have recognized in recent years, and has been part of the reason why many remote workers have been asked to return to the office for at least some days each week.

⁷To conclude, it is clear that face-to-face communication still has a primary role to play in society if we want strong social ties with others, to form successful teams, to be healthy and happy, and to raise and nurture our children so that they are well-adjusted. It is equally clear that our current use of digital communication tools is having a negative repercussion on the quality of our interactions with people. It would not be helpful to advocate for no digital communication, but it may be helpful to adjust our approach to digital communication. One way to resolve issues might be to view digital communication as supporting our closest relationships, not driving them. That way, we may seek to make more of an effort with our face-to-face interactions.

⁸It is also important to consider future advancements in technology. Much as virtual reality (VR) allows people to immerse themselves in a virtual world and converse with people globally, avatars are still fairly basic. However, it must be considered, as technology evolves, that eventual VR technology may make it possible to interact fully in a virtual world in a way that mimics real-life interactions, body language, and facial expressions. If so, it may be more possible to reap the benefits of face-to-face communication online.

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D CLOSE READING

Read the text again and choose the correct answer for each question.

- 1 What does the writer say about online communication compared to face-to-face communication? (para. 3)
 - a Topics tend to be more challenging.
 - b Discussions do not usually last as long.
 - c Conversations tend to be shallower in nature.
 - d Interactions depend on how familiar speakers are.
- 2 What does the writer believe to be true about face-to-face friendships compared to online friendships? (para. 4)
 - a They are more straightforward.
 - b Disagreements are more likely to occur.
 - c Miscommunication is less of an issue.
 - d They are not dissimilar to each other.
- 3 What has some research demonstrated about empathy in communication? (para. 5)
 - a Its existence is in jeopardy.
 - b It is impossible to identify online.
 - c It happens automatically.
 - d It is mostly conveyed through words.
- 4 What conclusion does the writer come to? (para. 7)
 - a The most emotionally healthy people are those who rarely access social media.
 - b Digital communication should not be completely abandoned.
 - c Young people should be taught better communication skills.
 - d Using technology to communicate is best for work contexts.

E CRITICAL THINKING

Work in a group. Discuss the questions.

- 1 How do you think your online interactions positively or negatively affect your life? Why?
- 2 What measures could we take to ensure our need for deep connections with other people is satisfied?
- 3 Could you imagine a time in the future when almost all interactions are online? What might the implications of such a situation be?

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Synonyms and register

A large part of academic writing is choosing language that is appropriate to your intended reader. Vocabulary that is appropriate in one context may not be appropriate in another. Learning a broad range of synonyms will help you adapt the register of your text.

- 1 Skim read the text on pages 15–16. Find more formal synonyms of the words in bold. Use the paragraph number in parentheses to help you.**

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-------|----------------------------|-------|
| 1 decide (3) | _____ | 7 remove (5) | _____ |
| 2 worrying (3) | _____ | 8 shown (5) | _____ |
| 3 include (4) | _____ | 9 states firmly (6) | _____ |
| 4 let (4) | _____ | 10 ask for (7) | _____ |
| 5 happening (5) | _____ | 11 effect (7) | _____ |
| 6 part (5) | _____ | 12 developments (8) | _____ |

- 2 Replace the underlined words with the more formal synonyms below. There are four that you won't use.**

are able to asserts comprehend derived disconcerting distant
diverse element establish gravity manage permits... to
repercussions seek strategy

- Many sociologists find the negative effects of our hyper-connected world worrying.
- Social media lets us connect, even when physically far apart.
- A worrying part of social media is the ability to start friendships with people you have not met in person.
- With social media, we can look for friendships among a more varied group of people.
- It's difficult to understand the seriousness of social media's impact.

- 3 Replace repeated words in the text with suitable formal synonyms.**

The human brain is constantly changing, and neuroscientist Gary Small says new technologies are changing it further. He also says that technology is improving our decision-making skills. One study carried out with people aged between 55 and 76 showed that the brains of those that could already use the Internet showed much greater activity than those who could not. As many older people find they are unable to keep the same level of brain function as they age, Gary believes using the Internet may help them keep good brain function throughout their lives. However, he is also aware of the danger of using the Internet, such as a fall in empathy levels. He suggests people avoid this fall by developing their face-to-face relationships without the use of technology.

ACADEMIC WORDS AND IDIOMS

1 Complete the definitions with the words in bold.

- 1 Social networks **aid** the reunion of old school friends and distant family.
- 2 We must **differentiate** between social media and social networking.
- 3 **Empirical** evidence shows that social media can change character.
- 4 The military developed the system that would **evolve** into the Internet.
- 5 People should **modify** their technology use when with others.
- 6 The **perception** that all young people use social media is unfounded.
- 7 Social media helps like-minded individuals to **pursue** friendships.
- 8 Crowdsourcing gets people together to **resolve** an issue.
- 9 I've always **advocated** for less use of social media.
- 10 The **eventual** effect is likely to be positive.
- 11 These statistics **beg the question**: Why?
- 12 **To quote** Browning **on** texting, "it is far easier to type than talk."
 - a _____ (v) to see or show a difference between things
 - b _____ (adj) happening at the end of a process or period of time
 - c _____ (v) to gradually develop or change
 - d _____ (v) to find a satisfactory way of dealing with a problem
 - e _____ (id) to say exactly what someone has said or written
 - f _____ (v) to help
 - g _____ (id) to make you want to get an answer to a question
 - h _____ (adj) based on real experience or scientific experiments
 - i _____ (v) to change something slightly in order to improve it
 - j _____ (v) to try to achieve something
 - k _____ (n) the way you think about or understand something
 - l _____ (v) to publicly support a policy

2 Complete the questions with some of the words and phrases from Exercise 1.

- 1 Is it sensible to _____ new friendships with people online?
- 2 Would you ask people online to help you _____ a serious issue?
- 3 Would you _____ the banning of targeted social media ads?
- 4 How can a YouTube vlogger _____ their content from others?
- 5 _____ him on social media use, "it can take over your life." Do you agree?
- 6 The benefits of face-to-face communication _____: Do we have a responsibility to connect face to face?
- 7 How important are other people's _____ of you online?

3 Work with a partner. Discuss the questions from Exercise 2.

ACADEMIC IDIOMS

BEG THE QUESTION

The phrase *beg the question* originally described a type of invalid argument in basic logic. Today, it is used when something makes us want to ask a question. It can be followed by a colon (:) and the question, or by *as to* or *of*.

CRITICAL THINKING

Identifying types of evidence

An academic argument needs to be supported by evidence. Evidence can be in the following form:

1 Data, statistics, or research from credible and unbiased sources

You need to be realistic about how much money people will invest in your project. 66% have raised less than \$10,000.

2 An opinion from a credible and unbiased expert

All-or-nothing campaigns are perceived as less risky.
(Economist, Thomas Kerr)

3 Anecdotal evidence

I recently saw a campaign for a product called Flic—a small button in your house that allows you to wirelessly control apps on your phone ... watch the video and within the first ten seconds you know exactly what it is and how it can benefit you.

1 Read *The role of face-to-face communication in a digital world* again. Find and underline arguments in the text that match sentences 1–10. Use the paragraph number in parentheses to help you.

