

Vail School District  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Writing Benchmark #1  
Informational

**DIRECTIONS:**

Read the writing prompt and excerpts below. Then use scratch paper for your prewriting/planning and your draft.

Technology is used by millions of people around the world. Some experts claim that, at times, technology can be harmful instead of helpful. Read the attached articles. Write an informational essay to your community explaining how technology can have a negative influence on people.

Your writing should:

- Include a clear beginning, middle, and end
- Include a beginning that grabs the reader's attention
- Include important details and evidence from the articles
- Use supporting words and phrases

Remember to edit for spelling, grammar, punctuation, and capitalization.

## Cell Phone Revolution

www.readinga-z.com

Does it seem like everywhere you go people are using their cell phones? Just ten years ago, cell phones were not nearly as common as they are today. Now they have become something that many people cannot live without. Cell phones have made it easier to connect with people and get information. However, some people think they have negative effects as well.

In the past, when people wanted to communicate with another person, they could use their home phone or write a letter. Before answering machines, there was no way to leave a message. The person had no way of knowing that someone had called. Letters take days to reach the recipient. Then it takes more time to receive a response.

Cell phones have completely changed how we communicate. They give us many more ways to quickly connect with people all over the world. We can text instant messages and get responses in a matter of minutes or seconds. Cell phones allow us to place calls from nearly any location. We don't have to be at home to call someone. Today many people are better able to stay in touch with family and friends. They can use their phone to easily send a short message, and they are likely to get a quick response.

Smart phones allow us to do much more than just call or send messages. We can use them to send and receive email. They can even give us directions. Smart phones also allow us to surf the Internet. Information about stores, restaurants, and other businesses is available at the touch of a finger—and without having to ask a friend or neighbor.

There are some who argue that this convenience comes with a cost. Some people think texting is having a negative effect on our society. They say that people are less friendly. When people communicate via text message, sometimes their words can be misinterpreted.

Some adults think that younger people have forgotten how to spell and write complete sentences. Text messages need to be brief. This means that people type short sentences with little or no punctuation. They often type words as they sound not as they are spelled. Some adults say that younger people have poor speaking skills. This makes it harder for them to interact with people face to face.

Have you heard stories about people who are obsessed with their smart phones and cannot live without them? Some people feel the need to constantly check their email. They are afraid they will miss an important piece of information. Sometimes people pay more attention to their phones than to the people with them. This can lead to problems in personal relationships. Some people are more comfortable communicating via text than talking face to face.

Cell phones have changed how we communicate. Now we can place calls no matter where we are or what we are doing. They make it easier to reach out to people and stay connected. However, cell phones have not replaced sitting down and talking with someone in person.

## Life With Computers

www.learninga-z.com

Can you imagine life today without computers? You may not realize it, but computer technology is linked to almost every part of our lives. Computers help us do many things, but they can have negative effects as well.

The first computers were huge! They filled an entire room. Today's computers are much smaller, so we can easily carry them around. They are inside cell phones, laptops, and tablets. Computers can process and store large amounts of data. This allows us to keep and play movies and music on CDs, DVDs, and MP3 players and take them with us wherever we go.

Computers perform complex operations and process information much faster than people can. This makes them an essential part of many businesses. The medical industry relies on computers in much of its equipment. Medical testing is easier and more accurate because of computer technology. Computers are also an important part of products we use every day. Our cars, home appliances, and smart phones all rely on computer technology.

Most of us probably find it hard to imagine life without the Internet. Computers provide us with Internet access. They make it possible to share information with people all over the world. Today, it is easy to quickly find information about any topic. There is no need to drive to the library and search for just the right book. Just a few simple clicks are all we need to find facts, get directions, or plan a trip.

Some people are concerned about the role computers play in our lives. They think that computers have led to a loss of privacy. Computer hackers find ways to break into email and bank accounts. They can steal people's personal information. When you surf the Internet, companies collect information about the sites you visit. Some computer users have been the victims of cyber bullying or scams. It is easy to pretend to be someone you are not on the Internet.

Did you know that computers use a lot of energy? Many people leave their computers on at work or home for most of the day. Power plants burn fossil fuels to generate electricity. This leads to greater use of Earth's natural resources. As more people use computers, the demand for electricity increases.

Computer technology is constantly improving. This means that newer, faster computers are constantly being created. Old computers become obsolete. Everyone wants the latest, best thing. What happens to the old hardware? Much of it winds up in landfills as trash. Computers contain substances that can harm the environment.

Some people think that we spend too much time using personal computers, tablets, and other devices. Instead of playing outside, more kids are staying inside to play games. This lack of physical activity can lead to health problems, such as obesity. Some people spend more time with their computers than with their families and friends.

Computers have improved our lives in many ways, but we should be aware of the harm they can do as well. What will you do to lessen computers' negative effects?





