

'It is increasingly difficult to tell right from wrong today.' How far do you agree?

In this essay, we need to consider the factors on whether individuals are equipped with the capacity to make judgement between the right and the wrong issues before assessing the underlying developments that may improve or worsen said capacity.

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1) Introduction

Steps for Introduction: 1. Set the observation to give an overview of the subject - Provide an explanation of the subjects - Link the subjects with a yardstick on the issue of discussion 2. Set the perspectives or aspects of the discussion 3. Set your stand of argument for the essay

Student Answer

As today's world becomes increasingly polarised, there has been an increasing existence of gray areas between the two opposing parties. This translates to how there is a rising challenge to discern between what is believed to be right or wrong. In order to understand the complexity of this situation, this essay will first consider the factors that deem whether individuals are able to make a judgement between one or the other, namely in the aspects of economics, social media and morals.

Tutor Answer

With the contemporary explosion in information and information technology, the average Joe has never had more ideas to consider, more things to know, more "facts" at his fingertips. Some contend that this glut of information has made it more difficult to distinguish fact from fiction, to tell right from wrong. Perhaps, but the extent to which that is true depends on the strength of various assumptions. While the growth in information proliferation and the constancy of vested interests in content and dissemination would suggest that it is indeed harder to distinguish right from wrong today, the extent to which a reasonable man finds it challenging to do so, inasmuch as "right" and "wrong" can even be objectively delineated, depends on the strength of his discernment and the soundness of his intellectual habits of mind.

2) Proposition Point 1

Explain why it is increasingly difficult to tell right from wrong. - Discuss the problem of misinformation in today's digital world and how the increase of such overwhelms digital readers and make it increasingly difficult to tell right from wrong. Steps to write the paragraph: 1. Set the topic sentence - provide a conceptualised idea based on a category of

discussion 2. Provide the elaboration - show how this idea can answer the question 3. Support with evidence - substantiate your point with an example 4. Conclude the paragraph - include a linking sentence to reiterate your view

Student Answer

Due to the increasingly fast pace of society, there has been an advancement in the economy, resulting in a clash between business and morals. By definition, the aim of firms is to maximise profits and generate revenue. In order to do this, firms will use every means to distort information in order to achieve their aims. As such, individuals are unable to gain access to correct information may end up a greater amount of inaccurate information, making it more challenging to discern right from wrong in today's era.

Tutor Answer

It is increasingly difficult to tell right from wrong today as the amount of deliberate misinformation has substantially increased, making it more difficult to discern the accuracy of information.

- Alleged Russian interference in the 2016 US Presidential Election - spread of fake news to lower the credibility of presidential candidate Hillary Clinton

3) Extent of Agreement 1

- Provide an argument why 'Proposition Point 1' is wrong. - Students have to identify the point in the proposition point and prove it wrong. *Do not attempt to give another point - you are proving the supporting view if you do not argue against the proposition point.

Student Answer

Due to the rise in education, people become more aware and individuals have become better at discerning right and wrong. With the rise of education, there has been an improvement in inference skills and people are able to research on the factuality of the information presented to them. This can be done through looking at the source of the article, its credentials or by fact-checking through other institutions. According to Common Sense Media's report, there have been a rise in millennials who are trying to be careful readers. They will pay attention to the link the article brings them to, and majority of them will also try to figure if a certain article is true or not if they are skeptical of its contents by looking at said evidences and more. As such, individuals are now more equipped with skills to discern real and fake news.

Tutor Answer

However, many countries are embarking on the eradication of fake news and falsehood through legislation and the inculcation of greater awareness about fake news through public education.

A higher degree of public awareness on this matter will be a good start to help the individuals from being misled and raise capacity to make a better judgement.

Legalisation against the act of falsehood and manipulation will strongly deter

- The bill on the Protection from Online Falsehood and Manipulation Bills

4) Proposition Point 2

Explain why it is increasingly difficult to tell right from wrong. - Discuss the problem of diverse opinions, especially those weighing on populist views and how these opinions affect make it difficult to differentiate between credible and non-credible opinions. Steps to write the paragraph: 1. Set the topic sentence - provide a conceptualised idea based on a category of discussion 2. Provide the elaboration - show how this idea can answer the question 3. Support with evidence - substantiate your point with an example 4. Conclude the paragraph - include a linking sentence to reiterate your view

Student Answer

Next, due to the differing and diverse conventional yardstick, there has been a rise in differing opinions between various groups of people. The various mindsets stem from an increase in over-education, making people become more opinionated. As such, many may publish biased views and this can result in the audience receiving information from biased sources, leading to them believing in matters seen from only a certain point of view, which may be false. In fact, based on Google's algorithm, advertisements are targeted based on their's users searches, causing individuals to become desensitised to the information, further exacerbating the inability to make judgements between right and wrong.

