

Worksheet

by Jennifer Kerr

For the article:

Australia passes social media ban for kids and teens under 16

Read On, February issue 2025, page 2



Topics: Australia • social media • politics • young people

Skills: scan reading • reading comprehension • speaking • grammar • use of English

Answers: see page 7

Pre-reading

👉 Work with a partner or with a group.

Before reading the article, discuss the following questions in pairs or small groups:

- a) Do you use social media? If so, which social media platforms do you use?
- b) What do you do on social media? Why do you use it?
- c) Brainstorm some of the potential dangers of using social media. Use the space provided below:



Scan reading

There are many statements by different people and organisations in this article.

- a) Before reading the full article, scan read through the article to find the name of the person or organisation who said each statement.
- b) Then fill in the final column explaining who or what each person or organisation is. You may need to scan through the article again to find this information.

Work individually, and then check with your partner.

Statement	Name of person or organisation	Description
A "Social media is doing harm to our kids and I'm calling time on it."		
B "the bill was 'ineffective' and wouldn't make kids safer"		
C "the whole process was 'hasty'"		

D “We need to make social media safer for everybody.”		
E “This is a government that is obviously not made up of teenagers, but it’s making a law about social media when they didn’t grow up in the social media age”		
F “Social media provides vital connections for many young Australians, allowing them to access mental health resources, peer support networks, and a sense of community”		
G “Our children will be jumping from the frypan into the fire”		

Reading comprehension

Now read the article all the way through, and decide if the following statements are true (T), false (F), or not mentioned (N). Write corrections for the false statements in the spaces provided below. Work individually.

	Statement	T	F	N
a)	Australia’s social media age limit is the highest age limit set by any country.	☐	☐	☐
b)	Social media platforms have six months to implement the law.	☐	☐	☐
c)	The bill was not supported by Australia’s major political parties.	☐	☐	☐
d)	The Australian prime minister has a child under 16.	☐	☐	☐
e)	In Australia, there were several cases of teenage suicide due to online bullying.	☐	☐	☐
f)	Children who use social media do less sport.	☐	☐	☐
g)	The new law is raising privacy questions.	☐	☐	☐

h)	Many teens feel left out of the debate.	☐	☐	☐
i)	Leo Puglisi is a senator from the Australian Greens.	☐	☐	☐
j)	Young people will still be able to use online dating websites.	☐	☐	☐

Now rewrite the false statements from above, using the correct information from the article.

Speaking

 Work with a partner.

In pairs, take it in turns to describe one of the following words or expressions from the article. Your partner needs to guess which word you are describing, but you can't say the word or any part of the word, or make any movements with your hands or body. You need to describe it using other words.

First, individually, check that you understand the meaning of each word. Then begin describing them. Take it in turns.

ban	age limit	fine
poll	news conference	addiction
hasty	peer support network	criticism

Grammar

Scan back through the article to find sentences or phrases in the present, past, and future tenses. Find two examples for each tense. Use the spaces provided in the table below to write your examples and the paragraphs where you found them in the article. One example has been provided for you.

Tense	Example from article	Paragraph
Present tense	<i>It's one of the toughest social media bans in the world, with the highest age limit set by any country.</i>	1
Present tense		
Past tense		
Past tense		
Future tense		
Future tense		

Use of English

Scan through the article to find synonyms (>>) for the words below. The paragraphs where you can find the words are indicated in brackets.

- a) hard (>>) _____ (para. 1)
- b) prohibited (>>) _____ (para. 2)
- c) main (>>) _____ (para. 4)
- d) survey (>>) _____ (para. 4)
- e) hurt (>>) _____ (para. 5)

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| f) harmful (>>) | _____ (para. 6) |
| g) entire (>>) | _____ (para. 8) |
| h) dangerous (>>) | _____ (para. 11) |
| i) clearly (>>) | _____ (para. 12) |
| j) important (>>) | _____ (para. 14) |

Post-reading

Work with a group.

1. Discuss the following questions, which are all related to the topic of the article, in small groups:

- What is your opinion on the new law in Australia, which bans children under 16 from using social media? Let everyone share their opinion and explain their reasoning.
- If you were a teenager living in Australia, how do you think you would feel about this new law?
- According to the article, the Australian prime minister said that “social media is doing harm to our kids”, and the article mentions toxic content, addiction to social media and online bullying. Do you think banning social media will help to end these problems?
- The article also mentions that Christopher Stone, the executive director of Suicide Prevention Australia, said that “a social media ban might make teens feel more isolated and lonely”. Do you agree with this statement?
- Overall, do you think social media has more negative effects or more positive effects on young people? Discuss your answers together.

2. Now imagine you are a teenager living in Australia and the prime minister has asked young people to write in and share their opinions about the new law.

First, decide if you are for or against this social media ban. Then write a letter to the Australian prime minister, Anthony Albanese, sharing your opinion. Write in full sentences, and use your own words. Mention at least three points to explain why you are for or against the law, explaining your reasoning. Try to think of some other points not mentioned in the article.

Work individually, and use the space provided below to write your letter.

[illegible]

