



Crawford

International North Coast

LIFE ORIENTATION

DISCURSIVE ESSAY

GRADE: 12

TRIMESTER 1 – 2026

PRACTICE DISCURSIVE ESSAY TASK

EXAMINER: S. MAHARAJ

MODERATOR: A NCANE

MARKS: 40

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. This paper consists of 4 pages.
2. It is in your best interest to write legibly and to present your work neatly.
3. Do not use Tippex.

DISCURSIVE ESSAY

Social media is a central part of modern communication, especially for young people, but its rapid expansion has also led to increased online bullying and concerns about user wellbeing. Although platforms have introduced self-regulatory measures to address harmful behaviour, these are often criticized as inconsistent and ineffective.

Examine the following sources carefully and respond to the essay prompt that follows.

Source 1

The public and connected affordances of social media, much like a school yard or school bus, enable bullying to occur before an audience of bystanders or even encouragers, though the number of bystanders online has almost no limit. The size of the social network and the anonymity of the participants can both influence the likelihood of people continuing the harassment.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2024. Social Media and Adolescent Health. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/788>.

Source 2

UK Online Safety Act - Strong Government Action to Protect Children Online

In the UK, the government legally requires tech firms to protect children from harmful content, including cyberbullying, under the Online Safety Act. The country's communications regulator, Ofcom, has introduced detailed rules for platforms to follow, including effective age-verification, swift removal of harmful material, and clear reporting options, with significant penalties (including fines or platform shutdowns) for non-compliance. These rules show direct government regulation of social media rather than relying on platform self-policing, and aim to make online spaces safer for young people

Source 3

CHAPTER

1 When Cyberbullying Ends in Suicide

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Tijana Milosevic

<https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/9780262037099.003.0001> Pages 3–20

Published: February 2018

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Abstract

This chapter serves as an introduction to the book and it starts with a very brief overview of several online bullying cases that resulted in suicides (which are elaborated on later in the book) and that garnered significant attention from the media internationally. The chapter explains the dynamic between the relevant stakeholders (regulators, industry, parents/caregivers, media, educators) that emerge in such cases, focusing briefly on the pressures that the companies where these incidents took place can face under such circumstances, which leads to the development of their self-regulatory mechanisms (cyberbullying policies, intervention and prevention mechanisms). This chapter also details the scope of the book and the questions it raises.

Source 4

According to teens, parents are doing their best in terms of addressing online harassment and online bullying, with 66% of teens saying parents are doing at least a good job. Roughly four-in-ten teens report thinking teachers (40%) or law enforcement (37%) are doing a good or excellent job addressing online abuse. A quarter of teens say social media sites are doing at least a good job addressing online harassment and cyberbullying, and just 18% say the same of elected officials. In fact, 44% of teens say elected officials have done a poor job addressing online harassment and online bullying.

Pew Research Centre

Source 5

United Nations, UNICEF Youth Poll (2025). Misinformation is the leading cause of stress for youth on social media, followed by bullying and harmful content.

This UNICEF poll shows that young people themselves identify bullying and negative comments on social media as a major source of stress, with many expressing support for rules governing content on social media to curb harmful behaviour. Specifically, more than half of respondents thought that social media rules are important to stop harmful behaviours like bullying and hate speech, providing evidence that there is strong youth support for regulation rather than leaving safety solely to platforms.

QUESTION

Refer to the statement below and write a discursive essay:

Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree that governments should regulate social media to prevent bullying, rather than relying on platform self-regulation. Your response should consider the relevant perspectives as well as your own perspective

Adhere to the following when submitting your practice attempt:

- **Your response should be handwritten and not typed. This will assist with time management as devices are not permitted in the final IEB examination.**
- **Refer to rubrics and resources made available on Teams**
- **Engage with your teacher should you experience any difficulties**

- Remember to integrate IEB Standards when it comes to producing your practice essay.
- Integrate 2 of your own sources when writing your draft. They must be reputable sources. This allows you to research which aids your overall understanding of the topic. The two sources of your choice must be printed and handed to your teacher when submitting your attempt.
- DUE DATE FOR PRACTICE ESSAY: 10 February 2026.

TOTAL: 40 MARKS