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# AP<sup>®</sup> Seminar

## Free-Response Questions

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**AP SEMINAR**

**Part A**

**Suggested time — 30 minutes**

**Directions:** Read the passage below and then respond to the following three questions.

1. Identify the author’s argument, main idea, or thesis. (3 points)
2. Explain the author’s line of reasoning by identifying the claims used to build the argument and the connections between them. (6 points)
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the evidence the author uses to support the claims made in the argument. (6 points)

Write your responses to Part A only on the designated pages in the separate Free Response booklet.

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**From “The Case for Handwriting.”**

By Jennifer L. W. Fink (*Scholastic Teacher*, 2014)

Across the country, handwriting instruction is fading from prominence as teachers and students go electronic. Keyboarding and word processing are viewed as essential skills; handwriting is not. As a result, many schools and districts, emboldened by the new standards, which only require students to print upper- and lowercase letters, have drastically cut back on or eliminated handwriting instruction.

“What we hear is that handwriting is not a skill that’s tested, so therefore we don’t have to teach it,” says Laura Dinehart, associate professor of early childhood education at Florida International University. “But just because it’s not tested doesn’t mean that it’s not influencing other skills.” . . .

Indiana University researcher Karin H. James was one of the first to notice the link between the motor systems of the brain and reading. Using MRI scans, she showed that the motor sections light up when literate adults simply look at printed text.

Keyboarding doesn’t “light up” the literacy sections of the brain in the way handwriting does. “Pressing a key on a keyboard doesn’t really tell us anything about the shape of the letter,” Dinehart says. “If you press A or B, it feels the same. But if you’re creating a symbol over and over again, it creates in the brain a kind of cognitive image of what that letter looks like. The writing of that letter is critical to producing that image and having it in your brain.” Although researchers aren’t yet sure how handwriting is related to reading, studies have shown that working to improve students’ handwriting may improve their reading, and vice versa. . . .

Research shows that writing by hand also activates the parts of the brain that are involved in memory, impulse control, and attention. Anecdotal evidence and research strongly suggest that writing by hand “moves information from short-term to long-term storage,” says Carol Armann, a school-based pediatric occupational therapist.

A 2014 study found that college students who took notes by hand demonstrated better conceptual understanding and memory of the material than students who took notes using a laptop. Researchers suspect the same may hold true for younger students. . . .

[To incorporate handwriting practice] Jeannie Scallier Kato, a recently retired fourth-grade teacher, required her students to write a final report in cursive. Each student’s project was then sent to Studenttreasures Publishing and returned as a glossy hardback book.

“To my students, it was like creating an art project,” says Kato. Some parents objected to using such an old-fashioned method to create a report, but, she says, “I reminded [them] that children did digital projects, too, and that the published books [would be] a sample of their child’s personal writing as it was at age 9 or 10.”

Many studies have linked handwriting fluency with compositional skill. Research by Virginia Berninger, a professor of educational psychology at the University of Washington, found that handwriting instruction improves first graders’ composition skills, and a 2007 study published in the *British Journal of Educational Psychology* found that handwritten essays were two years ahead of typed essays, developmentally.

Why would handwriting instruction improve students’ compositional skills? Dinehart says it’s partly because handwriting practice makes writing automatic. “If you’re too busy focused on getting the writing out, you take the focus away from what it is you’re writing. You’re focused more on the writing itself than on the content.” . . .

[To combine handwriting and writing instruction] Rhonda Thomas, a sixth-grade English teacher at Woodson ISD in Texas, projects her writing onto a SMART Board. “You can’t just tell students, ‘Write an introduction,’” says Thomas. “I model writing for them, often sentence by sentence. They watch me as I write the whole thing out. The next week, I’ll leave a few blanks and they start filling in their own words when they copy it. By the end of six weeks, they’re writing their own introductions.”

It’s a near-universal rule: Kids with better handwriting do better in school. And while it’s easy to attribute this to the fact that teachers tend to give better grades to papers they can read, the link between handwriting and academic achievement appears to be deeper than teacher bias.

Kids with better handwriting have “better reading grades, better reading scores on the SAT, and better math scores, both on the SAT and as it relates to grades,” says Dinehart.