- 1 How prevalent digital communication is in our daily lives. (1) ____
- 2 Face-to-face meetings create stronger connections. (2) ____
- 3 Discussions online tend to be shallow. (3) ____
- 4 Deep connections are important for young people's well-being. (3) ____
- 5 Friendships are not predictable. (4) ____
- 6 Non-verbal communication is vital for effective communication. (5) ____
- 7 People are losing their ability to feel empathy. (5) ____
- 8 People need to deliberately look for non-verbal language. (5) ____
- 9 Trust is less likely to be gained in online teams. (6) ____
- 10 Communication is less effective online. (6) ____

2 Skim the text again and decide whether the arguments in Exercise 1 are supported by statistics (S), research (R), an expert opinion (EO), or anecdotal evidence (AE).

3 Work with a partner. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of each type of evidence used to support the arguments in Exercise 1. Which do you think is the most effective type? Why?

WRITING MODEL

You are going to learn about concessive clauses (or subordinate clauses), contrastive structures, and how to analyze essay questions. You are then going to use these to write an essay about the social and economic impacts of social media.

A MODEL

1 Match the essay introduction to the correct statement below.

Since the inception of social media in the mid-2000s, its popularity has grown exponentially. Often defined as platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, the term *social media* most accurately describes the content that people share via those platforms (Taylor et al., 2015). Sharing content in this way has evolved to become an integral part of our social fabric, determining the way we communicate with each other, share and receive news, and work. To quote Rice (2023) on sharing: “Who we are is now what we share.” This begs the question of how this change is impacting our society. Although advancements have no doubt proven to be positive, understanding any detrimental effects will allow us to pursue solutions. This essay will therefore examine both the positive and negative impacts of social media use on our physical and mental well-being and assess their significance on society.

- 1 Evaluate the impact of social media on the health of its users today.
- 2 Justify the future use of social networking in education.
- 3 Outline the social and economic impacts of social media in the last decade.
- 4 Examine the impact of social media on society or on business and illustrate with examples.
- 5 Identify key social and economic impacts of teenagers owning smartphones.

2 Work with a partner. Discuss the questions.

- 1 What are some positive effects of social media on our physical and mental well-being?
- 2 What are some negative effects of social media on our physical and mental well-being?
- 3 Do you think the positives outweigh the negatives or vice versa? Why?

B ANALYZE

1 Read the introduction more carefully. Which sentence(s):

- 1 give any useful definitions?
- 2 introduce the main topic of the essay?
- 3 give an outline of what the essay will say?
- 4 state why the topic is important?

2 Order the items in Exercise 1 to create a logical essay introduction. More than one answer may be possible.



GRAMMAR

Concessive clauses and contrastive structures

Concessive clauses—those beginning with *although*, *though*, or *even though*—allow writers to acknowledge an alternative point of view, before presenting their own, often contrary position:

Even though purchases can be made via social media, it is still not the norm.

Other structures that can be used to contrast information include:

It is true that there are positives to social media. ***Nevertheless***, there are also negatives.

Much as social media takes up a lot of our time, it does help to strengthen relationships.

Note that *despite* and *in spite of* can be followed by either a noun or a gerund.

1 Match (1–6) to (a–f) to concede or contrast ideas.

- 1 Despite many adolescents constantly using smartphones,
 - 2 Even though many parents monitor their children's online activity,
 - 3 Although many of us take care to protect our privacy online,
 - 4 Much as social media can be a useful tool,
 - 5 It is true that social media can cause feelings of anxiety.
 - 6 While traditional advertising can be expensive,
- a its impact on our offline character is hugely disconcerting.
 - b promoting products on social media is not.
 - c it is impossible to protect them at all times.
 - d not all young people want to engage with social media.
 - e identity theft is still a prominent issue.
 - f Nevertheless, it has done a great deal to raise awareness of mental health.

2 Write sentences giving your opinions on the topics in bold, using the prompts provided and the words in parentheses.

- 1 **Children and smartphones:** necessary for safety / dangerous for health (Even though)
- 2 **Smartphones in schools:** can enhance education / can distract (although)
- 3 **Smartphones and sleep:** disrupt sleep / some apps aid sleep (in spite of)
- 4 **Social media in the workplace:** can increase productivity / can reduce productivity (It is true that / Nevertheless)
- 5 **Social media and privacy:** privacy issues / benefits—which are greater? (despite)

3 Compare sentences with a partner. How do your views differ?

WRITING SKILL

Before writing an essay, follow these steps to analyze the question / instructions:

- 1 Identify the key words in the question / instructions as this will help you to understand the main subject area and its particular focus.
- 2 Identify restricting words which limit what you should write (e.g., time periods, particular areas of a subject, number of things to write about).
- 3 Identify the meaning of the instruction word or phrase (e.g., *analyze*, *to what extent*, *discuss*).

Analyzing essay questions

1 Underline the key words in the essay instructions below.

- 1 Evaluate the impact of social media on the health of its users today.
- 2 Justify the future use of social networking in education.
- 3 Outline the social and economic impacts of social media in the last decade.
- 4 Examine the impact of social media on society or on business and illustrate with examples.

2 Identify the restricting words in the essay instructions in Exercise 1.

3 Match the main instruction words below with their meanings.

analyze describe discuss evaluate examine illustrate justify outline

- 1 _____ = give details about how and why something happens
- 2 _____ = give examples to support an idea or argument
- 3 _____ = present an argument while exploring both sides of the issue
- 4 _____ = look at the facts and issues in close detail and investigate what they mean
- 5 _____ = provide evidence for an argument, considering alternative views too
- 6 _____ = make a judgment about something
- 7 _____ = give the main points of something but not the small details
- 8 _____ = look at the component parts of something, discuss them, and show how they relate to each other

4 Read the essay outline below. Which number in Exercise 1 is it answering?

Intro: Define social media, mention commercial impact, state essay purpose.

Main body: State how social media has impacted advertising and revenue, client / colleague communication, and productivity. Suggest what each one means for companies.

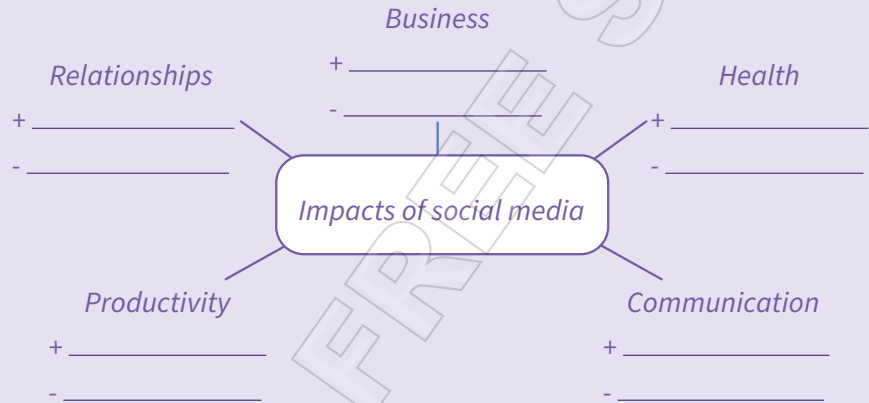
Conclusion: Both benefits and issues. Benefits largely outweigh issues.

WRITING TASK

You are going to write an essay in response to the following instructions:
"Outline the social and economic impacts of social media."

Brainstorm

What are some key social and economic impacts of social media? Complete the "spidergram."



Plan

Read the essay instructions carefully. Decide which information you should include in your essay. Order the ideas so they are presented logically in your text. Check that your plan will help you to complete the essay correctly.

Write

Use your plan to make sure you organize your ideas effectively and follow the instructions as stated. Remember to use concessive clauses and contrastive structures where appropriate and to select more formal academic words when choosing synonyms to bring a variety of vocabulary to your essay.

