

6th Grade

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## WEEK AT A GLANCE!

Story:

"The Black Hole of Technology"

Genre: Persuasive Essay

Vocabulary/Word Study Skill:  
multiple meaning words

Writing: Compare & Contrast

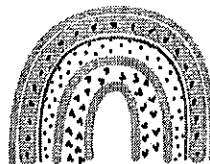
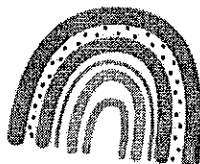
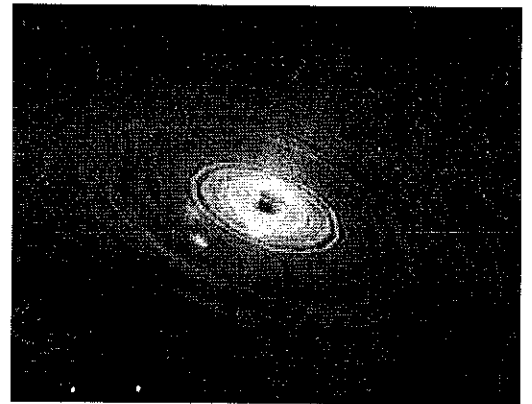
Comprehension: Persuasive  
Techniques:

- ❖ repetition
- ❖ appeal to emotion
- ❖ appeal to reason

Conventions: Independent and  
Dependent Clauses

Vocabulary:

- devouring: taking in greedily
- absorbing: learning; fully taking in
- process: gain an understanding of
- consumed: absorbed; occupied
- digesting: thinking over; mentally taking in



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

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## The Black Hole of Technology

Leena Khan

### SHORT-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

**DIRECTIONS:** Complete the following items after you have read the text.

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**RI.6.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.

1. (a) **Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including technical meanings.**

In paragraph 1 of the blog post “The Black Hole of Technology,” the author refers to “streams of technology-enabled information.” Use a print or online dictionary to find the meaning of the technical term *stream*. Then, identify context clues in the paragraph that support this meaning.

- (b) **Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings.**

Personification is a type of figurative language that gives human characteristics to animals or nonliving objects. Reread paragraph 1 of “The Black Hole of Technology,” focusing on the author’s use of personification. What does she mean when she says “information is devouring everyone living in the twenty-first century”? Consider the denotation, or definition, of the word *devouring*, as well as its connotations, or emotional associations.



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**RI.6.2** Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

**2. (a) Identify a central idea of a text and explain how it is developed through particular details.**

Identify a central or main idea of “The Black Hole of Technology.” Then, use details from the text to explain how the author develops this idea over the course of the blog post.

**(b) Write a summary of the text.**

Write an objective summary of “The Black Hole of Technology” that includes main ideas but not your personal opinions or judgments. Remember to include the author and title of the text.

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**RI.6.6** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

**3. Identify an author's point of view and explain how it is developed in the text.**

Reread paragraph 7 of “The Black Hole of Technology.” Identify the author's point of view of, or the way she sees, technology after her experience at the Cambodian temple. Explain how she uses details to develop this point of view throughout the blog post. Consider the title of the blog post as well as key details she includes.



**EXTENDED RESPONSE ACTIVITY** Persuasive Techniques

**DIRECTIONS:** Complete the following activity as either a written response or a group discussion.

**RI.6.8** Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

4. Identify the author's main claim, or position, in "The Black Hole of Technology," and explain how she supports it with reasons and evidence. Then, evaluate the author's argument. Consider her use of repetition and appeals to emotion and reason. Think about how they affect you as a reader.

Use these guidelines in your writing or discussion.

- Identify the author's main claim.
- Distinguish the author's main claim from related claims she makes. Consider how these claims work together to develop a solid argument.
- Explain how the author uses supporting details, including examples, reasons, and evidence, to develop her argument. Which supporting details help clarify her main claim?
- In persuasive writing, an author tries to convince the audience to agree with his or her position. Does the author of this text succeed in convincing you? Why or why not?
- Recall that appeals to emotion include words and phrases that make readers feel something. Appeals to reason include facts and logical reasoning. Which appeals affected you the most? Explain why these had the greatest impact on you as a reader.

**TIP FOR WRITTEN RESPONSE**

For academic writing, use a formal style that avoids contractions and slang.

**TIP FOR DISCUSSION**

Be sure that everyone has an equal amount of time to speak during the discussion.



**COMPARE** → Arguments

**DIRECTIONS:** Complete the following question if you have also read the blog post “Teens and Technology Share a Future.”

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**RI.6.9** Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

**5. Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another.**

Compare and contrast how the blog posts “Teens and Technology Share a Future” and “The Black Hole of Technology” present their experiences with technology. Consider the authors' claims about their experiences and how they support those claims. Identify the kinds of appeals the authors make, and describe the kinds of evidence each uses to develop his or her argument.

