



Seventh Grade

ELA

ACTIVITY
2.15

Differing Opinions: Acknowledging Opposing Claims

Learning Strategies

Marking the Text
Graphic Organizer
Brainstorming
Debate

Learning Targets

- Analyze the logic in the development of different points of view and the consideration of alternatives.
- Create a claim and argue a position in a debate, using an appropriate mode of delivery.

Preview

In this activity, you will read and analyze two articles with different points of view about the value of capturing daily life on social media. Then you will present arguments about the issue in a debate with your classmates.

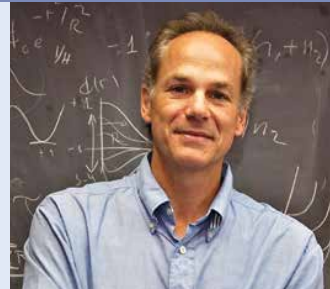
My Notes

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- As you read, take notes in the My Notes space on the author’s feelings about social media.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

About the Author

Marcelo Gleiser (1959–) is a professor of physics and astronomy. His research covers both the very big (the universe as a whole) and the very small (particle physics, or the smallest material constituents in the universe). He’s also very interested in the origin of life on Earth and the possibility of life elsewhere in the universe.



Essay

Should We Live Life, Or Capture It?

by Marcelo Gleiser

1 Everyone is, or wants to be, the star of their own life, and the rage is on to capture every moment deemed meaningful. ... There is a side of it that makes sense; we all matter, our lives matter, and we want them to be seen, shared, appreciated. But there is another side that leads to a disengagement with the moment.

2 Are people forgetting to be present in the moment, scattering their focus by looking at life through a screen? Should you be living your life or living it for others to see it?

3 It is telling, however, that this all started before the cellphone revolution. Something happened between the private journal we kept locked in our drawer and the portable video camera. For example, in June 2001 I led a group ... on a cruise to see a total solar eclipse in Africa. On board were a crowd of “eclipse groupies,” people who go around the world chasing eclipses. Once you see one you can understand why. A total solar eclipse is a deeply moving experience that awakens a primal connection with nature, linking us to something bigger and truly awesome about the world. It needs total commitment and focus of all senses. Yet, as **totality** approached, the ship’s deck was a sea of cameras and tripods, as dozens of people prepared to photograph and videotape the four-minute-long event.

4 Instead of fully engaging with this most spectacular natural phenomenon, people chose to look at it from behind their cameras. I was shocked. There were professional photographers onboard and they were going to sell/give pictures away. But people wanted to take their pictures and videos anyway, even if they weren’t going to be half as good. I went to two other eclipses, and it’s always the same thing. No full personal engagement. The gadget is the eye through which they choose to see reality.

5 What cellphones plus social media have done is to make the archiving and the sharing of images amazingly easy and efficient. The reach is much wider and the gratification (how many “likes” a photo or video gets) is **quantitative**. Lives become a shared social event.

6 Now, there is a side of this that is fine, of course. We celebrate meaningful moments and want to share with those we care about. The problem starts when we stop fully participating in the moment because we have this urge to record it. ... Without trying to sound too nostalgic (but sounding), there is nothing like eye-to-eye contact or the sharing of an experience through the real act of engaging in a conversation with friends and family. The gadgets are awesome, of course. But they should not define the way we live—only complement it.

Making Observations

- What image from the article sticks in your mind?
- Who is the author’s intended audience?

totality: the moment when the sun was completely covered

quantitative: measurable

Returning to the Text

- Return to the text as you respond to the following questions. Use text evidence to support your responses.
- Write any additional questions you have about the essay in your Reader/Writer Notebook.
 1. What is the author’s main claim in the text?
 2. What evidence does the author use to support his argument?
 3. What might *totality* mean in the second paragraph? Use context clues to infer its meaning.
 4. What rhetorical device does the author use in the text? What is the effect of this question on the reader?

- As you read, underline the author’s claims or opinions. Put a star next to any sources used to support the claims.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

About the Author

Megan Garber is a staff writer at *The Atlantic*, where she writes about technology and culture. She is a founding editor for the innovation section of *Columbia Journalism Review*’s website. In recognition of excellence in media reporting, Garber earned the Mirror Award. She attended Columbia, where she earned a master’s degree in journalism.