Review

Exchange your essay with a partner. Review for the following together:

- The essay follows the instructions effectively.
- The ideas in the essay are logically ordered and are supported by evidence.
- The essay conclusions are fair and logical.

Rewrite and edit

Consider your partner's comments and write your final draft. Think about:

- whether you used concessive clauses and contrastive structures appropriately.
- whether you selected more formal words where possible, e.g., *permit*, not *let*.

WORDLIST

*** very frequent ** frequent * not frequent

Vocabulary preview

acquaintance (n)	crowdfunding (n)	hyper-connected (adj)	start-up (n)
adolescent (n) *	empathy (n)	narcissist (n)	tangible (adj)
anti-social (adj)	entrepreneur (n)	nurture (n)	tie (n) **
backer (n)	equity (n)	philanthropic (adj)	venture capital (n)

Vocabulary development

advancement (n)	comprise (v) **	detriment (n)	repercussion (n)
assert (v) **	derive (v) **	disconcerting (adj)	
comprehend (v)	determine (v) **	eradicate (v)	

Academic words and idioms

advocate (v) *	differentiate (v) *	evolve (v) **	pursue (v) **
aid (v) **	empirical (adj) *	modify (v) *	quote somebody on something (id)
beg the question (id)	eventual (adj) *	perception (n) **	resolve (v) *

ACADEMIC WORDS AND IDIOMS REVIEW

Complete the sentences using the correct form of the words in the box.

aid beg differentiate empirical perception pursue quote

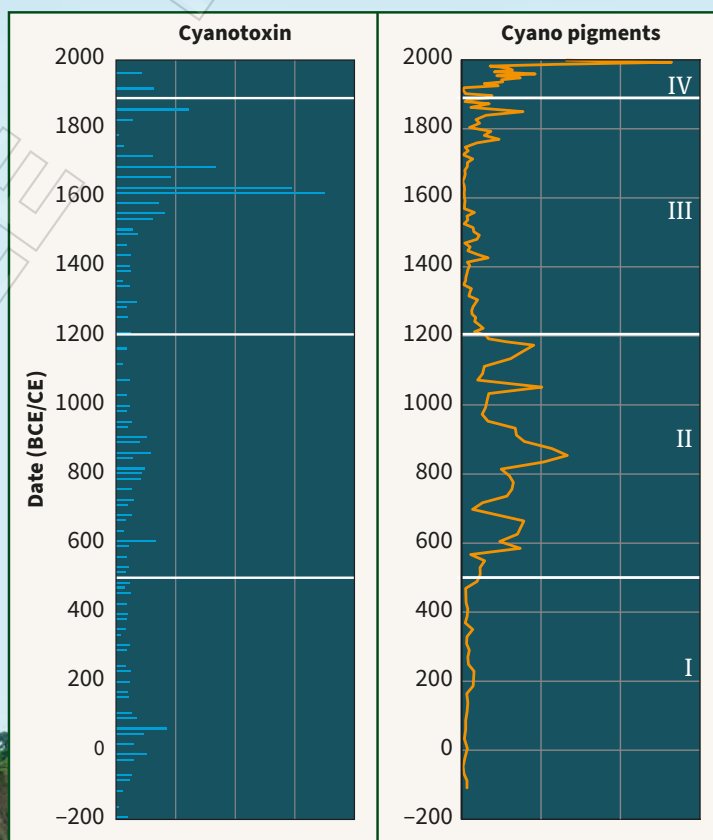
- When Ed graduated, he wanted to _____ his dream of becoming a documentary film director.
- When reading a text, it is important to _____ between fact and opinion.
- A list of technical terms is included here to _____ understanding.
- It is important to gather _____ evidence to support your argument.
- The public's _____ of crowdfunding has changed over time.
- Our attachment to our phones _____ the question: Is it healthy?
- To _____ Redman (2020) on this, it is not what we expected.

UNIT REVIEW

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Reading 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> | I can understand assumptions in questions. |
| Reading 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> | I can identify the writer's position. |
| Academic skill | <input type="checkbox"/> | I can locate the author's voice. |
| Vocabulary | <input type="checkbox"/> | I can use synonyms and different registers. |
| Grammar | <input type="checkbox"/> | I can use concessive clauses. |
| Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> | I can analyze essay questions. |

Toxic Algae Plagued Ancient Maya Civilization

- 1 Maya civilization once stretched hundreds of miles across Mesoamerica and the Yucatán Peninsula, with bustling cities, a thriving economy, and a booming arts and culture scene. But between the 8th and 10th centuries C.E., it endured sudden population fluctuations, increased conflict, and abandoned urban centers. Archaeologists and other researchers have considered landscape degradation, volcanoes, and drought as possible drivers of this dramatic instability throughout Maya society.
- 2 For a recent study in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*, researchers probed a lake bed near the ancient Maya city of Kaminaljuyú to investigate another possible stressor: harmful algae in the water supply. Chemicals called cyanotoxins, which make some algae blooms poisonous, were preserved in sediments at the bottom of central Guatemala's Lake Amatitlán—along with green pigments that record algae's presence. Study lead author Matthew Waters, a limnologist at Auburn University, and his colleagues sampled a 5.5-meter core of lake-bed muck and found a 2,100-year record of algae blooms, possibly caused by runoff from settlements and farms in the watershed. The findings suggest these toxic blooms would have rivaled their modern counterparts. In Lake Amatitlán (which frequently hosts harmful algae blooms today), cyanotoxin concentrations rose throughout the period in which Maya civilization reached—and then fell from—its zenith. A previous study showed ancient algae in a lake near the Maya city of Tikal, but Waters says his team's study is the first to provide definitive evidence of cyanotoxins.
- 3 Today's scientists are just beginning to grasp the extent of water-quality issues during the period of Maya instability. Because that time span featured widespread droughts, Waters says, quantity of water has been studied more than quality. The blooms alone were likely not responsible for societal instability, he notes—but having toxic reservoirs amid the droughts could not have helped.
- 4 Together with research on the makeup of ancient algae blooms, Waters adds, the study "starts to build a case that water quality and water potability need to be added to the list of environmental stressors" on Maya civilization. Lake Amatitlán's history provides a stark reminder to carefully manage land, as well as water, to avoid pitfalls of the past.



GLOSSARY

algae (n) plant-like organisms that grow in or on water and other wet places

potability (n) whether a liquid (usually water) is safe to drink

runoff (n) pollution that flows from the land into rivers and lakes (e.g., when it rains)

sediment (n) the layer of mud, etc. at the bottom of a lake, river, etc.



Toxic algae bloom

INTEGRATED SKILLS

You will read a text about toxic algae and analyze a diagram. You will then hear a short audio related to the topic. There are some questions to help you with language and the main ideas. Finally, you will summarize the points in both texts.

A CLOSE READING

Read the *Scientific American* text about toxic algae and look at the diagram. Identify if topics a–e below are mentioned in paragraphs 1–4 and / or the diagram. Some topics are mentioned in both the text and the diagram and in more than one paragraph.

- a a lesson that we can learn from the Maya
- b concentrations of cyanotoxins and cyano pigments over time
- c the impact of droughts on Maya instability
- d the findings of the study by Waters and his colleagues
- e the environmental stressors that caused population fluctuations

B READING ANALYSIS

Discuss the questions with a partner.

- 1 Which periods in the diagram (I, II, III, or IV) are mentioned in the text?
- 2 The text mentions that “cyanotoxin concentrations rose throughout the period in which Maya civilization reached—and then fell from—its zenith.” Does that match what the diagram shows? What might explain any differences?
- 3 Why does the author say, “Lake Amititlán’s history provides a stark reminder to carefully manage land, as well as water”?

