Research-Based Curricula

Your Wellbeing and Social Media

Key Stage 5

Technology, Politics and Wellbeing

2022

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Contents

Getting Started

Subject Learning

Study Skills, Tips and Guidance

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About this Pack

Who is this pack for?

- This pack was created for all students, regardless if this is your best subject or your worst.

- It's not graded or marked by your teacher. It's a chance to explore the subject and learn in a new way that's different to the classroom.

- Each pack is written by a student at the University of Cambridge who is researching this topic and has special knowledge on the subject. When they were your age they knew nothing about it either!

- By completing their mini-course, you will find out why it's interesting and you will build your skills that help you improve at school.

So… why complete this pack?

- Learn new cool areas of a subject that you won't cover in the classroom

- Sharpen your academic skills, like short essay writing and interpreting data

- Experience what it's like to explore a subject freely

- Better understand what you enjoy and don't – it will help you make decisions about your future studies and career choices!

What's in this booklet?

Your RBC booklet is a pack of resources containing:

✓ More about how and why study this subject

✓ Six 'resources' each as a lesson with activities

✓ A final assignment to gauge learning

✓ Extra guidance throughout about the university skills you are building

✓ End notes on extra resources and where to find more information

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Meet the Author

Name **Aisha Sobey**

Area of Study and Degree **PhD in the Politics of Digital Space**

University **University of Cambridge**

Where I am from
I grew up in a little village in Derbyshire, in the East Midlands of the UK.

I think my subject is awesome because…
…it can be applied to all areas of life. Tracing the money explains so much of the world around us – why things are done they way they are and how inequalities are created and continued. I love being able to critically engage with the structures we live within and hope to make positive change!

At school I studied…
Maths, Chemistry and Philosophy at A level as I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I liked being creative but thought the STEM subjects would help keep my options open and challenged my logical thinking.

A resource that inspires me…
I loved this article by Professor Louise Amoore, which I was introduced to when studying a security and technology module in my undergraduate degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Queens University Belfast. She looks at international border security at airports following 9/11 to consider the hidden power and control at the border. Amoore's work was definitely eye-opening for me in the way that seemingly normal technology has hidden consequences and power.

For this coursebook in particular, Tristan Harris's blog which explains the design of social media is amazing and written in a really accessible way. This blog was partly why I've focussed on digital space for my PhD!

One person I really admire is…
Jameela Jamil. I think she is admirable for many reasons, but briefly, because she has succeeded while being open about her chronic health condition and mental health. She is willing to learn and be wrong publicly. She makes space in her activism for people who are marginalised and fights for inclusion online.

Building Your Skills

Research-Based Curricula packs challenge you to build your skills in this subject but also to be used across any of your schoolwork.

Any time you see a badge, look out for a skill you'll be building!

These skills are the type of skills that teachers and universities look for as you progress, so see how many you know below.

Skills you may see and use in this pack

|	
Research	*your ability to work on your own and find answers online or in other books*
Creativity	*your ability to create something original and express your ideas*
Problem solving	*your ability to apply what you know to new problems*
Source analysis	*your ability to evaluate sources (e.g. for bias, origin, purpose)*
Data analysis	*your ability to discuss the implications of what the numbers show*
Active reading	*your ability to engage with what you are reading by highlighting and annotating*
Critical thinking	*your ability to think logically to build an argument clearly*

Psst! You can learn more about these skills in the Academic Study Skills section.

Your Skills Badges

As you work through this booklet, you'll have the chance to build the skills you have read on the previous page.

Make sure to revisit this page once you have mastered each skill. Tick off each skills badge below once completed!

Research

Critical Thinking

Active Reading

Creativity

Problem Solving

Source Analysis

Data Analysis
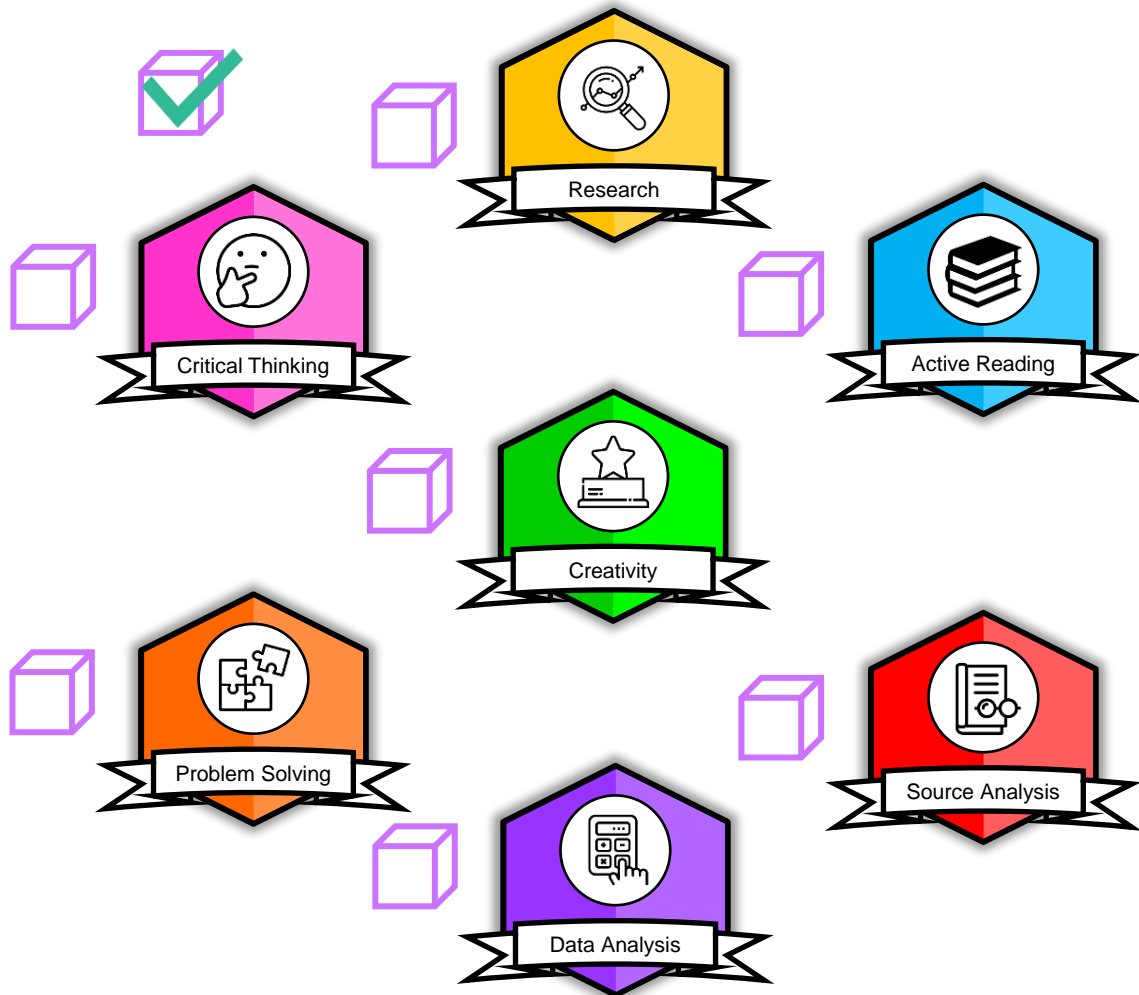
Look out for these badges in the Data Source, Activities and Further Reading sections of each Resource. If you complete a skill more than once, write the number of times you completed it next to the badge.

When you've earned all seven skills badges, you can discuss with your teacher how to further build your skills!

Vocabulary

Be sure to use this section as you go through your booklet. If you see an emboldened word, you can find the definition here. If you are still unsure about the meaning or use of the word, we encourage you to use a dictionary or ask a teacher. See page 10 to add your own words.

Term	Definition
Technological Instrumentalism	An approach to technology which positions it as a tool. From this perspective technology is neutral and does not transmit values (like power, money, kindness, honesty), but is made to fix a problem and/or help people.
Technological Determinism	An approach to technology which sees technology as a controlling force in human existence towards its own end (such as power, money or destruction) which cannot be influenced by humans.
Socio-Technical Development	This approach to technology considers the reciprocal relationship between technology and society. Technology is created imbued with values, and through use is shaped and changed by the users in an exchange between technology and humans.
Human Computer Interaction (HCI)	HCI is the interdisciplinary study of the relationship between computers and humans. HCI covers any device, such as smartphones, watches, tablets, keypads to kettles, that humans interact with.
Critical Theory	Is a broad theory within political science which attributes problems to structural conditions including social structures and cultural assumptions. For example, very simply, the problem of sexism and the gender pay gap, has been socially created, cultural assumptions of the low value of women have created a system where childcare is the women's responsibility and women are paid less. This approach aims to highlight and unpick these conditions.
Planned Economy	A planned economy is one where the government (or another body with authority over the economy) sets the prices, trading and peoples wages.
Free Market Economy	A free market economy is one where markets are left free to set prices via the supply and demand model.

Vocabulary

Term	Definition
Supply-Demand Model	The supply and demand model is the understanding that the levels of supply of a good or service contrasted with the demand for the good or service will set an ideal price for this good or service.
Equilibrium	The point at which the supply equals demand, is the equilibrium. It indicates the price at which there will be stable supply and demand.
Capitalism	Capitalism is the political and economic system which both uses a free market leaning economy to set prices and sees individual accumulation of money (capital) as the desired outcome of life for people.
Surveillance Capitalism	Surveillance capitalism is the means of making money digitally though the collection and use of personal data for advertising.
The Attention Economy	The attention economy is the development of a market trading in people's attention, rather than trying to get their money, it wants their attention to collect data about them and have them view adverts they get paid for by other companies.
Wellbeing	Wellbeing is people's quality of life. It's whether we're happy, healthy, are able to cope with life's challenges and are satisfied with life. You can have a mental illness but have high wellbeing.
Positive Psychology	Is a branch of psychology which focuses on creating ways we can improve wellbeing, rather than traditional psychology which treats mental illness.
Flourishing	Flourishing is the goal of developing wellbeing and is the maximum state of wellbeing.
Languishing	Languishing is the minimal state of wellbeing where people are unhappy, not coping with life and are unsatisfied.
Normal Distribution	Is a statistical concept which means the values which make up an average value all cluster around the average value, such as our heights, and form a bell curve on a graph.
The Cognitive Approach	The cognitive approach is a theory within psychology which states that our cognition (thoughts and experience) of the world and events shape our behaviour.

Vocabulary

When you find words, you don't recognise in a lesson, be sure to look up their definition. Use this page to write them down and make a note of their definition!

Term	Definition

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Introduction to Subject
Wellbeing in Social Media

The topics within this pack will include:

Can we consider social media to be good or bad?

The design of social media

How social media is capturing our attention

What is wellbeing?

Wellbeing and social media

Can social media support our wellbeing?

Understanding the relationship between wellbeing and social media is a relatively new area of study which draws on many different disciplines and traditional fields. It can be approached from both a medical and health perspective such as psychology, from a behavioural economic perspective, computer modelling, or from social sciences such as digital geography, sociology or anthropology.

The approach to understanding this relationship will therefore differ depending on the background of the researcher. This coursebook, and my research, are informed by my beginning in politics and international relations where I have always been interested in structural power: What invisible conditions do we live in that shape how we behave and live our lives?

With the rise of social media, that I am old enough to have lived through, the impact of our digital world seemed especially important. My research, then, is concerned with how the invisible, digital structures that are everywhere in our lives, impact our wellbeing?

Social media is understood to be websites and apps which allow users to create and share content, or build and develop social connections. They will be the vehicle this pack uses to introduce a critical, interdisciplinary approach to the world we live in, combining knowledge from different places. Hopefully, this will give you an insight into university style study which pushes boundaries and creates new knowledge.

Introduction to Subject
Wellbeing in Social Media

This pack is centred around you having a social media account of some sort for some of the exercises. The understanding of structural control will still be relevant, but if you do not use social media it would be ideal if you could: work with a partner who does, or try to apply the studies to a different form of technology (such as how your phone, computer or even something like your alarm in the morning works).

To continue this at university level, depending on your interests, you could consider lots of different courses, such as psychology, software design, sociology, anthropology or even human geography, depending on how you like to think about the world, and specialise within that discipline.

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Resource One Overview

Topic	**Is social media good or bad?**
Key Stage 5 Subject Area	**Issues and debates in Psychology** **Human Computer Interaction (HCI) in ICT**
Objectives	**By completing this resource, you will be able to:**

✓ Explain and differentiate between the terms instrumentalism, determinism and socio-technical development.

✓ Be able to assess and relate these terms to common ways social media is discussed in the press.

✓ Understand the development of HCI

Instructions

1. **Read the data source**
2. **Complete the activities**
3. **Explore the further reading**
4. **Move on to the Resource Two**
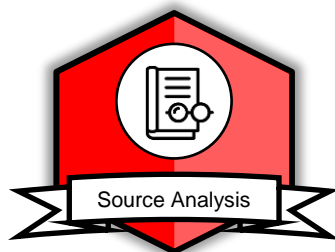
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Resource One
Data Source

Section A

Gut reaction, what do you of social media?

Welcome to Resource One, we're starting with a gut reaction task so please don't read beyond this page until you've completed activities 1 and 2! From lots of different places like news headlines or chatting to friends and family, we all have different opinions on social media. So, we are going to start with an activity. This first section aims to get your gut reaction to the question: Is social media good or bad?

Figure 1

News headlines concerning social media

Creativity

Source Analysis

Activity 1

Considering the headlines In figure 1 and your own experiences with social media create 'pros' and 'cons' lists for social media, what's good about them and what's bad?

Activity 2

Summarise these lists into a couple of sentences to give your opinion on social media and we will revisit this as we go through the pack. Please now move on to the next section.

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Resource One
Data Source

Instrumentalism, Determinism and Socio-technical development

Now we've had a chance to form a first take on social media, this section will explore three different ways to understand the relationship between social media and society.

First **Technological Instrumentalism**, is an understanding of technology purely as a tool to be used by humans to fix a problem or help us in some way. Technology is framed as neutral, it doesn't have any other motives, it just exists to do the job it was designed for. With this approach, social media isn't seen to have any influence on human behaviour. For example, *"Facebook is a platform to be used to make friends."*

Technology ⬅ **Humans**

Second, on the other end of the spectrum, **Technological Determinism** sees technology as a driving force of human behaviour. Here, the consequences of technology are seen as unstoppable, and based on values built into the technology. With this approach, technology inevitably causes things to happen, and humans don't have free will to do anything differently. For example, *"Facebook makes people mean"*.

Technology ➡ **Humans**

Both instrumentalism and determinism are common in how the media talks about social media as they simplify the topic to a cause-and-effect relationship between humans and technology which is easier to understand.

