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ECPE

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WRITING



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HAMILTON HOUSE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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SECTION A Virtual friendships: genuine or fake?

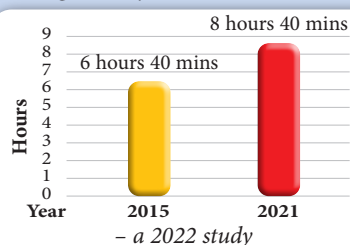
Get started

1 Talk with your partner. Which of these statements do you agree with? *Students' own answers*

- 1 Virtual friendships are usually fake.
- 2 I'd like to make more friends from other countries.
- 3 Virtual friendships can be very meaningful.
- 4 There are advantages to making some friends in a virtual space.
- 5 Online friendships can be risky, so caution is advised.
- 6 Real-life friends know you much better than virtual friends.

Writing Task A: Article

A Average Daily Screen Time of Teens



B

91 %
of EU students
are learning English
– a 2017 report

C

"Many teens find it easier to share personal secrets with online friends."
– Todd Sanders, psychologist

A group of teachers wants to create a new secure social media platform for students to safely develop online friendships with teenagers from other countries. Some parents are not supportive of this idea. Write an **article** for a local website expressing your opinion about the project. Include at least one piece of information given above to support your response.

Analyze the prompt

2 The writing prompt usually consists of four parts:

- 1 **Situation:** it provides background information about an issue that has come up
- 2 **Viewpoint:** it presents some people's opinion or reaction to the situation
- 3 **Task instruction:** it identifies what you need to write and your audience
- 4 **Source instruction:** it asks you to use a source to support your arguments

Read the prompt and write the number and the part next to each sentence.

- A 4 **Source instruction** Include at least one piece of information given above to support your response.
- B 1 **Situation** A group of teachers wants to create a new secure social media platform for students to safely develop online friendships with teenagers from other countries.
- C 2 **Viewpoint** Some parents are not supportive of this idea.
- D 3 **Task instruction** Write an article for a local website expressing your opinion about the project.

3 Read the prompt again and choose the correct answers.

- 1 The audience of this article is
 - A a person of authority.
 - ☒ B mostly parents.
 - C only teachers.
- 2 The article should
 - A use only formal language and long sentences.
 - ☒ B support ideas with personal examples.
 - C read like a friendly conversation.
- 3 What is the central topic that this article should debate?
 - A Online friendships are only for young people.
 - B Online friendships are changing society.
 - ☒ C Online friendships are worthwhile.

Study the model

- 4 Titles can make your article more interesting to the reader. Which of the following titles is the best for this article? Explain why the other options are not suitable.

- A The hidden dangers of online friendships *It considers only the negative side.*
 B Online friendships are the best! *It considers only the positive side.*
 C Can virtual friendships benefit teens?

- 5 Articles use expressions to help the reader follow the organization of arguments and points. Read and complete the model article with these expressions.

It is also important to acknowledge On the one hand In addition
 However, it should be pointed out that All in all First and foremost



Can virtual friendships benefit teens?

Paragraph 1

A group of educators is considering launching a secure social media platform that would connect students from all over the world, but some parents have voiced their disagreement. The prospect of a new platform piques my interest, so I would like to discuss the possible dangers and benefits of such an initiative.

Paragraph 2

(1) On the one hand, there are well-documented reasons why some parents may not want to encourage online friendships between teens. (2) First and foremost, young people already spend a significant amount of time online, often at the expense of their school studies. According to a 2022 study, teens spend over eight hours a day online, a substantial increase since 2017 when they spent two hours less on average. (3) In addition, it is next to impossible to verify that the people you befriend are who they say they are. Since you may never meet them in person, they could be deceiving you. I once kept a virtual friend for months before finding out that he had lied to me about his age and country of origin.

Paragraph 3

(4) However, it should be pointed out that online relationships offer unique advantages, particularly for the younger generation. Cultivating online friendships with people from other countries promotes connections between people of different cultures. This is possible since so many of today's teens have a good level of English. A 2017 report informs us that an overwhelming proportion of young people in Europe are learning English, which means that there generally would be no language barrier. (5) It is also important to acknowledge the ways in which virtual friendship bonds can run deeper than real-world ones. Psychologist Todd Sanders explains how when he says that due to its anonymity, virtual communication can allow freer conversations between teens. This is worth pointing out, especially because it disproves the idea that you can't have a meaningful connection with someone unless you meet them in the flesh.

Paragraph 4

(6) All in all, we must acknowledge that the rapid transformation of our world is pushing us towards increased online communication. This is why I welcome any secure platform that will enable young people all over the world to connect and form friendships.

- 6 Read about topic sentences.

