PART II: PRACTICE

Unit 4: Virtual Relationship

Unit 5: Organ Donation System

Unit 6: Physician Assisted Dying

Unit 7: Same-sex Marriage

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students are exposed to different viewpoints of current issues.

2. Students are able to understand the arguments and counter-arguments of the selected issues.

3. Students apply the reading skills in tackling the selected issues.

4. Students exercise critical thinking skills based on the selected issues.

4

Virtual

Relationship

Unit 4: Virtual Networking

Making friends nowadays can only be a click or a tap away, thanks to modern technology. Social networking websites have become more and more popular. Is this kind of friendship the same as the one made through real contact? Is it better even, because of its convenience? How has this virtual friendship transformed users' lifestyles? We'll explore two viewpoints on online social networking.

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1   BEFORE READING

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1   Directions: Discuss the following questions with your partners.
Are you a Facebook user? What about your close friends? Can you name three advantages this mode of interaction has over the physical one? Do you think you are addicted to virtual social networking?

2   Directions: Match the given meanings with the boldfaced words or phrases in the text.

VOCABULARLY

✔ (n) a substitute
✔ (adj) having the characteristic of extravagant behaviour intended to attract attention to oneself
✔ (adj) excessive interest in own physical appearance
✔ (v) make something work more simply and effectively
✔ (n) a virtual world containing a range of online game and activities targeting children
✔ (adj) significant

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2   THE MAIN TEXT

Directions: Read the following text on social networking. Identify the issue and what the writer thinks about the issue.

Beyond Networking   by Christine Rosen

This past spring, Len Harmon, the director of the Fischer Policy and Cultural Institute at Nichols College in Dudley, Massachusetts, offered a new course about social networking. Nichols is a small school whose students come largely from Connecticut and Massachusetts; many of them are the first members of their families to attend college. "I noticed a lot of issues involved with social networking sites," Harmon told me when I asked him why he created the class. How have these sites been useful to Nichols students? "It has relieved some of the stress of transitions for them," he said. "When abrupt departures occur— their family moves or they have to leave friends behind—they can cope by keeping in touch more easily." (1)

So perhaps we should praise social networking websites for **streamlining** friendship the way e-mail streamlined correspondence. In the nineteenth century, Emerson observed that "friendship requires more time than poor busy men can usually command." Now, technology has given us the freedom to tap into our network of friends when it is convenient for us. "It's a way of maintaining a friendship without having to make any effort whatsoever," as a recent graduate of Harvard explained to *The New Yorker*. And that ease admittedly makes it possible to stay in contact with a wider circle of offline acquaintances than might have been possible in the era before Facebook. Friends you haven't heard from in years, old buddies from elementary school, people you might have (should have?) fallen out of touch with—it is now easier than ever to reconnect to those people. (2)

But what kind of connections are these? In his excellent book Friendship: An Exposé, Joseph Epstein praises the telephone and e-mail as technologies that have greatly facilitated friendship. He writes, "Proust once said he didn't much care for the analogy of a book to a friend. He thought a book was better than a friend, because you could shut it—and be shut of it—when you wished, which one can't always do with a friend." With e-mail and caller ID, Epstein enthuses, you can. But social networking sites (which Epstein says "speak to the vast loneliness in the world") have a different effect: they discourage "being shut of" people. On the contrary, they encourage users to check in frequently, "poke" friends, and post comments on others' pages. They favor interaction of greater quantity but less quality. (3)

This constant connectivity concerns Len Harmon. "There is a sense of, 'if I'm not online or constantly texting or posting, then I'm missing something,'" he said of his students. "This is where I find the generational impact the greatest—not the use of the technology, but the overuse of the technology." It is unclear how the regular use of these sites will affect behavior over the long run—especially the behavior of children and young adults who are growing up with these tools. Almost no research has explored how virtual socializing affects children's development. What does a child weaned on **Club Penguin** learn about social interaction? How is an adolescent who spends her evenings managing her MySpace page different from a teenager who spends her night gossiping on the

telephone to friends? Given that "people want to live their lives online," as the founder of one social networking site recently told Fast Company magazine, and they are beginning to do so at ever-younger ages, these questions are worth exploring. (4)