“How we interact with things physically has a huge bearing on cognitive development,” James says. “Fine motor control, memory, and learning are highly connected, and doing things with the hands is really important.” . . .

Teachers at Zielanis Elementary School in Kiel, Wisconsin, don’t have much time to teach handwriting, so they enlist parents’ help. “We send a letter home letting parents know that our goal is to introduce kids to it and help them be able to read cursive,” says second-grade teacher Sara Kassens. “We let parents know that if they would like their child to really master writing cursive, they’ll need to spend more time at home [on it].”

Keyboarding and tech skills are a necessity, but handwriting matters, too. You can offer your students the best of both worlds by giving them opportunities to do both. “This is not handwriting versus technology. There is a place for both of those,” Dinehart says. “Handwriting serves a purpose, particularly for young children.”

From [scholastic.com/teacher-magazine](http://scholastic.com/teacher-magazine). Copyright (c) by Scholastic Inc. Reprinted by permission of Scholastic Inc.

**END OF PART A**

**GO ON TO PART B.**

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**Part B****Suggested time — 1 hour and 30 minutes**

**Directions:** Read the four sources carefully, focusing on a theme or issue that connects them and the different perspective each represents. Then, write a logically organized, well-reasoned, and well-written argument that presents your own perspective on the theme or issue you identified. You must incorporate at least two of the sources provided and link the claims in your argument to supporting evidence. You may also use the other provided sources or draw upon your own knowledge. In your response, refer to the provided sources as Source A, Source B, Source C, or Source D, or by the author’s name.

Write your response to Part B only on the designated pages in the separate Free Response booklet.

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**Source A**

**From “The privacy paradox: we claim we care about our data, so why don’t our actions match?”**

By Ivano Bongiovanni, Karen Renaud, and Noura Aleisa (*The Conversation*, July 29, 2020)

Imagine how you’d feel if you discovered footage from your private home security camera had been broadcast over the internet. This is exactly what happened to several unsuspecting Australians last month, when the website Insecam streamed their personal lives online.

According to an ABC report, Insecam broadcasts live streams of dozens of Australian businesses and homes at any given time. Some cameras can be accessed because owners don’t secure them. Some may be hacked into despite being “secured.”

When asked if they care about their personal information being shared online, most people say they do. A 2017 survey found 69% of Australians were more concerned about their online privacy than in 2012.

However, a much smaller percentage of people actually take the necessary actions to preserve their privacy. This is referred to as the “privacy paradox”, a concept first studied about two decades ago.

To investigate this phenomenon further, we conducted a research project<sup>1</sup> and found that, despite being concerned about privacy, participants were willing to sacrifice some of it in exchange for the convenience afforded by an internet-connected device.

**Unpacking the privacy paradox**

Any “smart” device connected to the internet is called an Internet of Things (IoT) device. These can be remotely monitored and controlled by the owners.

The projected growth of IoT devices is staggering. By 2025, they’re expected to reach 75.44 billion—an increase of 146% from 2020.

Are device owners genuinely concerned about their privacy? Recent worldwide anxiety about personal information shared through . . . tracing apps seems to suggest so.

But as the privacy paradox highlights, users expressing privacy concerns often fail to act in accordance with them. They freely divulge personal information in exchange for services and convenience.

<sup>1</sup> Noura Aleisa, Karen Renaud and Ivano Bongiovanni, “The privacy paradox applies to IoT devices too: A Saudi Arabian study”, *Computers & Security*, Volume 96, September 2020.

Explanations for the privacy paradox abound. Some suggest:

- people find it difficult to associate a specific value to their privacy and therefore, the value of protecting it
- people do not consider their personal information to be their own and thus might not appreciate the need to secure it
- people completely lack awareness of their right to privacy or privacy issues and believe their desired goals (such as a personalised experience) outweigh the potential risks (such as big tech companies using their data for profiling).

The likely explanation for the privacy paradox is a mix of all these factors.

### **What if we *proved* your device harvests data?**

To understand whether and how the privacy paradox applies to IoT devices, we conducted an experiment involving 46 Saudi Arabian participants. This is because in Saudi Arabia the use of IoT is exploding and the country does not have strong privacy regulations.

We gave participants a smart plug that let them switch a table lamp on or off using an app on their smartphone. We then showed them the device’s privacy policy and measured participants’ privacy concerns and trust in the device.