Conversely, **Socio-Technical Development** is a middle ground which doesn't see the relationship as only one way or the other. Instead, the relationship is complicated and goes both ways.
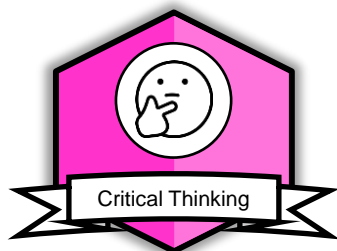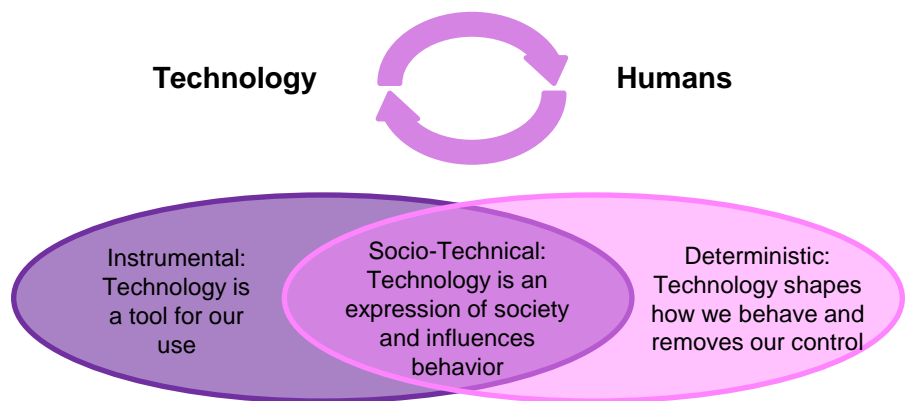
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Resource One
Data Source
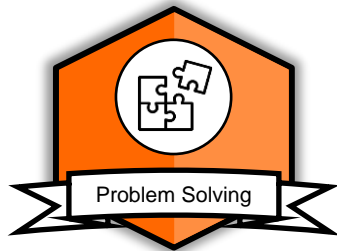
Socio-technical development recognises the feedback loop between society and technology, as they both influence each other. It positions technology as an expression of societal, and political values, which shape the consequences of a technology. Different laptops have different keyboard arrangements and functions depending on the place they are meant to be used, as different languages and cultures use some keys more than others.

Active Reading

In exchange, users of a technology improve, adapt, and exploit the technology in return. We have the free will and ability to rebel against the designed use and use them in different ways. For example, *"Facebook is a platform on which life updates can be shared, but we have used this as a way to meet new people and from new social circles".*

Problem Solving

Figure 2

Approaches to understanding technology and society

Technology ⟳ **Humans**

Instrumental: Technology is a tool for our use

Socio-Technical: Technology is an expression of society and influences behavior

Deterministic: Technology shapes how we behave and removes our control

Critical Thinking

The socio-technical approach is really important as this understanding of social media will allow us in later resources of this RBC pack, to trace the influences of money within the design of social media and our **Wellbeing**.

Activity 3

Revisit your answer to activity 2 and consider your answer. Was your gut reaction deterministic? Instrumental? Or did you fall in the middle as more socio-technical?

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Resource One
Data Source

Section C

Human Computer Interaction (HCI)

Taking socio-technical development as our approach, **Human Computer Interaction (HCI)** is a field of study within which socio-technical development is explored. HCI was first developed in the 1980's by technology designers but has grown to be an interdisciplinary field. HCI seeks to explore the interaction between humans and technology from different perspectives, such as engineering, design and psychology. In this coursebook we will move away from software design to focus on political and cultural values and psychology. We will consider the motivations built into the design of social media and the outcomes for people using it.

Figure 3 shows how many factors influence the user experience and create different interdisciplinary research areas under the banner of HCI. It also demonstrates how complicated this area of research can be – although this is nothing to be afraid of!

Critical Thinking

Figure 3

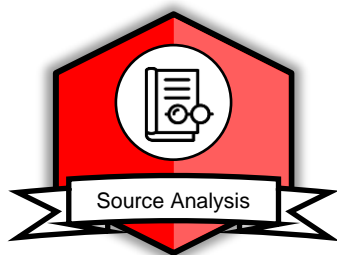*Visual representation of the areas and subfields within HCI*

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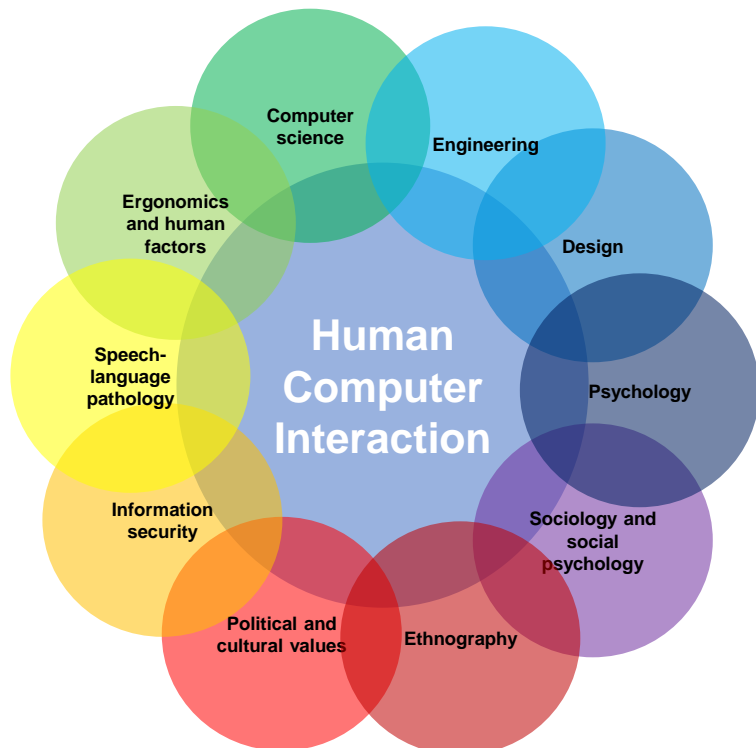
Resource One
Data Source

Section D

Critical Theory

By pushing against accepting social media at face value, we will be engaging in **Critical Theory**. Critical theory is an area of research which attributes problems to the social structures we live in and tries to unpick these problems by questioning things that are taken for granted. Its aim is to reveal and challenge power structures. For example, how the social control of women of colour has been linked to controlling hair and hair care for Afro-Caribbean hair types, which can be seen in examples like not allowing swim caps for different types of hair to be used in the Olympics, or in calling afros and braids unprofessional.

We are going to stay within general critical theory as we question how social media is designed. If you wanted to study this further you could move into one of the sub-fields of critical theory which focus on different aspects of life such as race, gender or class and apply this to social media.

Figure 4

Excerpt from a Guardian article titled "The role of social media in community building and development"

"

Facebook users can claim to have hundreds of friends in their network, yet sometimes find it difficult to name half a dozen people that they have actually met in their local neighbourhood. While social networks have helped people to meet like-minded contacts online, they have had a more limited role in developing face-to-face contact in communities.

But gradually, social networks are beginning to have a bigger role in building community and catalysing neighbourhood co-operation and social action. The recent post-riot clean-up Twitter campaign was one example of how social media can be used to inspire people to get involved in community life.

This was just one of the examples discussed at a round table event last week exploring the crossover of local communities and social media. Organised by RightmovePlaces and Civic Voice, it brought together some of the leading lights in hyperlocal online communities to discuss what role social media can play in supporting and mobilising communities.

One national organisation that has used social media to encourage community action is Keep Britain Tidy. The organisation's partnerships support director Fran Hayes told participants how it uses existing social networks such as Twitter and Facebook to help change people's habits nationally and organise local litter pickups.

"

Resource One Activities

Activity 4   Figure 4 is an excerpt from a news article about the use of Facebook for community building. Describe the features in this extract which demonstrate socio-technical development, highlighting the design of the technology and the adaptions made by the users.

Activity 5   Find a second article about social media or a social media app of your choice from a newspaper online, you could take a look at The Guardian, The Times, or The Observer for something that could be balanced or newspapers like The Sun or the Daily Mail are more likely to use one sided or extreme language. Identify its approach to technology – is it describing social media and its outcomes as instrumental, deterministic or as socio-technical?

Compare the way social media is described in the article you find to the extract in figure 4.

Which one do you think offers the best approach to social media?

Research

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Resource One
Further Reading

Explore **For more examples of socio-technical development**

- https://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/community-action-blog/2011/dec/08/facebook-social-media-community-development

- https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/mar/19/tiktok-ukraine-russia-war-disinformation

For more information on HCI

- https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/book/the-encyclopedia-of-human-computer-interaction-2nd-ed/human-computer-interaction-brief-intro

- https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLssT5z_DsK_nusHL_Mjt87THSTIgrsyJ

References Carr, M. (2016). A (Select) Political History of the Internet. In *US Power and the Internet in International Relations*. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137550248_3

Karray, F., Alemzadeh, M., Abou Saleh, J., & Nours Arab, M. (2008). Human-Computer Interaction: Overview on State of the Art. *International Journal on Smart Sensing and Intelligent Systems*, *1*(1). https://doi.org/10.21307/ijssis-2017-283

Livingtson, K. (1988). Technology and Politics . Michael E. Kraft and Norman J. Vig, Eds. Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 1988. xvi, 358 pp. $59.75; paper, $17.95. . *Science*, *241*(4872). https://doi.org/10.1126/science.241.4872.1519.a

McArthur, J. (2021). Critical theory in a decolonial age. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2021.1934670

Resource One
Further Reading

Image Sources

- https://programmerblog.net/what-is-human-computer-interaction/
- https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/mar/19/tiktok-ukraine-russia-war-disinformation
- https://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/community-action-blog/2011/dec/08/facebook-social-media-community-development
- https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/how-facebook-and-friends-are-killing-democracy-nsjbs2b5j
- https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z2w7dp3

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Resource Two
Overview

Topic   **What has driven the design of social media?**

Key Stage 5   **Power, Soft Power and the Political Economy**
Subject Area

Objectives   **By completing this resource, you will be able to:**

✓ Understand the principles of capitalism and the free market economy

✓ Explain the concept of surveillance capitalism

✓ Consider and suggest ways to subvert social media data collection

Instructions   1. **Read the data source**
2. **Complete the activities**
3. **Explore the further reading**
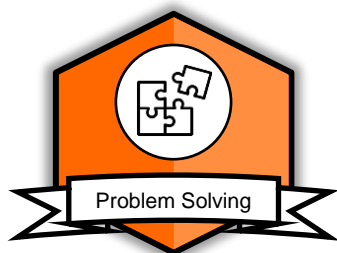4. **Move on to the Resource Three**

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Resource Two
Data Source

Section A

Supply and Demand in the free market economy

In Resource One, we learned, through a socio-technical view, that technologies reflect the politics and society they are created within. Therefore, this resource will introduce the political background of social media through looking at economic stance. There are a range of economic approaches, from a fully **Planned Economy**, to a fully **Free Market Economy**. A planned economy has prices set by governments, for example the price of a bottle of water might be set at 75p. So, water sellers must charge that much.

A free market economy is focused on the exchange of things for money. The price of goods or services is set by how much of that thing there is and how many people want it. If there are 100 bottles of water and 50 people who want them, the price will be low, say 50p because there are 2 bottles per person. But if there are only 10 bottles of water and 50 people who want them, then the price rises as each water bottle is in higher demand, the price might go up to £5 a bottle. If the price is really high, then more people will make and sell water bottles to try to make money and the price will fall as the number available rises. This process is called the **Supply-Demand Model**, and says that if left to be free, a market will find an **Equilibrium** or ideal price and quantity ratio.

Problem Solving

Figure 5

Supply-Demand Model graph. Shows the level of supply and demand creating an equilibrium point and price at *
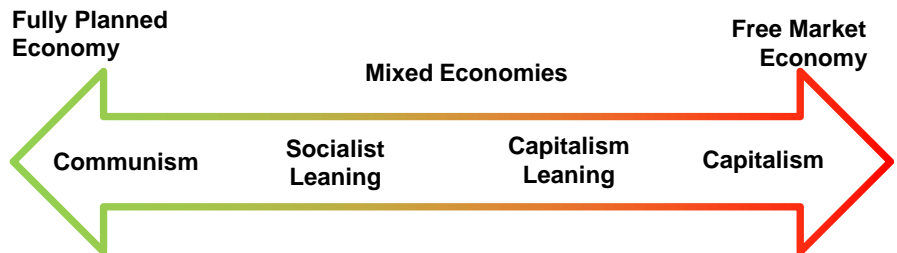
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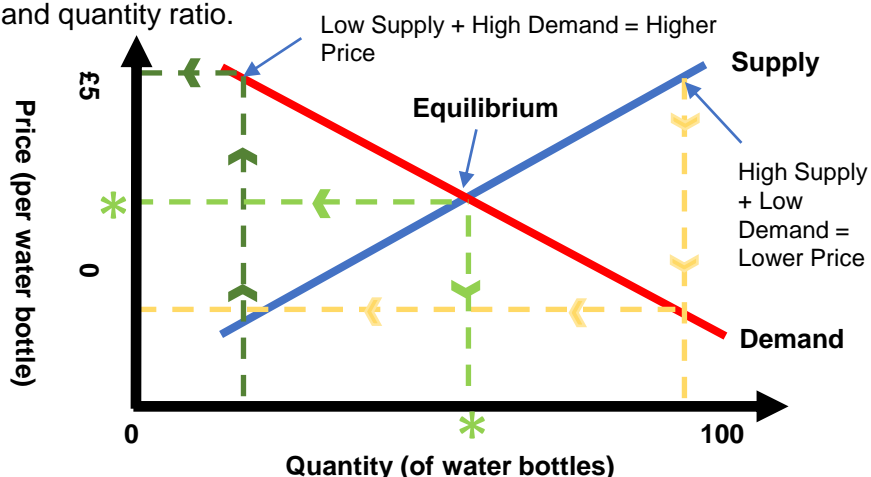
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Section B

Capitalism and Digital Technologies

Between the free market and a fully planned one, there are a range of economic stances governments can take. Most countries have a mixed economy, with more western countries usually falling closer to a free market than a planned one.

Figure 6

Economic models diagram

Free market leaning economies have resulted in the promotion of **Capitalism**. Capitalism is focused on making money, by private people and companies owning things such as property and factories and having the ability to make new things to sell. As this ideal has spread across the world in the process of globalisation, the global market has formed and most products we use now come from around the world.

Critical Thinking

The internet and digital technologies can be understood as an extension of capitalism, developed in the west and based on free trade of knowledge, ideas and digital services. The use and development of digital technologies has offered new ways of making money. From traditional businesses being able to reach a wider customer base, to new types of digital services all together.

Activity 1

Can you think of ways money can be made now which rely on digital innovations from your experience and day-to-day life? Try to think of some which are adding value or enhancing an already existing way of making money (like selling things online) and new ways which are only possible because of the internet.

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Resource Two
Data Source

Section C

The Surveillance Capitalism

Social media is one of the innovations which has only been made possible through the invention of the internet and has made a lot of money, for both users of the platform who create content and for the owners of the platforms.

For the platforms however, one of the major ways this is possible, is through the collecting and selling of personal data in what Shoshanna Zuboff calls **Surveillance Capitalism**.

She argues that the aim of surveillance capitalists is to use behavioural data about what people do online, to create accurate predictions of purchasing patterns to sell to advertisers. This is how all the big companies such as Facebook and Google make their money.

