**The following are EXAMPLE debate speeches on the topic: “That technology has a negative effect on society.”**

**Example First Affirmative Speech**

**Introduction – hook, rhetorical question, opening statement**

Technology surrounds us all at almost every minute of the day in modern life – but is this a good thing? The motion for our debate today is that “technology has a negative effect on society”.

**Define terms**

We understand ‘technology’ to mean modern devices such as TV, phones, tablets, and the internet. We believe ‘a negative effect on society’ means increased mental health problems, decreased social skills such as communication and negotiation, and increased family and relationship problems such as divorce, domestic violence, and neglect of children.

**Team Line – affirmative always AGREE with the motion**

We the affirmative team believe that technology is addictive, dangerous, and damaging to mental health. Our team agrees with the motion that technology has a negative effect on society.

**Team Split – outline what each person on your team will cover**

In our address today I will be arguing two points: firstly, that technology has a negative effect on children and teenagers, and secondly, that social media is harmful to society. Our second speaker will consider the negative effect of technology on physical health and explore the deterioration of social relationships caused by TV, gaming, and streaming technologies.

**First two points (PEEL format)**

**(P)** Children are spending too much time using technology. **(E)** A recent survey revealed that kids aged 6-7 watch on average 150 minutes of TV each day – well beyond the amount recommended by national guidelines. And it only increases as they age, with 12 to 13-year-olds on average watching a staggering 250 minutes per day. **(E)** These statistics would not be so shocking if it were not for the proven, long-lasting negative impacts of screen time on children: obesity, sleep disturbances, impaired social skills, and reduced academic performance among. **(L)** We cannot ignore this global catastrophe any longer. Technology is harming our children, our future, and our world.

**(P)** Social media is harmful to society for various reasons, one of which is its negative impact on mental health. **(E)** Numerous studies have shown a clear connection between excessive social media usage and deteriorating mental health. Research conducted by the Royal Society for Public Health in the UK found that platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are associated with increased levels of anxiety, depression, loneliness, and low self-esteem among users. **(E)** The constant comparison to others, curated images of perfect lives, and cyberbullying on these platforms leads to unhealthy social comparisons. People begin to judge their own worth based on these idealized images, which can be detrimental to their self-esteem and mental well-being. **(L)** Recognizing these harms should prompt us to take a critical look at our social media habits and consider the potential consequences of our online interactions, with the ultimate goal of promoting a healthier and more positive digital environment for all.

**Example First Negative Speech**

**Define Terms (optional – can just accept their definition)**

Before we present our arguments, the negative team will contend the definition presented by the affirmative team. Instead of arguing whether technology can have a negative effect (as logically, anything can when misused), we feel the teams should consider whether technology has a greater negative impact on society than a positive one.

**Rebuttal of first affirmative speaker’s 2 points**

**1)** The proposition argued that children are spending too much time with technology. Screen time may have increased, but this does not prove that technology is harmful. In fact, a recent study found students who used a literacy and numeracy app at age 4-5 had average test results of 80% and had learned invaluable skills in recognising letters, sounds and numbers. **2)** The first affirmative speaker also claimed that social media is harmful to society. While we agree that there may be a link between social media and mental health, we argue that the impact of social media is not solely determined by the platform itself but by how it's used. Moderation and mindful usage are key. People who use social media in a balanced and constructive way can enjoy the benefits of staying connected with friends and family and even finding motivation and inspiration.

**Team Line – opposition always DISAGREE with the motion**

We the opposition do not support the motion that technology has a negative effect on society. While we concede that technology has potential to be abused or overused, we feel that any negatives are outweighed by the many positive benefits that technology brings to our society.

**Team Split – what each member of your team will cover**

I will consider two points: first, that social media has clear positive benefits, and secondly, that culture, not technology, is in fact to blame for societal problems. Our second speaker will argue that advances in medical technology have made a positive impact on society, and that innovations in environmental technology are certainly positive rather than negative.