Topic sentences

The first paragraph of the article is the introduction, the second and third paragraphs are body paragraphs, and the last paragraph is the conclusion. Paragraphs should start with a topic sentence. A topic sentence expresses the main point of a paragraph.

Now study paragraphs 2 and 3 and identify the topic sentence which introduces:

the negative points of the new platform On the one hand, there are well-documented reasons why some parents may not want to encourage online friendships between teens.

the positive points of the new platform However, it should be pointed out that online relationships offer unique advantages, particularly for the younger generation.

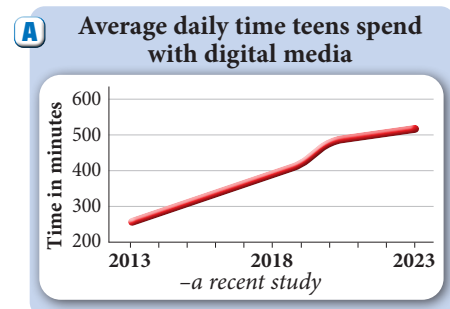
- 7 Underline the parts of the article where the sources are paraphrased. Then write them here:

Source A teens spend over eight hours a day online, a substantial increase since 2017 when they spent two hours less on average
 Source B an overwhelming proportion of young people in Europe are learning English
 Source C due to its anonymity, virtual communication can allow freer conversations between teens

Build up your writing skills

Sources

1 Look at the sources (A-C) below and rephrase the information using the words given. *Suggested answers*



B

57 %

teens aged 13–17
who befriended others online

—a 2023 survey

C

“The Internet is never a safe environment, especially not for teens.”

— Karen Niles, police officer

- A** 1 (according to / time / young people / online / almost double / from)
According to a recent study, the time young people spend online almost doubled from 2013 to 2023.
- 2 (a recent study / inform / in a ten-year period starting in / dramatic rise in / time / adolescents / online)
A recent study informs us that in a ten-year period starting in 2013, there has been a dramatic rise in the time adolescents spend online.
- B** 1 (recent survey / reveal / proportion of teens / make virtual friends / 57%)
A recent survey reveals that the proportion of young teens who had made virtual friends is 57 percent.
- 2 (over half / young people between the ages of / strike new friendships online / according to / 2023 survey)
Over half of young people between the ages of 13 and 17 had struck new friendships online, according to a 2023 survey.
- C** 1 (Karen Niles / police officer / warn about / dangerous place / Internet / in particular / young people)
Karen Niles, a police officer, warns (us) about what a dangerous place the Internet is, in particular for young people.
- 2 (Internet / generally unsafe / teenagers / more at risk / online / than adults / state police officer / Karen Niles)
The Internet is generally unsafe, but teenagers are more at risk online than adults are, states police officer Karen Niles.

Introductions

2 Read the the first part of this introduction and choose the correct answers.

The current school policy that forbids students from using cell phones might be changed to allow it. This is a decision that has both negative and positive implications to consider.

- 1 The purpose of the first sentence of the introduction is to
- A** rephrase the topic.
B make the first point.
- 2 The purpose of the second sentence of the introduction is to
- A** summarize the main point.
B refer to opposing views.

3 Read the prompt and complete the model introduction with these words.

It has been suggested that seminars should be offered in high schools to teach students about online bullying. Some students agree with this, but others think it is not necessary. Write an **article** for the school newspaper about the effectiveness of seminars on bullying and your opinion about it.

adolescents behavior disagree discussions effective initiative

Since negative online (1) behavior affects so many (2) adolescents, many high schools are considering holding formal (3) discussions about the topic. Although this may seem like a positive (4) initiative, there are students who (5) disagree, arguing that they would not be very (6) effective.



Prepare to write

- 4 You will write an article for **Writing Task A** on page 18. In your article, you will argue against the new platform. You should begin with the arguments in favor of it and then present arguments against it. Look at the **LANGUAGE BANK** and the writing plan below.