The few studies that have emerged do not inspire confidence. Researcher Rob Nyland at Brigham Young University recently surveyed 184 users of social networking sites and found that heavy users "feel less socially involved with the community around them." He also found that "as individuals use social networking more for entertainment, their level of social involvement decreases." Another recent study conducted by communications professor Qingwen Dong and colleagues at the University of the Pacific found that "those who engaged in romantic communication over MySpace tend to have low levels of both emotional intelligence and self-esteem." (5)

The implications of the **narcissistic** and **exhibitionistic** tendencies of social networkers also cry out for further consideration. There are opportunity costs when we spend so much time carefully grooming ourselves online. Given how much time we already devote to entertaining ourselves with technology, it is at least worth asking if the time we spend on social networking sites is well spent. In investing so much energy into improving how we present ourselves online, are we missing chances to genuinely improve ourselves? (6)

We should also take note of the trend toward giving up face-to-face for virtual contact—and, in some cases, a preference for the latter. Today, many of our cultural, social, and political interactions take place through eminently convenient technological **surrogates**—Why go to the bank if you can use the ATM? Why browse in a bookstore when you can simply peruse the personalized selections Amazon.com has made for you? In the same vein, social networking sites are often convenient surrogates for offline friendship and community. In this context it is worth considering an observation that Stanley Milgram made in 1974, regarding his experiments with obedience: "The social psychology of this century reveals a major lesson," he wrote. "Often it is not so much the kind of person a man is as the kind of situation in which he finds himself that determines how he will act." To an increasing degree, we find and form our friendships and communities in the virtual world as well as the real world. These virtual networks greatly expand our opportunities to meet others, but they might also result in our valuing less the capacity for genuine connection. As the young woman writing in the Times admitted, "I consistently trade actual human contact for the more reliable high of smiles on MySpace, winks on Match.com, and pokes on Facebook." That she finds these online relationships more reliable is **telling**: it shows a desire to avoid the vulnerability and uncertainty that true friendship entails. Real intimacy requires risk—the risk of disapproval, of heartache, of being thought a fool. Social networking websites may make relationships more reliable, but whether those relationships can be humanly satisfying remains to be seen. (7)

2.1   COMPREHENSION CHECK

1   How did Nichols College students benefit from social networking websites? (P.1)

_____

2   What are the other benefits of social networking websites? (P.2)

_____

_____

3   Why has Harmon worried about social networking users? (P.4)

_____

4   A   What is mainly discussed in paragraph 5?

_____

        B   What is the support for the main idea?

        B.1   _____

        B.2   The more the subjects rely on online socialising, the less they feel the need for
                social involvement.

        B.3   _____

5   What disadvantages may result from the facts that Facebook users tend to spend a lot of
        time 'grooming' and 'presenting' themselves online? (P.6)

_____

6   What is the last point of concern that the writer has raised? (P.7)

_____

2.2   DEVELOPING READING SKILLS

2.2.1   THE WRITER'S THESIS

When we examine the title—Beyond Networking, we know the issue definitely has to do with
social networking. We still don't know if the writer is in favor of against social networking, as the
title doesn't give away much. We don't have the lead-in to give us any hint either. As discussed in
Unit 1, sometimes when the writer's thesis is not explicitly stated, nor is there a lead-in to help you
identify the thesis, we may follow the steps below in order to identify the writer's thesis.

1   Read the first sentence of each paragraph in order to get a gist of what the writer is
        discussing.

2   Identify the key words in each sentence in order to help you formulate the writer's point in
        each paragraph.

Most paragraphs are developed deductively. 'Deductively' is here used in a different sense from
deductive reasoning. Still the concept remains that the point moves from general to specific. The
first sentence of each paragraph captures the general sense of the paragraph and what follows are
specific details that support the first sentence.

Now, let's work on the first two steps.