But does this mean we have to give our data through our phones? Some people are revolting:

Figure 7

Extracts from BBC Article titled 'Not Smart but clever? The return of 'dumbphones'

" ## Not smart but clever? The return of 'dumbphones'

These are basic handsets, or feature phones, with very limited functionality compared to say an iPhone. You can typically only make and receive calls and SMS text messages. And, if you are lucky - listen to radio and take very basic photos, but definitely not connect to the internet or apps.

Five years ago, Przemek Olejniczak, a psychologist, swapped his smartphone for a Nokia 3310, initially because of the longer-lasting battery. However, he soon realised that there were other benefits.

"Before I would always be stuck to the phone, checking anything and everything, browsing Facebook or the news, or other facts I didn't need to know," he says.

"Now I have more time for my family and me. A huge benefit is that I'm not addicted to liking, sharing, commenting, or describing my life to other people. Now I have more privacy."

However, Mr Olejniczak, who lives in the Polish city of Lodz, admits that initially the switch was challenging. "Before I'd be checking everything, such as buses and restaurants, on my smartphone [when travelling]. Now that is impossible, so I have learned to do all those things beforehand at home. I got used to it." "
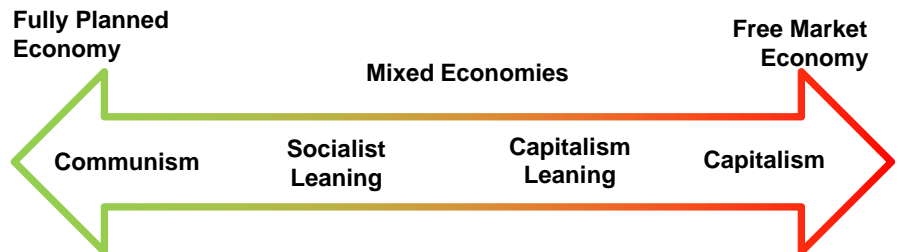
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Resource Two
Activities

Activity 2 In your own words, can you explain how supply and demand affect price?

Activity 3 Mark on the diagram where you think the following countries sit on the spectrum: United States, France, North Korea, China, Japan and Sweden. You can research their politics or use what you know about each of those countries.

Source Analysis

Fully Planned Economy

Mixed Economies

Free Market Economy

Communism   **Socialist Leaning**   **Capitalism Leaning**   **Capitalism**
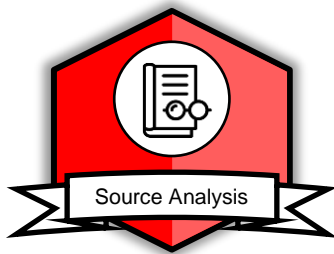
Activity 4 Watch this short clip of Shoshana Zuboff explaining the surveillance economy and summarise her argument https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwNYjshqZ10&ab_channel=TheLavinAgencySpeakersBureau

Activity 5 Reading the extract of the article in figure 7, can you explain how the decision to reject a smartphone in favour of a 'dumbphone' could be understood within socio-technical development? And how could this affect what might this mean for the supply-demand level of smartphones and dumbphones?

Creativity

Resource Two
Activities

Activity 6   To protect against our data being harvested we can start using a dumbphone, but it does mean we don't get the benefits of social media. Can you suggest any alternatives or middle ground between full use of social media or quitting social media completely? You could consider national policy, changes to the design of the app, a different way to use the app or any other avenue you can think of.

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Resource Two
Further Reading

Explore
- A lesson on capitalism and the free market https://study.com/academy/lesson/capitalism-and-the-free-market.html
- Shoshana Zuboff explaining surveillance capitalism in an interview: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QL4bz3QXWEo&ab_channel=Channel4News
- Read: https://www.tortoisemedia.com/2019/02/17/zuboff/
- http://www.differencebetween.net/business/difference-between-free-market-economy-and-command-economy/

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Backhouse, R. E. (2005). The Rise of Free Market Economics: Economists and the Role of the Sate since 1970. *Journal of the Political Economy*, *78*(2), 355–392.

Galizia Caruana, P. (n.d.). Shoshana Zobuff's Surveillance Capitalism is suddenly being quoted everywhere. What is it about? Learn to speak Zuboffian. *Tortoise*. Retrieved April 2, 2022, from https://www.tortoisemedia.com/2019/02/17/zuboff/

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access ed

Resource Three Overview

Topic	**How does the design of social media capture our attention?**
Key Stage 5 Subject Area	**Behavioural theory** **Human Computer Interaction**
Objectives	**By completing this resource, you will be able to:** ✓ Explain the attention economy ✓ Identify ways social media has been designed to capture attention ✓ Apply this understanding to features in other apps
Instructions	1. **Read the data source** 2. **Complete the activities** 3. **Explore the further reading** 4. **Move on to the Resource Four**

access ed

Resource Three
Data Source

Section A

The Attention Economy

In Resource Two, we identified the political economic idea of the free market that has shaped the development of the internet and social media. This resource will focus on how capitalism, the aim of making money, has been built into social media.

To make the most money, digital platforms need to gain as much user data as possible. To do this, they need our attention. Time spent liking, clicking and viewing content all give the platforms information about human behaviour and what makes us tick – which can potentially be used to sell us things.

Shoshana Zuboff called it surveillance capitalism, but researchers like James Williams and Tristan Harris believe that it goes further than that. They argue that there is a whole new economy based on people's attention: **The Attention Economy**.

In the digital world where there are unlimited choices of what to look at, it is human attention that becomes limited instead of having limited money to spend on things. We all have limited time (at most 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) and we have to do things like sleep. So, the aim for platforms in the attention economy is to get as much attention as possible, to gather data for surveillance capitalism, and have the chance to show ads which they get paid for.

Active Reading

Figure 8

How the attention economy works

User Data

Views Adverts

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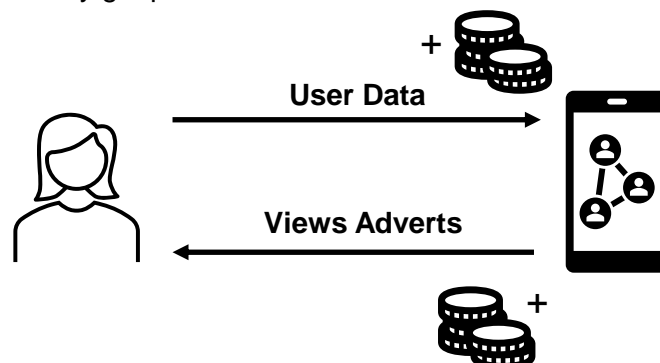
Resource Three
Data Source

Section B

The development of tactics for grabbing attention

Figure 9

Image of first computer pop-up adds

The internet became available in houses for personal use in the 1990s and quickly gained popularity. The first generation of internet ads came in the form of pop-up ads.

As people tried to browse, multiple ads would jump up onto the screen, many also making noises, and stay until they were manually closed. They could be about all manner of things and usually offered free things if the person followed the link. Yes, these grabbed your attention, but they were more frustrating than tempting.

While this shares similarities with some adverts we see now, advertising online has gained sophistication and has become a lot sneakier. Clickbait is a good example of this. Designed to attract attention either as a text or image link, clickbait is usually sensationalised, exaggerated, or controversial, playing on people's curiosity to get them to click but often disappointing them when the link is followed.

Figure 10

Clickbait Headline

She Hid From Everyone For Years - Now She Tells Us Why

access ed

Resource Three
Data Source

Section C

Behavioural tactics for capturing our attention

Clickbait is one more obvious example of how our attention is being grabbed by social media. However, Tristan Harris argues that the problem is even deeper than that. He worked at Google for 3 years designing the software so that it would take advantage of human psychological vulnerabilities.

He identified 10 main 'hijacks' used to control people online:

#1 Controlling the menu of options

#2 Slot machine in your pocket

#3 Fear of Missing Something important (FOMSI)

#4 Social Approval

#5 Social Reciprocity (tit-for-tat)

#6 Bottomless feeds and auto play

#7 Instant Interruption Notifications

#8 Bundling our reasons with theirs

#9 Inconvenient Choices

#10 'Foot in the door' strategies

Section D

Focus on controlling the menu

This section will go into more detail about controlling the menu of options and activity 2 will ask you to research the rest of the hijacks. By controlling the menu, for example Google Maps showing a list of options, it gives a list of choices, but not necessarily all of them or the best choices for us. We very rarely ask in a restaurant for something not on the menu, and it is the same while using digital searches.
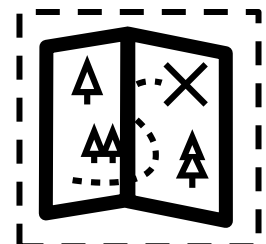
Figure 11

Controlling the Menu

Menu of Options

What's not on the menu?

access ed

Resource Three
Data Source

Section E

A moral question of freedom?

James Williams considers the attention economy one of the biggest moral and political challenges we face today.

He argues that: *"In the short term, this can distract us from doing the things we want to do. In the longer term, however, it can distract us from living the lives we want to live".*

He is concerned that social media design is not only taking advantage of vulnerabilities, but that it is eroding free will. Especially as social media and digital technologies are hard to opt out of, living with a dumbphone poses challenges such as navigating the city and remaining in contact with friends.

However, if we take the approach of socio-technical development, it is important to consider his argument as the initial expression of values built into the technology, and to highlight where users of these technologies are improving, adapting, and exploiting social media in return. For example, taking the choice to put a newsfeed blocker on Facebook is one small act of rebellion we can perform to challenge doing what the technology wants us to use it for, whilst still having the benefit of the social connections and messaging services.

Critical Thinking

Figure 12

Example of a newsfeed blocker

access ed
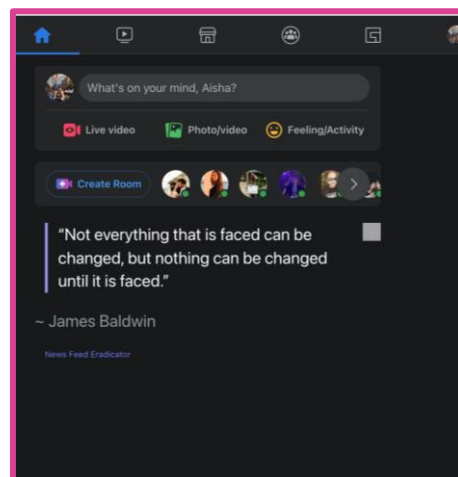
Resource Three
Activities

Activity 1   In your own words describe how the attention economy works.

Activity 2   Read this article from Tristan Harris and summarise the key elements of the 9 other mind hijacks he argues are used by social media companies. https://medium.com/thrive-global/how-technology-hijacks-peoples-minds-from-a-magician-and-google-s-design-ethicist-56d62ef5edf3

Activity 3   Using a social media app of your choice as the example, identify which hijacks are used within this app and how it captures attention and time.

Activity 4   As we learned in Resource One, socio-technical development takes into account how technology's design is influenced by its culture, in this case the capitalist system its been built within to try to capture your attention. Can you think of ways you have improved, adapted or exploited any of the hacks in the process of socio-technical development? Examples could be things like using a newsfeed blocker on Facebook to avoid hijack 8, or silencing notifications to neutralise hijack 7?

access ed

Resource Three
Further Reading

Explore
- Check out the TEDx talk by James Williams explaining the attention Economy in more detail https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MaIO2UIvJ4g&ab_channel=TEDxTalks

- For an extra deep dive into James' work, his book is available for free here: https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108453004

- More resources from Tristan Harris, and his really interesting podcast:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jT5rRh9AZf4&ab_channel=TEDxTalks

- https://www.humanetech.com/podcast/1-what-happened-in-vegas

- https://www.humanetech.com/the-social-dilemma

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Resource Three
Further Reading

Image Sources

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- https://vulcanpost.com/17252/zuckerman-apologizes-for-inventing-pop-up-ad/

- https://seopressor.com/blog/why-clickbait-headline-is-bad-for-website/

access ed

Resource Four
Overview

Topic	**What is wellbeing and why is it important?**
Key Stage 5 Subject Area	**Extension of the psychology curriculum to introduce positive psychology.**
Objectives	**By completing this resource, you will be able to:**

✓ Describe wellbeing and mental health as a continuum and their relationship with each other

✓ Explain normal distribution and why a small increase is a significant improvement

✓ Summarise the 5 ways to wellbeing and apply them to your own life.

Instructions
1. **Read the data source**
2. **Complete the activities**
3. **Explore the further reading**
4. **Move on to the Resource Five**

access ed

Resource Four
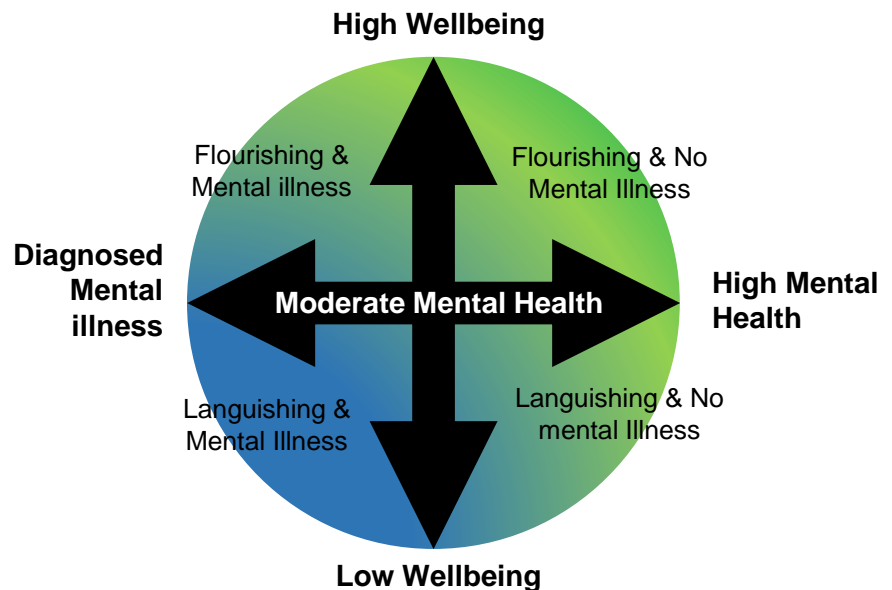# Data Source

Section A

Wellbeing and Mental health, a spectrum

In Resources One to Three we had an overview of the design of social media. Now, we're going to make a jump over to understanding wellbeing, which we will bring together in Resources Five and Six.

Wellbeing is simply how we're doing: how well we can cope with everyday life and challenges, how happy we feel, and if we feel like we have purpose and connection with the people around us. The study of how to support wellbeing, called **Positive Psychology**, is a relatively new area of research which compliments traditional psychology research. Traditional psychology focussed on mental health and how to treat mental illness, rather than how to help people live fulfilled lives. Within positive psychology, people who are doing really well are considered to be **Flourishing**. People on the other end of the spectrum are **Languishing**, and positive psychology aims to increase flourishing and reduce languishing. Figure 13 shows how wellbeing and mental health are a spectrum. We can be flourishing even with diagnosed mental illness and be languishing without any mental illness.