**First two points (PEEL format)**

**(P)** Social media undeniably offers numerous positive benefits to society and can be a powerful tool for communication and information sharing. **(E)** Social media fosters global connectivity, breaking down geographical barriers and enabling people from diverse backgrounds to connect. During natural disasters and emergencies, social media can be a lifeline for disseminating crucial information, connecting individuals with aid organizations, and coordinating relief efforts. **(E)** The evidence illustrates how social media has become an essential means of real-time communication and information, especially during crises. **(L)** The positive benefits of social media ultimately contribute to a more informed, connected, and compassionate global society.

The opposition strongly feels that blaming technology is not helpful, since **(P)** culture, not technology, is responsible for many of the societal problems we face today. **(E)** Historical analysis of different cultures shows that the same technological advancements can lead to different outcomes depending on cultural values. Japan's emphasis on collectivism and respect for tradition has led to a society with low crime rates and strong social cohesion, while the USA, with a more individual-centred consumerist culture, has seen issues such as gun violence and social division persist despite technological progress. **(E)** This evidence demonstrates that it is the values, norms, and behaviours within a society that determine how technology is used and its impact on various societal issues. **(L)** Technology itself is neutral; it is the cultural context that shapes its influence.

**Example Second Affirmative Speech**

**Rebuttal of first negative speaker’s 2 points**

**1)** The speaker for the negative claimed that social media can have some benefits when not overused. But social media is designed to be overused. The platforms are deliberately calculated to encourage prolonged use by employing tactics such as infinite scrolling, push notifications, auto-play videos, and gamification. This can lead to addiction, sleep disturbances, wasted time, and a lack of face-to-face social interaction. The few feeble positive impacts that social media may claim are outweighed by its numerous, unmistakeable, and clearly proven negative effects. Social media is a breeding ground for the spread of misinformation and fake news. The viral nature of social media can lead to the rapid sharing of false or misleading information. Social media is directly to blame for the worrying increase in isolation, anxiety, and depression among young people.

**2)** The first negative speaker also argued that culture, not technology, is to blame for societal problems. While it's true that culture plays a role, saying that it is solely to blame oversimplifies the issue. Technology is not a neutral force. It can influence culture as much as culture influences it. It often strengthens and worsens existing cultural norms, and it can be used by those who want to manipulate it for negative purposes such as political manipulation or stirring up racial hatred. Societal problems, like income inequality, can be made worse by the unequal distribution and control of technology. The interaction between culture and technology is complex, but while both contribute to the challenges that societies face, technology is clearly the main cause.

**Two new points (PEEL format)**

In addition to the points we have already raised, the affirmative team strongly believes that **(P)** technology negatively impacts the lives of adults in terms of its effects on physical health. **(E)** A growing body of research has linked technology usage to various physical health problems among adults. Prolonged hours spent in front of screens increases the risk of obesity and related health issues. A study published in JAMA Internal Medicine revealed that more screen time is associated with higher mortality rates, indicating a clear connection between excessive technology use and adverse health outcomes. **(E)** The evidence underscores the detrimental impact of technology. Technology-related physical health problems are worsened by smartphones and tablets, which often encourage prolonged sitting and poor posture. Excessive screen time can disrupt sleep patterns, leading to sleep deprivation, a known risk factor for various chronic conditions. **(L)** The negative consequences of technology on the physical health of adults are undeniable, but another concern is the effect of technology on social relationships.

**(P)** TV, gaming, and streaming technologies have contributed to the deterioration of social relationships. **(E)** A survey conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that children and adolescents spend an average of over seven hours daily engaged with screens, which significantly reduces the time they have for real-world social interactions. Furthermore, studies have shown that the excessive use of these technologies is associated with loneliness, a lack of meaningful relationships, and even decreased empathy. **(E)** These activities often encourage isolation and passive consumption, and can lead to addiction, taking away valuable time from face-to-face social interactions. **(L)** The evidence is clear that TV, gaming, and streaming technologies have played a role in the deterioration of social relationships.