C CLOSE LISTENING

 **1 Listen to a podcast about mercury contamination. Answer the questions.**

- 1 Where does mercury pollution come from? Where does it end up?
- 2 What animals did the researchers use as their biological indicator (bioindicator)?
- 3 Where did the team collect the animals? How long did the collection take?
- 4 How many of these locations were found to pose a high or severe risk?
- 5 What two ways to manage mercury pollution can be encouraged by the team’s findings?

D LISTENING ANALYSIS

Discuss the questions with a partner.

- 1 What exactly is the function of a bioindicator? Why was this animal chosen?
- 2 Why did the researchers also study other aquatic organisms (e.g., fish)?

E INTEGRATED WRITING

Work with a partner. Summarize the points made in the podcast, text, and diagram to discuss the impact of pollution. Use the ideas from the podcast and reading text to explain:

- land / water pollution and recent research
- how pollution can affect humans
- what we can / should do about it.

Write 225–300 words.

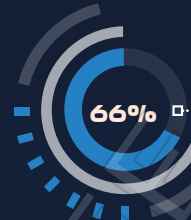
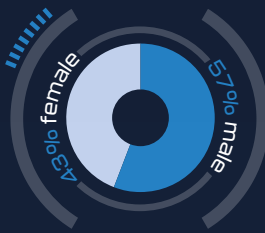
DISCUSSION POINT

Discuss with a partner.

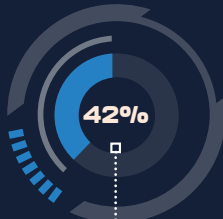
- 1 Do you think video games have a positive impact on children in your country? Why / why not?
- 2 Do you think video games are socially isolating? Why / why not?
- 3 What effects do video games have on academic performance and health?

Gaming by percentages

Gamers by gender



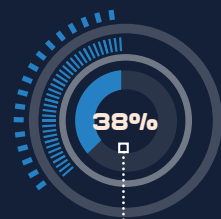
66% of parents say that gaming has a positive effect on their children's development



42% of American households own a game console



75% of teenagers prefer online gaming to playing alone



Gaming can improve decision-making by 38%

VIDEO

CAREER GAMING

BEFORE YOU WATCH

Match the words in **bold** with the correct definitions.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1 accolade (n) | a related to the roles, behaviors, activities, and characteristics that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women |
| 2 sponsorship (n) | b an honor given to someone for their work |
| 3 revenue (n) | c income from business activities or taxes |
| 4 gender (n) | d money given to an organization to help to pay for something, often an event |



Playing online video games at an eSports arena

WHILE YOU WATCH

▶ Watch the video and choose *T* (True) or *F* (False).

- 1 The popularity of e-sports has probably plateaued. T / F
- 2 Sylvia's parents were happy when she became a gamer. T / F
- 3 Sylvia discourages young girls from entering e-sports. T / F
- 4 Sylvia wants e-sports to be divided by gender. T / F

AFTER YOU WATCH

Work with a partner. Discuss the questions.

- 1 Have you ever watched an e-sports event? Why / why not?
- 2 Do you think people who play e-sports can be considered "athletes"? Why / why not?
- 3 Should e-sports have different categories for competitors such as by age or gender? Why / why not?

SUBSCRIBED

A VOCABULARY PREVIEW

1 Choose the correct option to complete the sentences.

- 1 What **subscription** / **consumption**-based streaming services do you pay for?
- 2 Is there a video streaming service that **dominates** / **embraces** the sector in your country?
- 3 Would you say buying physical computer games or streaming games is the **feasible** / **norm** in your country?
- 4 People spend a **staggering** / **feasible** amount of money on subscriptions they no longer use. Do you have subscriptions you might have forgotten about?
- 5 How quickly do you **embrace** / **dominate** new technology? Do you always want the latest gadgets?
- 6 Are there any **sectors** / **norms** that you think would never become subscription based?
- 7 Do you think it's **feasible** / **staggering** that newspapers will no longer be printed in the next decade?
- 8 To what extent do you think the **consumption** / **embrace** of physical media is likely to see a revival over the next decade?

2 Work with a partner. Ask and answer the questions in Exercise 1.

B BEFORE YOU READ

Work with a partner. Discuss the changes over the years in how people purchase music, video games, books, and movies, and say when the last time was that you bought a physical version of any of these products.

C GLOBAL READING

Complete *Subscribed* with the paragraph headings (a–f).

- a An overrated device
- b Varying formats, varying success
- c Large individual spending
- d A constantly changing landscape
- e Fall of a big brand
- f A future growth sector

Activating prior knowledge

Identifying main ideas

Subscribed

1

Subscription services have been embraced by a staggering number of people. From food and drink subscriptions to music to video gaming and apps, consumption of such services shows no signs of slowing down and has in fact grown by over 400% in the last decade. The norm in the UK sees the average Brit spend \$600 a year to access TV, film, and music services. In the USA, when we consider subscription products as well as services, the amount spent exceeds \$2,500 annually. The idea of owning *access* to content, rather than content itself is starting to dominate many sectors to such an extent some are arguing that this is the final era we will buy physical content.

2

Before the likes of Netflix and Amazon Prime Video, the company that sprang to mind for movies was Blockbuster. Unless you were willing to buy your own physical copy, Blockbuster and similar stores were your only feasible way of accessing movie content. Such was the popularity that the company went from one store in 1985 to being bought for \$8.4 billion less than a decade later, with over 6,000 stores worldwide. However, companies like Netflix and Redbox started to take market share from them, and streaming services began to emerge. At the peak of the DVD era, 6.1 billion DVDs were sold annually in 2011. By 2022, just 300 million were sold. During the same period, subscription services such as Netflix have grown from 39 million users worldwide to 1.2 billion. Arguably, when it comes to movies, the era of owning physical products is already over. So, what about other sectors?

3

When Amazon launched the first Kindle e-reader device in 2007 for \$399, it sold out within five and a half hours. Initially, it was only available in the USA and offered access to 90,000 books. In the light of how Apple's iPod had revolutionized listening to music, many forecast a similar disruption to the book market. However, these forecasts have proven to be somewhat inaccurate, as the bulk of all books sold comprises print copies. With total revenues in the USA standing at around \$26 billion, e-books account for around only \$2 billion of that figure. Worldwide, these figures are similar, and the numbers have grown negligibly in recent years and are even starting to flatten out. So, while we may not be bothered about owning a DVD, it seems many of us still want a physical book.

4

In some cases, both the physical format and the method of accessing content digitally has changed even more. Take the music sector, for example, which was dominated by vinyl in the 1970s. In the early 1980s, the proportion of sales had been taken over by a new physical format—the cassette. However, its success was short lived, and from the late 1980s through to the end of the 1990s, sales of compact discs—aka CDs—grew rapidly until they constituted over 95% of the market. No single format, digital or print, had ever held such a large proportion of the market, nor has it since. From

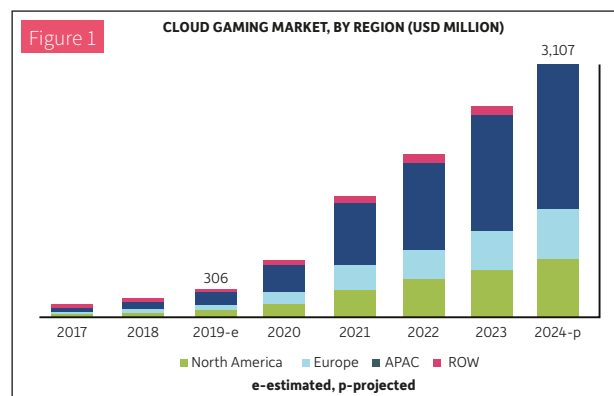
the early 2000s, companies started to utilize digital formats for selling music content. At first this was as a digital download whereby people still owned the song or album. However, it wasn't long until streaming quickly took over. One vastly unexpected change was the growth of vinyl, which grew from a 0.2% sector share to a sizeable 7.5% of the market to become the second most popular format. Despite the comeback of vinyl, this is yet another sector in which people are paying just to access content rather than to own something physical.

