

## WRITING

### General-to-Specific Essay

A **general-to-specific essay** is a nonfiction text, usually five paragraphs long. This kind of essay gives and explains a generalization or general statement. At the end of the introduction paragraph, there is a thesis, or main idea, statement that lists the three supporting examples that will be discussed. Then each body paragraph gives and explains one of the examples. General-to-specific essays are often found in magazine or newspaper articles and textbooks.

**A Read.** Read Kenzo's essay about forms of communication.

### New Forms of Communication

by Kenzo Watanabe

This is the technology age. More and more people are relying on technology for everyday living. Young people, especially teenagers, are using technology as a primary means of communication. Cell phones, instant messaging, and online social networks are three main ways people use technology to communicate with each other.

Cell, or cellular, phones have been around for dozens of years. However, each year they become more sophisticated and more popular. Essentially, cell phones are small devices that connect the user via satellite to nearly any other phone in the world. In 2006, 203 million people in the United States had cell phones. Nearly two billion people worldwide had them (Leo). Now the numbers have grown even larger. Most people who own cell phones believe they have made their lives easier. However, studies have shown that there is a high correlation between car accidents and cell phone use. Some U.S. states have even passed laws prohibiting cell phone use by drivers in cars (Leo). Also, many people find the use of cell phones in public annoying and rude. For example, they think that people who conduct loud, personal conversations in typically quiet places, like restaurants or movie theaters, abuse this convenient method of communication.

Instant messaging (IM) is a relatively new method of communication that has replaced e-mailing in many informal and some formal settings. IM is the instant exchange of typed messages between two users of the Internet. One user types a short, informal message, which instantly pops up in a small box on the computer screen of the other user. Because IM is instantaneous, it seems more like speech than e-mail. Some unique IM language conventions have developed. Abbreviations such as K for "OK" and LOL for "laugh out loud" make instant messaging even faster (Schirber). Emoticons, which are faces created out of standard keyboard characters, communicate emotions with a few strokes of the keys. To illustrate, :- ) is a smiley face; ;- ) is a wink; :- ( is a frown; and l-O is a yawn (Schirber).

Online social networks have given people a new way to present themselves to the world. Online social networks are Internet sites where a user creates a profile and builds a personal network that connects him or her to other users. Currently in the United States there are tens of millions of users. Fifty-five percent of teenagers who are online use social networks (Lenhari). Like cell phones, online social networks have some dangers. Because some networks allow anyone to create or view a profile, users need to avoid putting identifiable

personal information on their page. All sites allow users to close their profile to strangers, helping users to protect themselves (Lenhari).

Despite their annoyances and dangers, new forms of communication allow people to stay connected in a more and more fragmented and busy world. Before electricity and other technological devices, people dreamed that someday they would create machines that would make their lives easier. Now we live in the age of our ancestors' dreams. From the Internet to mobile communication that are fast, easy, and able to change with these hectic times help even the busiest people communicate with those around them.

*Sources:*

Lenhari, Amanda and Mary Madden. "Social Networking Websites and Teens: An Overview." *Pew Internet*. 1 Jan. 2008. Trust. 19 July 2007 <[http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/198/report\\_display.asp](http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/198/report_display.asp)>.

Leo, Peter. "Cell Phone Statistics that May Surprise You." *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*. 16 Mar. 2006. 21 July 2007 <<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/06075/671034-294.stm>>.

Schirber, Michael. "Study: Instant Messaging is Surprisingly Formal :-)." *Live Science*. 1 Mar. 2005. Imaginova Corp. 20 July 2007 <[http://www.livescience.com/technology/050301\\_internet\\_language.html](http://www.livescience.com/technology/050301_internet_language.html)>.

**B** Re-read Kenzo's essay on new forms of communication on page 79. Summarize each paragraph below the correct group of pictures. The first has been done for you.

I.



*Cell phones are a popular form of communication. They connect the user via satellite with any other phone in the world. Because cell phones are so convenient, sometimes people abuse them by driving while talking on them, which can be dangerous, or talking on them in public places, which can be rude.*

II.




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III.




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