**Essays – Topics analysis**

**A - Subjects that invite you to have a strong defined opinion:**

1° Do you think robots are the future of mankind?

This topic doesn’t invite you to consider how robots could change the world or whether it is good or not to replace men, but to consider if they are unavoidable. You can thus consider that different roles they are increasingly taking. You can, however, explain in the end if this future is bleak or bright according to you, but that comes second.

2° Would you say the COVID crisis has changed people’s perception of science and research?

This is truly a topic that invites you to think as a citizen and study public opinion. In a specific context where science and research have been thrust to center stage during the pandemic, the question is whether or not the spike in science’s visibility has come with greater public skepticism or support.

3° Do we need digital detox?

Analysis this topic cannot go without saying the benefits of disconnecting from the screens, gadgets and apps that sometimes control us. It can be useful to remind the context of this question as the COVID-19 pandemic has brought global lockdowns and remote work has turned mainstream, we’re plugged into more electronics than ever, for more time than ever, and technology has invaded our homes. Experts are reporting that to maintain a state of mental and physical wellbeing, digital detoxing should be a priority for us all. So the topic is truly to explain why it would be not only a good thing, but a necessity (*need*) to step back and unplug.

4° Should scientific research be financed by the state?

Who pays for science? You cannot deal with such a topic without balancing it with its possible counterparts: should scientific research be financed by private actors? Companies? Non-profit organizations? Funding for science has changed with time (private patronage, church sponsorship, wealthy individuals, Government grants) and today researchers are likely funded by a mix of grants from various sources. In a perfect world, money wouldn’t matter — all scientific studies (regardless of funding source) would be completely ​​objective. But of course, in the real world, funding may introduce biases — for example, when the backer has a stake in the study’s outcome. Is it the lesser evil when that money comes from the state?

5° Does modern technology help improve the educational process?

The temptation would be to describe the pros and cons of technology in education. With so few words at your disposal you could briefly in the introduction state the main obvious advantages or disadvantages then state that however you are going to defend the other side, which you are going to develop afterwards. Be careful, however, the subject is about “the education process”, meaning that you have to analyze how technology is used for different educational purposes but not specifically at school. Ex: educational platforms…

6° Has technology made us more intelligent?

This topic is inviting to give your opinion on whether or not technology harms our biological cognitive abilities from a very strict point of view, and more broadly speaking whether or not it has made us able to do more while understand less about what we are doing. It is not about challenging whether or not it has made our lives easier, but about whether or not it makes us smarter? Or maybe is it developing another form of intelligence, making us think and learn differently?

**B - Subjects that invite you to weigh the pros and cons of a matter:**

7°To what extent do new technologies affect social life?

This topic acknowledges the fact that new technologies do affect social life. It is not about whether or not it is a good thing that it does. But it is about analyzing the aspects that change because of new technologies and the aspects that are left untouched, if they exist. You are the one who decides where to draw the line.

8° To what extent should scientific research be subject to ethical constraints?

This topic invites you to draw the line, however strict you may want it to be, regarding the ethical limits that we should put to scientific research. You can decide that there should be none, or that ethics should be considered at every level, or restrain it to certain domains according to limits that you establish.

9° To what extent should we embrace human enhancement?

This topic invites you to draw a line, establish a limit at what is acceptable or unacceptable when it comes to transhumanism.

**C - Subjects that give a statement and invite you to argue it / describe or explain a phenomenon:**

10° “Genetic engineering has never been about saving the world, it’s about controlling the world.” Discuss.

The topic invites you to analyze the motivations behind the scientific research in genetics. It is about judging whether or not is is sheer altruism or interest to play with the rules of and master nature that lead it. You must draw the line. It can be a question of time line, a question of context, a question of domain… You decide.

11° “Scientific progress is measured in units of courage, not intelligence.” Discuss.

The topic hints at the fact that innovation and scientific research always come with hurdles, which you would have to identify. For science to progress you need to overcome those hurdles. Those who make science progress are not always the smartest ones, but those who can manage to overcome all the obstacles to progress (courage to challenge authorities, go against established ideas, take risks in tests, make sacrificies…).

12° How are new technologies changing the world?

You must first make the difference between technology in general and new technologies, which are the technology that constantly replace those which came before for an established process (constant redefinition). Today it would apply to information and communication technologies that are said to revolutionizing the world, in ways that you have to describe.

13° How have social networks changed politics?

The topic establishes for a fact that social networks have changed politics. The question is, in what ways? Have they changed the way we campaign? The way we influence politicians? The way we share political news? The way we debate, discuss, seek political information? The way we donate money? The way we engage in political organizations? The way politicians are accountable and accessible to voters?...

14° What do social networks bring to society?

With the use of the word “bring”, the topic invites to consider the positive gains of social networks, defined as all the dedicated websites or other applications which enable users to communicate with each other by posting information, comments, messages, images, etc. You can organize your thought by structuring your argumentation around different domains (work, culture, the economy, politics…) in which you consider that they have changed things for the better but you structure around the gain, and not the domain so as not to be repetitive in your argumentation.

15° What technology awareness needs to be given to children nowadays?

The topic is not about why technology awareness is essential to be given to children today. This should be dealt with rapidly in the introduction, taking for granted that it is increasingly difficult nowadays to stop kids from trying their hands on all the high-tech devices that have become a part of our lives. It doesn’t have to be negative however. Technology proves to be highly beneficial for the growth and exposure of the expansion of a child if properly used. The question here is thus what should be done to carefully monitor that exposure, especially with kids here that at an early stage must be protected. The topic hints at the fact that, even if acceptance of technology can be seen either as an opportunity or as a threat, if dealt with early on in life, when young people learn how it works, they can then use it better. The question is then what needs to be taught and how?

16° How has technology changed the rules of war?

The topic acknowledges for a fact that technology (and not new technology) has changed the rules of war, what is asked of you is to describe in what ways. You can make difference between different types of technology (information tech, weaponry and ammunition…) have changed different aspects of warfare (war tactics, fields and scales in which war is waged (ex: space, cyber wars…)…).

17° What are the issues surrounding facial recognition technology?

The topic states for a fact that facial recognition technologies poses problems and invite you to analyze them. You can organize your argumentation around different domains (surveillance society, technological mistakes, bias and misinformation, data breaches…)