5

One area that is a relatively new market is cloud gaming, but not everyone is convinced it will replace physical games and consoles. Pav Bhardwaj, a senior figure at Microsoft's Xbox Game Pass, argued in 2022 that streaming won't completely replace consoles because some people associate consoles with the heart of the gaming experience. Others, however, predict the market to grow dramatically. Some forecasts suggest that in the USA alone, the cloud gaming market could be worth over \$40 billion. Since the market is still relatively young, estimates vary significantly. However, as can be seen in Figure 1, the sector is expected to grow tenfold in just five years. One of the leading causes of this is the improved 5G network. This is especially true in the APAC region, which will see by far the biggest growth.

6

Access to content versus owning physical products is an ever-evolving market. Apart from a few niche sales areas, music and movies have nearly all shifted to a market where consumers prefer to pay to access to content rather than own it. However, despite the availability of e-readers for more than two decades, physical book sales still dominate the sector. For now, cloud gaming is in its infancy and forecasts vary widely over its future. Books may have bucked the trend, but for many other sectors accessing content rather than owning it seems to be the norm.



Global Cloud Gaming Market Size, 2017–2024

Interpreting visual data

D CLOSE READING

Graphs and charts are an efficient way for an author to communicate large amounts of information using little space and few words. Interpreting graphs can give you a better understanding of the bigger picture behind a text.

1 Look at Figure 1 in *Subscribed* again and complete the summary.

The graph shows changes in regional revenue streams in the cloud gaming industry from 2017 to 2024. From 2017 to 2024 sales of cloud gaming access ¹*grew / flattened out* in all regions. APAC grew the ²*fastest / least* in the eight-year period. Cloud gaming relies on good 5G networks and this may explain why the ROW (rest of the world) showed ³*very little / a lot of* growth. By 2024 the APAC region was ⁴*more than / less than* all other markets combined.

2 Read the text again and answer the questions.

- 1 What were the highest yearly sales of DVDs? What had they fallen to in just over a decade?
- 2 What is the global trend for e-book sales?
- 3 What was the best-selling music format in each of the following decades?
1970s _____ 1980s _____ 1990s _____ 2000s _____ 2010s _____
- 4 Who does not think all gaming will move to cloud gaming?
- 5 What is one of the main drivers of cloud gaming?

E CRITICAL THINKING

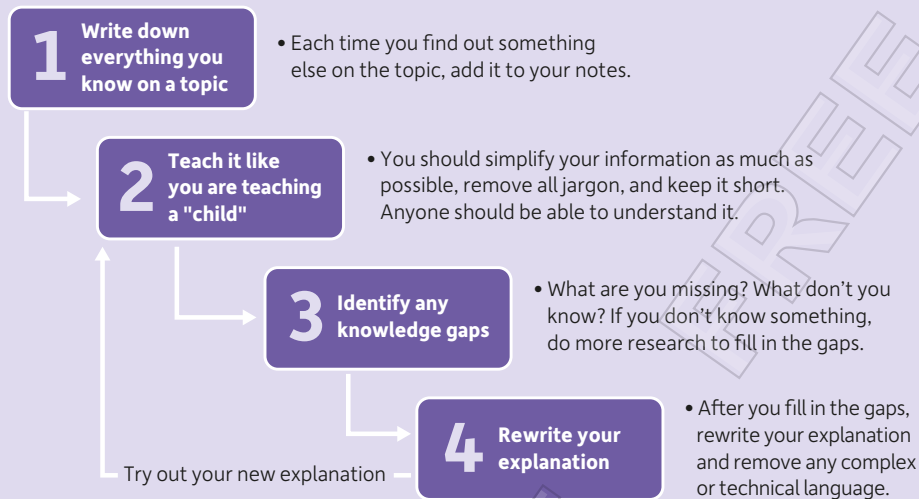
Work in a group. Discuss the questions.

- 1 Do you feel any sense of nostalgia when you see DVDs or CDs? Why / why not?
- 2 Are digital versions of products always better than physical products? Why / why not?
- 3 The text referred to “the improved 5G network” as one reason for the increased popularity of cloud gaming. What other barriers might there be to greater adoption of online gaming and how could they be overcome?

ACADEMIC SKILLS

THE FEYNMAN TECHNIQUE

Richard Feynman (1918–1988) was an American author, philosopher, and physicist who shared a Nobel Prize in 1965. He devised original approaches to the teaching and learning of technical content, and his name became linked with the Feynman technique, which is a way to learn about something more deeply. The technique involves these four steps:



1 Work with a partner. Read the skills box and answer the questions.

- What kind of "child" should you teach your topic to?
 - under 10 years old
 - with no knowledge of subject
 - very academic
- How should you rewrite your explanation?
 - simpler language
 - more information
 - fewer words
- How do you try out your new explanation?
 - do your research again
 - write it again
 - teach it again

2 Choose a topic you're studying and write down what you know about it. Make sure it is specific, e.g., *supply and demand* rather than *macroeconomics*.

3 Find a partner with no knowledge of this topic and try to explain it to them. Simplify your explanation as much as possible.

4 Work with a partner. Discuss the questions.

- Did your explanation show you that you have some gaps in your knowledge? If so, what do you need to research?
- Could you use this technique to learn about any topic? Are there any limitations with the technique?

GAMING, SOCIETY, AND THE INDIVIDUAL

A VOCABULARY PREVIEW

1 Complete the questions with the words in the box.

aggression analytical awareness deficit
interaction isolation peers prolonged

- 1 Do you think children who play video games are more likely to have better social skills than their non-gaming _____?
- 2 Do you agree that regular gaming increases levels of _____ in young people?
- 3 Does gaming have a positive or negative impact on social _____?
- 4 To what extent do you agree that _____ periods of online gaming could lead to health issues?
- 5 In what way might gaming improve cognitive and _____ ability?
- 6 How might playing video games improve your spatial _____?
- 7 What are the long-term health implications of a sleep _____ caused by gaming?
- 8 Is social _____ an inevitable consequence of gaming?

2 Work with a partner. Discuss the questions in Exercise 1.

B BEFORE YOU READ

Activating prior
knowledge

Work in a small group. Discuss whether gaming has a largely positive or negative impact on both individuals and society as a whole.

C GLOBAL READING

Identifying main ideas

Read *Gaming, society, and the individual*. Match the main ideas (a–f) with paragraphs (1–6).

- a Online multiplayer games may actually enhance social skills ____
- b Research indicates both positive and negative effects on academic performance ____
- c The impact on physical and mental health is mixed ____
- d Gaming has come to dominate our culture ____
- e The link between gaming and violence is unfounded ____
- f Despite many positives, continued research is necessary ____

A person is seen from behind, wearing a large, colorful headset with a microphone, and playing a video game on a computer monitor. The person is wearing a red and black plaid shirt. The monitor displays a game with a red and white character in a landscape. The background is dark with some blurred lights.

