

Summary-Response: Past Unreal Conditionals; Phrases Used in Summary-Response Writing

Privacy in the Digital Age

1 Grammar in the Real World

You will read an article that discusses the issue of privacy and computers. You will then read an essay that summarizes and responds to the article.

A Before You Read What are some possible dangers of surfing the Internet? What can people do to protect themselves from these dangers? Read the article. Then read the response to the article below it. What do the two writers suggest as ways Internet users can protect themselves?

Privacy and Computers

by Robert Erani

In an era of online social media, people can announce any event to their virtual network of friends, family, and acquaintances within moments. From birthday celebrations to baby pictures, friends get news about each other from texts, tweets, or social networks. In addition, many people use credit cards to purchase products and complete numerous online forms with personal information for a variety of purposes. As a result, personal information is ending up in the hands of other people. There are critics who are concerned by the lack of privacy. Despite such concerns, by following a few common-sense measures, people can use the Internet enjoyably and safely.

In our fast-paced world, social networking sites are, for many people, an important way to keep up with friends and family. The issue now is how open one should be with sharing private information since the information could be stolen by criminals. For example, some people have had their homes broken into because they had posted the details of their vacation online. If they had not posted those details, the thieves would not have known that they had gone away. One way to reduce the risk of this happening is to activate the privacy controls on social networking sites and smartphones. In other words, think about who will see your information and consider how they might use it.

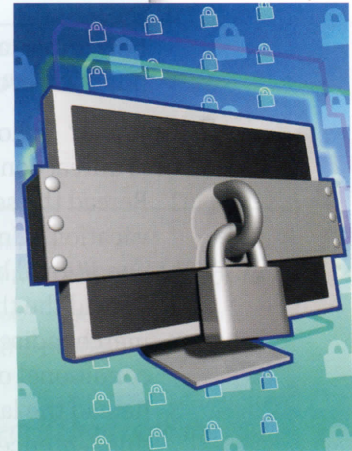
Another important step is to shop only on secure websites so that one's accounts, passwords, and financial records are protected. Some experts recommend that people should treat their online information like they would treat the contents of their wallets. For example, a man bought merchandise on a website that did not have a security padlock, and as a result of this transaction, his bank accounts were emptied. If he had paid attention to the security on the site, he would not have lost his money. However, it appears that people are becoming more aware of the risks of fraud and taking steps to avoid them since the total percentage of

incidences of fraud remained steady in 2011 (Campana, 2012). It may be that people who have
 25 grown up using the Internet understand its risks as well as its strengths.

The ease of sharing information provides opportunities for crimes and abuses. While it may
 be impossible to entirely eliminate the risks, if people followed reasonable guidelines to protect
 important data, they could greatly reduce these risks. The benefits of being able to do such
 things as bank online, keep medical records updated almost instantly, and share the thrills both
 30 big and small of everyday life with friends outweigh these concerns.

Summary-Response Essay on "Privacy and Computers"

Robert Erani, in the article "Privacy and Computers," explains the issues
 concerning the sharing of personal information online. According to Erani,
 one area of concern is that people may sometime share details of their lives
 online without thinking about the consequences. As the author points out,
 5 "The issue now is how open one should be with sharing private information
 since the information could be stolen by criminals" (para. 2). The author
 describes a situation in which people were robbed after revealing their
 vacation plans online. The author further states how important it is for
 consumers to protect their personal information when they purchase
 10 products online. Erani concludes the article by stating that, despite the
 concerns about privacy, one can still use online services safely by using
 common sense and privacy controls.



In sum, the author provides a general introduction to the issues of privacy online
 and offers some advice on how to avoid problems. I agree that insecure websites are
 15 a problem, but I disagree with the author's contention that people who have grown
 up using the Internet are more savvy about using it. Hackers and scammers continue
 to come up with more sophisticated and convincing schemes. The consumer needs
 to constantly be wary of them. In addition, the article fails to address the more
 controversial issues concerning the consequences of posting information regarding
 20 health issues, job dissatisfaction, or even political views. This is an oversight because
 these issues impact individuals every day. It is becoming increasingly common for
 employers, for instance, to view the online profiles of potential employees as part
 of their selection process. Despite these shortcomings, the author rightly states that
 the concern around privacy issues seems to be an acceptable exchange for many
 25 people for the benefits of sharing their lives with others.

B Comprehension Check Answer these questions.

1. What two suggestions does the writer of "Privacy and Computers" make for being safe on the Internet?
2. What important issues does the summary-response writer believe are missing from the original article?
3. What other privacy concerns do you have concerning the use of your personal information? What do you do to keep your information safe?

