

**Project 3: The Effect of Computing and Communication Technology on Your Brain**

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**Introduction**

Considering our conversations in regard to *The Shallows* and your own research, write a well-developed argument about the relationship of technology and the human brain in an essay of at least 1,250 words.

For example, you might choose to argue that Google makes us smarter or augments our memory, or alternatively, you might choose to argue that Google reduces our intelligence or impairs our memory. Another example, you might choose to argue that social media improves our empathy for others, or alternatively, you might choose to argue that social media impedes our empathy for others.

Any argument focused on some aspect of the relationship between digital technologies and the human brain is fair game as long as it the argument is supported by your research.

You will have an opportunity to improve your work through the writing process before submitting it on our OpenLab site. You can strengthen your essay’s impact by manipulating the conventions of online publishing for your purposes and incorporating photos or videos of your own. Finally, you will have an opportunity to give a brief presentation summarizing your essay.

**Research**

For this project, there is a minimal requirement of four sources: one source from the Academic Search Complete database, one source from the LexisNexis database, and two sources from personal interviews (one with a person who is old enough to have lived before our modern digital world and one with a peer). You are encouraged to use additional sources such as *The Shallows*, but these are in addition to the unique research done by you to meet the four source requirement.

**Unity of Thought**

Whatever topic you decide to write about, you should pick a single, unifying topic, and it should be something that you know a lot about without needing to do any additional research. All topics are open for to write about as long as it gives your audience a strong impression of you through your discussion of the topic. This means that everything that you write this topic in your essay must connect back to you and show (instead of telling) how it is a part of who you are as a person. Choosing this one topic to unite all of the separate paragraphs of your essay is called a unity of thought. Additionally, each paragraph should contain its own unity of thought connected to the topic/argument of your essay.

**Developing Your Essay**

This is the recommended essay structure. We will discuss in class why I suggest this approach. Other approaches are permissible as long as overall you develop a thesis, support it with evidence, and discuss possible challenges to your argument.

1. Introduction (1 paragraph)
   1. Introduce your topic.
   2. Thesis or argument.
   3. Roadmap.
2. Supporting Evidence for Your Thesis (3 or more paragraphs)
   1. Each of these paragraphs should support your thesis statement in the first paragraph.
   2. Each paragraph should begin with a topic sentence connected to and supporting your thesis.
   3. These paragraphs should be supported with your personal experience, readings, and library research.
   4. Each supporting paragraph should be about one topic. Beware of attempting to discuss too many things in a single paragraph, which could lead to the loss of that paragraph’s unity of thought.
3. Counter Evidence (at least 1 paragraph)
   1. In at least one paragraph, discuss potential objections to your thesis.
   2. Acknowledge and account for these challenges.
4. Conclusion (1 paragraph)
   1. After briefly reminding your reader about your argument and your supporting evidence, discuss your topic in broader terms. For example, what might your observations mean if extrapolated five or ten years into the future? Or, what emerging technologies build on those that you discussed and what might their effect be on the brain? Or, what advice can you provide your reader to deal with or manage the effects of our digital technology on the brain?
5. Works Cited
   1. Create a Works Cited list at the end of your essay that follows MLA formatting. Refer to the Purdue OWL Website (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>).
   2. Remember to use proper parenthetical citations of all sources in the body of your essay.

**Progress and Process**

It is absolutely essential to your success as a communicator to use the writing process to your advantage. We use the drafting, peer review, and revision process in an iterative fashion to develop your writing over time continuously but not necessarily in a linear fashion. Put another way, you should never consider your writing “done.” You can always return to any part of your writing and revise it in part or whole until its final due date.

**Submitting Your Work on OpenLab and In-Class**

After you have completed your essay, you will copy-and-paste it in its entirety (including the Works Cited) into a new blog post on our OpenLab site. As a reminder, you create a new blog post by following these directions: 1) Login to OpenLab and navigate to our class’ site. 2) Mouse over the + sign on our site’s gray menu bar and click on “Post.” 3) You will now be on the Add New Post page. 4) Where it says, “Enter title here,” click and type your title (create your own descriptive, informative, and catchy title followed by “by Your Name”). 5) In the large white box beneath the title, you can type or copy-and-paste the writing that you have done elsewhere. This is where you will create your blog post. 6) Click “Publish” when you are ready for it to be read on OpenLab.