GAMING, SOCIETY, and the individual

¹Traditionally, gaming was solely the pursuit of a hardcore minority, but the rise of mobile gaming over the past five years has significantly expanded this user base. While there remains a dedicated core that plays anything up to 40 hours a week—the equivalent to a full-time job—hundreds of millions now play for a more leisurely half an hour to an hour a day. From the early arcade games of the 70s and console wars of the 90s, to the current boom in massively multiplayer online games (MMOG) and virtual reality, gaming has become ingrained in all aspects of modern society. While gaming is often reputed to have a negative impact on child development and behavior, an emerging body of research suggests we may have been a little quick to judge.

²Perhaps the most well-publicized concern is that gaming is causally linked to increased levels of violent behavior, especially amongst children and adolescents. The general perception is that violent

video games incite real-world violence, yet frankly there is considerable evidence to the contrary. Przybylski and Mishkin (2015) found that it is in fact the duration of game play, not the content of the game itself that is likely to have a detrimental influence on behavior. Furthermore, according to Ferguson (2010), many studies are purely observational and use measures to evaluate aggression that do not correspond to real-world violence, and that it is consequently impossible to demonstrate a cause-and-effect relationship. In this area at least, it seems there simply isn't enough robust data to support common wisdom.

³Another commonly held belief is that gaming leads to the social isolation of our youth. It is largely perceived as an insular activity that has a profoundly negative impact on the individual's ability to interact with their peers. While a superficially attractive theory, it fails to consider the role and prominence of massively multiplayer online gaming (MMOG). These games, by definition, require interaction; in fact, it is often impossible to succeed in them without the cooperation of others. Rather

than being socially isolating, they may actually improve real-world social skills—a notion that seems to be supported by the research. Kovess-Masfety et al. (2016) found that children who frequently play video games are actually more likely to have superior intellectual and social skills than those who play no games at all. Furthermore, in a review of recent research, Granic et al. (2014) concluded that gaming encourages both collaborative behavior and social interaction. While gamers undoubtedly spend less time socializing offline, the perception that gaming is socially isolating, simply isn't borne out by the research.

⁴However, one issue that is a little less clear-cut is the impact of gaming on academic performance. A wealth of studies has identified a strong correlation between excessive gaming and poor performance on standardized testing. While no causal link has been clearly

demonstrated, researchers attribute the effect to sleep deficit and a propensity to skip class. Gamers also tend to demonstrate higher levels of aggression to their peers, and are generally more hostile towards teachers, neither of which correlate with good grades. Yet perhaps somewhat counter-intuitively, gaming has been shown to be of benefit to children with attention deficit disorder (ADD). Furthermore, Bavelier et al. (2014) found that habitual action gamers are actually better analytical decision makers and can work faster and with a higher level of accuracy than their non-gaming counterparts—all of which are hugely beneficial in an academic environment.

⁵Another key area for discussion is the impact of gaming on physical and mental development. Gamers have repeatedly demonstrated greater hand-eye coordination, improved dexterity, and better spatial awareness than their non-gaming counterparts—largely due to the sheer speed at which they are expected to interpret and react to visual stimulus. Furthermore, gaming is arguably beneficial to mental health (Kovess-Masfety et al. 2016) and, according to a study by Kühn et al.

(2014), may even help prevent neurodegenerative diseases. However, as the vast majority of games require little to no physical movement, one might reasonably claim them to be a contributory factor in childhood obesity. However, children also spend prolonged periods of time watching TV and using mobile devices, both of which contribute to a more sedentary lifestyle. It would therefore be unjust to infer that gaming alone is the direct cause of obesity.

⁶In conclusion, while there is research to suggest that gaming can have a negative impact on academic performance and our physical health, the commonly held beliefs that video games lead to violent behavior and are socially isolating simply aren't borne out by the evidence. In fact, collaboration and, by extension, social interaction, are intrinsic parts of massively multiplayer online gaming. Furthermore, gaming can enhance fine motor skills and may well prevent a range of mental health issues. However, as gaming continues to encroach on all aspects of society, one thing remains clear—we must continue to study its impact on all aspects of our lives.

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Identifying stance and distancing

D CLOSE READING

In order to properly evaluate an argument or claim, it's important to distinguish the writer's opinion from others presented in the text. Although writers often explicitly state their attitude toward something, they also use a range of adverbs to indicate stance;

Admittedly, it's unclear whether there is a direct causal link between the two.

It is **obviously** too soon to assess the true impact of gaming on society.

Writers may also use adverbs in the middle of a clause to distance themselves from what they're saying;

The researchers were **apparently** unable to determine the exact cause of the phenomenon.

Read *Gaming, society, and the individual* again. Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer? Write **Y (Yes)** if they agree, **N (No)** if they disagree, and **NG (Not Given)** if it's impossible to say what the writer thinks of this.

- 1 Research supports the commonly held belief that gaming incites violence. ____
- 2 On the surface, the notion that gaming leads to social isolation is appealing. ____
- 3 Gamers almost certainly socialize less in the real-world than their peers. ____
- 4 Prohibiting mobile devices in the classroom would improve academic performance. ____
- 5 Gaming has an unexpectedly positive impact on behavioral disorders. ____
- 6 Non-gamers perform better in tests of agility and physical strength. ____
- 7 Arguing that gaming plays a role in childhood obesity is unjustified. ____
- 8 The general perception that games are too violent is unjustified. ____

E CRITICAL THINKING

Work with a partner. Discuss the questions.

- 1 Based on the text, do you think the effects of gaming are mainly positive or negative?
- 2 What else would you like to know about the studies mentioned in the reading? How might this change your stance on question 1?

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

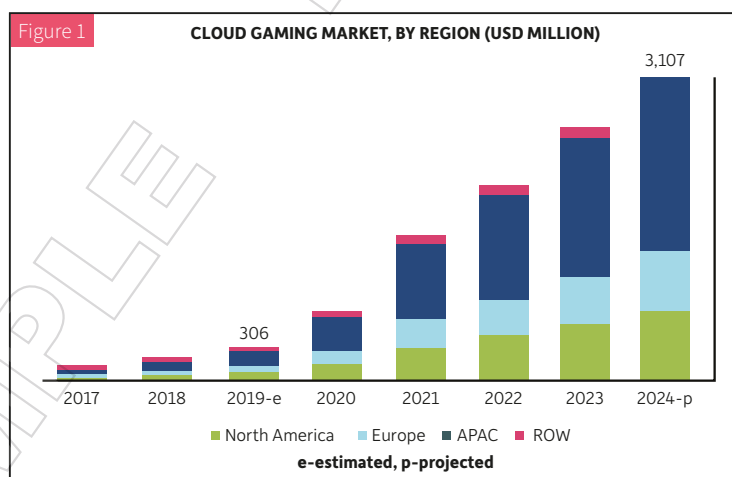
VOCABULARY FOR THE DESCRIPTION OF DATA

1 Complete the definitions with the words and phrases in the box.

account for exceed flatten out negligibly overwhelming majority
significant proportion sizable vastly

- 1 _____ (v) to be greater than a given number or amount
- 2 _____ (n) a powerfully large proportion of
- 3 _____ (adv) of little importance or size
- 4 _____ (adj) fairly large
- 5 _____ (phr v) to explain the cause of something
- 6 _____ (phr v) to stop increasing and remain at the same level
- 7 _____ (adv) to a great degree
- 8 _____ (n) a noticeably large percentage of

2 Complete the description of the chart with words from Exercise 1. Change the form if necessary.



Global Cloud Gaming Market Size, 2017–2024

The cloud gaming market in Europe and North America grew ¹ _____ between 2017 and 2018. However, by 2019 it had ² _____ \$300 million for the first time. By this stage, the APAC region already ³ _____ over half the market. There was ⁴ _____ growth in the market overall between 2019 and 2024. However, the growth in the rest of the world started to ⁵ _____ between 2022 and 2023. The ⁶ _____ of cloud gaming platforms rely on a well-developed 5G network. The 5G infrastructure initiatives in APAC mean that a ⁷ _____ of cloud gaming happens in this region. Cloud gaming has already grown tenfold in the last six years, and some predict that it will ⁸ _____ grow in the next six years to be worth over \$40 billion.

