

PRUEBA DE ACCESO A LA UNIVERSIDAD PAU

CURSO 2024–2025

MATERIA: LENGUA EXTRAJERA: INGLÉS

Convocatoria: Junio_5_JUEVES

Children and smartphones: setting some limits is a good idea

With the rise of smartphones and smartwatches, people—notably younger generations—spend a lot of time online. Being connected has become an essential part of their lives. Therefore, preventing youngsters from participating in this online world is hopeless. The genie is out of the bottle. The problems linked to the internet are complicated, and simply keeping children away from it will not solve them.

Although some promote a tech-positive view, most people recognise that the portable computers we carry around with us make excessive demands on our time and attention. This highlights the necessity for intervention. Just as children need guidance to develop healthy eating habits, they also require support to learn how to use the internet in moderation—especially at a young age. However, avoiding extreme measures, such as simply banning smartphones, can create the impression that nothing can be done about the issue or that the responsibility falls entirely on parents.

American social psychologist Jonathan Haidt, the most prominent supporter of the pro-active view on smartphones, argues that social media use has caused a huge rise in teenage mental illness, particularly among girls, and calls for collective action to reverse this. Supporting this position, Professor Lord Darzi—a distinguished expert in medicine and health policy—acknowledged in a review of the National Health Service in England that the dramatic rise in mental health issues is likely related to social media but could not say whether it was the “cause or the consequence of depression.”

Some critics think that Haidt oversimplifies the problem, but his perspective has caught the attention of policymakers worldwide. For example, the Australian government is considering raising the minimum age for social networking platforms use from 13 to 16, while officials across Europe are implementing stricter regulations. In fact, the UK has some of the strictest legislation in the world to protect children online. Earlier this year, the government advised schools to ban phones during lunchtime as well as lessons. Last week, another warning was sounded: Science Secretary Peter Kyle has indicated he would consider following Australia in prohibiting social media accounts for under-16s.

Nevertheless, smartphone use is not the biggest challenge facing schools in the UK. There are problems that need to be solved, such as a shortage of teachers, child poverty, and a lack of funding. Phone restrictions could be seen as a distraction from bigger issues, like raising the age limits for social media, which tech companies are likely to oppose.

Teachers, along with parents and wider society, have a role in setting boundaries for children and should not be ignored. The worsening of children’s mental health and cases linked to online interactions cannot be neglected. There are good reasons to act.

Fragment adapted from *The Guardian*, September 2024

1. Say whether the following sentences are TRUE or FALSE according to the text. COPY the evidence from the text. No marks will be given without the evidence. (1.5 points)

- A renowned US mental health expert demands a unified response to address the adverse effects of social media usage.
- The United Kingdom is known for having some of the most rigorous online safety regulations for youth.
- Tech corporations will support the implementation of age restrictions for social media usage.

2. **ANSWER the questions below. COPY no more than 10 words and/or a number from the text to answer each question. (1.5 points)**

- a) How is the attempt to stop young people from using the internet viewed by the author?
- b) What politician is open to the idea of banning social media accounts for young children?
- c) Who shares the responsibility for establishing limits for children's social media use?

3. **FIND a word or expression in the text that means... (1 point)**

- a) a being able to grant wishes (lines 1-10)
- b) opposite of permitting (lines 1-10)
- c) completely (lines 1-10)
- d) associated with (lines 24-30)

4. **READ this conversation and COMPLETE your part. Write the numbers (1-6) and complete each sentence on your exam paper. (1.5 points)**

Arriving home late

Your parents: Where on earth have you been?! It's nearly two hours past the time you usually come home! We were worried! What happened?

You: (1) _____.

Your parents: And you couldn't call or text? We had no idea where you were! Why didn't you let us know?

You: (2) _____.

Your parents: That's not a good enough excuse. We were worried sick!

You: You're right. I'm so sorry. (3) _____.

Your parents: Your studies are important, but you must be responsible and keep us informed. We're not angry that you stayed—just that you didn't tell us.

You: I understand. (4) _____.

Your parents: Next time, let us know.

You: Yes, I promise (5) _____.

Your parents: Good. Now that you're home safe, let's have dinner. And don't let this happen again.

You: I won't. (6) _____?

Your parents: We made your favourite, spaghetti and meatballs!

5. **Choose ONLY 3 of the following situations and WRITE what you would say in each one to show that you understand the context of the situation. Write between 10 and 25 words. (1.5 points)**

- a) It is extremely hot in the classroom. Complain about it.
- b) Your sibling wants to share your Instagram account with their friends, but you don't feel comfortable with that. Explain your reasons.
- c) You accidentally sent your English homework to the wrong teacher. Apologise for the mistake.
- d) You didn't understand the homework, so you couldn't finish it. Ask your classmate for help.
- e) You want to order pizza for dinner, but your family prefers Chinese food. Convince them.

6. **Choose ONE of the following topics and WRITE a composition of about 120-150 words. If you choose the email, DO NOT SIGN it. (3 points)**

- a) Write an email to Professor Lord Darzi discussing the impact of social media on young people's health.
- b) Is social media damaging human relationships? Give your opinion.