None of the participants read the privacy policy. They simply agreed to commence with the study.

After two hours, we presented evidence of how much of their data the IoT-connected plug was harvesting, then remeasured their privacy concerns and trust.

After the participants saw evidence of privacy violation, their privacy concerns increased and trust in the device decreased. However their behaviour did not align with their concern, as shown by the fact that:

- 15 participants continued to use the device regardless
- 13 continued to use it with their personal information removed
- only three opted to block all outbound traffic to unusual IP addresses.

The rest preferred “light-touch” responses, such as complaining on social media, complaining to the device’s manufacturer or falsifying their shared information.

After one month, we measured participants’ attitudes a third time and discovered their privacy concerns and trust in the device had reverted to pre-experiment levels.

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**Source B****From *1984***

By George Orwell (Secker &amp; Warburg, 1949)

Behind Winston's back the voice from the telescreen was still babbling away about pig-iron and the overfulfilment of the Ninth Three-Year Plan. The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it, moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.

Winston kept his back turned to the telescreen. It was safer, though, as he well knew, even a back can be revealing. A kilometer away the Ministry of Truth, his place of work, towered vast and white above the grimy landscape. [It] was startlingly different from any other object in sight. It was an enormous pyramidal structure of glittering white concrete, soaring up, terrace after terrace, 300 meters into the air. From where Winston stood it was just possible to read, picked out on its white face in elegant lettering, the three slogans of the Party:

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

. . . Scattered about London there were just three other buildings of similar appearance and size. So completely did they dwarf the surrounding architecture that from the roof of Victory Mansions you could see all four of them simultaneously. They were the homes of the four Ministries between which the entire apparatus of government was divided. The Ministry of Truth, which concerned itself with news, entertainment, education, and the fine arts. The Ministry of Peace, which concerned itself with war. The Ministry of Love, which maintained law and order. And the Ministry of Plenty, which was responsible for economic affairs. . . .

Winston turned round abruptly. He had set his features into the expression of quiet optimism which it was advisable to wear when facing the telescreen. . . .

He went back to the living-room and sat down at a small table that stood to the left of the telescreen. From the table drawer he took out a penholder, a bottle of ink, and a thick, quarto-sized blank book with a red back and a marbled cover.

For some reason the telescreen in the living-room was in an unusual position. Instead of being placed, as was normal, in the end wall, where it could command the whole room, it was in the longer wall, opposite the window. To one side of it there was a shallow alcove in which Winston was now sitting, and which, when the flats were built, had probably been intended to hold bookshelves. By sitting in the alcove, and keeping well back, Winston was able to remain outside the range of the telescreen, so far as sight went. He could be heard, of course, but so long as he stayed in his present position he could not be seen. It was partly the unusual geography of the room that had suggested to him the thing that he was now about to do.

*1984* by George Orwell. © 1949, Secker & Warburg.

**Source C****From “Stop Screening Job Candidates’ Social Media”***(Harvard Business Review, 2021)*

Social media sites . . . have given many organizations a new hiring tool. According to a 2018 CareerBuilder survey, 70% of employers check out applicants’ profiles as part of their screening process, and 54% have rejected applicants because of what they found. Social media sites offer a free, easily accessed portrait of what a candidate is really like, yielding a clearer idea of whether that person will succeed on the job—or so the theory goes.

However, new research suggests that hiring officials who take this approach should use caution: Much of what they dig up is information they are ethically discouraged or legally prohibited from taking into account when evaluating candidates—and little of it is predictive of performance.

In the first of three studies, the researchers examined the Facebook pages of 266 U.S. job seekers to see what they revealed. Some of the information that job seekers had posted—such as education, work experience, and extracurricular activities—covered areas that organizations routinely and legitimately assess during the hiring process. But a significant share of profiles contained details that companies may be legally prohibited from considering, including gender, race, and ethnicity (evident in 100% of profiles), disabilities (7%), pregnancy status (3%), sexual orientation (59%), political views (21%), and religious affiliation (41%). Many of the job seekers’ profiles also included information of potential concern to prospective employers: 51% of them contained profanity, 11% gave indications of gambling, 26% showed or referenced alcohol consumption, and 7% referenced drug use.