ACADEMIC WORDS AND IDIOMS

1 Match the words in bold with the correct definitions.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 attribute (v) | a to be or form something |
| 2 bulk (n) | b the form that a film, program, or recording is produced in; the way something is designed or produced |
| 3 constitute (v) | c because of a particular fact |
| 4 format (n) | d a part or share of a whole |
| 5 infer (v) | e the most common or greatest in number or amount |
| 6 in (the) light of (id) | f to say that something is the result of a particular situation, event, or person's actions |
| 7 intrinsic (adj) | g involving nothing except the person or thing mentioned |
| 8 predominant (adj) | h to form an opinion about something based on the information available |
| 9 proportion (n) | i to suddenly remember something or start to think about it |
| 10 solely (adv) | j the largest part or majority of something |
| 11 spring to mind (id) | k to use something |
| 12 utilize (v) | l the essential qualities or features of something or someone |

2 Complete the text with words from Exercise 1. Change the form if necessary.

Technology has become ¹ _____ to most aspects of society as we ² _____ it for everything from work to entertainment. The ³ _____ of the changes that have occurred over the last 20 years can largely be ⁴ _____ to technological advancement. While many of the changes have been positive, there are areas of concern, such as the increased incidence of cybercrime, which in some countries ⁵ _____ approximately 40% of all crime committed—a disturbingly large ⁶ _____ of the total. From the available research, it seems reasonable to ⁷ _____ that this increase is, in part, due to the trend toward digital ⁸ _____ and the rise of streaming technology. In fact, many adolescents surveyed stated that they obtained music / media ⁹ _____ via illegal torrent sites. ¹⁰ _____ the advances in mobile networks, streaming rather than owning content is likely to become the ¹¹ _____ method to continue accessing media whether legally or illegally. When we think of how much content is illegally shared on the Internet, the word “honesty” definitely does not ¹² _____.

3 Work with a partner. Discuss the questions.

- 1 To what extent do you agree that the bulk of technological advancements are positive?
- 2 In what ways has technology diminished our levels of privacy?
- 3 To what do you attribute increased levels of cybercrime?

ACADEMIC IDIOMS

SPRING TO MIND

If something *springs to mind*, then you suddenly think of it—in much the same way as water can appear suddenly from an underground spring.

CRITICAL THINKING

Evaluating supporting data: 1

Data can be a simple way to support a claim or argument. However, it's important to assess whether the writer has deliberately misrepresented the data in order to strengthen the appearance of their argument. Some common ways to do this are:

- Using percentages to make small sample sizes sound more impressive (e.g., 25% instead of 1 in 4)
- Omitting results that contradict the main argument
- Manipulating the presentation of a graph (e.g., presenting an axis ranging from 20–25, rather than 0–100).

1 Work in a group. Read the argument and supporting data. Then discuss the questions.

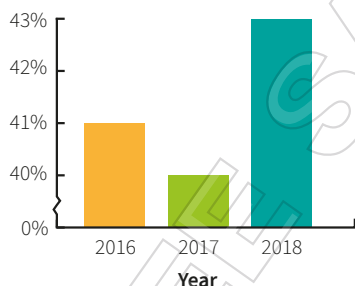
Playing video games clearly leads to an increase in violence in children. In one study, those who played violent games for more than two hours per day showed much higher levels of aggression toward peers and teachers. Therefore, it can be said that there is a clear cause-and-effect relationship between violent game time and violent behavior.

- 1 How large was the sample size? Why is it important to know this?
- 2 How was the level of aggression measured? Why is it important to know this?
- 3 What other information, such as the children's background, might influence our assessment of the data?
- 4 Do you agree with the writer that the data clearly indicates a cause-and-effect relationship?

2 Work with a partner. Read the arguments (1–3) and assess whether the data offered are sufficient.

- 1 In a case study of five boys, two showed much higher levels of aggression after playing video games. It is clear that over 40% of all children become more aggressive after playing video games.
- 2 As evidenced in Figure 1, there has been a huge spike in the number of violent crimes committed.
- 3 It was found that 30% of children failing at school play video games for in excess of two hours per week. Clearly, academic performance is hindered by video games.

Figure 1

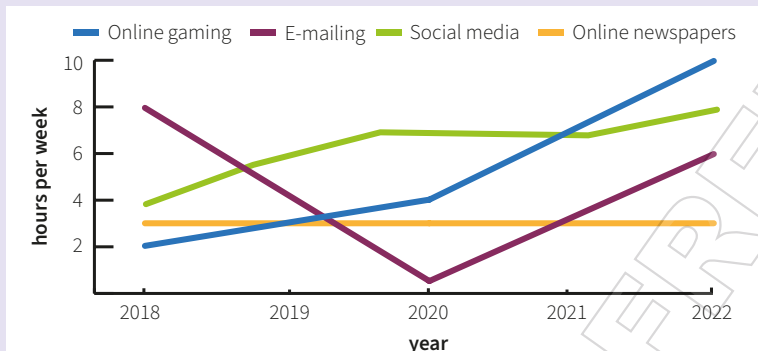


WRITING MODEL

You are going to learn about using inverted real and unreal conditionals, and using data to support opinions. You are then going to use these to write a short report about trends in the gaming industry.

A ANALYZE

Look at the graph and add an introductory sentence to the model below.



B MODEL

Read the model and answer the questions.

In the past, people spent vastly more time on e-mail and it accounted for over 50% of the time spent online. It continued to take the overwhelming majority of people's time, as approximately twice as many hours were spent on e-mail in comparison to all other activities until 2018. At this stage, a significant proportion of time was spent using social media. The rise in the number of hours spent on social media hours continued until 2020 when it flattened out at marginally more time than the hours spent on e-mail. Were this trend to continue, technology would likely play an increasingly important social role.

Perhaps the most significant change is the vastly increased number of hours spent gaming online as well as e-mailing. Between 2020 and 2022 the number of hours spent gaming roughly doubled to exceed ten hours per week. Proportionally speaking, online gaming was also increasing, whereas reading online newspapers only negligibly changed. Although the graph does not state it, this may have happened in light of the COVID-19 pandemic with increases in homeschooling and working from home. The growth of 5G also springs to mind and may allow this trend to continue.

- 1 Which sentences describe single factors and which ones combine factors?
- 2 Which verbs are used to describe change?
- 3 Which adverbs are used to describe the verbs?
- 4 How does this graph compare to your own online use?

GRAMMAR

Inverted conditionals: real and unreal present

Conditional sentences can be made to sound more formal using the following inverted constructions;

should + subject + base form

*Should this trend continue, DVDs will become obsolete by the end of the decade.
Should consumers not choose to adopt mobile gaming, the industry may collapse.*

were + subject + to + base form

*Were it easier to access high-speed Internet connections, more consumers would adopt Netflix.
Were companies not to adapt, they would risk losing out to competitors.*

1 Invert the following sentences using the verbs in bold.

- 1 Companies may stop investing in e-books if sales continue to stagnate.

