

Look at the essay and do the exercises to improve your writing skills.

Preparation

Match the vocabulary with the correct definition and write a–h next to the numbers 1–8.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1..... a snippet | a. to take part in or do something |
| 2..... to engage in something | b. the world |
| 3..... the globe | c. long-distance |
| 4..... to empathise with somebody | d. to rub something to make it clean and shiny |
| 5..... to polish something | e. to understand how someone feels |
| 6..... to embellish something | f. to make it more difficult for something to happen |
| 7..... long-haul | g. a small piece of information or conversation |
| 8..... to impede something | h. to make something more attractive by adding decoration |

Online communication is preferable to face-to-face communication. Discuss.

In today's world we find ourselves communicating more and more through online channels such as messaging, social media and video calls, often at the expense of face-to-face dialogue. There are certain situations where online communication is unavoidable but others where we opt for virtual over real-life conversation. Which begs the question: is online communication preferable in today's world?

To begin with, I'd like to outline the advantages of online communication. One of the main arguments in its favour is that it opens up the possibility of communicating with people in different places around the globe. This has considerable benefits in the workplace as meetings can take place via videoconferencing between Stockholm, San Francisco and Shanghai without the need for time-consuming, exhausting, long-haul business trips. Furthermore, it provides opportunities for long-distance families and friends to keep in touch on a daily basis. Another point is that written online communication gives us the option of responding either immediately or at a time that suits us as well as allowing us to edit and polish our message.

On the other hand, there are several significant drawbacks to over-reliance on online communication. Some experts are concerned that a lack of face-to-face interaction impedes the development of vital social skills such as empathising and reacting to situations in real time. Also, the very nature of conversation is different in the virtual world. If short snippets of dialogue embellished with emoticons replace longer stretches of direct conversation with emotions expressed on real faces, we're running the risk of losing the art of real conversation.

On balance, I believe that online communication brings an overall advantage in today's fast-paced, global society. However, we should take care not to overlook the benefits of engaging in face-to-face dialogue.

Top Tips for writing

1. Use the correct structure: introduction, key points for, key points against, conclusion.
2. Be objective. Give a balanced argument and make your overall opinion clear in the conclusion.
3. Use neutral or formal language. Don't use emotional or informal language.
4. Use suitable words or expressions to introduce, add, contrast and link ideas.
5. Include examples to illustrate ideas.

1. Check your understanding: grouping

Write the features of communication in the correct group, according to the text.

a. edited messages	b. close proximity required	c. immediate response	d. develops social skills such as empathy
e. facial expressions	f. emoticons	g. possible delayed response	h. talk to people far away

Online communication	Face-to-face communication

2. Check your understanding: reordering

Put these words in the correct order by writing a number in the brackets.

1. we find ourselves (___) through online channels. (___) communicating more and more (___) In today's world, (___)
2. begs the question: (___) online communication (___) Which (___) is (___) preferable (___) in today's world? (___)
3. main arguments (___) opens up the possibility (___) is (___) in favour (___) One of the (___) that it (___) of long-distance communication. (___)
4. written online communication (___) gives us (___) either immediately or later. (___) the option of responding (___) is that (___) Another point (___)
5. the development of (___) face-to-face interaction (___) impedes (___) in (___) that a lack of (___) Some experts (___) vital social skills. (___) are concerned (___)
6. real conversation. (___) losing. (___) we're (___) running the risk of (___) the art of (___) So, (___)
7. I believe that (___) there are (___) On balance, (___) online communication. (___) several advantages to (___)
8. face-to-face dialogue. (___) However, (___) we should (___) the benefits of (___) to overlook (___) take care (___) not (___)