C Notice

1 Summary-Response Writing Find the following sentences in the summary-response essay and fill in the missing words to notice how the writer refers back to the first essay.

1. _____, one area of concern is that people may sometimes share details of their lives online without thinking about the consequences. (para. 1)

2. _____, "The issue now is how open one should be with sharing private information since the information could be stolen by criminals." (para. 1)

3. _____ how important it is for consumers to protect their personal information when they purchase products online. (para. 1)

2 Grammar Follow the instructions to notice how the author of "Privacy and Computers" uses unreal conditionals.

1. Reread the second paragraph of the article. What happened to the people who went on vacation? Underline the unreal conditional on lines 13-14. How does using an unreal conditional help the writer?

2. Reread the third paragraph of the article. What happened to the man who bought merchandise on a website that did not have a security padlock? Underline the unreal conditional on lines 21-22. How does using an unreal conditional help the writer?

3. Reread the last paragraph of the article. Find the sentence with the *if* clause. Compare this sentence with the sentence with the *if* clause in 2. Which one refers to an imagined past result? Which one refers to an imagined present result? What do you notice about the forms of the verbs?

3 The Writing Process Match the excerpts from the summary-response essay to the lines in the "Privacy and Computers" essay that it summarizes. Write the paragraph number and the line numbers in which the information appears.

1. Robert Erani, in the article "Privacy and Computers," explains the issues concerning the sharing of personal information online. Para. _____ Lines _____ to _____

2. The author describes a situation in which people were robbed after revealing their vacation plans online. Para. _____ Lines _____ to _____

3. Erani concludes the article by stating that, despite the concerns about privacy, one can still use online services safely by using common sense and privacy controls. Para. _____ Lines _____ to _____

B Pair Work With a partner, take turns describing mistakes you have made and ways that you could have avoided making the mistakes.

Someone stole my wallet from my purse at a restaurant last weekend. I'd hung my purse on the back of my chair. If I hadn't put it on the back of my chair, no one would have stolen my wallet. If I had put my purse closer to me, I'd have my wallet now.

3 Common Phrases Used in Summary-Response Writing

► Vocabulary Presentation

Good academic writers use phrases appropriate to introducing and identifying ideas in summary-response writing.

*The article **provides** a thorough introduction to the issues of privacy.*

*The author **fails to address** more controversial concerns.*

3.1 Common Phrases in Summary-Response Writing

- a.** You can use these common subject + verb combinations to introduce the main idea of a summary. They are listed in order of frequency:

The article + say, state, note, describe, mention, quote, report . . .

The author + claim, explain, call, say, write, argue, cite, establish, start . . .

The article is used much more frequently than the author in summary-response statements.

Note: Do not use believe or think in summary-response statements that begin with the words "The author . . ."

The article describes the problem of privacy and computers.

The article mentions ways that education can prevent problems with technology.

The author starts the article by saying that technology is part of everyone's lives.

The author claims that the experts he interviewed for this article were well-known.

NOT *The author ~~thinks~~ that the experts he interviewed for this article were well-known.*

- b.** The common subject + verb combinations in (a) are usually used in the present but sometimes also appear in the simple past or present perfect.

(See Unit 14 on reporting verbs.)

The article quoted many well-known sources.

The author has argued that individuals are responsible for protecting their own privacy.

3.1 Common Phrases in Summary-Response Writing (continued)

- c. Use these phrases to identify ideas by the author of the original text:

discuss

go on to say

further state/explain

also state

according to the author

The article discusses identity theft in detail.

The article goes on to say that the problem is being addressed.

The author further states that regulations may be necessary in the future.

The author also states that consumers need to become proactive on this issue.

According to the author, the government has an important role in this debate.

- d. Use these phrases to conclude the summary-response:

In conclusion,

In sum,

The author concludes

Summing up,

In conclusion, the author predicts that Internet privacy will become one of the most important issues of the next decade.

Summing up, the author calls for people to be cautious when giving their personal information online.

- e. Use these phrases in the response part of summary-response writing to indicate what the author omitted or did not consider:

fail to address/mention

not address/mention

Note: Phrases that use the first person, such as *In my opinion*, are rare in academic writing. They are more common in informal texts like magazines.

The author **fails to address** the idea that users are also to blame for identity theft.

The author **does / did not mention** that we are all responsible for protecting privacy.

I think that the author...

In my opinion, the author could have...

► Vocabulary Application

Exercise 3.1 Summarizing Information

Read the summary of an article about privacy on the Internet.
Circle the correct words or phrases to complete the summary.