Active Reading

Figure 13

Wellbeing and mental health spectrum diagram

High Wellbeing

Flourishing & Mental illness

Flourishing & No Mental Illness

Diagnosed Mental illness

Moderate Mental Health

High Mental Health

Languishing & Mental Illness

Languishing & No mental Illness

Low Wellbeing

access ed

Resource Four
Data Source

Section B

Why does wellbeing matter?

For positive psychologists, understanding wellbeing is of utmost importance because it means people have better lives. But it also means people are more productive at work, have lower healthcare costs, have better relationships and can deal with life's stresses.

Crucially, experiments have shown that wellbeing levels are normally distributed, like our heights. This means that a group's scores are clustered around the average. Most people are similar in height, with a few much taller or shorter people, rather than having randomly sized people, or lots of very tall and some shorter people etc. Wellbeing scores follow this pattern. For example:

Figure 14

Table showing normal distribution

	Wellbeing score					Average Wellbeing
Normal Distribution	10	11	12	13	14	12
Non-normal distribution	6	8	8	10	26	12

Data Analysis
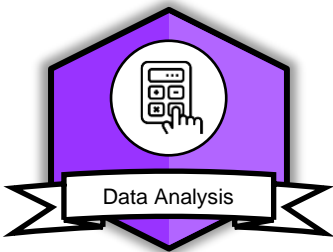
Having a **Normal Distribution** means that increasing the average wellbeing is a really good goal, and if the average wellbeing score drops this is particularly bad. Because wellbeing is normally distributed, if the average wellbeing score increased, lots of people will feel the improvement. For example:

Figure 15

Table showing increased normal distribution applying to all scores

	Wellbeing score					Average Wellbeing
Normal Distribution	11	12	13	14	15	13
Non-normal distribution	6	8	8	15	26	13

access ed

Resource Four
Data Source

Figure 16

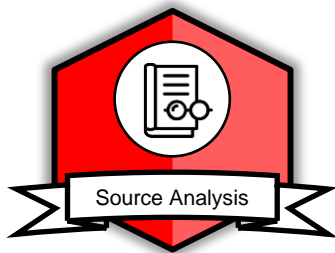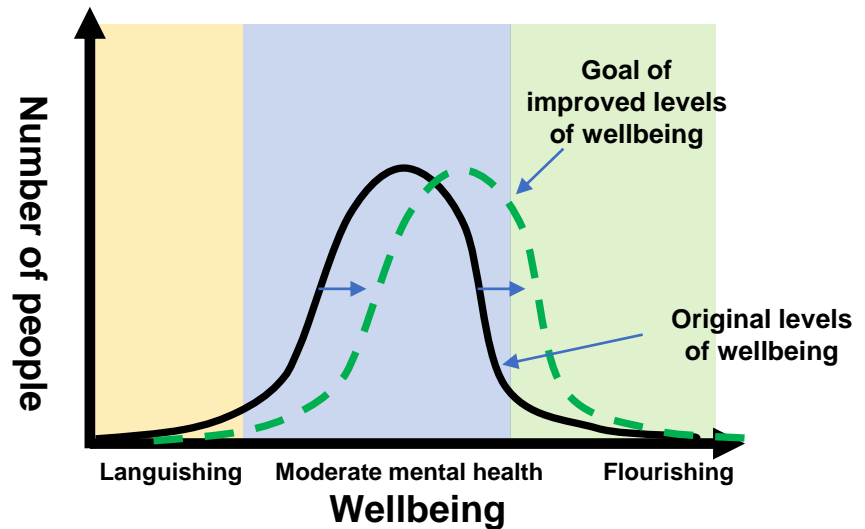*Graph showing normal distribution and the shift to increase it*

Figure 16 shows the graphical representation of the goal of increased wellbeing levels. Increasing wellbeing for everyone would lead to greater happiness and quality of life across society. Conversely, reducing wellbeing would have a negative affect across the country, lowering productivity, increasing demand on healthcare services and leaving people with less good lives. But how do we protect against reduced wellbeing and increase our wellbeing?

Section C

The Five Ways to Wellbeing

In 2008, the New Economic Foundation (NEF) brought together all the studies and found five areas which help improve wellbeing, and called them the five ways to wellbeing: Give, Connect, Keep Learning, Be Active and Take Notice.

Giving can take many forms, from giving money to charity, to less obvious ways, like spending time with someone who needs company or volunteering at a local charity shop. Studies have shown that people who report that they are interested in helping others are more likely to also consider themselves happy.

access ed

Resource Four
Data Source

Studies have shown <u>connection</u> is key for wellbeing. Some ways to deepen our connections are in-person contact instead of a text or email, and really listening to what people are saying to us to be able to ask questions and empathise with them.

<u>Keeping learning</u> is part of school, but some ways it is made more impactful is by having goals which are achievable and important to us, as well as us being really interested in the topic. Curiosity is great for keeping learning.

<u>Being active</u> regularly is good for our brains, it doesn't need to be intense activity, but moving in ways you enjoy.

<u>Taking notice</u> of the world around us is beneficial for two reasons, First, it allows us to savour the moment and appreciate what we have. Secondly, it is linked to understanding ourselves and our priorities, so we can make choices that are the best ones for us. Taking notice can be done through changing a common journey route or staring to practice mindfulness, where you live in the moment.

Figure 17

The Five Ways to Wellbeing

The five ways to wellbeing all overlap and many activities cover multiple ways to wellbeing. Yoga is both being active and taking notice of yourself as it is a mindfulness practice. Taking a walk with a friend covers connection and activity. Noting something or having questions about the world around you and then conducting research to understand it draws on both taking notice and keeping learning, especially if it was something you were curious about.

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Resource Four
Activities

Activity 1   Fill in the table below with the figures that would show a drop in wellbeing scores to an average of 11 across normal distribution and non-normal distribution.

	Wellbeing score					Average Wellbeing
Normal Distribution						11
Non-normal distribution						11

Activity 2   Draw on the below graph a line to represent what would happen if the average wellbeing fell instead of increased.
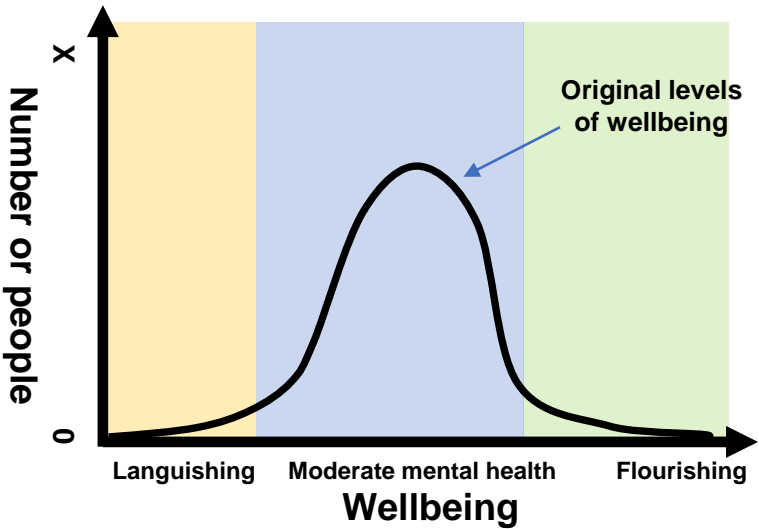
Activity 3   Can you describe what happens in your answer on the above graph, using the theory of normal distribution?

Resource Four
Activities

Activity 4   Thinking about the five ways to wellbeing, can you assess your own life and behaviour for when and how you do things which fit into each of these five areas?

Activity 5   Which of five ways to wellbeing do you do the most? Which do you do the least? Can you think of any barriers that get in the way of doing these things, or anything that helps you?

access ed

Resource Four
Further Reading

Explore
- Ways to measure flourishing, you can create an account and take the PERMA test to see if you're flourishing: https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/testcenter

- Watch a video about the 5 ways to wellbeing https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gJ5V525SCk&ab_channel=Sanctuary

- Read more about wellbeing https://whatworkswellbeing.org/about-wellbeing/what-is-wellbeing/

References

Adler, A., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2016). Using wellbeing for public policy: Theory, measurement, and recommendations. *International Journal of Wellbeing.* https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v6i1.429

Aked, J., Marks, N., Cordon, C., & Thompson, S. (2008). *Five Ways to Wellbeing* . https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/five-ways-to-wellbeing-1.pdf

Seligman, M. (2018). *The Journal of Positive Psychology PERMA and the building blocks of well-being.* https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2018.1437466

Seligman, M. E. P. (2010). *Flourish: a visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being.* Free Press.

What is wellbeing? - What Works Wellbeing. (n.d.). Retrieved April 2, 2022, from https://whatworkswellbeing.org/about-wellbeing/what-is-wellbeing/

Image Sources
- https://www.canva.com/photos/MAEhvshtFgA-green-blue-and-red-abstract-painting/

- https://positivepsychology.com/mental-health-continuum-model/

access ed

Resource Five Overview

Topic	**How do wellbeing and social media interact?**
Key Stage 5 Subject Area	**The cognitive approach** **Human Computer Interaction**
Objectives	**By completing this resource, you will be able to:**

✓ Summarise the cognitive behavioural theory of thoughts feelings and actions.

✓ Apply the cognitive behavioural theory to the design of social media.

✓ Evaluate a personal experience of social media mind hijacks.

Instructions
1. **Read the data source**
2. **Complete the activities**
3. **Explore the further reading**
4. **Move on to the Resource Six**

access ed

Resource Five
Data Source

Section A

Cognitive approach in theory

Now we know the five ways to wellbeing, we need a framework to explore how social media (designed to capture our attention) might interact with it. For this we are going to use **The Cognitive Approach**. Created in the 1960s, the cognitive approach says that our thoughts about everything, (from events, to things we see, to things we read or hear), affect how we feel about things and then alters how we behave.

Figure 18

The Cognitive Approach
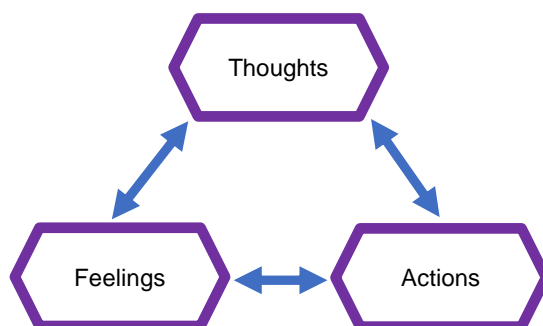
Figure 18 shows the cognitive approach and how within the theory the relationship between each thing goes both ways. For example, figure 19 shows how an action can lead to feelings, and then thoughts, followed by more action and can escalate.

Figure 19

The Cognitive Approach with an example that applies to both real life and the online world. It shows how an initial cognitive cycle (in orange) can keep going into negative places (shown in red)

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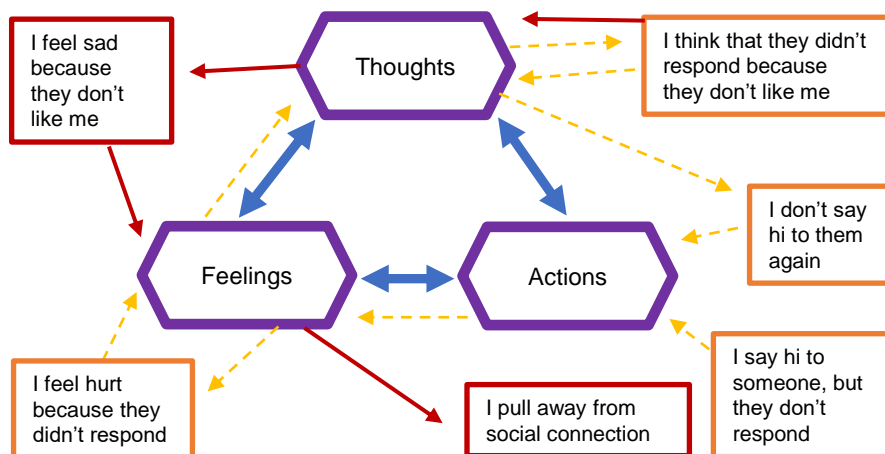
Resource Five
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Section B

The Cognitive approach and CBT

The cognitive approach developed into a treatment method for mental illness, especially common in the UK, called Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), which follows the logic that:

- Cognitive activity (our thoughts) alter our behaviour.
- We can use the cognitive approach to understand these thought processes which are shaping our behaviour, and so could change our thought processes.
- Therefore, we can change undesirable behaviour through changing the thought processes that are creating the behaviour.

CBT uses a slightly simplified flow chart to try to map, and then challenge, thought processes to help people overcome anxiety, depression and a range of other concerns.

Creativity

Figure 20

CBT worksheet. The Situation or trigger is the starting point leading into the cycle. For this worksheet we go from the trigger into the emotions, but the trigger can go anywhere on the cycle.
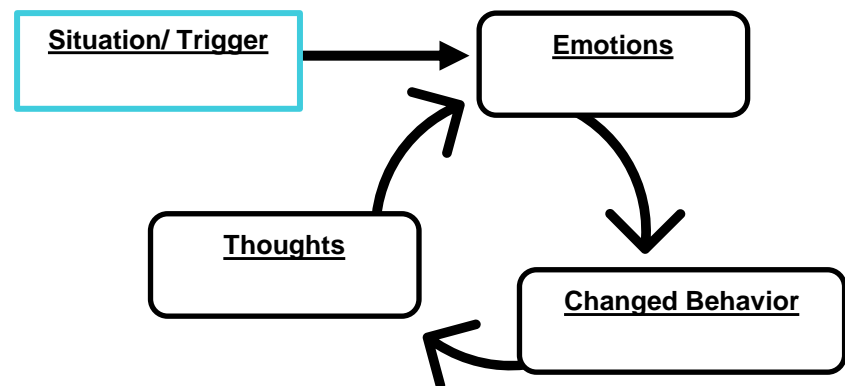
We are therefore, going to use this framework to explore the mechanism behind the attention economy's desire to grab attention. What is the attention economy doing to how we think about the world and ourselves, and how is this changing our behaviour? Importantly, we are then going to ask if the outcomes are reducing or improving our five areas of wellbeing. By highlighting this mechanism, we have the chance to intervene and change how social media is designed and how we use it, to put our wellbeing first.

