LIVING ONLINE: TEENS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

NAME: _____

Read the article below.

Teenagers today have grown up using the internet and they use social media much more than their parents and other adults. However, young people may not be using this technology in a way that's effective or healthy. In a recent study, the CNN news agency followed a group of 200 North American teenagers for a period of six months to see how they were using social media. The results were quite shocking, especially for parents who thought they knew what their children were doing online.

During the experiment, scientists recorded 150,000 posts and messages, which means approximately 125 messages a month for each person, although some teens wrote more messages than others. However, the most surprising fact was how often some teens were checking their social media profiles. Some people looked at them up to 100 times a day, even at school or when they were hanging out with other friends. But why were they checking their profile so often? When the scientists asked, they discovered that:

21% of teens wanted to know if people had written about them. They looked forward to positive posts, but they also worried about negative ones and how they should respond to rude comments.

36% wanted to know what other people were doing and they worried about not being part of an online group. This 'fear of missing out' (FOMO) can be quite stressful for many teens.

61% were checking their profiles for new 'likes', followers and comments on their posts. All of these things are extremely important in the world of social media.

In fact, a lot of what teens do on social media is related to self-image and popularity. Some people always want to look perfect, so they take hundreds of selfies and then post only the very best one. Other people upload photos of all the great places they visit, the fun things they do, and all of the amazing people they meet and know. This competition can be terrible, especially for people who aren't very cool or popular. It can also have a negative effect on schoolwork. The CNN study found that people who spent the most time on social media often had lower grades.

On the positive side, social media seems to create stronger connections between young people and their friends. Some people might write nasty posts, but many teens use social media in a good way, to support their friends and show how much they care. They send messages to each other, tell jokes and celebrate special occasions. Young people could never share information about their lives in this way in the past. The world might be changing, but fortunately young people are changing along with it.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Complete the sentences with ideas from the article.

1 Parents and other adults don't use _____ as much as _____.

2 The teenagers in the CNN study wrote about _____ and messages in a period of _____.

3 More than 60% of the teens wanted to know if they had new _____, _____ or _____.

4 Some people take lots of selfies because they want to _____.

5 Students get poor grades if they _____ on social media.

6 In the past, young people could never share _____ about their _____ in this way.

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