Argumentative Genre
Directions

• Read all the directions for each question carefully and think about the answer.

• This Assesslet contains five items. Questions 1-3 are selected-response items where you choose the one BEST answer. Answer each question by filling in the circle on your answer document.

• Question 4 is a constructed-response item. Write your answer on the lines provided on your answer document.

• Question 5 is an extended-response item. Use the scratch paper provided to plan your writing. Then, write your essay on the lines provided on your answer document.

• Be sure to write your answers in the spaces provided on the answer document.
The Effects of Social Networking

Passage A: Information about social networking

Social networking refers to the use of a website to connect people with similar interests in an online group format. Social media is so popular that teens connect daily—or many times daily—using social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

In recent years, social media has, by and large, replaced traditional communication tools such as home telephones, hand-written notes, and emails. The Internet and online social networking sites offer teens opportunities to connect with others around the world. In fact, social media has become the most popular form of instant communication among teens with access to the Internet. These sites are virtual spaces where teens meet, chat, perform research, enjoy music, view or post videos, share and comment on photos, exchange personal stories, and much more. These “plugged-in” teenagers have specific expectations of online social networking sites and of the friends they meet on these sites. Teens around the world insist that these online communities promote interactions among family and friends, invite new friendships, build relationships with friends in other countries, and offer support to individuals. Because of their access to instant information via smartphones and computers, today’s teens may appear more informed than previous generations.

According to the 2014 Forrester’s North American Consumer Youth Survey, the following statistics indicate that teens (ages 12-17) spend at least some time each day using social media. Consider the following statistics:

- 40% spend an average of one hour per day on social media.
- 67% regularly use Facebook.
- 34% agree that less face-to-face interaction occurs today.
- 98% have viewed or posted YouTube videos.
- 52% use Instagram daily.
- 46% agree sites encourage social awareness and community involvement.
- 22% visit Twitter weekly.
- 49% learn false information online.
- 28% have had personal information unknowingly shared with companies.
- 57% get to know fellow students at school better.
- 52% state increases in friends/relationships.

Passage A continued on page 3
• 20% report that social networking activities have negatively affected their grades; 59% note an increase in academic performance.
• 32% text or chat online during family meals.
• 49% report being a victim of cyberbullying.
• 64% listen to new music on YouTube exclusively.
• 35% admit to plagiarizing online sources.
• 85% post comments on others’ pictures/comments.
• 68% remain vulnerable to hacking, viruses, and other malware.

Research indicates that social networking has had both positive and negative impacts on our lives. Using these resources responsibly needs to be a part of what we do every day.

Source: Forrester’s North American Consumer Youth Survey
Passage B: Identity Theft and Social Media

Growing up, most of us were likely taught not to speak to strangers, not to give out our names and addresses to people we didn’t know, or in general, to keep personal information to ourselves. But today, people have profiles on social media sites, smartphones capture our daily movements using GPS signals, and information about almost anyone can be found by just Googling a name on the internet. Is it no wonder that identity theft has become a major concern of people all over the world today and a growing area of crime?

In 2012, the Federal Trade Commission reported that more than 360,000 complaints of identity theft were registered. In 2014, Georgia ranked second per capita in reporting identity theft complaints. These complaints included everything from being asked to visit a scam website in an email to being the target of identity theft. Identity thieves are continuously finding new avenues to steal personal information.

One of the ways identity thieves gain information is via social media sites. With only limited information in the profile (name, place of birth, and year), a thief has ample information to steal a person’s identity. Doing a status update, however innocent this may seem, can leave you open to a variety of crimes. Making the statement that you are going away for the week on vacation alerts a criminal that your home will be vacant. It can also make an identity thief aware that your bank account may be accessed from remote locations via your phone or a public computer.

While people are becoming savvier about protecting themselves, many people are not aware that some sites ask for sensitive information that could be used in inappropriate ways to either steal your identity or to use your identity to commit crimes in malicious ways. The following information is often included in your profile, or is disclosed in conversations on social media sites:

- Your full name, including your middle name
- Your date of birth, which is often required
- Your home town

Passage B continued on page 5
Your relationship status
• The schools you attended and/or graduated from
• Your pet’s name
• Your religious affiliations, hobbies, clubs, etc.