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**ANALYZE CRAFT AND STRUCTURE** PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES

## The Black Hole of Technology

Leena Khan

In writing a persuasive text, authors try to convince readers to understand and agree with their perspective. The author states a **claim** or position and then uses facts and examples to support that claim. In addition, authors of persuasive texts use other techniques to make their idea more convincing. These techniques include the following:

- **Repetition:** Authors repeat a word or phrase to emphasize it and make it more memorable. For example, the author of an essay persuading readers to vote for a certain candidate might repeat the word *honest*.
- **Appeal to Emotion:** Authors use words, phrases, or stories that appeal to certain feelings. For example, if an author wants to convince readers to vote, he or she might stress ideas about duty or patriotism.
- **Appeal to Reason:** Facts and examples are organized in logical way so that readers can clearly follow the author's argument and be convinced by well-reasoned logic.

**DIRECTIONS:** Answer the following questions about "The Black Hole of Technology." Use textual evidence from the article to support your responses.

1. The term "black hole" is not only the title of the essay but is also repeated in the essay itself. What effect does the repetition of this term have on the reader?  

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2. What is one example of an appeal to emotion that the author uses in "The Black Hole of Technology."  

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3. \_\_\_\_ After Khan relates a story about a beautiful day when she and her friends stayed inside, consumed with technology, she writes about the experience of visiting the temple. What purpose might Khan have had for ending the essay this way? Write the letter of the best answer on the line.
  - a. The purpose is to emphasize the idea that technology has its good points, but it is also a distraction. Khan is emphasizing the idea that by removing this distraction, one can feel better.
  - b. The purpose is to show that while technology is useful, it is a burden and a distraction and will always make users feel like they are pulled into its "black hole."

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# ANALYZE CRAFT AND STRUCTURE ► PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES

In writing a persuasive text, authors try to convince readers to understand and agree with their perspective. The author states a **claim** or position and then uses facts and examples to support that claim. In addition, authors of persuasive texts use other techniques to make their idea more convincing. These techniques include the following:

- **Repetition:** Authors repeat a word or phrase to emphasize it and make it more memorable. For example, the author of an essay persuading readers to vote for a certain candidate might repeat the word *honest*.
- **Appeal to Emotion:** Authors use words, phrases, or stories that appeal to certain feelings. For example, if an author wants to convince readers to vote, he or she might stress ideas about duty or patriotism.
- **Appeal to Reason:** Facts and examples are organized in logical way so that readers can clearly follow the author's argument and be convinced by well-reasoned logic.

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the passage below. Then, answer the questions that follow.

Every year, thousands of dogs and cats are neglected and abused. Of course, no one can save every orphan dog at the local animal shelter. But we can all help by joining the "Read to a Pup" program. This worthwhile program allows volunteers to visit their local shelter and read in a soothing voice to one of the dogs. You can read any book you choose. The point is for the dog to hear a kind and compassionate voice and to overcome its fear.

I know firsthand how worthwhile this program is. Just last week I read to a frightened terrier named Rosie. At first, she cowered in the back of the crate, trembling all over. As I read, her ears perked up and she began inching toward me. I even saw her tail wag, very slightly. Like all dogs, Rosie wants only to be loved and cared for. You can show her love and care by volunteering in this worthwhile program. You won't regret it!

1. What does the author of this passage want readers to do?

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2. What word or phrase is repeated? What is the effect on the reader?

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3. What is one example of an appeal to emotion used in the passage? Explain your answer.

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**ANALYZE CRAFT AND STRUCTURE** ➔ **PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES****DIRECTIONS:** Read the passage below. Then, answer the questions that follow.

We are drowning in garbage. Each year, we throw out millions of tons of recyclable plastics, glass, and paper. We toss leftovers and spoiled foods into landfills. But we cannot continue on this way forever. Eventually we will run out of space. That is why I am launching this appeal for more people to join the curbside composting program, an easy, inexpensive service offered by your garbage collectors.

Composting is simple, easy, and environmentally friendly. Instead of throwing those potato peelings in the trash, put them in a bucket designated for compost. Then, once a week, put them in the compost bin provided to you by your garbage collectors. It's that easy. And it's that important. We have an opportunity to send reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills each year, and leave a cleaner world to our children and grandchildren. We owe it to them to make this effort.

1. What does the author of this passage want the reader to do or believe?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What words or phrases does the author repeat? Why do you think the author repeated these specific words or phrases?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why does the author begin by explaining how much waste is generated? What is the effect of beginning the passage this way?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How does the author appeal to the reader's emotions? Is the appeal effective? Explain your answer.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Were you convinced by this brief argument? Explain your answer.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### CONCEPT VOCABULARY AND WORD STUDY

## The Black Hole of Technology

Leena Kahn

### WORD LIST

devouring

process

digesting

absorbing

consumed

**A. DIRECTIONS:** In each of the following items, think about the meaning of the italicized word or phrase. Then answer the question.