**Example Second Negative Speech**

**Rebuttal of second affirmative speaker’s 2 points**

**1)** The proposition have claimed that technology has a negative impact on physical health. But in fact, technology can be used can support and enhance physical well-being. Wearable fitness trackers and health apps help adults monitor their physical activity, heart rate, sleep patterns, and can motivate individuals to make healthier lifestyle choices. Telemedicine and health-related mobile apps have made it more convenient for adults to access medical care and health information. This can lead to earlier diagnosis and treatment of health issues, ultimately improving physical health outcomes. Online resources and mobile applications offer guidance on healthy eating, exercise routines, and stress management, assisting adults in making informed choices to improve their physical health. As we have repeatedly seen, the key lies in how individuals choose to use these tools, as responsible and informed usage can lead to improved health outcomes.

**2)** The second claim made by the speaker for the affirmative team was that excessive use of TV, gaming, and streaming technologies can have negative consequences for social relationships, but this is simply not true. When used correctly these technologies enhance and even maintain social connections. Online gaming involves multiplayer modes that enable players to interact with friends and make new connections, leading to real-world friendships. Streaming technologies have given rise to the concept of "watch parties," where people can watch movies or TV shows together while chatting in real-time with friends and family even if they are physically apart. Television and streaming platforms also serve as common conversation topics. The shared experience of watching a popular TV show or discussing the latest series can strengthen bonds among friends and family.

**Two new points (PEEL format)**

The opposition would now like to draw our audience’s attention to some of the key positive effects of technology on our society. **(P)** Advances in medical technology have undeniably made a positive impact. **(E)** Imaging technologies like MRI and CT scans have revolutionized diagnosis, enabling doctors to identify diseases and conditions more quickly and accurately. Surgical procedures have been improved by technology such as laser and robotic surgeries, which reduce patient recovery times, minimize scarring, and decrease the risk of complications. **(E)** The evidence highlights how medical technology has improved patient care, diagnosis, and treatment, allowing for early detection of conditions, more effective interventions, and better patient outcomes. These advancements have led to higher quality healthcare and improved quality of life for individuals. **(L)** As we continue to harness the potential of technology, we can expect even more positive changes that will shape our future for the better.

Secondly, our team feels that **(P)** environmental technology has made a clear and positive impact on society and may in fact have the power to save human society from destruction. **(E)** The rapid development of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power have reduced our reliance on fossil fuels, resulting in lower greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change. Innovations in waste management and recycling technologies have reduced landfill usage and promoted sustainable resource management. **(E)** Transitioning to renewable energy sources decreases air pollution, mitigates the impacts of climate change, and improves overall air quality, which has direct health benefits for society.These technologies not only reduce the negative environmental footprint but also enhance the quality of life for people. **(L)** Through the adoption of sustainable energy solutions and responsible waste management, we can preserve the environment for future generations while simultaneously improving our quality of life and overall well-being.

**Example Third Affirmative Speech**

**Rebuttal of second negative speaker’s 2 points**

**1)** The second speaker for the negative team claims that medical technology has had a positive impact on society but failed to mention the drawbacks and limitations of these advancements. The high cost of some medical technologies and treatments can worsen existing healthcare inequality. The focus on advanced technologies may divert resources and attention from basic healthcare needs, especially in underserved areas. Rapid increase in medical technology has raised concerns about data privacy and security, as electronic health records and connected medical devices may be vulnerable to cyberattacks, putting patients' sensitive information at risk. And the use of technology can depersonalize the patient-doctor relationship, with healthcare providers spending more time interacting with screens than with patients, resulting in a loss of empathy in healthcare.

**2)** The opposition have also attempted to show that environmental technology has had a positive impact on society, but again this is not necessarily the case. The transition away from traditional energy sources can lead to job losses in industries related to fossil fuels, causing economic hardships for those dependent on these jobs. Manufacturing and disposal of environmental technologies, such as solar panels and batteries, involves resource extraction, energy-intensive manufacturing, and waste generation. The accessibility and affordability of environmental technology can vary widely, and marginalized communities may not have the same access to clean energy or waste management technologies, exacerbating existing social and environmental inequalities.

