A N G L A I S

The Net generation, unplugged[1]

THEY are variously known as the Net Generation, Millennials, Generation Y or Digital Natives. But whatever you call this group of young people ---roughly, those born between 1980 and 2000----there is a widespread consensus among educators, marketers and policymakers that digital technologies have given rise to a new generation of students, consumers, and
5   citizens who see the world in a different way. Growing up with the Internet, it is argued, has transformed their approach to education, work and politics.

"Unlike those of us a shade older, this new generation didn't have to relearn anything to live lives of digital immersion. They learned in digital the first time around", declare John Palfrey and Urs Gasser of the Berkman Centre at Harvard Law school in their 2008 book, "Born Digital",
10   one of many recent tomes about digital natives. The authors argue that young people like to use new, digital ways to express themselves: shooting a YouTube video where their parents would have written an essay, for instance.

Anecdotes like this are used to back calls for education systems to be transformed in order to cater to these computer-savvy students, who differ fundamentally from earlier
15   generations of students: professors should move their class discussions to Facebook, for example, where digital natives feel more comfortable. "Our students have changed radically. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach", argues Marc Prensky in his book "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants", published in 2001. Management gurus, meanwhile, have weighed in to explain how employers should cope with
20   this new generation's preference for collaborative working rather than traditional command-and-control, and their need for constant feedback about themselves.

But does it really make sense to generalize about a whole generation in this way ? Not everyone thinks it does. "This is essentially a wrong-headed argument that assumes that our kids have some special path to the witchcraft of 'digital awareness' and that they understand
25   something that we, teachers, don't---and we have to catch up with them," says Siva Vaidhyanathan, who teaches media studies at University of Virginia.

Michael Wesch, who pioneered the use of new media in his cultural anthropology classes at Kansas State University, is also skeptical, saying that many of his incoming students have only a superficial familiarity with the digital tools that they use regularly, especially when it
30   comes to the tools' social and political potential. Only a small fraction of students may count as true digital natives, in other words. The rest are no better or worse at using technology than the rest of the population.

Writing in the *British Journal of Education Technology* in 2008, a group of academics led by Sue Bennett of the University of Wollongong set out to debunk the whole idea of digital
35   natives, arguing that there may be "as much variation within the digital native generation as between the generations". They caution that the idea of a new generation that learns in a different way might actually be counterproductive in education, because such sweeping generalizations "fail to recognize cognitive differences in young people of different ages, and variation within age groups". The young do not really have different kinds of brains that require
40   new approaches to school and work, in short.

What about politics and the idea that, thanks to the Internet, digital natives will grow up to be more responsible citizens, using their technological expertise to campaign on social issues and exercise closer scrutiny over governments ? Examples abound, from Barack Obama's online campaign to activism on Twitter. A three-year study by the MacArthur Foundation found

45 that spending time online is "essential for young people to pick up the social and technical skills they need to be competent citizens in the digital age". But discussions about "digital citizens" run into the same problems as those about digital natives : there may simply be too much economic, geographic, and demographic disparity within this group to make meaningful generalizations.

50   After all, not everyone born between 1980 and 2000 has access to digital technology : many in the developing world do not. It is true that the Internet can provide an outlet for political expression for people living under repressive regimes. But those regimes are also likely to monitor the Internet closely. And in some cases there is, in effect, a new social contract : do what **you** like online, as long as you steer clear of politics. Government-controlled Internet-

55 access providers in Belarus, for example, provide servers full of pirated material to keep their customers happy.

      [1]**Unplugged** = disconnected

I. **COMPREHENSION**   **(18 marks)**

A) **Find in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 words that reflect <u>skepticism</u> about the promises of the digital culture by filling the table accordingly:**   **(3 marks)**

Verbs	Adjective	Compound noun	Noun

B) **Match the following ideas/concepts (Hostility -Doubt Ë Challenge Ë Enthusiasm) with the paragraphs they relate to. One does not apply:**   **(1.5 mark)**

Paragraphs 1,2,3	Paragraphs 4,5,6	Paragraphs 7,8

C) **Circle your answer:**   **(1 mark)**

To cater to these computer-savvy students+(l.14) **means,**
a) To help students fond of computers
b) To assist computer-gifted students
c) To arrest cyber-criminal students
d) To train students in new computer systems.

