

Vail School District
7th Grade
Writing Benchmark #2
Argumentative

DIRECTIONS:

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

The Nature of Technology by James F. Rutherford

As long as there have been people, there has been technology. Indeed, the techniques of shaping tools are taken as the chief evidence of the beginning of human culture. On the whole, technology has been a powerful force in the development of civilization, all the more so as its link with science has been forged. Technology—like language, ritual, values, commerce, and the arts—is an intrinsic part of a cultural system and it both shapes and reflects the system's values. In today's world, technology is a complex social enterprise that includes not only research, design, and crafts but also finance, manufacturing, management, labor, marketing, and maintenance.

In the broadest sense, technology extends our abilities to change the world: to cut, shape, or put together materials; to move things from one place to another; to reach farther with our hands, voices, and senses. We use technology to try to change the world to suit us better. The changes may relate to survival needs such as food, shelter, or defense, or they may relate to human aspirations such as knowledge, art, or control. But the results of changing the world are often complicated and unpredictable. They can include unexpected benefits, unexpected costs, and unexpected risks—any of which may fall on different social groups at different times. Anticipating the effects of technology is therefore as important as advancing its capabilities.

Rutherford, James F. "The Nature of Technology". *Science for All Americans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990. Print.

Negative Effects of Using Technology in Today's Classroom by Julia Klaus

Classroom teachers are using technology in the classroom more frequently than ever before. According to the National School Boards Association, students who are exposed to a high volume of technology perform as well as expected on standardized test, however technology can potentially do students a disservice if used inappropriately. When teaching using technology, instructors must be aware of the potential hindrances technology can bring to the learning process. Some negative effects of technology in today's classroom are that it can take away valuable learning time, it can be overused, and it can also turn educational experiences into games for students.

Takes Away Learning Time

In today's classroom, teachers are pressed to make every minute count. If the teacher and students are not experienced with technology in the classroom, valuable time is often wasted on technical troubles. In addition, the teacher faces the difficulty of having a class full of students who are all at different skill levels. In many schools, most students will have a computer and Internet access, but schools that are located in impoverished areas may have a large portion of their student body with little to no computer experience. While it is important to educate these children in technology, it must be done at a pace that meets every individual's needs or more learning time will be wasted.

Overuse

In some classrooms technology is overused. This can lead to a variety of problems. Many students learn best by physically and mentally interacting with what they are studying. If most of the teaching is done using a computer, these students' needs are not being met. Technology should be used to supplement the classroom curriculum, but should not be used as the sole source of learning.

Game Mentality

One problem that many classroom teachers face is that students often use computers primarily for games. Because of this, many students associate computers and technology with game playing. Though some teachers can use this to their advantage, if this issue is not addressed, some students may get distracted and off task quickly.

“Negative Effects of Using Technology in Today’s Classroom”.
classroom.synonym.com.

Study: Emerging Technology Has Positive Impact in Classroom by Ryan Lytle

Stacey Roshan, an Advanced Placement calculus teacher at Bullis School—a private school for students grades three through 12 in Potomac, Md.—faced the problem of trying to keep her students engaged as she walked them through the difficult mathematics curriculum. During her previous three years at the school, Roshan notes, students were routinely stupefied by the traditional classroom lecture and often left class with more questions than answers.

"They wanted so much more time in the classroom to work on problems," Roshan says. To meet the needs of her students, Roshan made radical changes to her lesson plans. Using Camtasia Studio, a screen recording and video editing program, Roshan uploaded her lectures to iTunes and assigned them as homework. "We've kind of reversed the whole dynamic of the class," she says. "Instead of lecturing in class, I lecture to them when they're at home, and we work problems together [in the classroom]. I liken it to an English classroom where the kids go home and do the reading and then they come into class and have this lively, engaging discussion.

Taught with the video lectures, Roshan's students in the 2010-11 school year scored an average of 4.11 on the AP calculus test, compared to the 3.59 average among her students who took the test and were taught in the traditional classroom setting the year before. And a third of the class—a 10 percent increase from the previous year—scored a 5, the highest score a student can achieve on an AP test.

Other teachers have successfully implemented technology in the classroom, according to a recent study by CompTIA—which surveyed 500 K-12 and college instructors across the country. The report, *IT Opportunities in the Education Market*, revealed that 78 percent of K-12 teachers and administrators believe technology has positively impacted the classroom and the productivity of students. Roughly 65 percent of educators surveyed also believe that students are more productive today than they were three years ago due to the increased reliance on technology in the classroom.

Jim Tracy, headmaster at Cushing Academy in Ashburnham, Mass., sees the "process of technology coming into the classroom as inevitable."...Perhaps most noteworthy...is Cushing's implementation of an all-digital library.

"We were able to offer our students a library that was anywhere on campus where they were," Tracy notes. "For the same amount of money you would pay for a few thousand books on a shelf, you could have access to digital databases that give students access to literally millions of sources."

Lytle, Ryan. "Study: Emerging Technology Has Positive Impact in Classroom." *US News*. 14 July 2011. Web. 1 June 2014.

PROMPT: You have read three texts about technology and its impact in the classroom. Write an argumentative essay arguing for or against the use of technology in the classroom. Use specific evidence from the texts to support your argument. Use the writing guide as a tool to help you.

Your essay should include:

- an introduction, body, and conclusion
- an explanation of your reasons with supporting details from the text
- content and selected details that are appropriate to audience

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