Should _____

- 2 Traditionally broadcasted TV may become a thing of the past if people continue to stream content on mobile devices.

Should _____

- 3 Investors might well lose faith in the project if sales were to decline any further.

Were _____

- 4 If companies choose not to invest in mobile gaming, they may well see a decline in revenue over the next decade.

Should _____

- 5 E-readers would undoubtedly be more popular among consumers if they were easier to navigate.

Were _____

- 6 If consumers don't adopt early, the product might fail in its first year.

Were _____

2 Work with a partner. Make predictions about the following using inverted conditionals.

- a DVD sales
- b Online gaming
- c Music streaming

WRITING SKILL

Data are often used to support an argument in academic writing. There are two main ways to approach this:

- 1 State the opinion first, then justify it with supporting data.
- 2 Present the data first as a basis for the opinion that follows.

Use of e-mail for personal correspondence has declined steadily since 2010, while social media has seen a rise to prominence. This strongly indicates that social media has become the preferred method of communication.

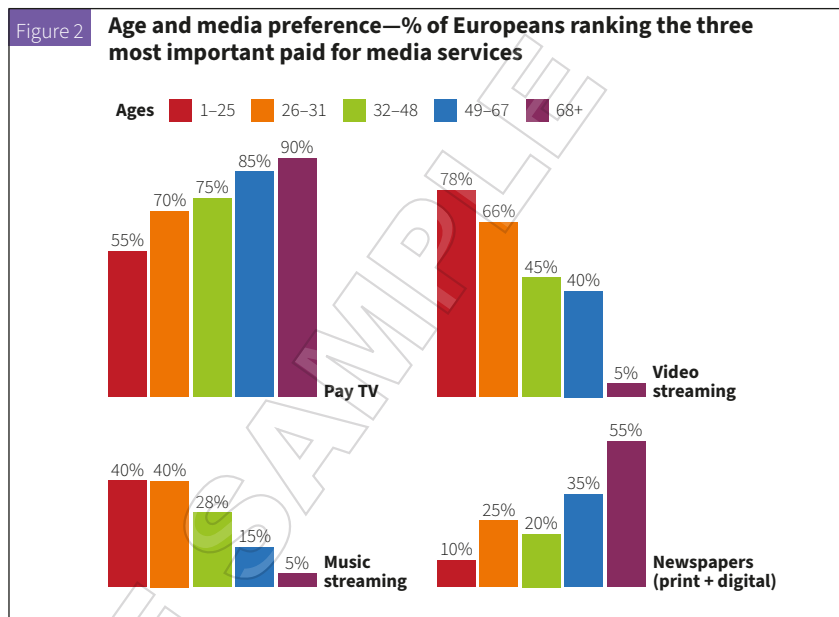
Note that your choice of adverb shows the degree to which you believe in the data.

Using data to support opinions

1 Work with a partner. Discuss what data sets might be used to support the following arguments.

- 1 Social media has become the primary way to share photos.
- 2 The gaming industry is still primarily rooted in physical media.
- 3 Young people are no longer interested in physical media.
- 4 Mobile gaming is the main reason for the growth in female gamers.

2 Write sentences to support the following arguments using data from the graph.



- 1 Video streaming is far more popular among young people than retirees.
- 2 Music marketing should be targeted squarely at adolescents.
- 3 Young people simply aren't interested in newspapers.
- 4 Pay TV will become obsolete within the next decade.

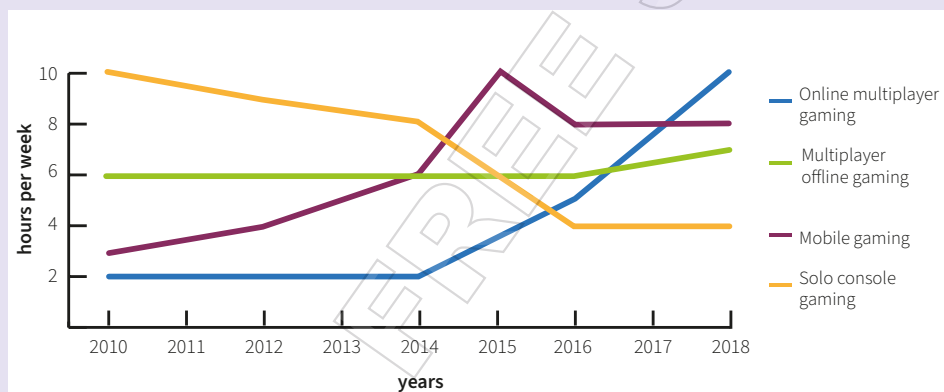
WRITING TASK

You are going to write a short report in response to the following:

“The graph shows current and predicted trends in the gaming industry. Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where necessary.”

Brainstorm

Look at the graph and make notes about the main trends.



Plan

- 1 What are the main trends you will focus on?
- 2 What conclusions can be drawn about the data?
- 3 What might happen if these trends persist?

Write

Use your plan to help you write your report. Write 250–350 words. Remember to use inverted conditionals as appropriate and to use data to support your opinions.

Review

Exchange your report with a partner. Review the following together:

- Have you reported the main features?
- Have you made comparisons where necessary?
- Have you made predictions about the future trends?

Rewrite and edit

Consider your partner's comments. Before writing the final draft of your report, check whether your report:

- uses an inverted conditional.
- uses *should* or *were* in the inverted conditional.
- uses an accurate structure of the inverted conditional.

WORDLIST

*** very frequent ** frequent * not frequent

Vocabulary preview

aggression (n) **	deficit (n) **	interaction (n) **	prolonged (adj)
analytical (adj) *	dominate (v) **	isolation (n) **	sector (n) **
awareness (n) **	embrace (v) **	norm (n) **	staggering (adj)
consumption (n) **	feasible (adj) *	peer (n) **	subscription (n) *

Vocabulary development

account for (phr v) ***	flatten out (phr v)	overwhelming majority (phr)	sizable (adj)
exceed (v) **	negligibly (adv)	significant proportion (phr)	vastly (adv)

Academic words and idioms

attribute (v) **	format (n) **	in (the) light of (id)	solely (adv) **
bulk (n) **	infer (v) *	proportion (n) ***	spring to mind (id)
constitute (v) **	intrinsic (adj)	predominant (adj)	utilize (v) *

ACADEMIC WORDS AND IDIOMS REVIEW

Complete the sentences using the correct form of the words below.

bulk constitute in the light of modify proportion resolve spring to mind

- Some small _____ were made to the survey after it was piloted.
- The captain maneuvered the ship's vast _____ skillfully into the port.
- _____ the findings, further research is needed.
- Sales of e-books declined by 18.7% in the USA last year, and this _____ a downward trend as consumers switch to tablets to download digital books.
- Crowdfunding has become increasingly common as a means to _____ funding issues for business ventures.
- What words _____ when you hear the brand name Tesla?
- A significant _____ of the students were dissatisfied with their results.

UNIT REVIEW

- Reading 1 ☐ I can interpret visual data.
- Reading 2 ☐ I can identify perspective.
- Academic skill ☐ I can use the Feynman technique
- Vocabulary ☐ I can use phrases for change.
- Grammar ☐ I can use inverted conditionals in the real and unreal present.
- Writing ☐ I can use data to support opinions.