**Outline Discussion – Handout**

**“The quality of written language is being destroyed by social media.” What is your view?**

Thinking Perspectives

**1) Question Type**– “Do you agree” (DYA)

**2) Structure of Discussion**

a) Introduction

* Observation: explanation or meaning of the subject
* Perspective setting: Given view and contrasting view
* Stand: State whether you agree or disagree with the given view in the question
  + This essay will argue that the quality of written language has not been destroyed by social media

b) Main Body

* Given View 1 – Agree to the proposition
* Given View 2 – Agree to the proposition
* Opposing View 1 – Disagree with the proposition
* Opposing View 2 – Disagree with the proposition
* Analysis – Identify a key factor to determine which view is more correct

c) Conclusion

* Restate your stand
* Provide a reflective opinion or suggestion

**3) Question Requirements**

* Subject matter:
  + Quality of written language and social media
  + Educational role/ Cultural function/ Moral compass of the society/ Social and political platform
* Key terms:
  + ‘still have a role’ – assess its relevance
  + ‘is being destroyed’ – the quality of written language is being undermined or lowered by the impact of social media which can be seen from how social media influences the way we write
* Context: Modern and digital age
* Category of Discussion: individual, economic and social context
* Nature of Discussion: Observe how social media is influencing the way we communicate and write

**4) Content of Argument**

* Must have a good understanding of the roles the newspaper can play in the interests of the society
  + Informative, educational, political, cultural function, entertainment
  + Determine the type of paragraphs and focus of discussion
* Must know how to use the features of the newspaper to assess whether they can or cannot play the roles in the society
* In doing so, we need to know how to depict why these features of the newspaper can help them to play or why the features will be the source of limitations in playing the roles.
* Printed materials/portable and convenient/updated source of information/ guided content of the materials
* Must know how to compare the features of the social media to the features of newspaper and assess whether the newspaper is still significant in playing this role when compared to the mass media.

**“The quality of written language is being destroyed by social media.” What is your view?**

**Introduction**

Prior to the Web, the written language is mostly formalised by the dictionary and encyclopaedia and is commonly expressed in logography, syllabaries or alphabets. Serving as a representation of spoken or gestural language by means of a writing system, the written language is seen as linguistically distinctive from the spoken word. However, with the advent of Web 2.0, social media has drastically transformed written language by introducing new slangs especially emojis and emoticons into popular communication platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter. This has led to the birth of ‘social speak’ in written communication, in which a typical writer mixes formal language with colloquial parlance. Linguists have remarked that such a mixture could distort the quality of written language because the meaning and intonation become lost in the process. In contrast, savvy users retort that social media has only benefited written language by making it simplified and efficient, thereby increasing the pace of communication while retaining the key idea. Considering these views, this essay will examine the relationship between social media and written language and attempt to argue that the quality of written language has not been destroyed by social media.

**Main Body**

Supporting View #1

The quality of written language is being destroyed by social media because the regressive nature of social media oversimplifies the intricate structures and complexities of the written language.

* Abbreviations / slangs
* Emoji & emoticon

Supporting View #2

Proponents also lament social media’s destruction of the quality of written language as the concept of social speak entrenches itself into formalised writing, degrading formal language which remains important in formal settings such as business letter, proposal report, academic writing etc.

Opposing View #1

On the other hand, it can be argued that social media has not ruined the quality of written language, but rather enhanced it by transforming the efficiency and succinctness of communication.

* Archaic words - Shakespearean language → mainstream words like shopaholic, voicemail, foodie

Opposing View #2

Furthermore, social media has created a convenient platform for linguists and the masses alike, to practice and express their thoughts, which in turn improves the quality of written language exponentially as they become prolific writer.

Analysis – identify a key factor to determine which view is more correct

Arguably, a double-edged sword like social media inevitably reaps both benefits and costs to the quality of the written language. Whether its impact is destructive or beneficial would depend on the expected standard we conceive for the quality of written language and the influence social media have on this yardstick. If the social media promotes an interaction of high language standard, it is not fair for us to agree to this proposition but if the social media has lowered its standard of communication and expression, we cannot rebut this accusation.

**Conclusion**

In summary, it can be argued that the quality of written language has been both destroyed and improved by social media. While it is true that social media has degraded written language, especially in formal writings, we cannot deny the benefits that have made written communication succinct and efficient - characteristics of today’s fast-paced world. Therefore, in the grander scheme of things, we can see that social media is a mere tool that assists the evolution of written language, insofar as higher quality of written language continues to be synonymous to effective and efficient communication.