

Student Sample C

Grade 7 Argument Writing Performance Task: Social Media

Should social media place greater limitations on free speech?

In my opinion, social media websites should keep limitations on free speech. Without these limitation, users may feel uncomfortable or unwelcome. These rules on 'free speech' limit what you say to help make all users fee safe and stop threats from alarming others.

Many may say that in the US, we have free speech and are able to say whatever we want, but in the article, 'How Free Speech and Social Media Fit Together' *Sara Hawkins*, it states that "the government can limit both the content of speech and the ability to engage in speech as long as the government has a 'substantial justification.'" This prohibits "words that would encourage hatred or violence" (2) and "speech would encourage others to engage in illegal activity" (2). This means that not all speech is 'free'.

In the article, "Facebook Policy" *Marne Levine*, it tells the readers that many things are removed due to threats, bullying, and illegal activities. They will remove "serious threats to harm public or personal safety" (3), "any organizations that are engaged in [Terrorist activity or organized criminal activity]" (3), and don't "tolerate bullying and harassment" (3). Other social media website may have limitations placed on "[indecentcy, defamation, profanity, and copyright]" (2). They remove these to not only make people feel safer and more comfortable, but also to stop people from breaking the law.

Though social media sites should put limitations on free speech, this should not be concerned for in schools. Throughout the course of many years, many students have gotten in trouble in school for something they posted on their private account after school hours. In the article, 'Do Students Still Have Free Speech in School?', it tells the readers about a case where a 13-year-old girl was suspended for wearing an armband to protest the Vietnam War in 1965. It was called the *Tinker vs Des Moines* case. "The court said Tinker was not guilty by saying students do not 'shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate,'" states the article. Another source explains that "schools' authority to limit student speech has generally not been extended to speech that takes place off-campus." (4). All of this goes to show that though social media should limit free speech, breaking the guidelines should not get a person in trouble at school.

Without limitations of free speech on social media, a lot more illegal activity, bullying and threats could happen. This could not only make users uncomfortable, but put them in danger as well. Though many may argue that they should be able to have free speech on social media, it does cause dangers to other users, because not all speech is unharmed. And not all speech should be 'free'.

Sources:

1. (Article) Do Students Still have Free Speech in School?
2. (Article) How Free Speech and Social Media Fit Together *Sara Hawkins*
3. (Article) Facebook Policy *Marne Levine*
4. (Article) Students Rights – Free Speech