

ESSAY

OUTLINE

Introduction	
<p>The rise in the use of social media in recent years has been phenomenal. Facebook now has millions and millions of users in almost every country, and the statistics for other sites such as weibo, Twitter and whatsapp are similarly staggering. Whilst some people argue that these networks have a negative influence on society, it is my belief that so many people cannot be wrong and that these networks can do a lot to bridge divisions in society.</p>	<p>Start by ‘painting a picture’ of the general context, then state your position, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social media is becoming more popular • I think this is a good thing
Main Body	
<p>The first way in which social networks do this is that they allow users to interact with a wide range of people from different countries and different social circles. Among my Facebook friends, for example, I have friends from all five continents and of ages 16-82. It would be impossible to hold together all those friends without the internet, and I can testify that I have learnt a lot about life from my friends on social media sites. Whilst it is true that the users of these sites tend to be young and wealthy, this divide is becoming less and less apparent. There are now more and more free apps that are user-friendly so that people of all ages can enjoy them.</p>	<p>Give your first argument and support it with examples, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social media allows for greater interaction • you can interact with people from all walks of life
<p>Secondly, social media allows us to keep in touch with our friends when we are physically apart. For example, when our friends go to study in other countries, we can still find out what they are doing by looking at their Facebook page or following their Twitter feeds. Without social networks this would simply be impossible. As it is, we can look at their photos and get a window into their lives so that when they return to Hong Kong we will not be clueless about what has happened to them. Similarly, it is reassuring for the person who has travelled to be able to keep in touch with friends and family back at home so that they do not feel so isolated.</p>	<p>Give your second argument and support it with examples, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We can use social media to keep in touch with family / friends • This is particularly true when we visit other countries.
<p>A final argument in favour of social networks is that they allow the user to control what information they give about themselves. Whilst it is true that some social networks have been criticised for privacy violations, it is nevertheless the case that each individual user can decide how much information they choose to divulge about themselves. This enables them to get to know other people gradually in that they can choose what information to reveal and when to reveal it. In other words, friendships can develop at their own pace, and if online friends choose to meet each other in person, they can do so knowing as much about the other person as they want. Of course, appropriate safety procedures should be followed, but just because there are occasional reports of online friends meeting dangerous people, it does not necessarily follow that online friends cannot develop rich and lasting ‘real’ friendships.</p>	<p>Give your final argument and support it with examples, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it provides a place for relaxation • ping pong tables etc. allow students to unwind
Conclusion	

In summary, social networks are an excellent way of bringing people together. They may not be danger free, but neither is any other method of making friends. Sometimes the most rewarding things involve an element of risk, and the risks of social media are not the most dangerous. Whilst they cannot replace face-to-face friendships, they may well enhance them or lead to them.

Sum up your proposal briefly.