	First Sentence		The writer's points
1	This past spring Len Harmon offered a new course about social networking.	✓ __	Introduction of a course in social networking websites and its rationale The popularity of social networking
2	So, perhaps we should <u>praise</u> social networking websites for <u>streamlining</u> <u>friendship</u> the way email streamlined correspondence.	__ ✓	The fallen friendship in today's world Advantages of social networking websites
3	But, what kind of connections are these?	__ __	Introduction of problems related to social networking websites Users' addiction to social networking websites
4	This constant connectivity <u>concerns</u> Len Harmon.	__ __	The negative effects of the technology overuse Teenagers' lifestyles brought on by social networking websites
5	The few studies that have emerged do not inspire confidence.	__ __	Users' low emotional intelligence of users and self-esteem Evidence of negative effects of social networking website use
6	The <u>implications of the narcissistic and exhibitionistic tendencies</u> of social networkers also cry out for further consideration.	__ __	Artificial self-portrayal VS Genuine self-improvement Studies proving the modern day's unproductive lifestyle
7	We should also take note of the <u>trend toward giving up face-to-face for virtual contact</u>.	__ __	Criticism of virtual friendship Cautions against virtual friendship

3   Group the information and fill it in the blanks.

Paragraphs 1-2: Introduction: _____

Paragraphs 3-6: Body: _____

Paragraph 7: Conclusion: _____

The odd is five to two that the writer is 'not' in favor of social networking websites. A critical re-examination of the article will now help you identify the writer's thesis.

4   Formulate the writer's thesis

_____

_____

2.2.2 IDENTIFYING THE WRITER'S PURPOSE

Understanding the writer's purpose helps us understand the text more easily. While we try to identify the writer's main purpose in writing the text, it's equally important that we recognise his purpose in giving a specific piece of information, citing an authority, or sharing his personal account etc.

To elaborate, in the introduction, when the writer talks about a specific headline, he must pick the one that is related to the issue he is about to discuss, and we should appreciate that he may want to give the reader some background or an update on the issue.

In the body paragraphs, the writer aims to present his arguments in support of his view. He does this by giving facts, examples, statistics, anecdotes, citing authorities in the field etc. Therefore, we shall act as an engaged reader and try to figure out what end all the support provided serves. In the similar vein, we must recognise the information that the writer may use to rebut the opposing view.

Let's examine the writer's purpose in the following exercise.

1   What is the writer's purpose in writing the text?

_____

2   What is the writer's purpose in mentioning the new course in social networking in P.1?

_____

3   "Friendship requires more time than poor busy men can usually command." (P.3)

What is the writer's purpose in citing Emerson's statement?

_____

_____

4   What is the writer's purpose in quoting Epstein's writing "Proust…with a friend." (P.3)

_____

5   Why does the writer raise the questions in paragraph 4?

_____

6   "In investing so much energy into improving how we present ourselves online, are we missing chances to genuinely improve ourselves?"

What is the writer's purpose in asking the question?

_____

_____

7   "Often it is not so much the kind of person a man is as the kind of situation in which he finds himself that determines how he will act."(p.7)

In quoting Milgram above, what caution does the writer give to social networking fans?

_____

_____

2.2.3   IDENTIFYING THE WRITER'S ARGUMENTS AND/OR REFUTATION

We have established in the previous section that the writer maintains that 'as useful and convenient as it is, users should use social networking with cautions'. Also, we have identified the writer's aim in writing this article. She encourages the reader to be mindful of the use of social networking. As discussed, the writer uses 'arguments' to drive home her position on the issue. We now want to explore the arguments put forward in this article by examining the following questions.

1   Where in the text does the writer start portraying the adverse effects of people socialising online? What information does she provide?

_____

2   What are the concerns the writer raises in paragraph 4?

a   _____

b   _____

     _____

3   What does paragraph 5 discuss?

We have concrete evidence from this paragraph that a) heavy users are less interested in the world around them, b) the more individuals rely on social networking the less they are sociable, and c) people engaged in romantic relationship online could have low emotional intelligence and self-esteem.