1. If you are *digesting* instructions that your teacher gives you before a task, are you more or less likely to understand how to do that task? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sarah was *consumed* with fear when she entered the haunted house. Would you say that Sarah was unafraid? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The directions to the ancient ruins were confusing. Caleb reread them so that he could better *process* them. Was Caleb paying attention the first time he read the directions? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Niko began *devouring* science books when she was only 8. True or false: Niko did not want to read about science. Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Jia was having trouble *absorbing* what she was reading in her history book because she was distracted by loud construction noises out. Is Jia likely to remember what she read in her history book? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_

**B. WORD STUDY:** A **multiple-meaning word** is one that has more than one meaning. For example, the word *rock* can refer to a "a large stone" or "to sway to and fro." Below, write two sentences for each word. Each sentence should use a different meaning of the italicized word.

1. racket \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. hide \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**WORD STUDY** > **MULTIPLE-MEANING WORDS**

A **multiple-meaning word** has more than one meaning. For example, the word *minor* can refer to a "person under 18 years of age" or to something that is "small or unimportant." It can also mean "a lesser course of study" or "a key or scale" in music.

**A. DIRECTIONS:** Read each sentence. Then, on the line, write the letter of the definition that best matches the use of the underlined word.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ My dad woke us up early so we could go fishing for bass.  
 a. a fish                                      b. a voice, instrument, or sound of the lowest range
2. \_\_\_\_\_ A strong wind blew through mountains.  
 a. movement of the air              b. turn repeatedly
3. \_\_\_\_\_ There is such a minute difference between the twins that I can never tell them apart!  
 a. a fraction of time              b. extremely small
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The sow is out in the pasture.  
 a. a female pig                      b. to plant seeds

**B. DIRECTIONS:** Choose the most appropriate underlined word from part A to complete each sentence below.

1. "Wait a \_\_\_\_\_," I yelled, "I'll be down shortly."

Meaning of Word: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Keji's new speakers really pumped out some heart-thumping \_\_\_\_\_.

Meaning of Word: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Soon, after the thaw, it would be time to \_\_\_\_\_ carrots and potatoes.

Meaning of Word: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Gunther's driveway is long and twists up a mountain; you have to \_\_\_\_\_ your way up to his house!

Meaning of Word: \_\_\_\_\_

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**WORD STUDY** → MULTIPLE-MEANING WORDS

**A. DIRECTIONS:** Read each sentence. Then write the meaning of the word. Use a dictionary if needed.

1. Yesterday, our school had a tornado drill.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

2. We began to board the train at twelve-thirty.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

3. One section of a submarine is made up of living quarters.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Tyrell looked familiar, but I couldn't place where I knew him from.

Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

**B. DIRECTIONS:** Insert each of the following words from part A in a new sentence using a different meaning of the word.

1. drill \_\_\_\_\_

2. board \_\_\_\_\_

3. quarters \_\_\_\_\_

4. place \_\_\_\_\_

**C. DIRECTIONS:** On the lines below, write two multiple-meaning words. Then write two sentences for each word. Each sentence should use a different meaning of the word.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## CONVENTIONS INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT CLAUSES

### The Black Hole of Technology

Leena Khan

A **clause** is a group of words that contains both a subject and a verb. The two main kinds of clauses are independent clauses and dependent clauses. An **independent clause** has a subject and a verb and can stand alone as a sentence. A **dependent clause**—also known as a **subordinate clause**—has a subject and a verb, but it cannot stand alone as a complete sentence.

Dependent clauses often begin with a subordinating conjunction, such as *before* or *if*. Dependent **relative clauses** begin with a relative pronoun, such as *who* or *which*.

Insert a comma after a dependent clause that begins a sentence. If the dependent clause is not necessary to understand the main idea of the sentence, it is called a **nonrestrictive clause** and should be set off with commas, dashes, or parentheses.

**A. DIRECTIONS:** Identify each word group by writing *IND* for *independent clause*, *SUB* for *subordinate clause*, or *NC* for *not a clause*.

- \_\_\_\_\_ the black hole of technology
- \_\_\_\_\_ look at your smartphone
- \_\_\_\_\_ Not once do we stop
- \_\_\_\_\_ if you can get online
- \_\_\_\_\_ for telling about technology

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**B. DIRECTIONS:** Identify each underlined clause by writing *IND* for *independent clause* or *SUB* for *subordinate clause*.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Once we decided to take a break from the internet, we found many things to do outside.
- \_\_\_\_\_ When looking at my phone, I miss out on a lot.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I logged on, checking my email.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Escape the black hole of technology, because when you do . . . you feel free.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Once I was inside, I wiped the rain off of my phone screen.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONVENTIONS** → INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT CLAUSES

A **clause** is a group of words that contains both a subject and a verb. The two main kinds of clauses are independent clauses and dependent clauses. An **independent clause** has a subject and a verb and can stand alone as a sentence. A **dependent clause**—also known as a **subordinate clause**—has a subject and a verb, but it cannot stand alone as a complete sentence.