Title Main idea of article	An online teen friendship platform: Exploring the risks and benefits
Introduction Rephrase the topic and refer to opposing views	Some educators are thinking about launching a new secure social media platform that would connect students from around the world, but their idea has received negative reactions from some parents. The prospect of a new platform piques my interest, so I would like to discuss the likely risks and benefits of this initiative.
Body paragraph 1 Arguments in favor of the platform and reasons why	On the one hand, it goes without saying that many young people will be excited at the thought of making new friends online. First and foremost, communication won't be a problem since according to a 2017 report, 91% of EU students are studying English. This being the case, the proposed platform will allow young people to connect in a common language and learn about each other's culture. In addition, online friendships allow for greater intimacy. Since virtual friends may be thousands of miles away, they do not rush to express personal opinions, making it easier to share private matters with them openly. This is the view promoted by Todd Sanders, a psychologist. Personally, I cultivate an online friendship with someone in Peru, despite the fact that we may never meet in person.
Body paragraph 2 • Arguments against the platform and reasons why • Express your opinion clearly	However, there is no denying that young people already spend a significant amount of time online, sometimes at the expense of real-life friendships. In fact, a 2022 report reveals that today's teens are spending more than eight hours a day online. Having access to another online platform would mean that they could spend even more time glued to a screen. It is also worth mentioning that anonymity online means that you never really know who you are communicating with. There is a multitude of dangers hiding in the virtual world. This is an important point to acknowledge, because no matter how informed young people think they are, in the end, they can't really know the people they befriend.
Conclusion A brief summary and an interesting final statement	All in all, I strongly believe that a new social media platform would only serve to encourage adolescents to spend more time online and neglect real-life friends. We cannot go against the rapid transformation of the world, but we should insist on encouraging meaningful connections between people and knowing our friends in the flesh.

LANGUAGE BANK

Topic sentence expressions

On the one hand, there are some reasons why ...

First and foremost, ...

In addition, ...

However, it should be pointed out that ... / there is no denying that ...

It is also worth mentioning that ...

All in all, ...

Talking about relationships

people you befriend

encourage connections between people

cultivate online friendships

virtual friendship bonds

promote genuine connections

meet in person / in the flesh

strike a friendship with

- 5 Now write your article. After you have finished, go through the **Checklist** to make sure you have considered all the points.

Checklist

- My introduction rephrases the topic. ☐
- I've used at least one source to support a main idea. ☐
- I've given reasons and examples for my points. ☐
- I've used linking expressions to connect ideas and guide the reader along. ☐
- Each paragraph starts with a topic sentence that makes it clear what the paragraph is about. ☐
- I've presented both sides of the issue plus my own opinion. ☐
- I've checked my writing for grammar and spelling mistakes. ☐

Unit 1

Relationships

Article

SECTION B Making friends

Get started

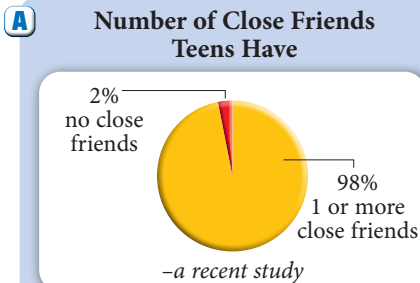
- 1 What are the most important qualities of a good friend? Number the list in the order of importance (1-6). Compare and discuss your answers with the class. *Students' own answers*

A good friend is one ...

- you can trust with your secrets. ☐
- you enjoy spending time with. ☐
- you see on a regular basis. ☐
- who sticks by you in times of trouble. ☐
- who is also popular with other people. ☐
- who gives you sound advice. ☐



Writing Task B: Article



B 22 %
of students reported
being bullied
—a 2024 survey

C "Adolescents who do not develop social skills risk facing difficulties in adulthood."
— Jessie Banes,
psychology professor

The Board of Education is considering a new course to teach high schoolers the social skills needed to form genuine friendships. Some students are in favor of this idea, but others think it will not be worthwhile. Write an **article** for a local website about whether you believe such a course would be useful. Include at least one piece of information given above to support your response.

Analyze the prompt

- 2 Read the prompt and underline the sentence that describes the situation.

- 3 What are the two opposing views on this topic? Circle the correct option.

- A whether friends are more important than studies
- B** whether classes about how to make friends should be offered
- C whether young people need to have more friendships to succeed in life

- 4 Study the sources. Which source is about ...?

- 1 the percentage of teens who do not have friends ☐ A
- 2 the importance of being able to make friends ☐ C
- 3 a dangerous outcome of not having social skills ☐ B

- 5 Look at the sources and paraphrase the information using the words given.

- A** 1 (according to / 98 percent / young people / report / at least)
According to a recent study, 98 percent of young people report having at least one close friend.
- 2 (recent study / inform / only two percent / teenagers / say)
A recent study informs us that only two percent of teenagers say that do not have a close friend.
- B** 1 (recent survey / indicate / proportion of teens / report / bullied / 22 percent)
A recent survey indicates that the proportion of teens who report being bullied is 22 percent.
- 2 (almost a quarter / young people / say / bullied / 2024 survey)
Almost a quarter of young people say that they have been bullied, according to a 2024 survey.
- C** 1 (psychology professor / claim / young people / lack social skill / may / struggle / adults)
A psychology professor claims that young people who lack social skills may struggle as adults.
- 2 (teenagers / without social skills / more problems / later in life / warn / psychology professor / Jessie Banes)
Teenagers without social skills may have more problems later in life, warns psychology professor Jessie Banes.