_____

4   What are other problems discussed in the text? (P.6 and 7)

_____

_____

Now, we summarise all the answers above:

Paragraph 3: The technology encourages users to be on constantly. (Authority)

Paragraph 4: Users tend to overuse the technology. (Authority)

Paragraph 5: Social networking could emotionally affect users. (Study)

Paragraph 6: Virtual users have a tendency of becoming narcissistic and exhibitionistic. (Writer's)

Paragraph 7: Users show sign of giving up face-to-face contact. (Writer's)

Obviously, after the introduction of social networking and acknowledgement of its benefit in paragraphs 1 and 2, the writer offers her arguments in paragraphs 3-7.

## 2.2.4 UNDERSTANDING REASONING AND DRAWING A GENERALISATION

We can see in this text that the writer presents her arguments using Inductive Reasoning technique. In inductive reasoning, a set of specific statements logically lead to a general or broad conclusion. Let's look at the previous exercise and draw a generalisation.

In the body paragraphs, we have four instances of problems associated with social networking — the sense of fear of missing out (P.3), overuse of the technology (P.4), emotional impact (P.5), narcissism (P.6) and giving up face-to-face contact (P.7). These are 'specific statements' that are given to support the writer's conclusion. Now, let us come up with a 'logical' generalisation.

Look at the disadvantages listed above, what does the writer want to say about social networking?

'There could be problems with online socialising'. This is the generalisation that can be drawn from the set of data given from the listed paragraph. This is an instance of Inductive Reasoning.

The diagram illustrates the reasoning in the text.
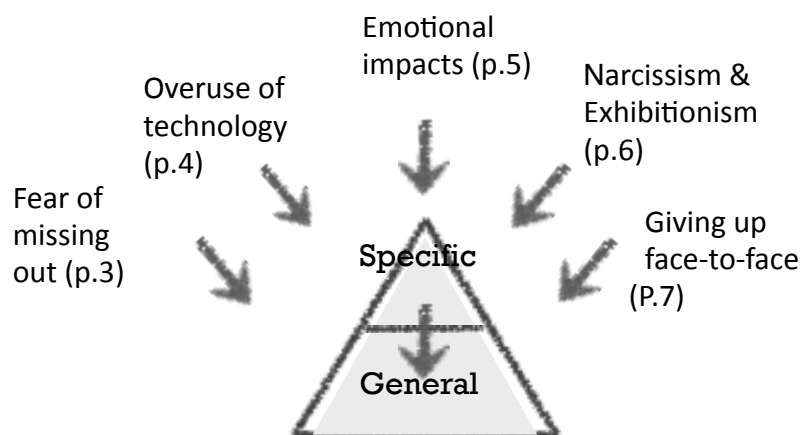
2.2.5 UNDERSTANDING INFERENCES

1   "It's a way of maintaining a friendship without having to make any effort whatsoever." (P.1)

     From the above statement, what is the reason that makes social networking websites so popular? _____

2   "Proust once said he didn't much care for the analogy of a book to a friend. He thought a book was better than a friend, because you could shut it—and be shut of it—when you wished, which one can't always do with a friend." (P.3)

     According to the above information, what kind of person might Proust be? Choose the best answer.

     ____ a. He may not be very sociable.

     ____ b. He may be quite aggressive.

3   "In investing so much energy into improving how we present ourselves online, are we missing chances to genuinely improve ourselves?" (P.6)

We could take note of the writer's use of 'present and (genuinely) improve'.

What might she imply about the self-portrayal and self-improvement? 'Present' focuses on 'looks', but 'improve' focuses on 'quality'.

_____

Note too that the writer uses 'rhetorical question'—are we missing chances to genuinely   improve ourselves? We could say that she subtly suggests her view toward self-improvement by using the rhetorical question which aims to seek an 'agreement', not 'answer'. We'll look at 'Rhetorical Questions' at length later.

4   "Often it is not so much the kind of person a man is as the kind of situation in which he finds himself that determines how he will act." (P.7)

Use this quote to reason why the young woman admitted, "I consistently trade actual human contact for the more reliable high of smiles on Myspace, ...Facebook."

   a   What kind of situation she puts herself in, in other words, what kind of friendship the girl relies on forming?