John M. Eger, Chair of Communications and Public

Policy at San Diego State University, addresses/claims⁽¹⁾

the issue of privacy in the Internet age in his article

“Growing Concerns Over Internet Privacy” (2010). He

starts the article / further states⁽²⁾ by explaining the historical context of the right to privacy

in the United States and cites / describes⁽³⁾ how in 1928, a Supreme Court decision was

made to protect the right to privacy. However, he concludes that / notes that⁽⁴⁾ our online

lives are today being monitored in ways that most people do not even realize. He then

claims / goes on to explain⁽⁵⁾ how websites use cookies to follow an Internet user’s every move.

The author acknowledges that / thinks that⁽⁶⁾ some sharing of information may provide us with

advertisements for things that may be beneficial to us, but then he argues that / sums up that⁽⁷⁾

data collectors might collect and share health and financial information, and even connect

our names to our data. In addition, according to the article, / the article quotes⁽⁸⁾ there

are currently no laws that adequately protect our right to privacy. Then, while the author

goes on to show / concludes⁽⁹⁾ by saying that we need to do something about this problem,

he does not mention at all / further states⁽¹⁰⁾ what we can do to protect ourselves.



Exercise 3.2 More Summarizing Information

Read the sentences below. Then listen to two people talk about an article on Internet passwords. Make notes as you listen. Listen again and complete the sentences.

1. The author starts the article by saying that a website was recently hacked.
2. _____ when they create their passwords.
3. _____ can break one password a second.
4. _____ shouldn't use the same password for multiple accounts.
5. _____ says, “I always use the same password for everything because otherwise I can't remember them.”
6. _____ is abc123.
7. _____ is 123456.
8. _____ can do to create strong passwords.

- social networking site, a large proportion of users could have get their information stolen.
- 15 Collins goes on to recommend ways users can limit the possibility of security and privacy violations. Because SNSs are getting so big, he says, it is becoming impossible to monitor the activity that takes place on them. It is therefore the responsibility of users to take precautions as they share information about themselves. Collins concludes that there probably will never be a solution to these issues and implies that we will have to put up with threats to our privacy
- 20 and security. Collins adds, however, that the less one uses SNSs, the lower the chance one has of getting their identity stolen.

5 The Writing Process

In this section, you will write a two-paragraph summary–response to an article about a topic on technology. Before you start writing, you will learn about summary–response writing.

About Summary–Response Writing

Being able to create strong summary–response writing is an important skill for academic writers. Academic writers have to be able to show that they understand the ideas put forward by others and how those ideas fit into their own worldview.

The following are guidelines for writing a summary–response of an article:

1. **Identify the writer’s main ideas.** While reading the original text, use a highlighter or take notes that show what the writer’s main ideas are.
2. **Make notes about your own ideas.** Review your highlighted text and notes and then make more notes indicating which points you agree or disagree with.
3. **State your source at the beginning of the summary–response.** Begin your summary by giving the name of the author and the article. In your opening statement, also state as briefly as possible the writer’s main point or purpose in writing the article.

Robert Erani, in the article "Privacy and Computers," explains the issues concerning the sharing of personal information online.

4. **Refer to main ideas in the same order as in the original text.** As you summarize the article, choose the main ideas that you want to refer the reader to and identify them in the same order in which they appear in the original text. Use examples that are essential for understanding the main ideas, but only use examples from the original text – do not include your own examples.
5. **Paraphrase and use short quotations.** Use your paraphrasing skills to review the writer’s ideas. Also include short quotations from the original text to give your reader a clear sense of how the writer expressed key points.

- 6. In the response section, present your views clearly.** Discuss aspects you agree and disagree with. Identify ideas that the writer either missed entirely or did not develop completely. Before offering your own suggestions, it can be a good strategy to find at least one positive thing to say about the original writer's ideas. In this way, you can sound thoughtful, balanced, and reasonable.

Exercise

- A** Reread "Patient-Doctor Relationships in the 21st Century" in Unit 15 on pages 218-219 or "Leading a Healthy Life" in Unit 16 on pages 234-235. Then complete the following:

Summary

1. Write a sentence that identifies the source and the main point or purpose of the essay.

2. List the main ideas in the same order as in the original essay.

3. Choose one short quotation that illustrates one of the writer's key points.

Response

1. Write your overall opinion about the essay.

2. Write one point that you agree with and one point you disagree with.

3. Write one point that you believe is missing and that expresses your own idea on the topic.

- B Pair Work** Explain your ideas to a partner. Discuss any disagreements that you have. Try to convince your partner of your idea by using information from the article, your knowledge of the topic, and your experiences.