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Resource Five
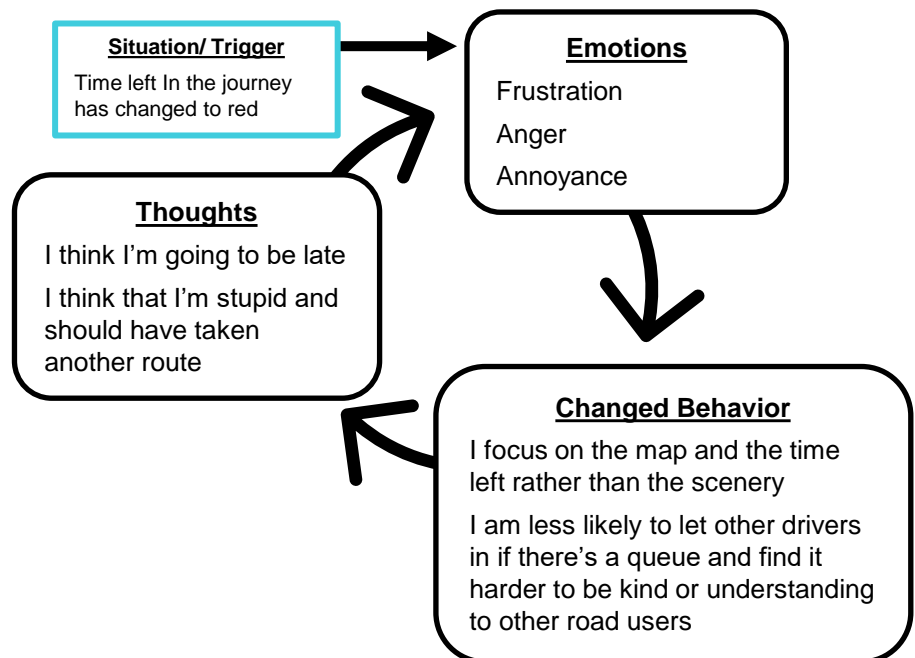# Data Source

Section C

Example worksheets

Critical Thinking

This first example worksheet, is based on Google Maps. It shows how the design of digital technology more widely can have unintended impacts on us. Google Maps, when used as a navigation tool for driving, colour codes the area which tells you how long you have left on the journey. Green for no unexpected traffic, orange for some extra traffic on the route and red when there is a very slow-moving vehicle ahead or major traffic. The below example goes through the worksheet as if the colour code has changed from green to red.

Figure 21

Google Maps traffic colour coding example

Situation/ Trigger
Time left In the journey has changed to red

Emotions
Frustration
Anger
Annoyance

Thoughts
I think I'm going to be late
I think that I'm stupid and should have taken another route

Changed Behavior
I focus on the map and the time left rather than the scenery
I am less likely to let other drivers in if there's a queue and find it harder to be kind or understanding to other road users

In this example I am less able to give and be kind, and less able to take notice. This is a real example, which I noticed has happened when I returned to my home in Derbyshire where traffic regularly gets stuck behind tractors. Journeys I'd done loads of times under the same conditions became very frustrating and stressful, because I was being told, in red, that the situation was bad, and I was going slower than I had planned to.

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Resource Five
Data Source

Problem Solving
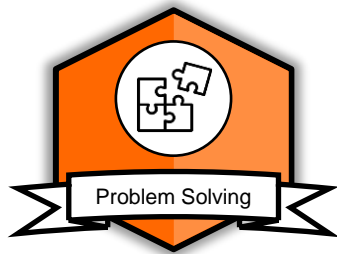
This next example worksheet, is focussed on social media. It is based on hijack #1, controlling the menu, on the social media platform Instagram. Instagram does this in many ways, but in t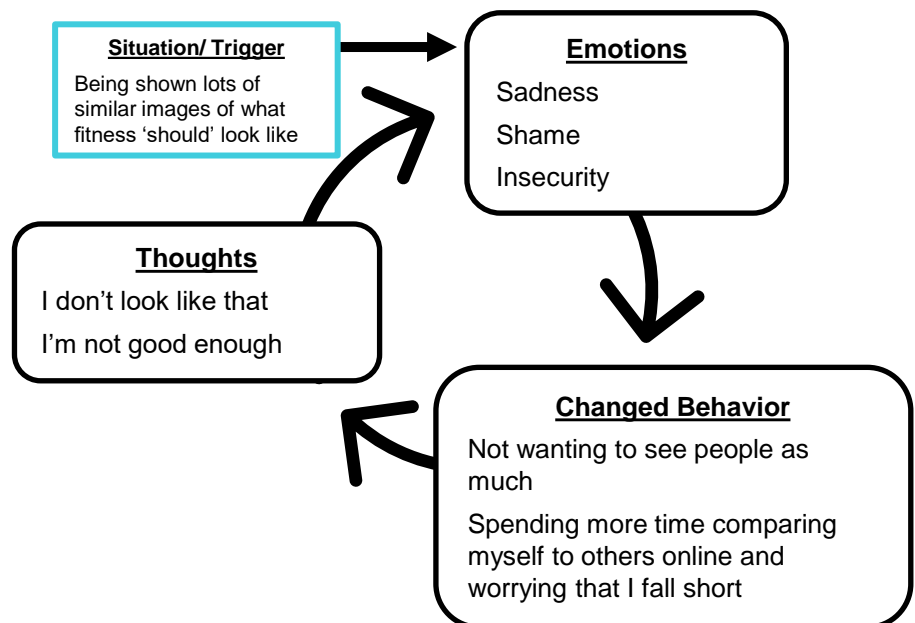his case study, it's when Instagram shows suggested accounts to follow. They show things that might gain attention. So, instead of an open search we have lots of options come up first. In this scenario, searching for exercise, lots of images come up of models, 'before and after' pictures and workout videos from toned people telling me how to look like them.

Situation/ Trigger
Being shown lots of similar images of what fitness 'should' look like

Emotions
Sadness
Shame
Insecurity

Thoughts
I don't look like that
I'm not good enough

Figure 22

Controlling the menu on Instagram Example

Changed Behavior
Not wanting to see people as much
Spending more time comparing myself to others online and worrying that I fall short

This example is a really common experience of social media, but because the behaviour change is pulling away from people, we lose connection. Additionally, spending lots of time looking at goal pictures, draws our attention onto one specific thing and we have a reduced capacity to take notice of the world around us.

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Resource Five
Activities

Activity 1   In your own words, can you describe the cognitive approach?

Activity 2   In Resource Three activity 3, you were asked to pick a form of social media you use the most and think about its design to identify the main mind hijacks it uses to try to capture your attention. Revisit those hijacks now and follow the CBT worksheet through the effects each of these hijacks have on your thoughts and behaviour. Included below is a blank worksheet and an emotions wheel which might be helpful when thinking about what these hijacks make you feel.

Activity 3   Consider your completed worksheets for each of the hijacks you identified. Within the behaviours section, do any of the changes fit into any the five ways to wellbeing? Are they helping you do things that would support those five ways? Or are they creating behaviours which get in the way?

To do this it could be helpful to colour code the behaviours across all of your hijack worksheets and see which areas of the five ways to wellbeing come up the most.
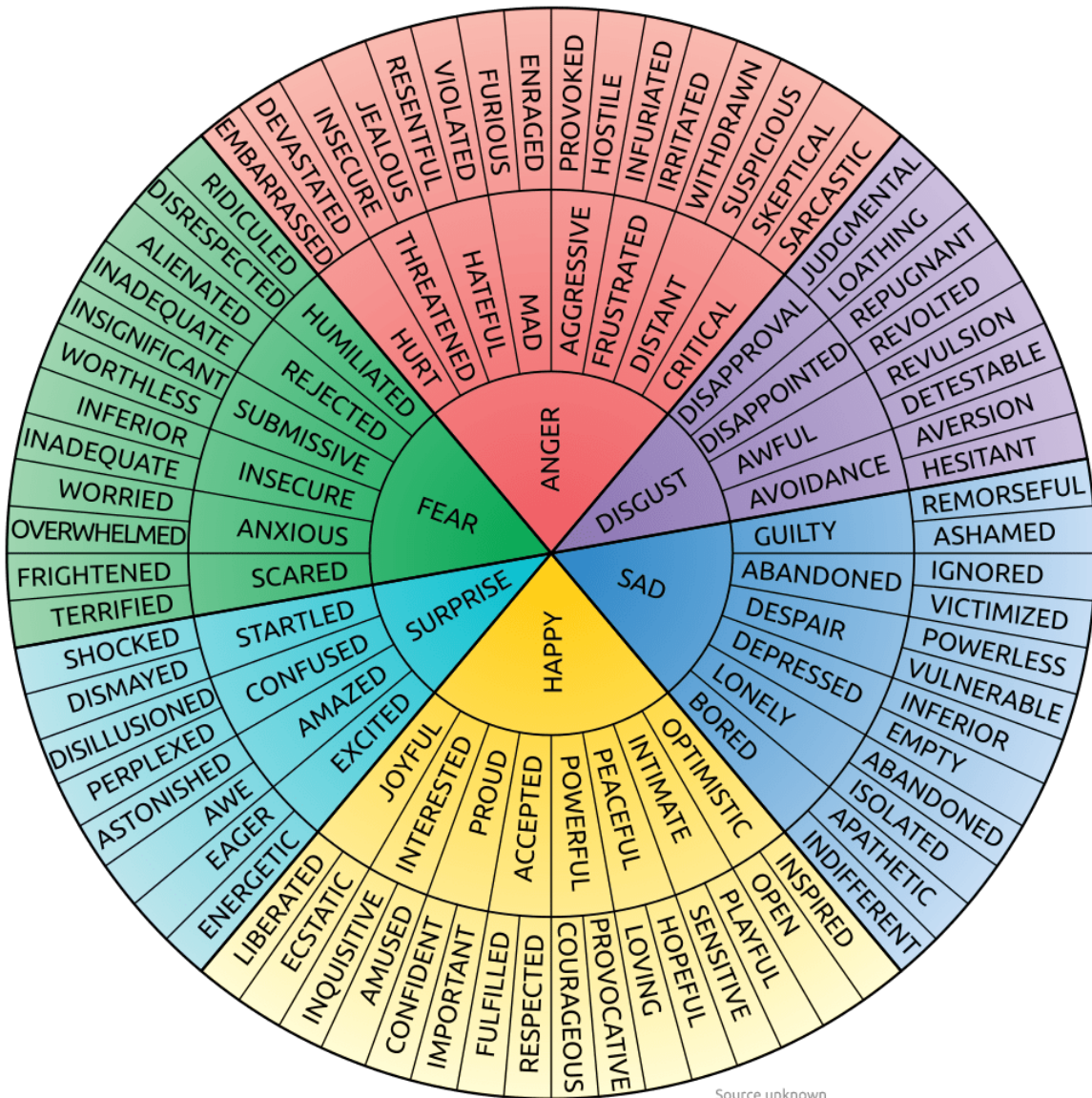
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Resource Five
Activity 2 Worksheet

Situation/ Trigger

Emotions

Thoughts

Changed Behaviour
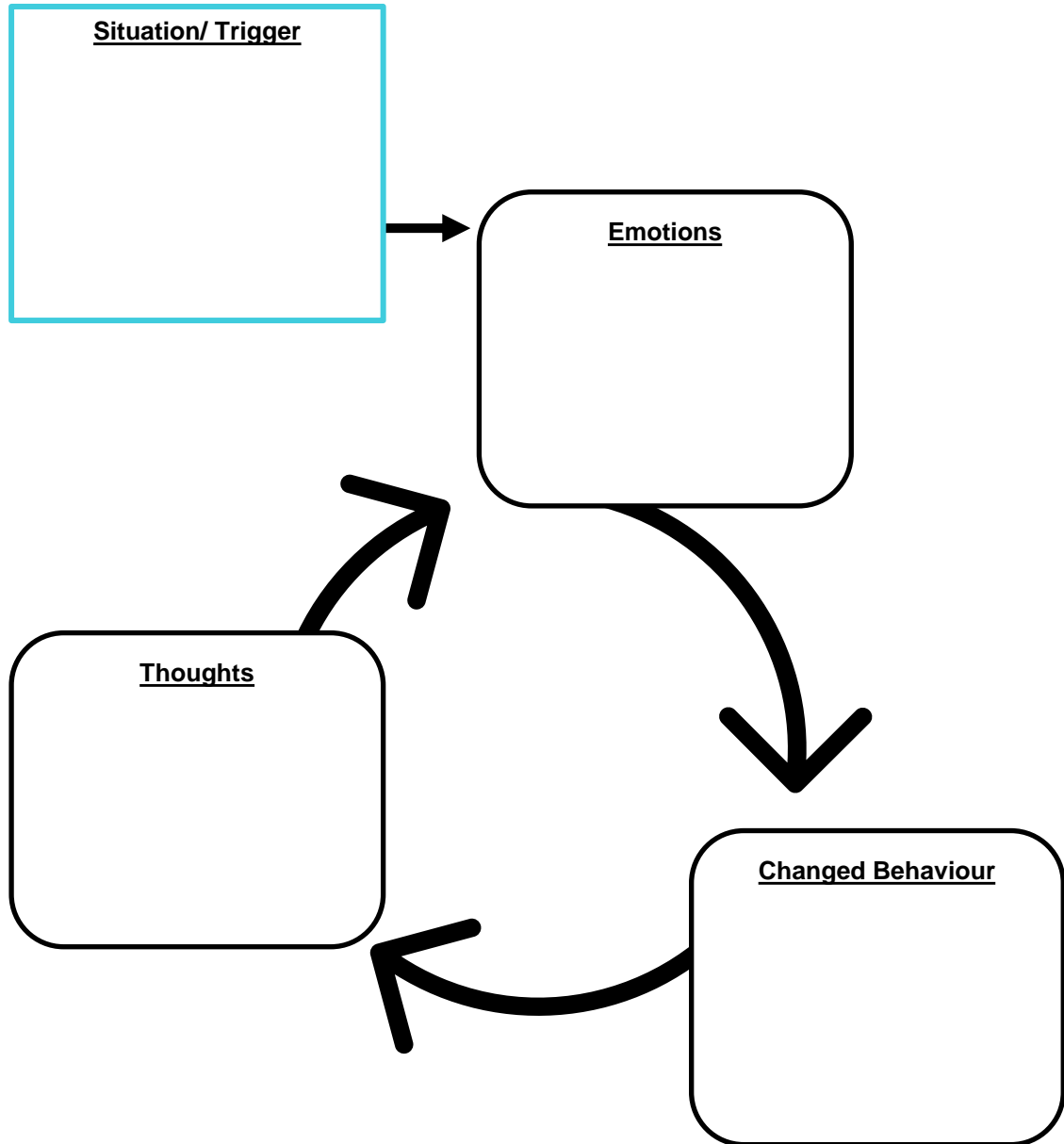
Resource Five
Figure 23: Emotions wheel

Source unknown

access ed

Resource Five
Further Reading

Explore
- Read more on the cognitive approach
  https://www.simplypsychology.org/cognitive.html

- Watch this YouTube video explaining CBT:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9c_Bv_FBE-c&ab_channel=Mind%2Cthementalhealthcharity

- If you have access, watch Inside Out, a 2015 film about our core emotions which is fantastic to help visualise what's going on in our brains when we experience things and then feel things about them.