        _____

   b   What has resulted from such condition?

        She becomes more trustful in such type of friendship which seems to be encouraging and pleasant as opposed to real-life interaction.

        In other words, the environment shapes one's behaviour.

5   There are opportunity costs when we spend so much time carefully grooming ourselves online.

What does the writer feel about the way some spending time decorating their pages on social networking websites? Let's look at the definition of 'groom'.

She disapproves of it. "Grooming" evidently suggests her attitude.

1 [**transitive**] to clean and brush an animal, especially a horse
2 [**transitive**] to prepare someone for an important job or position in society by training them over a long period
groom somebody for something
 Tim was being groomed for a managerial position.
groom somebody to do something
 Clare's been groomed to take her father's place when he retires.
3 [**transitive**] to take care of your own appearance by keeping your hair and clothes clean and tidy
 Her hair is always perfectly groomed.
→ **well-groomed**
4 [**transitive**] to develop a friendship with a child, with the intention of starting a sexual relationship. This is done by adults, and is illegal when the child is younger than 16.
5 [**intransitive, transitive**] if an animal grooms itself or another animal, it cleans its own fur and skin or that of the other animal
                              www.ldoce.come

   The best entry that matches the writer's use of the term is definition 3, where she implies her view against doing spending time doing so.

2.2.6   RECOGNISING THE TONE OF VOICE

When the writer addresses an issue, a person, a situation, she may also express her attitude—the way she feels about it. The writer's attitude is conveyed through his word choice, point of view and purpose of writing.

What tone of voice does the writer set in concluding her article? Hint: What action might the writer want the social networking website users to do?

_____

2.2.7   EVALUATING THE FOCUSED TYPES OF EVIDENCE

Types	Y/N	Where?	What argument does the evidence support?	Sufficient and reliable?
Example 1) Anecdote	✓	P. 2 1) _____'s statement P.7 2) ____ who was quoted in Times	Online friendship is a convenient way to foster relationship. Virtual friendship fans trade real relationship with safe artificial relationship	Yes. This evidence coupled with authoritative opinion makes the writer's claim concrete. Probably not. An account of a person cannot make the writer's claim compelling. Admittedly, being quoted in Times makes it more reliable than our acquaintance.
Example 2) Analogy	✓	P.2 _____'s statement	Online socialising does have its benefits.	The analogy makes sense. The writer compares conventional friendship with virtual friendship. While conventional friendship requires much time, virtual friendship does not. Therefore, even busy men can engage themselves in virtual friendship.
Authoritative Opinion	✓	P.3 Who? _____ who writes Friendship: An Exposé	Social networking websites give ones a number of friends, but it is not a quality friendship.	No. By saying the networking websites encourage users to be constantly on the web does not necessary mean that one's circle of friends is not a good one. One expert's view can't be proven reliable or sufficient.

Authoritati-ve opinion	✓	P.4 Who? L. Harmon	There might be adverse effects on users' social behavior especially children and young adults.	No. By quoting Harmon's concern of his students' overuse of the technology since he has not actually conducted a study to find out about such claim.
Stats	✓	P.5 1) _____'s survey 2) _____'s study	Social networking use may negatively affect users' social behaviours.	Open to discussion When dealing with research data, we would look at the credibility of researchers, the size of samples, the recency etc.

2   Overall, do you think the writer's thesis is sufficiently supported? Discuss.

3 FURTHER READING

Fostering relationships in the virtual world obviously has its upsides. Each year social networking website users grow, new websites pop up, adverts on the websites increase, and these networking companies' profit gain beautifully (Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg assets in 2015 alone was $6.9 billion). What do you think of virtual relationship? As social network users, do you see any drawbacks of this relationship? You could talk about this again after examining the following article which presents yet another position on the issue.

Directions: Match the given meanings with the boldfaced words or phrases in the text.