Essay

The Joy of Instagram

by Megan Garber

1 Is there any genre of image that better captures the current technological moment than the sea of screens, at a concert or a rally or a show, thrust upward to document a shared experience? The layering of the lights—reflecting an event in the moment, and capturing it for later—neatly conveys the frenetic beauty of life as it’s lived at the dawn of the Internet age. And the anxieties, too, because, you know: Does documenting something cheapen it? Does that sea of screens take something meaningful away from the stage they are aimed at? Does our impulse to snap and Insta and tweet and otherwise capture the events of our lives denude those events, and by extension those lives?

2 According to a new paper: Nope. Kristin Diehl, an associate professor of marketing at the University of Southern California Marshall School of Business, and a team of colleagues wanted to put those ideas to the test. ... Capturing experiences through photos, the team found, far from compromising people’s enjoyment of those experiences, actually seemed to amplify that enjoyment. A photographic mindset doesn’t seem to prevent people from “living in the moment,” as the old accusation goes; it might actually help them to do that living.

3 It’s not the act of photo-taking itself, to be clear, that leads to that enjoyment; it’s the kind of mental curation that is required when you’re thinking about what is worth documenting in the first place. Instagram makes us the editors of the texts of our own lives; it demands choices about what is significant—and therefore worth saving, and savoring, and remembering—and what is less so. ... Diehl and her colleagues tested the idea on a sightseeing bus, with nearly 200 participants—and found that the people who photographed the sights in question enjoyed the experience much more than those who simply sat and watched and absorbed. They tested it in museums, too: People reported enjoying exhibits more when they photographed them. And, yep, the findings held when it came to that most clichéd of activities: the Instagramming of food. The study participants who were encouraged to take photos while they ate lunch ... ended up being more immersed in the dining experience than the people who weren’t.

4 It may come down to the difference between “dining” and merely “eating”—the notion that even something as simple as lunch can be, if you allow it to, An Experience: something worth savoring in the present, sure, but also worth preserving for the future.

Making Observations

- What are your first thoughts about the article?
- Which details stand out the most to you?

What Influences My Choices?

Returning to the Text

- Return to the text as you respond to the following questions. Use text evidence to support your responses.
 - Write any additional questions you have about the essay.
5. What is this author's claim? Identify text that helps you answer the question.
 6. What does *denude* mean in the first paragraph? Use context clues to infer the meaning of the word.
 7. What is the purpose of including the rhetorical questions in the first paragraph?
 8. How does the author add credibility to her argument?

Working from the Text

9. Reread and mark the texts for logical reasoning and devices. Annotate by analyzing or commenting on the effect of the reasoning and devices.
10. Complete the graphic organizer to evaluate the arguments.

Reasons + Evidence FOR Documenting Life through Social Media	Is the argument effective?	Reasons + Evidence AGAINST Documenting Life through Social Media	Is the argument effective?

GRAMMAR & USAGE

Complex Sentences

Notice that a complex sentence with a dependent marker is a structure that helps the writer to acknowledge and refute a counterclaim. Example: *Yes, you worry about me, but I need to learn independence.*

Keep an eye out for complex sentences that serve this purpose in arguments that you read.

Acknowledging Counterclaims

Part of arguing effectively is considering alternatives and acknowledging opposing claims, also known as counterclaims—the “other side” of the issue. Recognizing counterclaims adds to a writer’s credibility (ethos) because it shows that he or she is knowledgeable about the issue. To acknowledge a counterclaim, a writer or speaker recognizes an opposing viewpoint and then argues against it, perhaps by finding weaknesses within the opposing reasons and evidence and thereby supporting his or her own argument. In other words, it is the “yes, but” part of the argument. “Yes” is recognizing the counterclaim; “but” is the writer’s response to it.

Example:

Issue: A teenager wants parental permission to go to a concert.

Claim: I should be allowed to go to a concert without an adult.

- **Of course you are worried about me going without you; however, I have a cell phone with me, and we can check in throughout the concert.**
- **Certainly I can see why you might be concerned because you don’t know all my friends, but I’ll be glad to ask their parents to call and reassure you.**
- **Admittedly, it is a good point that I do have homework; on the other hand, the concert is only a few hours long, and I plan to get most of my homework completed before I go.**

Reflect: How well did each author deliver his or her argument? How clear was each writer’s claim? Did each speaker incorporate adequate evidence (logos) and address the counterclaim?



Argumentative Writing Prompt

Should we live life or capture it? Write a well constructed response and defend your claim. Cite evidence from both “The Joy of Instagram” and the essay “Should We Live Life or Capture It?”

- Clearly describe and acknowledge the counterclaim.
- Use transitions and complex sentences with phrases and clauses to make your point.
- Use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- Check to make sure you have used parallel structure in lists or series of words, infinitives, prepositional phrases, or clauses.
- Establish and maintain a formal style.