**Summary & Conclusion (no new points). Use LOTS of pathos & persuasive techniques!**

I think the audience would agree with me that our team’s arguments have certainly been the most compelling today. We have seen that increased screentime is a huge concern for children and young people. Despite the opposition’s false claims, the overwhelming body of evidence suggests that children do not learn well from screens. We have seen that social media has had an overall negative impact on society, and although the opposition tried to show it can theoretically be used for positive reasons, its very design means that even those with good intentions end up overusing it.

Our second speaker drew our attention to the many negative physical effects of technology overuse, showing that it is not just harming our brains but harming our bodies too. We also heard how TV, gaming and streaming services have a negative impact on social relationships, with proven causational links to isolation, addiction and loneliness. Finally, we saw that the opposition’s claims about medical and environmental technologies overturned by the negative side effects.

Technology has left an indelible mark on our society, and not for the better. Family dinners have been replaced by screens and the laughter of children has been substituted with the eerie glow of smartphones. The tears shed in virtual isolation, the broken connections with our loved ones, and the overwhelming loneliness that often accompanies this digital age - these are the scars etched into the very fabric of our society. We see our children's eyes glazed over with the constant allure of virtual worlds and our elders left behind in an ever-accelerating race for technological advancement. It's time to question: Has technology brought us closer together or driven us further apart? The answer is crystal clear. In our pursuit of progress, we've forsaken the precious bonds that make us human. We must reevaluate the path we're on, for the sake of our humanity and the future of our society. Thank you.

**Example Third Negative Speech**

**Rebuttal of ANY of the affirmative team’s points OR rebuttals**

The affirmative team has continued to claim that screen time is harmful to children, but as we have shown, screens can offer valuable opportunities for learning, creativity, and connection. We cannot remove progress from our children's hands simply because it’s different to what our parents had. In today's digital age, screens are not just mindless distractions; they can be engaging tools for educational content. Interactive apps and educational games can make learning fun and accessible, helping children develop important skills and knowledge. Screens enable kids to connect with loved ones, especially when geographical distances separate them. The virtual world can foster a sense of community, even providing opportunities for children to meet and collaborate with peers worldwide. As with any tool, it's the responsible and balanced use of screens that matters.

The proposition has also claimed that there are some potential drawbacks and negative side effects from medial and environmental technology, but that is precisely why we need to keep innovating – as the technology is refined and advanced, we can find solutions to these problems and create a more sustainable, fair and peaceful future. Again, it is not the technology itself that is to blame for the way individual users choose to abuse it. Should we stop driving cars and return to horses and carts because people can be killed in road accidents? No! Instead, we should continue to develop technology for improved safety, so that the benefits can continue while the risks are minimised.

**Summary & Conclusion (no new points). Use LOTS of pathos & persuasive techniques!**

After hearing the arguments today, my esteemed fellow students can be left in no doubt that technology’s overall impact to our society has been beneficial. As our first speaker stated, social media has benefited society by providing opportunities for social interaction even when physical distance separates us. Who could possibly say we don’t need more love and connection in our world? We also saw that culture, not technology, is the key factor that is responsible for negative impact on society.

Our second speaker demonstrated the positive benefits of medical technology, showing that innovations in surgery and imaging are consistently improving outcomes, increasing care, and saving countless thousands of lives. They also clearly pointed out that environmental technology holds the key to the future of our world, allowing us to find ways to preserve our beautiful natural environment. Don’t you want future generations to be able to enjoy clean water and fresh air without worrying about the toxic pollution?

Technology is the thread that has woven us into a more interconnected and promising world. Think of the joy on a child's face as they video call with a grandparent who lives miles away, the comfort provided by medical breakthroughs, and the collective empathy and support we witness when disaster strikes and social media ignites with acts of kindness. Technology has not only bridged distances but also connected hearts. It has empowered voices that were once silenced, providing a platform for change and progress. In a world where despair can seem overwhelming, technology has, without a doubt, been a source of light and connection. I ask you, friends, where would be we today without technology? Why would we move backward in development, backward in knowledge, and backward in progress? Technology has ultimately enhanced our society and made our world a more compassionate and promising place to live. Thank you.