Tutor Answer

It is increasingly difficult to tell right from wrong today as opinions of uneven credibility and weight have proliferated with ease and speed unique to our modern world, making it difficult to identify the credible and weighty opinions.

- The democratisation of media - anyone can become a content creator, regardless of the rigour or relevance of his or her views
 - Roy Ngerng's defamatory post on the Central Provident Fund (CPF) and the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation (GIC)
 - Amos Yee's critical remarks on the first PM of Singapore, LKY
 - Steve Bannon & Breitbart News - far-right American news
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5) Extent of Agreement 2

- Provide an argument why 'Proposition Point 2' is wrong. - Students have to identify the point in the proposition point and prove it wrong. *Do not attempt to give another point - you are proving the supporting view if you do not argue against the proposition point.

Student Answer

However, this idea has slowly been disproven due to the increasing communication between various individuals. There have been various opportunities for different groups of people to sit down and air out their different opinions, allowing them to hear the other's point of view before coming to their own conclusion. For instance, in Singapore, the government has carried out talks with the public to allow both the public and government to better understand one another and come into a consensus. As such, this allows individuals to be able to make better judgements between right and wrong issues.

Tutor Answer

However, this is only true to the extent that the explosion in opinions has been misleading instead of

enriching. It is arguable that the growing diversity of views has also enabled viewers to cross-check information and verify the authenticity.

- fact-checking resources - Google News Initiative Verification Tools Course can be used to assess the accuracy of images, reports and videos that are found on social media sites

6) Proposition Point 3

Explain it is increasingly difficult to tell right from wrong. - Discuss the problem of advertisement and how the increase of digital advertisement crowds out objective information, making it difficult to distinguish between sponsored content and objective reporting. Steps to write the paragraph: 1. Set the topic sentence - provide a conceptualised idea based on a category of discussion 2. Provide the elaboration - show how this idea can answer the question 3. Support with evidence - substantiate your point with an example 4. Conclude the paragraph - include a linking sentence to reiterate your view

Student Answer

The proliferation of fake news has resulted in false information which appears to be true, which makes it difficult for individuals to discern right from wrong. Due to the increase in education, people are becoming more adept in writing articles. In today's society, where the digital space is not controlled by any regulations, articles can be written by any anonymous user and posted online. Receivers of this information may hence be unable to tell which article is true or false due to the ability of false news to guise itself as factual information. As such, there is increased difficulty in discerning right or wrong information.

Tutor Answer

From an economic point of view, the high degree of commercialisation in the form of an explosive increase in scale and ingenuity of advertising makes it difficult to distinguish objective analysis from paid shilling. From advertorials to media in cooperation with states, to paid studies and articles, it is difficult to distinguish objectively derived information and findings from the information presented and often "created" to fulfil a commercial agenda.

Example: the proliferation of native advertising where the content of advertisement is built into an article to convince consumers.

7) Extent of Agreement 3

- Provide an argument why 'Proposition Point 3' is wrong. - Students have to identify the point in the proposition point and prove it wrong. *Do not attempt to give another point - you are proving the supporting view if you do not argue against the proposition point.

Student Answer

Due to the advent of technology in today's world, different channels can prove against these false information. Numerous tools have popped up, designed to help people spot whether the news come from credible sources or not. Proof.com, is a website specifically designed to help individuals decide the reliability of a certain article by looking at the sources and its credentials etc., aiding individuals in

discerning right from wrong.

Tutor Answer

However, this is only true to the extent that not all advertising is “wrong” or misleading, with some in fact allowing us to distinguish the superior features of products, as well as products from competitors, both of which are “right” or at least relatively objective information.

8) Conclusion

1. Reiterate your stand on whether you agree or disagree with the question. 2. Provide an analysis on which is the key determinant on the extent of agreement to derive the view on how far it is agreeable. 3. Provide an opinion on the issue.

Student Answer

In conclusion, after discussing the different factors, I agree that it is increasingly difficult to tell right from wrong in this age. Particularly, I believe that the greatest player is our differing opinions in this society. Even if it may be wrong, people constantly hold on to the belief that their views are right. Moreover, they are further supported by confirmation bias, making it even more difficult for them to tell right from wrong.

Tutor Answer

In summary, the advancement and democratisation of social media have indeed made it difficult for people to distinguish right from wrong. Ultimately, the extent to which the reasonable man can distinguish right from wrong in this info-saturated world depends on his individual ability to exercise discernment and judgment, and the strength and utility of his habits of mind. In line with this concern, it is important for our society to equip individuals with the capacity to distinguish what is right or wrong.