VOCABULARLY

✓ (n) disdisrespect

✓ (n) a strange person

✓ (n) an online virtual world where users called residents live, meet and do activities in habitat, the virtual world they have created

✓ (v) claim

✓ (n) someone who does not belong to a group

Virtual people, real friends   by Anna Pickard

The benefits of forming friendships with those we meet online are obvious, so why is the idea still treated with such **disdain**?

Another week, another survey purporting to reveal great truths about ourselves. This one says that not only do UK housewives spend more of their downtime online than anyone else in the whole wide world, but also that – shock, horror – people are increasingly open to turning "online" friends into people they'd deign to call real life friends. (1)

To which I can only say good: Quite right too. If there's a more perfect place for making real friends, I have yet to find it. (2)

The friends I've made online – from blogging in particular, be they other bloggers or commenters on this or my own site – are the best friends I now have. And yet, when I say this to people, many times they'll look at me like I'm a social failure; and when surveys like this are reported, it's always with a slight air of being the "It's a crazy, crazy, crazy world!" item last thing on the news. Some portions of my family still refer to my partner of six years as my "Internet Boyfriend". (3)

Call me naive, but far from being the bottomless repository of **oddballs** and potential serial killers, the internet is full of lively minded, like-minded engaging people – for the first time in history we're lucky enough to choose friends not by location or luck, but pinpoint perfect friends by rounding up people with amazingly similar interests, matching politics, senses of humour, passionate feelings about the most infinitesimally tiny hobby communities. The friends I have now might be spread wide, geographically, but I'm closer to them than anyone I went to school with, by about a million miles. (4)

For me, and people like me who might be a little shy or socially awkward – and there are plenty of us about – moving conversations and friendships from the net to a coffee shop table or the bar stool is a much more organic, normal process than people who spend less time online might expect. (5)

Depending on the root of the friendship, on where the conversation started, the benefit is clear – you cut out the tedium of small talk. What could be better? (6)

There's no trying to slowly work out whether you think similarly or have the same kinds of life experience, or whether you really do have enough in common to sustain the friendship – all that is done by the time you meet because you've read their comments or their emails or their blog. You know where they stand on certain things, what they care about and just who they are – and so when you actually meet them, it's like you've known them a year already because all the small stuff is already out of the way, months of small talk replaced by the fact that online friendships are, essentially, self-selecting. (7)

Whenever this crops up in surveys and conversation, though, it's treated with an air of disdain. It's the sense of shock that surprises me, as if people on the internet were not "real" at all. Certainly, people play a character online quite often – they'll be a more confident, more erudite, or, depending on the site, more argumentative version of their real selves – but what's the alternative? What's the thing that's so much better than making friends in a virtual world? Meeting people at work? Yes perhaps, but for many, a professional distance between their work selves and their social selves is necessary, and they just don't want to spend

that much time with people they work with – especially with their guard down. Is it better to meet friends in pubs? While drunk? Are they really much more themselves in that state than in the words through which they present themselves online? (8)

There are always stories buzzing around about "man runs off with the woman he met on **Second Life**" or people who meet their soulmate online and end up with their head in someone's freezer – but affairs are affairs. People are people are people – by making friends online, you're simply speeding through the whole process, bypassing shyness and getting rid of the social awkwardness that comes with trying to make a friend out of a stranger. (9)

Is it really that odd that we're increasingly converting virtual friends to real, physically pokable ones as well as the other way around? Frankly, I now think it's weird to do much else. Call me naive, call me a social **misfit**, I don't care. Virtual people make the best real friends. And I'll keep saying that till they find my head in someone's freezer. (10)

3.1   DEVELOPING READING SKILLS

3.1.1   IDENTIFYING THE WRITER'S THESIS AND THE WRITER'S POINTS

1   What is the writer's thesis?

<u>Online friends can be best, real life friends.</u>

> Our task of identifying the writer's thesis is less challenging than that of Beyond Networking. This text differs from Beyond Networking in more than one way. Firstly, the title is very suggestive. We see the connection between the two phrases the writer plays with— virtual vs real and people vs friends. We know that the writer will somehow make connection of the two groups. Then, in her lead-in, the writer clues us in on her position on social networking. By now, we know that the writer is displeased and disagrees with those turned off by online friendship. And even more explicit, at the end of paragraph 2 the writer spells out her thesis in plain sight, saying 'If there's a more perfect place for making real friends, I have yet to find it'.