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access ed

Resource Five
Further Reading

References   Trower, P. (2012). CBT Theory. In W. Dryden & R. Branch
(Eds.), *The CBT Handbook* (pp. 25–44).
https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=WzX7AwA
AQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP2&dq=cbt+theory&ots=7c7OqZcL9d
&sig=0ajzP8ckGmAUQOTV7bOeW_OKKKY#v=onepage&
q=cbt%20theory&f=false

Image Sources   • https://www.canva.com/photos/MAEjiZauFUg-man-in-white-
and-black-crew-neck-t-shirt-sitting-on-chair/

• https://www.glenntrigg.net/emotions-wheel/

• https://positivepsychology.com/emotion-wheel/

access ed

Resource Six Overview

Topic	**Can social media support wellbeing?**
Key Stage 5 Subject Area	**The cognitive approach** **Human Computer Interaction** **Wellbeing in digital spaces**
Objectives	**By completing this resource, you will be able to:** ✓ Combine socio-technical development with cognitive theory. ✓ Apply your understanding of socio-technical development to source material. ✓ Apply positive design principles to a social media app you use that would support wellbeing.
Instructions	1. **Read the data source** 2. **Complete the activities** 3. **Explore the further reading** 4. **Move on to the Final Reflection Activity**

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Resource Six
Data Source

Section A

Activists and social media: Jameela Jamil

In the last resource, we considered the impact of the attention economy's hijacks on our thoughts, feelings and behaviour through a CBT framework. Figure 20, which looked at how the hijack of controlling the menu when searching for things on Instagram, highlighted the way social media can increase the extent we compare ourselves to others.

Activist Jameela Jamil, has spoken extensively about the impact of photo editing. Photo editing can contribute to many of the hijacks, but especially controlling the menu, social approval and social reciprocity. Figure 24 below is an extract from an interview she did about the subject.

Figure 24

*Extract from an interview with Jameela Jamil In Harpers Bazar*

Source Analysis

"

THE BODY SHOP'S RESEARCH HAS FOUND THAT 72 PER CENT OF WOMEN IN THE UK OFTEN WISH THEIR BODY WAS DIFFERENT. WHAT ARE THE DRIVING FORCES BEHIND THIS?

You go through Instagram, and everyone wants the same kind of doll face, the tiny, tiny, contoured nose, massive lips, big slanted eyes: general Eurocentric beauty but with aspects of different ethnicities that we deem acceptable. But we won't accept the people from those ethnicities: instead, we turn white faces into combinations of them. I think we underestimate the damage that photo editing can cause.

It's also about the immeasurable greed of social media platforms, allowing these adverts every 30 seconds – a keto app or an intermittent fasting app – all these different apps that cannot possibly replace a medical supervisor who will give you the correct blood tests and boundaries to slowly but surely change your body, whether you're trying to get bigger or smaller. An app cannot replace a doctor, yet we are bombarded with them; they are slippery slopes into eating disorders.

DO YOU THINK THAT COMPANIES SUCH AS INSTAGRAM SHOULD BE BANNING FILTERS?

I actually can't give an informed answer on this because I know that there are certain things that complicate this issue. So you have trans people who, in order to be safe, use editing apps to be able to reduce the amount of trolling or harm that they receive. So I'm not against all editing apps for that reason. But I think the first thing we can do is really not allow companies advertising products to use editing apps. I think first, as a start, if we stop seeing, if we stop being bombarded with those images everywhere else, then we will no longer feel the pressure to do so ourselves.

"

access ed
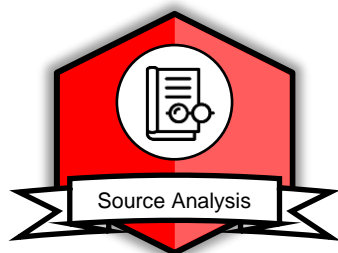
Resource Six
Data Source

Section B
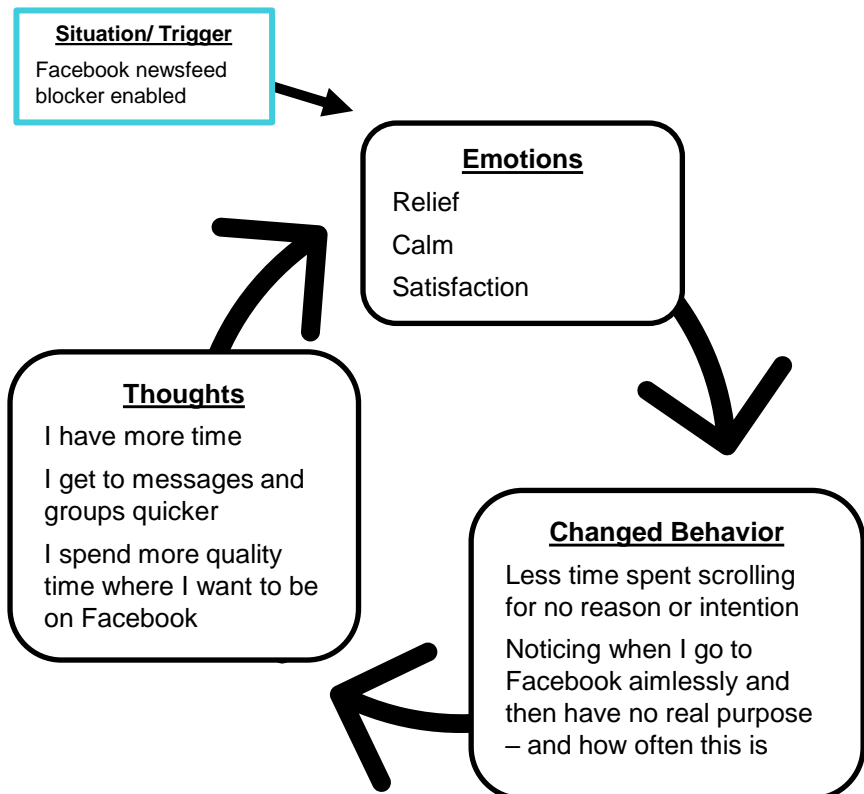
Small acts of rebellion

Critical Thinking

While Jameela identifies social media, specifically Instagram, as a driver in user's negative view of their appearances, her answers also highlight the process of socio-technical development around filters. Their initial design for light-hearted, attention grabbing, and superficial use has been adapted for important use to support transgender people's safety online.

This is a great example of socio-technical development where the users improve, adapt and exploit technology designed for one thing to do another. Below in figure 25, an example of exploited social media is put through the CBT worksheet.

Figure 25

Example of exploited social media

Situation/ Trigger
Facebook newsfeed blocker enabled

Emotions
Relief
Calm
Satisfaction

Changed Behavior
Less time spent scrolling for no reason or intention

Noticing when I go to Facebook aimlessly and then have no real purpose – and how often this is

Thoughts
I have more time

I get to messages and groups quicker

I spend more quality time where I want to be on Facebook
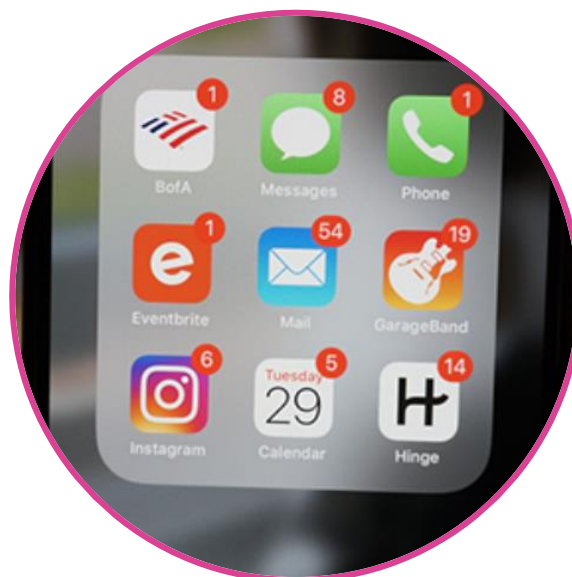
Resource Six
Data Source

Section C

Using for wellbeing?

Jameela's initial thoughts on how to regulate filters shows one way to begin to think about the design and regulation of social media. If we can't ban filters, what can we do?

From the perspective of socio-technical development, there are two sides to this question. Firstly, the things from our side, that we as users can do. Secondly, there is the design of social media and the regulation of it that could change.

The Centre for Humane Technology offers courses on how we can take control, offering suggestions like turning off notifications as they are distracting and triggering due to the red colour. Downloading helpful tools like newsfeed eradicators, tracking screen time and sleep aids, as well as following people you disagree with so there are a variety of opinions on your newsfeed, and setting boundaries like not waking up and going to bed on social media, or taking a day off each week are all possible adjustments we can make as users.

Figure 26

Phone notification example

access ed

Resource Six
Data Source

Section D

Using for wellbeing?

While the Centre for Humane Technology offers some great suggestions for personal decisions that can be made, there are also things to think about for the designers and regulators of technology. The centre is also working on influencing government and policy decisions to regulate social media companies. In 2020, they filmed 'The Social Dilemma' which gives insight into the lengths social media companies go to. This film aims to increase pressure through public opinion on companies and governments to consider how they should regulate social media.

Another option, for making change, is for the designers of the technologies to consider how they can design with people in mind. The calm technology design principles, first created in the 1980s, predate social media but are very relevant now. The founders of these principles were key figures in Microsoft at the time, and one went on to help run Amazon. Amazon has found massive success because it is unobtrusive, intuitive and easy to use. But thinking about the attention economy now, does it fit with any of these principles?

Figure 27

The Principles of Calm Technology
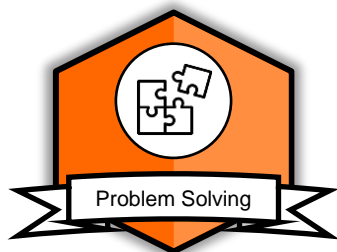
Principles of Calm Technology

I. Technology should require the smallest possible amount of attention
II. Technology should inform and create calm
III. Technology should make use of the periphery
IV. Technology should amplify the best of technology and the best of humanity
V. Technology can communicate, but doesn't need to speak
VI. Technology should work even when it fails
VII. The right amount of technology is the minimum needed to solve the problem
VIII. Technology should respect social norms

Overall, there is hope, we can adapt and use social media to benefit us. However, the design and regulation of this technology is crucial to make sure it supports rather than detracts from our wellbeing.

Creativity

Problem Solving

Resource Six **Activities**

Activity 1 Read the extract in figure 24. Can you explain how this demonstrates socio-technical development?

Activity 2 In Resource Three - activity 4 - you were asked to think about rebellions you've made against the 10 attention economy hijacks. Put any of these you identified through the CBT worksheet and contrast the difference in behaviours with the behaviours that come from the hijacks.

Activity 3 Research another positive socio-technical development where users have improved, adapted or exploited social media. You could go back to the community development article, or further back to the Arad Spring, which is a great example to look at too, but feel free to look at something else that peaks your interest!

Activity 4 Consider the Calm Technology Design Principles, and describe the changes you think should be made to your most used app to bring it in line with the principles. Is it possible?

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Resource Six
Further Reading

Explore

- The Centre for Humane Technology youth action courses: https://www.humanetech.com/youth#act

- Read more about social media echo chambers: https://www.socialmedia.biz/how-social-media-creates-echo-chambers/

- Listen to this podcast from Jameela's 'I Weigh' movement about the positive place social media can be for activism and body acceptance https://www.earwolf.com/episode/matt-mcgorry/

- Listen to the Centre for Humane Technology's podcast on how to build a community online: https://www.humanetech.com/podcast/27-wont-you-be-my-neighbor-a-civic-vision-for-the-internet

- Watch a briefing on better policy for big tech: https://www.humanetech.com/insights/how-governments-are-using-policy-to-reform-big-tech-video

- Read the whole article interview from Jameela Jamil https://www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/beauty/a35766354/jameela-jamil-filters-editing-interview/

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Image Sources

- https://www.canva.com/photos/MADQtnuCJGs/

- https://www.humanetech.com/take-control

Final Reflection Activity
Instructions

For the final reflection activity, you're asked to revisit the question: *Is social media good or bad?* and write a short essay response in about 1000 words or 2 pages **OR** create a presentation of your answer with around 6-8 slides covering each of the sections of the essay outlined below.

There is no right or wrong response, as this task is about you forming an argument from the resources you've found the most interesting here, and through further research. Draw on the things you've learned in this coursebook, and use a socio-technical approach to inform your answer. Try not to give your answer in first person "I think", "I believe", etc, try third person, "based on the research", "this shows", etc.

It is your choice if you want to consider wellbeing in your answer, you could also choose to do independent research on other aspects of social media, like racial bias, echo chambers or ways social media has been adapted by the users for their own purposes, such as the Arab spring or within the Ukrainian conflict to support your argument.

Your response should include

- A social media platform chosen as an example.

- An introduction, laying out your argument and including an explanation of the socio-technical development approach to understanding technology used in your argument.

- Three main points making up the main body of the essay supporting your answer.

- At least one point against your argument and a reason this is not the case.

- A conclusion, synthesising what you've said and drawing together your work. End persuading your reader to agree with your argument.

Your three points could include

- Economic context for how social media has developed

- An explanation of wellbeing and how this links to social media

- An explanation of the attention economy

- Further research into one of the Hijacks

- Further research into positive uses of technology

- The examples you already produced in Resource Six following the CBT flowchart

- Another example of the CBT flowchart.

- The impact on wellbeing the attention economy can have.

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Final Reflection Activity
Further Guidance

Here are some helpful links to guides on persuasive writing, writing an introduction and conclusion as well as some other areas your might want to research around social media.

Writing guides

- https://www.scribbr.com/academic-essay/introduction/
- https://www.essaywriter4u.com/blog/how-to-write-a-persuasive-essay/
- https://www.oxford-royale.com/articles/construct-compelling-argument/
- https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/14011/writing/112/essay_writing/7

Areas of interest around social media

- https://towardsdatascience.com/how-are-algorithms-biased-8449406aaa83
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJSSEAMSKWw
- https://moveme.berkeley.edu/project/arab-spring/
- https://sites.stedwards.edu/pangaea/the-role-of-social-media-in-the-arab-spring/
- https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-europe-60656613
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B8ofWFx525s
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mh1dLvGe06Y
- https://www.jou.ufl.edu/insights/social-good-from-social-media/
- https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/mar/19/tiktok-ukraine-russia-war-disinformation
- https://www.terrafermamedia.com/social-media-is-great/
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pT-k1kDIRnw

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More Subject Resources
A Deeper Look into Positive Psychology

Read
- http://positivepsychology.org.uk/what-is-positive-psychology/

Watch
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqPTHS1BZMM&ab_channel=louisajewell

Listen
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1hauE_OKP8&ab_channel=AmericanPsychologicalAssociation

Do
- **Try the gratefulness positive intervention**. Every night before you go to sleep, make a list (mental list is fine!) of three things that were good, have gone well or were positives from that day. It could be things you are proud of, that dinner tasted nice, that you heard a new song you liked, anything that you think of as a good thing. Try not to undercut them – for example, *"I am proud of my maths test result….though I could have done better, or someone else did better than me"* – be proud full stop!

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Study Skills, tips & Guidance

This a section includes helpful tips to help you complete this pack, as well as improve your study skills for school.

It also includes a few fantastic easy-to-use resources to know what to do next and where else you can look for more information on the subject.

Helpful information you will find in this section:

1. Cornell Notes
2. Academic terminology (key words)
3. Academic Writing Style
4. Referencing
5. How to Evaluate Your Sources
6. Subject Guidance
7. University Guidance

Psst! Learning these tips to improve your school skills could help you do better in exams and make assignments easier!