In addition to posting your work on OpenLab, you will give a two-minute oral presentation summary of your essay. This presentation will be supported by a typed and printed script, which will be turned in after your in-class presentation.

**Schedule**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week | Day | Date | Announcements | Reading | **Due** |
| 11 | M | 11/9 | Student-led introduction to the reading.  **Introduce Project Three.**  **Lab: Brainstorm and free write topics for Project Three.** | Carr, *The Shallows*, Prologue and One. | **Beginning of class writing: summary of reading.**  **OpenLab: Type and post your reading summaries from previous week as comments to the appropriate blog posts on our OpenLab before arriving to class today.**  **New due date: Project Two due on OpenLab.** |
|  | W | 11/11 | Student-led introduction to the reading. | Carr, *The Shallows*, Two and a digression. | **Beginning of class writing: summary of reading.** |
| 12 | M | 11/16 | Student-led introduction to the reading.  **Lab: Peer review introduction for Project Three.** | Carr, *The Shallows*, Three. | **Beginning of class writing: summary of reading.**  **OpenLab: Type and post your reading summaries from previous week as comments to the appropriate blog posts on our OpenLab before arriving to class today.**  **Bring three copies of your writing to class for peer review (at least 250 words).** |
|  | W | 11/18 | Student-led introduction to the reading. | Carr, *The Shallows*, Four and a digression. | **Beginning of class writing: summary of reading.** |
| 13 | M | 11/23 | Student-led introduction to the reading.  **Lab: Peer review draft of Project Three.** | Carr, *The Shallows*, Five. | **Beginning of class writing: summary of reading.**  **OpenLab: Type and post your reading summaries from previous week as comments to the appropriate blog posts on our OpenLab before arriving to class today.**  **Bring three copies of your writing to class for peer review (at least 500 words).** |
|  | W | 11/25 | Student-led introduction to the reading. | Carr, *The Shallows*, Six. | **Beginning of class writing: summary of reading.** |
| 14 | M | 11/30 | Student-led introduction to the reading.  **Lab: Peer review draft of Project Three.** | Carr, *The Shallows*, Seven and a digression. | **Beginning of class writing: summary of reading.**  **OpenLab: Type and post your reading summaries from previous week as comments to the appropriate blog posts on our OpenLab before arriving to class today.**  **Bring three copies of your writing to class for peer review (at least 1000 words).** |
|  | W | 12/2 | **Discuss reading.** | Carr, *The Shallows*, Eight. | **Beginning of class writing: summary of reading.** |
| 15 | M | 12/7 | **Discuss reading.**  **Lab: Peer review final draft of Project Three.** | Carr, *The Shallows*, Nine and a digression. | **Beginning of class writing: summary of reading.**  **OpenLab: Type and post your reading summaries from previous week as comments to the appropriate blog posts on our OpenLab before arriving to class today.**  **Bring three copies of your writing to class for peer review (at least 1250 words).** |
|  | W | 12/9 | **Project Three Presentations.**  **Handout readings for practice final exam.** | Carr, *The Shallows*, Ten and Epilogue. | **New due date: Project Three Blog Post Due on OpenLab.** |
| 16 | M | 12/14 | **Practice final exam during class.**  **Lab: Discuss practice exam.** |  | **OpenLab: Type and post your reading summaries from previous week as comments to the appropriate blog posts on our OpenLab before arriving to class today.** |
|  | W | 12/16 | **Class wrap up. Last day for any make up work and presentations.**  **Handout readings for final exam.** |  |  |
| 17 | M | 12/21 | **LAST DAY OF CLASS.**  **Final exam during class.** |  |  |
|  |  |  | **Final grades available on CUNYfirst after midnight on 12/29.** |  |  |