“You can see why many recruiters love social media—it allows them to discover all the information they aren’t allowed to ask about during an interview,” says Chad Van Iddekinge, a professor at the University of Iowa and one of the study’s researchers. . . .

In the second study, the researchers explored whether such information affects recruiters’ evaluations. They asked 39 recruiters to review the Facebook profiles of 140 job seekers . . . and rate each candidate’s hireability. The researchers then mapped the recruiters’ ratings against the content in each profile. Although the recruiters clearly took heed of legitimate criteria, they were also swayed by factors that are supposedly off-limits, such as relationship status (married and engaged candidates got higher marks, on average, than their single counterparts), age (older individuals were rated more highly), gender (women had an advantage), and religion (candidates who indicated their beliefs got lower ratings). Factors such as profanity, alcohol or drug use, violence, and sexual behavior lowered ratings; extracurricular activities had no effect on scores.

In their final study, the researchers probed the end goal of social-media mining: hiring better people. They obtained supervisors’ ratings for 81 of the job seekers in the second study (chosen randomly) after six to 12 months of employment and surveyed those employees about whether they intended to stay in their jobs. They then asked a new set of recruiters to assess the Facebook profiles. . . . One group proceeded without any special instructions. The other was trained in best practices for evaluating social media information. . . . Neither group’s assessments of the candidates accurately predicted job performance or turnover intentions, indicating that even with careful instruction, hiring officials stand to gain little from probing applicants’ online activity. . . .

What about using social media solely as a negative screen—that is, to identify any warning signs, such as overt racism or misogyny? “We didn’t study that,” says Liwen Zhang, a lecturer at the University of New South Wales and the research paper’s lead author. “But our research shows that a recruiter will be influenced by everything she sees on a social media site, so if companies want to look for red flags, they should have someone other than the hiring manager do so.” . . .



[T]he researchers recommend that hiring managers resist the temptation to pore over candidates' social media pages. "We aren't saying that the information there is useless," Van Iddekinge says, "but we don't yet have the tools to find the signal in all the noise."

"Stop Screening Job Candidates' Social Media" from *Harvard Business Review*. © 2021, *Harvard Business Review*.

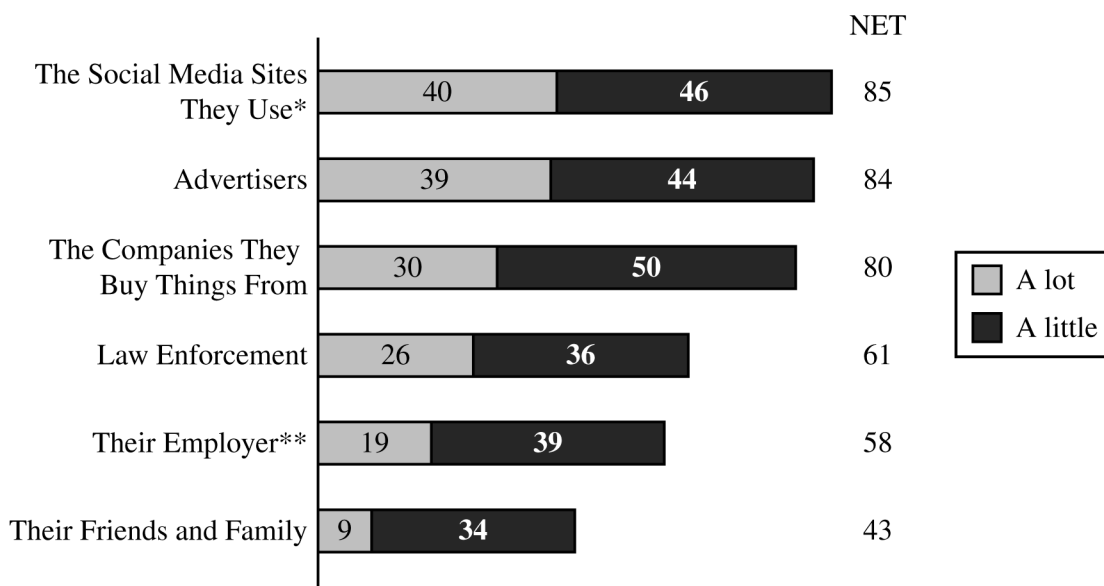
**Source D**

**From “Americans and Privacy: Concerned, Confused and Feeling Lack of Control Over Their Personal Information”**

By Brooke Auxier, Lee Rainie, Monica Anderson, Andrew Perrin, Madhu Kumar and Erica Turner (*Pew Research Center*, Nov 2019)

More than eight-in-ten Americans are concerned about the amount of personal information social media sites and advertisers know about them

*% who say they are concerned a lot or a little about how much personal information \_\_\_ might know about them*



\*Based on social media users.