Dependent clauses often begin with a subordinating conjunction, such as *when* or *if*. Dependent **relative clauses** begin with a relative pronoun, such as *who* or *that*.

TYPE OF DEPENDENT CLAUSE	KEY WORDS
Subordinate	starts with a subordinating conjunction, such as <i>if</i> , <i>when</i> , <i>because</i> , <i>although</i> , <i>unless</i> , <i>before</i> , <i>after</i> , <i>while</i> , or <i>since</i>
Relative	usually starts with a relative pronoun, such as <i>who</i> , <i>whom</i> , <i>whose</i> , <i>which</i> , or <i>that</i>

Put a comma after a dependent clause that opens a sentence. If the dependent clause is **nonrestrictive**, or not necessary to understand the main idea of the sentence, set it off with commas, dashes, or parentheses.

**Example:** When he has time after school, Mr. Winfrey will post our grades.

**Example:** Jania Turner, who recently transferred from Franklin High School, is now the editor of our school's online newspaper.

**DIRECTIONS:** Identify each word group by writing *IND* for *independent clause*, *SUB* for *subordinate clause*, or *NC* for *not a clause*.

- \_\_\_\_\_ she has learned an important lesson
- \_\_\_\_\_ people at the health-food store
- \_\_\_\_\_ if the play starts on time
- \_\_\_\_\_ since the children were feeling sad
- \_\_\_\_\_ the tigers look ferocious
- \_\_\_\_\_ for waiting too long
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sofia graduated from college today
- \_\_\_\_\_ which makes a delicious salad

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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**CONVENTIONS** INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT CLAUSES

**A. DIRECTIONS:** Identify each underlined clause by writing *IND* for *independent clause* or *SUB* for *subordinate clause*.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ After we left the sandwich shop, we went to the park.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Until Jamal moved to Tampa, he and I were best friends.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Nate tripped as he stepped onto the uneven pavement.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ We will learn the two-step, which is a fun dance.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The youth chorus will perform this evening.

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**B. DIRECTIONS:** Identify the clause that is the type indicated in parentheses.

1. You will see warning lights if there is fog on the mountain. (independent)
2. We put together a skit that tells the history of our state. (subordinate)
3. The science experiment was confusing. (independent)
4. When intermission was over, the audience took their seats. (subordinate)
5. Because we were tired, we did not go shopping last night. (independent)

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**C. DIRECTIONS:** Add an independent clause to each subordinate clause to make a complete sentence.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ where he had found the stray kitten.
2. Although she missed band practice, \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ because the day was clear and bright.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ that my grandmother sent me yesterday.
5. If I were the mayor, \_\_\_\_\_.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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**WRITING TO COMPARE** ➔ ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

## Teens and Technology Share a Future *and* The Black Hole of Technology

Stefan Etienne and Leena Khan

In an **argumentative essay**, you make an argument or convincing claim and then support it with reasons, facts, and examples. In this particular essay, you will **compare and contrast** “Teens and Technology Share a Future” and “The Black Hole of Technology” and explain which one is more convincing, using reasons, facts, and examples to support your claim.

**DIRECTIONS:** Once you have analyzed the arguments each blogger makes, plan how your essay will proceed. Use the notes you took on each blogger's argument to fill in the preliminary outline below. First, think of a good, catchy title for your essay and a clear, strong position statement. Then list facts and examples you will use in discussing each blog. Finally, write a concluding statement that echoes your position statement.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Position Statement: \_\_\_\_\_

“Teens and Technology Share a Future”

Fact 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Example: \_\_\_\_\_

Fact 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Example: \_\_\_\_\_

“The Black Hole of Technology”

Fact 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Example: \_\_\_\_\_

Fact 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Example: \_\_\_\_\_

Concluding Statement: \_\_\_\_\_



# Unit 1 Independent Reading Log

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Reading Time	Title and Author	What is it about?	How would you rate it?	Explain your rating.
Monday From _____ to _____			Great 5 4 3 2 1 Awful	
Tuesday From _____ to _____			Great 5 4 3 2 1 Awful	
Wednesday From _____ to _____			Great 5 4 3 2 1 Awful	
Thursday From _____ to _____			Great 5 4 3 2 1 Awful	
Friday From _____ to _____			Great 5 4 3 2 1 Awful	