

**Argument/Opinion****Grade 8****Shut Down Your Screen**

Dear Teachers,

I believe that we should participate in shutdown your screen week. I think that everyone in the school should not use any electronics for one week. Since the invention of the computer, cellphone and other electronics, people have been using them more and more and more. These electronics have big upsides, you're never alone if you have cell service and Facebook allows people to talk to multiple friends at once when they're not in the same room, town, state, or country. But they also have their downsides. What makes us truly great is our ability to think deeply and focus, but when we use electronics or the internet we aren't doing either of these things. In fact, using these things makes us think **more shallow** and focus less. I think that we should participate in shut down your screen week.

One reason is that using electronics and multi-tasking causes focus problems, on and off computers. In *Attached to Technology and Paying a Price* by Matt Richtel, it says, "Scientists say juggling email, phone calls, and other incoming information can change how people think and behave. They say our ability to focus is being undermined by bursts of information." This ability to focus is enormously important, it's one of the things that we depend on almost every day. Like when you're driving a car to work or flying a plane. If you're distracted while doing one of these things it can have dire consequences for yourself and for others. Multi-tasking can also affect creativity, deep thought, causing problems for work and family life. By participating we could give people a chance to develop new habits of not using their phone or computer all the time.

A second reason that we should participate is that heavy multitaskers have trouble filtering out irrelevant information on and off the computer. In *Attached to Technology and Paying the Price* by Matt Richtel it says the multitaskers "had trouble filtering out the blue ones – the irrelevant information."

**Introduces a claim:**  
The introduction gives specific context for the proposal about "Shut Down Your Screen Week" and then states a claim

**Supports the claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence,** including direct quotations, **from accurate, credible sources,** thereby **demonstrating understanding of the topic**

**Uses words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence**

If we participated, we could give these people a chance to develop new habits that would help them filter out irrelevant information and only pay attention to the things that are important. For example, if someone's playing with their daughter, they would check their email every time they received an email instead of focusing on playing with their daughter.

Now, some people say that we shouldn't participate because technology makes you smarter, why stop doing something that's helping yourself. In an imaging study by Dr. Small, he found that "Internet users showed greater brain activity than nonusers, suggesting they were growing their neural circuitry." While they may be growing their neural circuitry, they were also changing a characteristic of the brain that was thought to be unchangeable, the ability to only process one stream of information at a time. This ability allows humans to think deeply, an important characteristic in **today's** society. By changing it, they were preventing themselves from having the ability to think deeply.

Technology is a new thing, and it has many advantages and conveniences. But for many it becomes more than a convenience, it becomes an obsession. For this reason I believe that we should participate in shut down your screen week, to give people a chance to make new habits and make technology a convenience again, not a necessity.

**Establishes and maintains a formal style**

**Acknowledges an opposing claim, which the writer distinguishes from the claim and then counters with logical reasoning and relevant evidence**

**Provides a concluding section that follows from, and supports, the argument presented**

**Spelling** problems including typos are in yellow

**Missing or incorrect apostrophes** are in blue

**Punctuation** problems, including missing punctuation marks, are green.

**Grammar and word choice problems** are in pink

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to take a position on whether their school should participate in the national “Shut Down Your Screen Week.” This writer begins by offering specific, well-developed context concerning the issue and then asserts the claim that, in his view, the school should participate.

The writer develops his claim with several reasons, which he supports with some relevant, credible evidence, demonstrating his understanding of the topic and the texts he has read. The evidence in this piece comes from those texts. The writer organizes his ideas clearly and supports his claim with logical reasoning. In addition, he acknowledges a counterclaim, distinguishes it from his own claim, and refutes it with support for his own position, even though this development of a counterclaim is not stated in the Standards at this grade level, and again includes evidence from the texts. Throughout the essay, the writer uses words, phrases, and clauses as transitions to clarify the relationships among claim, counterclaim, reasons, and evidence and to create cohesion.

The writer maintains a formal style throughout the piece. The conclusion follows from and supports the argument presented.

***Student writing, even at a high level, is rarely perfect! As children learn to write, many times they will make errors because they are learning new words, phrases and writing skills. Creativity and exploration should be encouraged!***

This sample of student writing, aligned to the Common Core and annotated to show its strengths, is drawn from the **In Common** project. You can find more writing samples and learn more here:

<http://achievethecore.org/page/507/in-common-effective-writing-for-all-students>