2   What is the writer's point?

P.	Structure	The writer's point
1	Introduction	The writer introduces a study revealing that _____ _____.
2		The writer argues that the best place to get real friends is the digital world.
3-4	Body	The writer shares her own experience of real life relationship with her 'internet boyfriend' and contented friendship with her virtual friends.

P.	Structure	The writer's point
5-6		The writer reasons why the internet is the best place to make friends: people who are less sociable can make friends with those who share the same interests.
7-8		The writer counters the view that the virtual friends are not real by rebutting the idea of _____ _____
9		The writer acknowledges risks involved in the Internet affairs, and yet she emphasises benefits of creating friendship online are way more than those of making friends in the conventional way.
10	Conclusion	The writer restates her position that _____ _____.

3.1.2 TEXT STRUCTURE AND REFUTATION

Opposing view	The writer's refutation
People play a character online.	a _____ _____ _____. b Making friends at a pub, we only know them when they or we get drunk. It's not as if they were themselves either.

3.1.3 PARAPHASING

Certainly, people play a character online quite often – they'll be a more confident, more erudite, or, depending on the site, more argumentative version of their real selves – but what's the alternative? (P.8)

_____ a. Online, people do not trust one another

_____ b. People may not present their real selves online.

3.1.4 EXTRA FOCUSES

3.1.4.1 Point of view

As explained in Unit 1, the writer may choose to use the first person point of view 'I' or 'we'. The texts Beyond Networking and Virtual People, Real Friends differ in this aspect.

In Beyond Networking, the writer chooses to present her view from collective pronoun 'we' when she criticises social networking behaviours. The writer identifies with us, her

audience. The writer implicitly includes herself as one of those to be criticised instead of laying a blame solely on those who foster their relationship or friendship online. All along the text, when casting Moreover, when she ends her article in a suggesting us users to be mindful of fostering virtual friendship, she uses 'we' to show that she also is one of many social networkers, who should be cautious in using the social network. By writing from the point of view 'we', the writer successfully makes her concerns and suggestions more received.

In Virtual People, Real Friends, on the contrary, the writer clearly states her position from her own viewpoint. She uses 'I' throughout the text, which suggests that she has experienced and come to the conclusion of her own that friends that she has associated on the internet can become her true and quality friends.

3.1.4.2   Tackling difficult sentences

Identify what the underline words or phrases refer to.

1   Whenever <u>this</u> crops up in surveys and conversation, though, it's treated with an air of disdain. (p.8)

<u>The fact that online friendships are self-selecting. //In order to form a friendship online, one chooses to befriend with someone whose interests, ideas, or characters matches with his</u>.

2   Is it really that odd that we're increasingly converting virtual friends to real, physically pokable ones as well as <u>the other way around</u>? (p.10)

<u>Converting real-life friends to online friends</u>

Besides identifying the real meaning of the words or phrases and the pronoun referents, the <u>clipped structure</u> can also interfere your interpretation of the text. Look at the following example.

When the ideas have already been established, the writer can leave out some words or phrases that suggest such ideas. It is important that you are capable of identifying the ideas that have been omitted in order to comprehend the text. This certainly requires you to look at the context in which the clipped words or phrases appear. Check out the following examples from the text.

1   Another week, another survey purporting to reveal great truths about ourselves. This one says that not only do UK housewives spend more of their downtime online than anyone else in the whole wide world, but also that – shock, horror – people are increasingly open to turning "online" friends into people they'd deign to call real life friends. (P.1)

2   To which I can only say good: Quite right too. (P.2)

There are two challenges here. First, you have to identify what 'which' refers to and second, 'what' is quite right? In order to answer those questions, you have to go back to paragraph 1.

We' re provided with two major pieces of information.

a   UK housewives' past time is surfing the internet.

b   People have increasingly turned their online friends to real friends.