Who are those most susceptible to identity theft? Statistics from the Federal Trade Commission show that the group with the highest percentage of identity theft victims were ages 20-29. Some of the reasons seem to be that this group of people is less likely to keep a regular check on their bank accounts and credit card activity. The records indicate that they are also less careful when sharing information on social media.

In 2011, a Carnegie Mellon study of more than 40,000 children reported that children under the age of 18 were victims of identity theft twice as often as their parents. Teens are often less cautious about protecting their personal information. Teens often share personal information via sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The information shared often includes hints to things that a person might use to answer security questions for secure sites. Teens often have unused social security numbers. Thieves might sell the social security number to illegal immigrants so that they can obtain a fake ID for employment. Teens are also less cautious about sharing a credit card number with a friend to buy tickets for a concert or when they go out to eat. If the friend writes down the number and is not careful about destroying it, the number can be compromised. When teens use Wi-Fi, it is easy for a thief to obtain personal information. Smart phones store and transmit personal data. If the phone is lost, the information can be retrieved and used for malicious purposes. Importantly, teens often don’t understand the ramifications of identity theft and often consider themselves ‘immune’ to being a target. The impact of identity theft has on things like applying for college scholarships, buying your first car, getting your first job, or your first place to live could be an obstacle that could take years to overcome.

An example of a teen who was caught up in identity theft turmoil:
I found myself sitting in an attorney’s office with my parents, waiting to meet with someone who I hoped could help me. Someone had stolen my identity and I was trying to get into college. When my college loan application was rejected, I found out information that led me to the conclusion that someone was using my personal information. I need help!

Apparently, someone had stolen my social security number and had been using it for a while. I lost my wallet a couple of years ago, but I never reported my social security card as stolen. I also filled out all the information in the profile on Facebook and used my phone to make purchases all the time. I had no idea when or how the person had

Passage B continued on page 6
connected my information, but this unknown thief had created a lot of problems for me. Once I started investigating, with my parents’ help, we found that the person had applied for credit cards in my name, bought a car, and some furniture. I had contacted the credit card companies, but I have to go through some type of legal process to prove that I am really me and that I am not the one who ran up all those bills.

Once we talked to the attorney, we realized that it was going to take some time…and cost some money…to try to clear my name and set things straight. He worked really hard to help me talk to the college loan offices so that I could apply for loans to go to school. It took an extra year before the matter had been resolved to the point that I could get the loan, and I was finally able to start school. The attorney is still working to clear up the credit card debt.

What a way to start my life after graduation!

How do we prevent becoming victims of identity theft? Just a couple of easy steps can help when using social media sites. These will not protect against all identity theft, but will be a good place for everyone to start to be proactive and responsible.

- Use different passwords for every site you use.
- Don’t share passwords with anyone.
- Use a password to access your phone.
- Keep track of credit card and bank statements regularly.
- Use credit protection services to monitor your accounts.
- Shred all mail that has any identifying information on it instead of discarding it in the trash.

Be responsible and protect your identity. There should be only one you!
Selected-Response Questions

For questions 1-3, answer each question by filling in the circle on your answer document.

1 Which statement below BEST summarizes the information in these two texts?
   A Teens are careless users of social media.
   B Teens spend too much time on social media.
   C Teens are not well informed about important world issues despite being more connected.
   D Teens today use social media to stay connected and informed, but there are some negative consequences.

2 In Passage A, what does the word virtual mean?
   A actual
   B effective
   C practical
   D simulated

“These sites are virtual spaces where teens meet, chat, perform research, enjoy music, view or post videos, share and comment on photos, exchange personal stories, and much more.”

3 What is the importance of Passage B?
   A It describes the many ways identity theft can occur.
   B It proves that teens are abusing the use of social media.
   C It provides an understanding of the many ways social media has improved the lives of teens.
   D It gives examples of ways identity theft can occur but also provides information on ways to avoid ID theft.
Consider the statistics reported in Passage A. Which of these statistics does the writer of Passage B focus on MOST? Support your answer with at least one detail from each passage.

Write your answer on the lines provided on your answer document.
Extended-Response Question

Do you feel that online social networking activities have improved teenagers’ lives? Write an argumentative essay that addresses this question. In your essay, be sure to:

- Give at least 3 reasons to support your argument.
- Develop these reasons with appropriate evidence from the passages.
- Identify and address at least one counter claim.

Use the scratch paper provided to plan your writing. Then, write your essay on the lines provided on your answer document.