You can use the tips and web links in this section throughout your pack!

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Academic Study Skills
Cornell Notes

Why is good note taking important?

If it feels like you forget new information almost as quickly as you hear it, even if you write it down, that's because we tend to lose almost 40% of new information within the first 24 hours of first reading or hearing it.

However, if we take notes effectively, we can retain and retrieve almost 100% of the information we receive. Consider this graph on the rate of forgetting with study/repetition:
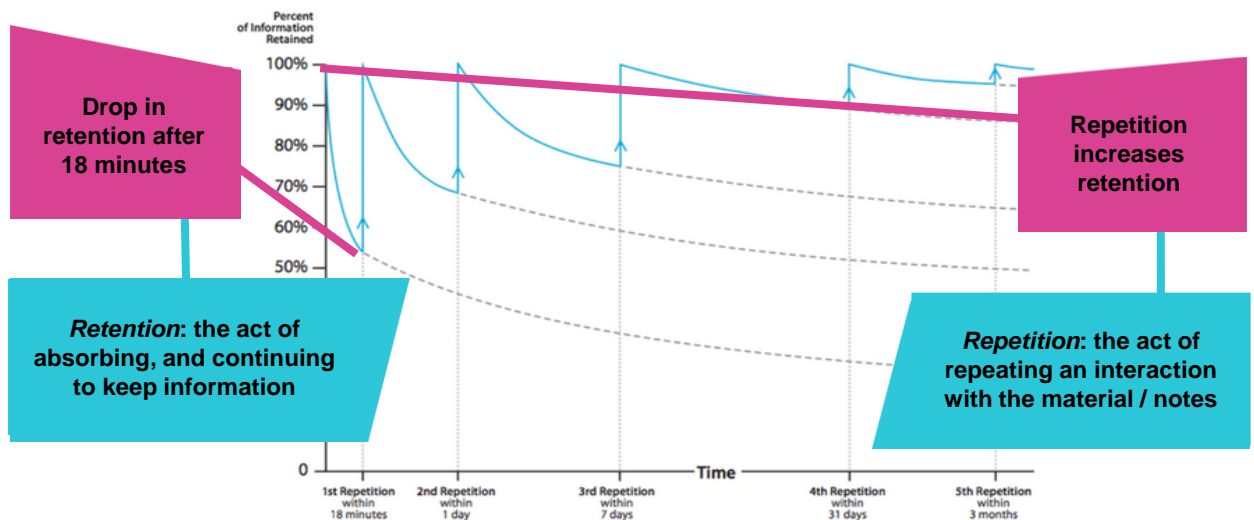
Learning a new system

The Cornell Note System was developed in the 1950s at the University of Cornell in the USA. The system includes interacting with your notes and is suitable for all subjects. There are three steps to the Cornell Note System.
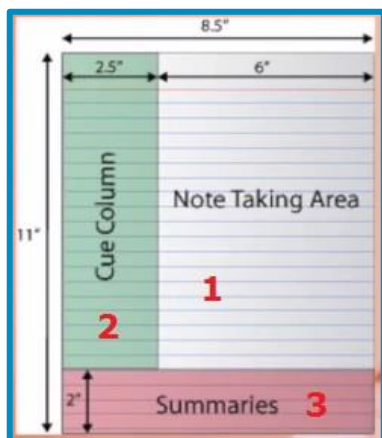
Step 1: Note-Taking

1. *Create Format:* Notes are set up in the Cornell Way. This means creating 3 boxes like the ones on the left. You should put your name, date, and topic at the top of the page.

2. *Write and Organise:* You then take your notes in the 'note taking' area on the right side of the page. You should organise these notes by keeping a line or a space between 'chunks' /main ideas of information. You can also use bullet points for lists of information to help organise your notes.

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Academic Study Skills
Cornell Notes

Step 2: Note-Making

1. *Revise and Edit Notes*: Go back to box 1, the note taking area and spend some time revising and editing. You can do this by: highlighting 'chunks' of information with a number or a colour; circling all key words in a different colour; highlighting main ideas; adding new information in another colour.

2. *Note Key Idea:* Go to box 2 on the left-hand side of the page and develop some questions about the main ideas in your notes. The questions should be 'high level'. This means they should encourage you to think deeper about the ideas. Example 'high level' questions would be:

   • Which is most important / significant reason for…
   • To what extent…
   • How does the (data / text / ideas) support the viewpoint?
   • How do we know that…

   Here is an example of step 1 and step 2 for notes on the story of Cinderella

Step 3: Note-Interacting

1. *Summary:* Go to box 3 at the bottom of the page and summarise the main ideas in box 1 and answer the essential questions in box 2.

Give the Cornell Note Taking System a try and see if it works for you!

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Academic Study Skills
Key Words

Below is a series of key terms you will come across from teachers and tutors as you got through school, especially as you enter upper secondary.

Knowing these will help you understand what you are being asked to do!

- *Analyse:* When you analyse something you consider it carefully and in detail in order to understand and explain it. To analyse, identify the main parts or ideas of a subject and examine or interpret the connections between them.

- *Comment on:* When you comment on a subject or the ideas in a subject, you say something that gives your opinion about it or an explanation for it.

- *Compare:* To compare things means to point out the differences or similarities between them. A comparison essay would involve examining qualities/characteristics of a subject and emphasising the similarities and differences.

- *Contrast:* When you contrast two subjects you show how they differ when compared with each other. A contrast essay should emphasise striking differences between two elements.

- *Compare and contrast:* To write a compare and contrast essay you would examine the similarities and differences of two subjects.

- *Criticise:* When you criticise you make judgments about a subject after thinking about it carefully and deeply. Express your judgement with respect to the correctness or merit of the factors under consideration. Give the results of your own analysis and discuss the limitations and contributions of the factors in question. Support your judgement with evidence.

- *Define:* When you define something you show, describe, or state clearly what it is and what it is like, you can also say what its limits are. Do not include details but do include what distinguishes it from the other related things, sometimes by giving examples.

- *Describe:* To describe in an essay requires you to give a detailed account of characteristics, properties or qualities of a subject.

- *Discuss:* To discuss in an essay consider your subject from different points of view. Examine, analyse and present considerations for and against the problem or statement.

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Academic Study Skills
Key Words

- *Evaluate:* When you evaluate in an essay, decide on your subject's significance, value, or quality after carefully studying its good and bad features. Use authoritative (e.g. from established authors or theorists in the field) and, to some extent, personal appraisal of both contributions and limitations of the subject. Similar to assess.

- *Illustrate:* If asked to illustrate in an essay, explain the points that you are making clearly by using examples, diagrams, statistics etc.

- *Interpret:* In an essay that requires you to interpret, you should translate, solve, give examples, or comment upon the subject and evaluate it in terms of your judgement or reaction. Basically, give an explanation of what your subject means. Similar to explain.

- *Justify:* When asked to justify a statement in an essay you should provide the reasons and grounds for the conclusions you draw from the statement. Present your evidence in a form that will convince your reader.

- *Outline:* Outlining requires that you explain ideas, plans, or theories in a general way, without giving all the details. Organise and systematically describe the main points or general principles. Use essential supplementary material, but omit minor details.

- *Prove:* When proving a statement, experiment or theory in an essay, you must confirm or verify it. You are expected to evaluate the material and present experimental evidence and/or logical argument.

- *Relate:* To relate two things, you should state or claim the connection or link between them. Show the relationship by emphasising these connections and associations.

- *Review:* When you review, critically examine, analyse and comment on the major points of a subject in an organised manner.

Write any other key words you come across below. Ask your teacher to explain their meaning or use a dictionary to find out.

_____

_____

_____

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Academic Study Skills
Academic Writing Style

What is academic writing?

'Academic writing' is a specific way of writing when communicating research or discussing a point of view. You will most often do this in essays and reports.

Academic writing has a logical structure and uses formal language. Unlike creative or narrative writing, academic writing uses different sources of information to support what is being said (see next page about different sources).

Top Academic Writing Tips

Do's

- Do use words you know the meaning of and are confident using.
- Remember words don't have to be complicated to be clear!
- Do write words out fully e.g., do not, cannot, does not, it would.
- Use the third person point of view
- Minimise use of informal adjectives such as cool, amazing and wonderful.

Don'ts

- Do not use contractions e.g., don't, can't, doesn't, it'd.
- Do not use public speaking phrases like "We can all agree that…" and "As I previously mentioned…".
- Do not use conversational phrases such as 'literally' or 'basically' too often.
- Do not use slang or jargon, for example, 'awks', 'lit', 'woke'.
- Do not use words that express value judgements e.g., crazy, ridiculous, terrible. Suitable synonyms are surprising, unjustified or distressing.

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Academic Study Skills
Academic Writing Style

Expressing your opinion in academic writing

In academic writing, it is best practice to express an opinion without writing in the first person.

Rather than saying 'In my opinion, this proves that', you can express your opinion by saying:

- 'Based on (insert fact/theory/finding) it shows that…"
- 'The graph here indicates that…';
- 'The aforementioned problems in Smith's argument reveal that…';
- 'Such weaknesses ultimately mean that…', and so on.

Signposting

Signposting guides your reader through different sections of your writing. It lets those who read your writing know what is being discussed and why, and when your piece is shifting from one part to another. This is crucial to for clear communication with your audience.

Signposting stems for a paragraph which expands upon a previous idea	Signposting stems for a paragraph which offers a contrasting view
Building on from the idea that ... (mention previous idea), this section illustrates that ... (introduce your new idea).	However, another angle on this debate suggests that ... (introduce your contrasting idea)
To further understand the role of ...(your topic or your previous idea) this section explores the idea that ... (introduce your new idea)	In contrast to evidence which presents the view that ... (mention your previous idea) an alternative perspective illustrates that ...
Another line of thought on ... (your topic or your previous idea) demonstrates that ...	However, not all research shows that ... (mention your previous idea). Some evidence agrees that ...

Academic Study Skills
Referencing

What is a reference or referencing?

A reference is just a note in your assignment that tells your reader where particular ideas, information or opinions that you have used from another source has come from. It can be done through 'citations' or a 'bibliography'.

When you get to university, you will need to include references in the assignments that you write. As well as being academic good practice, referencing is very important, because it will help you to avoid plagiarism.

Plagiarism is when you take someone else's work or ideas and pass them off as your own. Whether plagiarism is deliberate or accidental, the consequences can be severe. You must be careful to reference your sources correctly.

Why should I reference?

Referencing is important in your work for the following reasons:

• It gives credit to the authors of any sources you have referred to or been influenced by.

• It supports the arguments you make in your assignments.

• It demonstrates the variety of sources you have used.

• It helps to prevent you losing marks, or failing, due to plagiarism.

When should I use a reference?

• You should use a reference when you:

• Quote directly from another source.

• Summarise or rephrase another piece of work.

• Include a specific statistic or fact from a source.

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Academic Study Skills
Referencing

How do I reference?

There are a number of different ways of referencing, but most universities use what is called the Harvard Referencing Style. Speak with your tutor about which style they want you to use, because the most important thing is you remain consistent!

The two main aspects of referencing you need to be aware of are:

1. In-text citations

These are used when directly quoting a source. They are in the body of the work, after you have referred to your source in your writing. They contain the surname of the author of the source and the year it was published in brackets.

- E.g. *Daisy describes her hopes for her infant daughter, stating "I hope she'll be a fool—that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool." (Fitzgerald, 2004).*

2. Bibliography

This is a list of all the sources you have referenced in your assignment. In the bibliography, you list your references by the numbers you have used and include as much information as you have about the reference. The list below gives what should be included for different sources.

- *Websites:* Author (if possible), *title of the web page*, 'Available at:' website address, [Accessed: date you accessed it].
  - E.g. *'How did so many soldiers survive the trenches?',* Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z3kgjxs#zg2dtfr [Accessed: 11 July 2019].

- *Books:* Author surname, author first initial, (year published), *title of book*, publisher
  - E.g. Dubner S. and Levitt, S., (2007) *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything,* Penguin Books

- *Articles:* Author, *'title of the article'*, where the article comes from (newspaper, journal etc.), date of the article.
  - E.g. Maev Kennedy, *'The lights to go out across the UK to mark First World War's centenary',* The Guardian Newspaper, 10 July 2014.

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Academic Study Skills
Referencing

Is it a source worth citing? Use these tips to question your sources before referencing it.

- *Currency – the timelines of the information:* When was it published or posted? Has it been revised or updated? Does your topic require current information, or will older sources work as well?

- *Relevancy – the importance of the information for your needs:* Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question? Who is the intended audience? Have you looked at a variety of sources?

- *Authority - the source of the information:* Who is the author/ publisher/ source/ sponsor? What are the author's credentials? Is the author qualified to write on the topic?

- *Accuracy – the reliability and correctness of the source:* Is the information supported by evidence? Has the information been reviewed or refereed? Can you verify whether it is a personal or professional source? Are there errors?

- *Purpose – the reason the information exists:* Does the author make the intensions/ purpose clear? Is the information fact opinion or propaganda? Are there are biases? Does the viewpoint appear objective?

Academic Study Skills
Evaluating Your Sources

What is a source?

When you learn new things, you might get information from all sorts of different places. These places are called sources. Some sources are more reliable than others. For example, information in a textbook written by an expert is more reliable than information in a non-expert's social media post.

How do you decide which source to use? From newspaper articles to books to tweets, this provides a brief description of each type of source and breaks down the factors to consider when selecting a source.

Twitter

A platform for millions of very short messages on a variety of topics.

Blog

Blogs (e.g. Wordpress) are an avenue for sharing both developed and unpublished ideas and interests with a niche community.

Youtube

A collection of millions of educational, inspirational, eye-opening and entertaining videos.

Newspaper

A reporting and recording of cultural and political happenings that keeps the general public informed. Opinions and public commentaries can also be included.

Journal

A collection of analytics reports that outline the objectives, background, methods, results and limitations of new research written for and by scholars in a niche field.

Academic book

The information presented is supported by clearly identified sources. Sometimes each chapter has a different author.