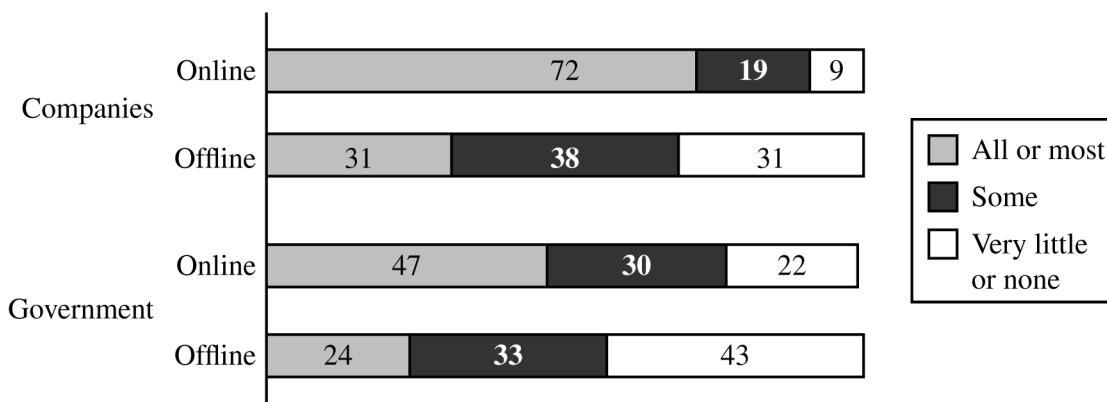
\*\*Based on those who are employed.

Note: Respondents were randomly assigned questions about how concerned they are about how much information different groups have about them. Those who did not give an answer or who gave other responses are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 3-17, 2019.

Roughly seven-in-ten Americans think all or most of what they do online is tracked by companies; about half say the same about government

*% of U.S. adults who say \_\_\_ of what they do online or on their cellphone, or offline (like where they go and who they talk to), is being tracked by . . .*

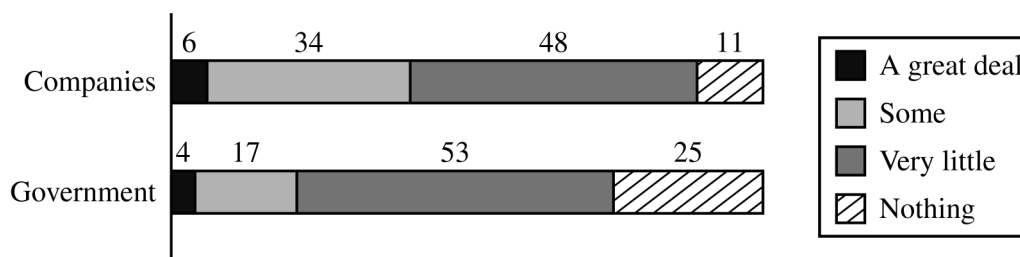


Note: Respondents were randomly assigned to answer questions about how much of what they do online and on their cellphone, and offline (like where they go and who they talk to) is being tracked by “companies” or “the government.” Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 3-17, 2019.

Only a minority of the public say they understand what companies or the government do with the data collected about them

*% of U.S. adults who say they understand \_\_\_ about what is being done with the data collected about them by . . .*



Note: Respondents were randomly assigned to answer questions about how much of what they do online and on their cellphone, and offline (like where they go and who they talk to) is being tracked by “companies” or “the government.” Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 3-17, 2019.

“Americans and Privacy: Concerned, Confused and Feeling Lack of Control Over Their Personal Information” by Brooke Auxier, Lee Rainie, Monica Anderson, Andrew Perrin, Madhu Kumar and Erica Turner, from Pew Research Center. © 2019, Pew Research Center.

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