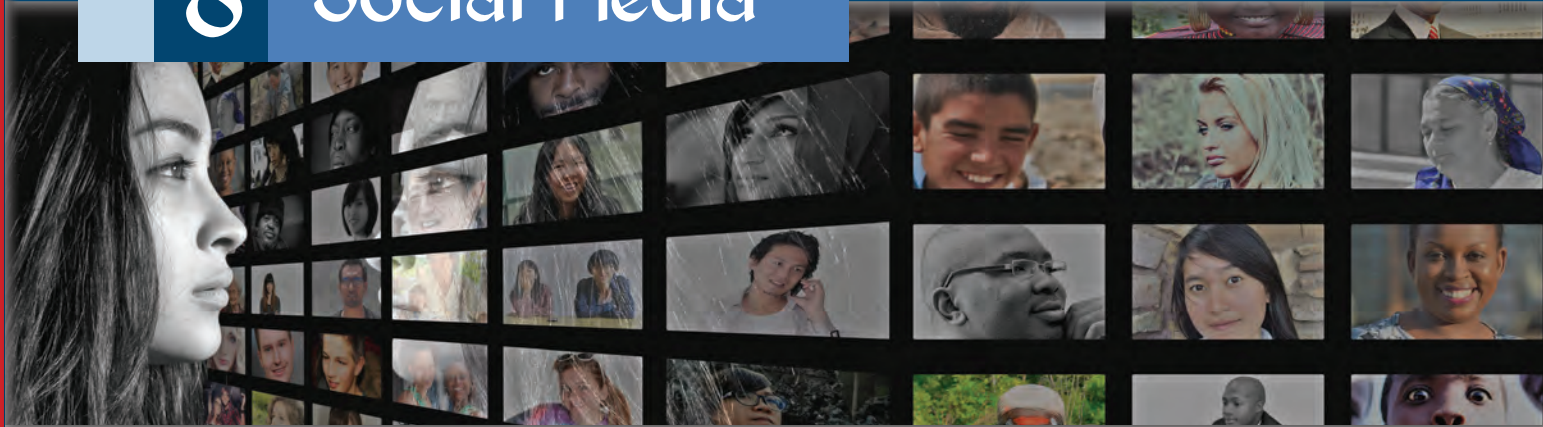


# 8 Social Media



◆ Before you read the text discuss the following questions.



1. How many words related to social media can you think of?
2. Do we really need social media? Why?/ Why not?
3. Imagine your life without social media. How would it be different/ better/ worse?



1. Read the adapted article below and then do the tasks that follow.

## The vital time you shouldn't be on social media

**Social media is having a worrying impact on sleep and our mental health.**

**1** Today's teens and tweens have built up an impressive amount of daily screen time. Figures put it at between six to eight hours a day for 11-15 year-olds, and that's not including time spent on a computer for homework. In fact, even the average UK adult spends more time looking at a screen than they do sleeping, according to one analysis.

**2** This trend is now exposing some worrying

results and, staying hot on the heels of social-media's popularity, researchers are interested in the impact it is having on many aspects of our health, including sleep, the importance of which is currently gaining unprecedented attention.

**3** Ever since the meteoric rise of social media, research has been interested in its impact on society examining the relationships between

technology and mental health looking at the good and the bad. What is unclear, however, is the exact causal direction: does increase social media use, or does social media use increase depression? It could be working both ways, making it even more problematic as there's a potential for a vicious circle. The more depressed a person is the more social media they might then use, which worsens their mental health further. Put another way, an increase in social media is associated with an increase in the likelihood of depression, anxiety, and a feeling of social isolation.

**4** But there's another worrying impact. In a 2017 study of over 1,700 young adults, they found that when it comes to social media interaction, time of day plays a fundamental role. Engagement during the last 30 minutes before bed was found to be the strongest indicator of a poor night's sleep being completely independent of the total amount of time of use in the day. Something about keeping those last 30 minutes tech-free, it seems, is crucial to a restful slumber.

**5** There are several factors that could explain this. A now well-told caution is that the blue light emitted from our screens inhibits our melatonin levels – a chemical that effectively tells us that it's time to nod off. It could also be possible that social media use increases a person's anxiety as the day goes on, making it hard to switch off when we finally go to bed. Or a more obvious reason might be that social media is deeply alluring and simply reduces the time we have for sleep.

**6** And so it seems there is a merry-go-round of interrelated issues at play. Social media is linked to increased depression, anxiety and sleep



deprivation. And a lack of sleep can both worsen mental health and be a result of mental health issues.

**7** A lack of sleep has other side-effects. It has been linked to an increased risk of heart diseases, diabetes, obesity, poor academic performance, slower reaction times when driving, risk behaviour, increased substance use... the list goes on.

**8** What's worse is that when it comes to sleep deprivation, it's usually young people who are most adversely affected. That's because adolescence is a time of important biological and social changes that are critical to development.



**9** If social media use is exacerbating anxiety and depression, it could then, in turn, impact sleep. If you lay in bed awake comparing yourself to other people's posts, you might well believe that your life is somewhat drab in comparison, which could make you feel worse and keep you up.

**10** Social media use is growing and changing so

quickly, that it is difficult to keep up. To combat any downsides, it's clear that moderation is the key. We should all ring-fence particular times throughout the day in which we can distance ourselves from our screens. Parents need to have set places in their homes where devices can or cannot be used, so it's not a fluid situation where social media is bleeding into every part of your life without any buffer zones.



<http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20180110-the-vital-time-you-really-shouldnt-be-on-social-media>

**2.** Answer the following questions.

What is the writer's main purpose?

- to give information about social media use
- to raise awareness about the issue

**3.** Read the text again and match the titles to each paragraph.

- Use of media before going to bed leads to bad quality of sleep.
- Social media, emotional disorder and bad sleep are interconnected.
- Absence of sleep brings about a great amount of health problems.
- It is not easy to resist social media.
- The effect of social media on our health.
- The growth of teenagers is strongly affected by lack of sleep.
- Excessive use of social media causes emotional problems.
- Advice on social media usage.
- Both young people and adults allocate more time to screens than sleep.
- Social media cause emotional disorders and, in turn, health problems affect the quality of sleep.