Encyclopaedia

Books or online – giving information on many different subjects. Some are intended as an entry point into research, some provide detailed information and onwards references.
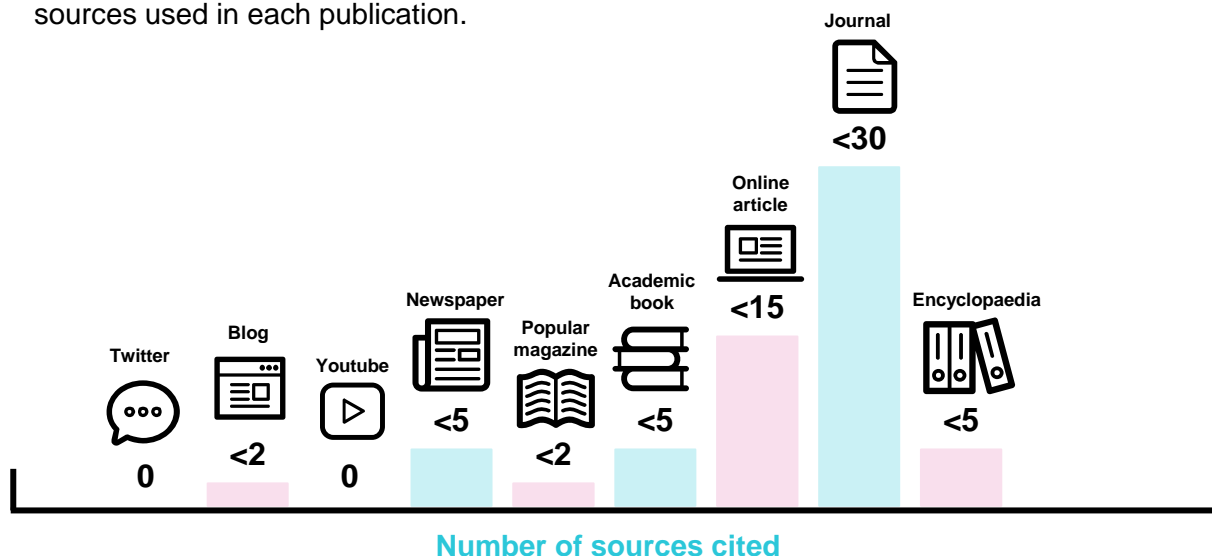
Popular magazine

A glossy compilation of stories with unique themes intended for specific interests.

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Academic Study Skills
Evaluating Your Sources

Number of outside sources

When an author used many outside sources into their writing, they demonstrate familiarity with ideas beyond their own. As more unique viewpoints are pulled into a source, it becomes more comprehensive and reliable. This shows the typical number of outside sources used in each publication.

Journal
<30

Online article
<15

Academic book
<5

Newspaper
<5

Encyclopaedia
<5

Blog
<2

Popular magazine
<2

Twitter
0

Youtube
0

Number of sources cited

Degree of review before a source is published

Two factors contribute to the amount of inspection that a source receives before it might be published: the number of reviewers fact-checking the written ideas, and the total time spent by reviewers as they fact-check. The more people involved in the review process and the longer the review process takes, the more credible the source is likely to be.

Number of reviewers			
Time in review			

0 reviewers

seconds   minutes   minutes

1-2 reviewers

hours   days   days

3-4 reviewers

2-3 months   6-2 months   3-5 years

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What's next?
Where can this subject take me?

Pathways

A degree in Sciences or Social Sciences gives students access to many career choices. Students who study Sciences often secure jobs in Psychology, Environmental Sciences, Biology, Chemistry or Biochemistry. Students who study Social Sciences, on the other hand, often secure jobs in Politics and International Studies, Sociology, Philosophy or Business and Economics.

Psychology	Politics
• empathy and interest in people • analytical research • problem solving • the ability to work in teams • written and verbal communication, including report writing and presenting • information technology • handling of data and statistics	• the ability to research, source and examine information thoroughly • the capacity to critically analyse evidence and construct coherent arguments • excellent written and oratory skills • intellectual independence and autonomy • teamworking skills • a flexible and open-minded approach to work

What are some are the 'interdisciplinary' subjects in this course?

Interdisciplinary is a term you will hear used by higher education institutions. It's also how many professionals and academics in the real-world operate: they use multiple subjects, or disciplines, to achieve their work.
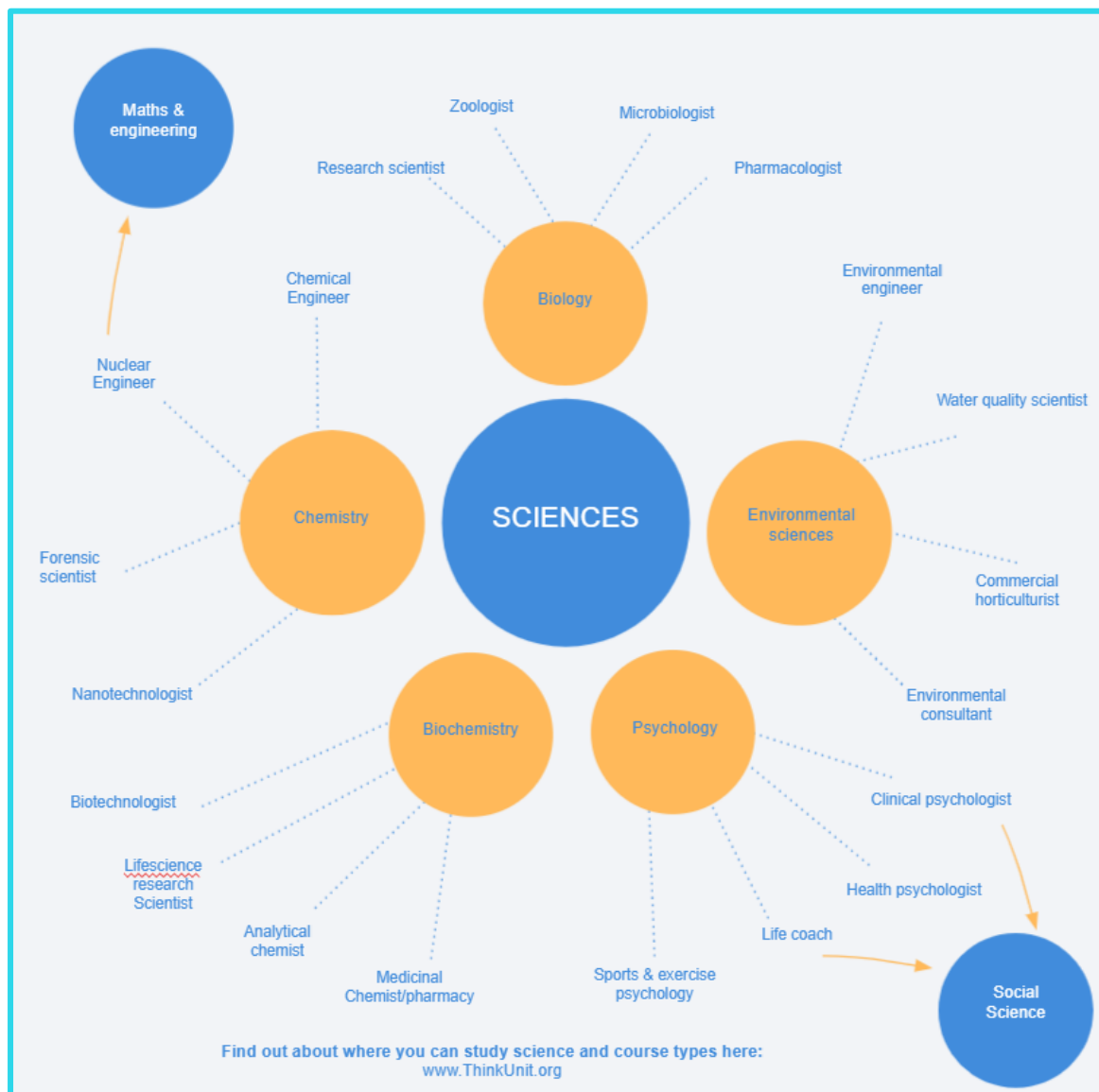
By thinking about which subjects you like, alongside maths, it can help you choose a career pathway later.

Read more about subject selection and careers pathways

• **https://targetjobs.co.uk**

• **https://www.prospects.ac.uk**

• **https://thinkuni.org/**

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What's next?
Science subject maps & jobs

Find out about where you can study science and course types here:
www.ThinkUnit.org

Find out about Science-related careers here:
PROSPECTS: https://www.prospects.ac.uk
TARGET JOBS: https://targetjobs.co.uk

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What's next?
Social science subject maps & jobs

Find our about Social Sciences-related careers here:
PROSPECTS: https://www.prospects.ac.uk
TARGET JOBS: https://targetjobs.co.uk

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What's next?
University Guidance

Different people go to university for different reasons. You might have a particular job in mind or just want to study a subject you are passionate about.

Whatever your motivations, going to university can help improve your career prospects, and develop your confidence, independence and academic skills.

Choosing a course and university

Choosing the right course to study is an important decision so make sure you take time to research the different options available to you. Here are some top tips:

- You don't have to choose a course which you have already studied, there are lots of courses which don't require prior knowledge of the subject. You can apply skills gained from school studies to a new field.

- The same subject can be taught very differently depending on the course and university you choose. Look at university websites to find out more about the course content, teaching styles and assessment types.

- When choosing a university, think about what other factors are important to you. Do you want to study at a campus university or be based in a city center? What accommodation options are there? Does the university have facilities for any extracurricular activities you're involved in?

- To research your options, have a look at university prospectuses and websites, as well as seeing if there are opportunities to speak to current students who can give you a real insight into what life is like there.

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What's next?
University Guidance

Exploring Careers and Subject Options

- Find job descriptions, salaries and hours, routes into different careers, and more at **https://www.startprofile.com/**

- Research career and study choices, and see videos of those who have pursued various routes at **http://www.careerpilot.org.uk/**

- See videos about what it's like to work in different jobs and for different organisations at **https://www.careersbox.co.uk/**

- Find out what different degrees could lead to, how to choose the right course for you, and how to apply for courses and student finance at **https://www.prospects.ac.uk/**

- Explore job descriptions and career options, and contact careers advisers at **https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/**

- Discover which subjects and qualifications (not just A levels) lead to different degrees, and what careers these degrees can lead to, at **http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/media/5457/informed-choices-2016.pdf**

Other useful resources

- **https://www.ucas.com/**

- **https://www.whatuni.com/**

- **http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/**

- **https://www.opendays.com/**

- **https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/**

You may or may not have thought about studying at university.

Don't worry – you have plenty of time to think about this and explore your options if you would like to go!

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What's next?
University Guidance

UCAS and the university application process

All applications for UK degree programmes are made through <u>UCAS</u>. There is lots of information on the UCAS website to guide you through the process and what you need to do at each stage.

Apply	• Applications **open in September** the year before you plan to start university. • You can apply for up to **five courses.** • The deadline for most courses is **15 January**, though there is an earlier deadline of **15 October** for Oxford and Cambridge, medicine, veterinary medicine/science and dentistry.
Decisions	• Some courses may require an interview, portfolio or admissions test in addition to UCAS application. Check individual university websites details. • Check UCAS Track which will be updated with decisions from the universities you have applied for and to see your deadline for replying to any offers. • You should choose a firm (or first) choice university and an insurance choice. If you already have your exam results or a university thinks your application is particularly strong, you might receive an **unconditional offer**.
Results	• If you're holding a conditional offer, then you will need to wait until you receive your exam results to have your place confirmed. • Clearing & Adjustment allows you to apply to courses which still have vacancies if you didn't meet the conditions of your offer, have changed your mind about what or where you want to study, or have met and exceeded the conditions of your offer and would like to look at alternate options.

Personal statements

An important part of your application is the personal statement. The personal statement gives you the opportunity to tell universities why they should offer you a place.

Here a few top tips for making your personal statement stand out:

• You can only submit one personal statement so it's important that you are consistent in your course choices. Make sure you have done your research to show your understanding of the subject area and passion for it.

• Start by brainstorming all your skills, experience and attributes. Once you have everything written down, you can begin to be selective – you only have 47 lines so won't be able to include everything.

• The ABC method: action, benefit and course can be a useful way to help demonstrate your relevant experience and how it applies to the course you're applying for.

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What's next?
University Guidance

Personal Statement do's and don'ts

Read the tips below from real life professors and admissions staff in university Sciences or Social Sciences departments, on the 'do's' and 'don'ts' of what to include in your personal statement.

Psychology

- Tell us why you want to study Psychology or Politics.

- What area of Psychology or Politics fascinates you?

- Demonstrate your interest by telling us what you have recently read, watched or listened to and how they helped your understanding of Psychology or Politics.

- Describe how your school or individual work has equipped you with the necessary knowledge and ability to be a successful Psychology or Politics student.

Other useful resources

- Key dates and deadlines: **www.access-ed.ngo/timelines-for-applying-to-university**

- Get tutor advice on writing a UCAS personal statement at **www.access-ed.ngo/writing-your-ucas-personal-statement**

- An easy template to start practising your personal statement: **https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/ucas-personal-statement-worksheet.pdf**

- Untangle UCAS terminology at **https://www.ucas.com/corporate/about-us/who-we-are/ucas-terms-explained**

- **Discover more about the** application process including when to apply and how to fill in your application on the **UCAS website.**

- Read more useful advice about what to include in your personal statement on **UCAS**, **the Complete University Guide** and **The Student Room.**

- Attend one of our **virtual sessions** to find out more about applying and personal statements.

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Insight into the
University of Cambridge

The University of Cambridge and its Colleges are committed to widening participation to higher education. Hundreds of outreach initiatives and events are run each year both in Cambridge and in schools and colleges across the UK.

Outreach Projects
neaco

The Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (neaco) delivers activities across East Anglia to help students in Years 9-13, with little or no experience of university, to explore the world of higher education. Find out more.

(Pre-16 Team Projects)

Insight Discover

Insight Discover is a programme that students follow from Year 7 to Year 8, which aims to develop key academic skills to support them in their academic work. In addition, the programme introduces students to university and the options which are available to them in the future. Find out more.

Insight Explore

Insight Explore is an academic programme which aims to develop participants interests and tackle the barriers many students face when applying to university. Find out more.

Realise

The Realise project's aim is to encourage more young people in care to consider higher education. We run a large number of events ranging from science days to theatre days to give a taste of life as a student at Cambridge. Find out more.

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Insight into the
University of Cambridge

(Post-16 Team Projects)

HE+

HE+ is a collaboration between the University of Cambridge's Admissions Office and Colleges, and state schools/colleges across the UK. The University and schools in 20 regions collaborate to form regional consortia to support highly-able students from under-represented areas and backgrounds and involves approximately 4,000 students in Year 12 each year. Find out more.

Insight+

Insight + aims to support students making competitive applications to selective Higher Education Institutions by supporting students over 12 months from Easter in Year 12. Students receive additional subject specific teaching across five subject strands (English, Physics, Maths, Chemistry and History) which is delivered by experience teachers and departmental outreach practitioners. Find out more.

Sutton Trust Summer Schools

Sutton Trust Summer Schools are free subject-specific residential courses for Year 12 students studying at state-maintained schools in the UK. The five-day summer schools in July and August allow students to explore their interest in one of 26 subjects and gain an insight into what it is like to live and study as a first-year undergraduate student at Cambridge. Find out more.

Experience Cambridge

Experience Cambridge gives participants an insight into teaching and study at the University, and the opportunity to explore their preferred subject area in further detail. The initiative involves one day-long visit to the University and covers subject sessions and Cambridge Admissions guidance. Find out more.

Apply: Cambridge

Apply: Cambridge is a specialist and free programme designed to support highly able students from underrepresented backgrounds and areas to make successful applications to the University of Cambridge. We work with students every step of the way over a 6-month period, helping them navigate the process and effectively prepare for the Cambridge application. Find out more.

STEM SMART

STEM SMART is a free, 17-month programme to support students in raising their attainment at school and develop their confidence to apply to study physical sciences and engineering at top universities. Find out more.

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