READING 1

The online article below is about the growing popularity of social networking websites. The article gives an example of a typical user named Sarah.

Every morning Sarah turns on her computer. First, she checks her email. Then, she visits a social networking website to find out what her friends are doing. On this website, she reads news from her friends. For example, she may look at comments her friends made about movies, music, books, and other friends. On her profile page, Sarah writes a short message about what she is doing. Like many young people, Sarah enjoys meeting and communicating with others on social networks. These websites let people see what their friends are doing and thinking.

Sarah is part of an important **trend** in communication. Social networking sites become more and more popular every day, and they are popular all around the world. In Japan, the top site is Mixi. In Europe, it is Bebo. The most popular site in Latin America is Orkut. In the United States, the top site is Facebook. In fact, Facebook is one of the most popular social networking sites in the world. A Harvard University student started Facebook in 2004, and it **spread** to more than 400 million users in just a few years.

Why is the social networking trend spreading so rapidly? One reason that these websites are popular is because people are social. We like to communicate with other people. We make friends with people in school, at work, and online. Most people like to stay closely **connected to** their friends and family. We use cell phones, email, instant messaging, and websites to learn what our friends are doing. The Internet is a good way to socialize and communicate, and social networking sites allow people to do this in many ways.

Social networking sites are interactive and personal. People can share photographs of themselves and of others. They can tell people what they are doing at any moment and **keep in touch**. They can post a link to a site with their favorite song or band. They can join groups with others who share their interests. Many people post videos of themselves on sites like YouTube. Other users can comment on these photos and videos. This interaction makes these websites become more popular.

Another reason that social networking sites are popular is because the users write what is on the site. In the past, websites only had information for users to read. In this way, websites were like newspapers or television. All of the communication went in only one direction: from the website to the

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users. In the past, the average person didn't **contribute** to the websites. Today, the Internet is more interactive than it was in the past. Now anyone can have their own website, blog, or page on sites like Facebook. Readers are now also writers and can easily add material to the Web. People can **express** their own ideas, and they can put their own experiences online.

Social networking sites first became popular with college students. At one college, students said that they spent almost two hours every day just on Facebook. Teenagers also use these sites to stay connected with their friends. These days, even older people are using social networks. The Internet keeps changing, but one trend is **clear**: People enjoy using websites that let them connect with others. They like to express themselves and communicate online.

A. MAIN IDEAS : Read the statements. Write True or False.

__ 1. On social networking sites, people can see what their friends are doing and thinking.

__ 2. Social networking websites are popular only in the United States.

__ 3. Most people are not very social.

__ 4. Today, people can express their own ideas online.

__ 5. It is harder now for people to express themselves on the Internet.

__ 6. Social networking sites are popular with people of all ages.

B. What is the best title for this reading?

a. The popularity of social networks

b. How to join a social network

c. Problems with social networks.

d. The most popular social networks.

C. CRITICAL THINKING: Read the sentences. Then number them in the order that the information appears in the article.

___ a. Websites are more popular when people can share information about themselves.

___ b. Social networking sites become more and more popular every day.

___ c. Social networking sites first became popular with college students.

___ d. People like to stay closely connected to their friends and family.

___ e. The Internet keeps changing.

___ f. Social networks let people see what their friends are doing and thinking.

___ g. Today the Internet is more interactive than it was in the past.

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D. Match the following words with the correct definitions. There is <u>one extra</u> definition that you do not need.

1. trend	a) easy to see, hear or understand
2. spread	b) joined or linked to something /someone
3. connected to	c) to give or be a part of something with other people
4. keep in touch	d) to say or show how you think or feel
5. contribute	e) to get or discover information about something
6. express	f) to meet, call, or write someone often
7. clear	g) to affect a large area or group of people
	h) a change to something different

Reading Skill: Identifying the main idea of a paragraph

A paragraph is a group of sentences about one topic. The main idea of a paragraph is the most important point about the topic. You can often find the main idea in the first or second sentence of a paragraph. This is the topic sentence. The other sentences help explain or support the main idea. Identifying the main idea of a paragraph will help you to understand and remember what you read.

1. What is the main idea of paragraph 2?

_____

2. What is the main idea of paragraph 3?

_____

3. What is the main idea of paragraph 4?

_____

4. What is the main idea of paragraph 5?

_____

5. What's the main idea of paragraph 6?

_____

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