The tentative answer to the questions posed is b). This is because upon reading the title and the lead-in, you should know that b) is more specific and much more related to the title and the lead-in.

So, the complete idea of the clipped sentence is:

I can only say 'good' to the idea that <u>people have increasingly turned their online friends to real-life friends AND turning their online friends to real life friends is the right thing to do.</u>

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4   WRITING A SUMMARY

Writing a summary is a good way to check if we actually comprehend the text. When writing a summary , we start with the writer's thesis, followed by the writer's arguments. If the text contains refutation, we include the opposing view's counter-arguments and the writer's rebuttal. Finally, we add the conclusion which may include the writer's suggestion.

Directions: Summarise the text 'Beyond Networking' by filling in the blanks provided with appropriate answers. Use the following guidelines.

(1)   Adding title here

(2)   Adding the writer's name

(3)   Adding the writer's thesis

(4)   Adding Opposing view

(5)   Adding first piece of writer's support

(6)   Adding second piece of support

(7)   Adding the writer's conclusion

In the text (1) *Beyond Networking*, written by (2) <u>Christine Rosen</u>, the writer claims that (3) as popular as they are, the users should use social networking websites with caution. The writer acknowledges (4) <u>that the virtual world has made forming friendship much easier and more convenient</u>. However, (5) users are prone to overuse the technology. Citing evidence of negative effects the social networking websites on users, the writer suggests (6) <u>that one had better devote time improving herself</u> rather than focusing on how to present herself on these websites. Reasoning that the technology has taken over many areas of people's lives already, she concludes that <u>(7) one should not trade real human contacts for virtual friendships for fear of being offended or hurt.</u>

5   JOURNAL WRITING

When writing a paragraph expressing an opinion, we can follow the steps below:

5.1   STATE YOUR POSITION CLEARLY.

(In my opinion) The internet broadens our opportunities to connect with the world.

5.2   LIST YOUR ARGUMENTS.

First of all, (our first argument)/The first reason is that ⋯

Argument 1 <u>Nowadays, music, sport and culture spread easily across the globe.</u>

Moreover, + statement of your second reason.

Argument 2 <u>The impact of the internet encompass many aspects of our generation</u>.

Finally, + statement of your third reason.

<u>The internet is a platform for a generation that is more open to connecting with strangers based on mutual interests based on their online profiles</u>.

Or we could simply start with our first argument without signal words like 'first, then, finally'.

5.3   PROVIDE EVIDENCE

For each of your reason, provide clarification, examples, statistics, and/or authoritative opinions (that you have researched on the issue).

For example:

To support Argument 1 in 6.2, the writer could supply evidence 1.1 and 1.2 as follows.

Evidence 1.1: <u>Chinese artist Ai Weiwei is the darling of the art world</u>.

Evidence 1.2: <u>Shakira's fans go beyond Latin America</u>.

For Argument 2 in 6.2, the writer provides evidence 2.1 and 2.2 as follows.

Evidence 2.1: For 18- to 24-year-olds, the heaviest social media users, the Internet is the top source of news.

Evidence 2.2:   For millennials, it is the biggest influence on voting behaviour and the reason that they are more likely to give to global, as opposed to local, causes.

Finally, for Argument 3 in 6.2, the writer has the following to support his argument.

Evidence 3.1:   AirBnB has inspired millions to travel differently, making it a successful economy superpower.

(Adapted from nytimes.com)

PRACTICE

Directions: Write a journal expressing your position on either of the following.

1   What is your position on the issue? Do you agree with the writer of *Beyond Networking* or the writer of *Virtual People, Real Friends?*

2   Lady Greenfield, professor of synaptic pharmacology at Lincoln college, Oxford, and director of the Royal Institution, says 'Social   Networking Websites infantalised people'. What do you think of this view?

     'Infantalise' is characterised by short attention spans, sensationalism, inability to empathise and a shaky sense of identity

     Source: http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/feb/24/social-networking-site-changing-childrens-brains

3   Depression among college students has become a worrying trend. Do you think social networking could have contributed to this problem?