As long as you steer clear of politics÷ (l.54) means, :
a) As long as you practice politics honestly
b) Provided you avoid politics deliberately
c) As long as you are involved in politics   õ
d) Provided you support the ruling political party

D) **What do the underlined words refer to?**   **(1.5 mark)**
‰Anecdotes like <u>this</u> are used to back callsõ +(l.13) _____
‰<u>They</u> caution that the ideaõ +(l.36) _____
‰ what <u>you</u> like online+(l.54) _____

E) **Decide if the statements are True (T), false (F). Justify using appropriate quotations from the text**   **(3 marks)**

The Millennialsqdigital skills promote hierarchy at work: _____
Justification : _____
The Net Generation is at ease with the teaching programs: _____
Justification: _____

The Net Generations dispositions could contribute to transparency in politics: _____
Justification: _____

F) **Using the information in the text, answer the following questions in your own words:**   **(2 marks)**

Why is ‰the Net generation+said to be ‰unplugged+? _____
_____

What makes the ‰digital natives+so different? Say Why ? _____
_____

G) **Summarize the text by completing the following outline in your own words:**
(6 marks)

Main ideas:

_____

_____

_____

Features characterizing digital natives:

_____

_____

_____

Ideas against generalizations:

_____

_____

_____

II. **LINGUISTIC AND COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE** **(16 marks)**

H) **Complete the following sentences meaningfully using the verbs below:** **(3 marks)**
To cope with Ë to bring about Ë to take into account
-
- The advocates of digital technology in politics naively believe that _____
- _____
-
- Their dreams of a digital society may fail if _____
- _____
-
- The ideal digital society will not come to be unless _____
- _____

I) **Í A wrong-headed argumentÎ is a compound noun. Translate the following sentences into English using compound nouns:** **(3 marks)**

- Une société impulsée par Internet: _____
- Un système de gestion informatisée: _____
- Une base de données en ligne très sophistiquée : _____

J) **Fill in the blanks with the right forms of the words between brackets (3 marks)**

‰There is also a feeling of superficiality about much online youth activism. Any_____ (teen) can choose to join a Facebook group supporting the _____ (oppose) in Iran or the liberation of Tibet, but such engagement is likely to be shallow. A recent study by the Pew Research Center, an American think-tank, found that Internet users aged 18-24 would, in all _____ (likely), email a public official or make an online political _____ (donate). But when it came to using the web to share political news or join political causes on social networks, they were far ahead of anyone else. Rather than genuinely being more _____ (politics) engaged, they may simply wish to broadcast their _____ (active) to their peers. As with the idea that digital natives learn and work in new ways, there may be less going on here than meets the eye.+

K) **Write the reply in each of these conversations. Answers must be original and meaningful:**   **(2 marks)**

- Marc Prensky: Wake up and wise up to the new age! You're lagging way behind!
- Michael Wesch: _____
-
- John Palfrey: Why bother writing essays? A video posted on YouTube speaks louder than words!
- Sue Bennett: _____

L) **Complete the conversation between a journalist and a former top manager turned cybercrime specialist:**   **(5 marks)**

Journalist: How would you define cybercrime?

Specialist: _____
_____

Journalist: How did you get started writing about cybercrime?

Specialist: _____

Journalist: Was it a good idea leaving such a top position?
Specialist:_____
_____

Journalist: _____
_____

Specialist: _____
_____

III. **WRITING**   **(16 marks)**

Deal with the two topics. (Write about 200 words for each)

M. **Topic one**   **(08 marks)**

"As a digital native, you respond to the following readers' comments. Present your counterarguments convincingly:

"For the digital generation, the only noticeable differences are:

- Plagiarism is a right;
- Cut-and-paste is writing;
- Thinking is uncritical;
- Uncritical thinking is cool;
- Attention deficit is normal."

Presentation 1   Ideas 4   vocabulary / grammar   4

N. **Topic two**   **(08 marks)**

Formal letter
Write to the minister of Education using relevant arguments to convince him to include the Internet more widely and efficiently in our educational system.

Lay-out 1   Ideas 4   vocabulary / grammar 4