Build up your language skills

6 Using appropriate vocabulary Replace the underlined words using the correct form of the words in the boxes.

In order to write an interesting article, choose the most appropriate vocabulary and use synonyms to avoid repetition.

A acquire collaborate cultivate lack mitigate struggle

- Violent behavior and bullying might be lessened if students attend seminars.
mitigated
- Teenagers often don't have the necessary social skills to build lasting friendships.
lack cultivate
- If young people learn to work well with others, they will be more successful as adults.
collaborate
- Some skills do not come naturally; they must be gained through lessons.
acquired
- Many teens have a hard time with social interaction.
struggle

B challenging essential peers potential preferable proponents of

- It is better when students learn to get along with their classmates by themselves.
preferable peers
- Many teenagers find meeting new people really hard.
challenging
- People who favor teaching social skills claim that it would be very useful.
Proponents of
- The possibility to change how students interact is a key benefit of this course.
potential
- I don't support the notion that teaching teens social skills is needed.
essential

7 Rephrase these sentences using the words given. Suggested answers

- It's very important that young people develop the social skills to form genuine friendships. (essential / acquire / cultivate)
It's essential that young people acquire the social skills to cultivate genuine friendships.
- Adolescence can be a tough time, especially for those who have difficulty getting along with people their age. (challenging / collaborating / peers)
Adolescence can be a challenging time, especially for those who have difficulty collaborating with their peers.
- One benefit of this course is that it could lessen antisocial behavior. (potential / mitigate)
One benefit of this course is that it has the potential to mitigate antisocial behavior.
- People who support this argument believe that many teens don't have enough experience to know how to be a true friend. (proponents / argument / lack)
Proponents of this argument believe that many teens lack the experience to know how to be a true friend.
- As a result, they suffer emotionally, so it's better if the educational system provides them with guidance. (struggle / preferable)
As a result, they struggle emotionally, so it's preferable if the educational system provides them with guidance.

8 Collocations (adjectives and nouns) Match to form collocations. Then complete the sentences with the correct collocation.

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------|---------------|
| 1 tough | d | a pressure |
| 2 social | g | b advantage |
| 3 primary | b | c connections |
| 4 exponential | f | d challenges |
| 5 peer | a | e skills |
| 6 interpersonal | e | f pace |
| 7 meaningful | c | g isolation |

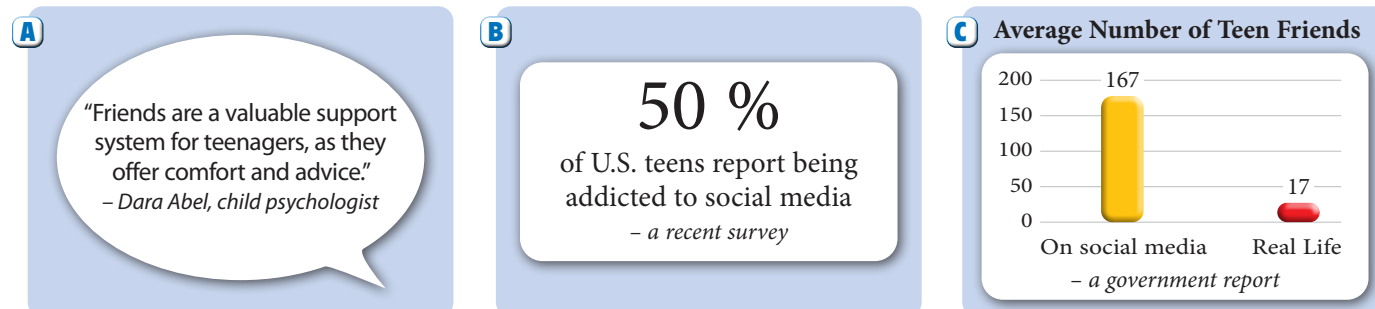
- Life is changing at a(n) exponential pace.
- We live in an era dominated by technology, characterized by fewer meaningful connections and increasing social isolation, making us the loneliest generation yet.
- The primary advantage of offering socialization classes is that young people may form strong bonds.
- Adolescents are facing the sort of tough challenges that previous generations never did.
- Having interpersonal skills will enable you treat other people more sensitively.
- Young people are easily influenced by peer pressure, which can lead them to make negative choices.



Build up your writing skills

Sources

1 Look at the sources and paraphrase them using the words given. *Suggested answers*



- A** (Dara Abel / state / friendships / essential / young people / since / primary source / emotional support)
Child psychologist Dara Abel states that friendships are essential for young people since they are a primary source of emotional support.
- B** (half / American / adolescents / admit / addiction / social media / as reported)
Half of American adolescents admit to having an addiction to social media, as reported in a recent survey.
- C** (Young people / report / ten times as many / in real life / according to)
Young people report having ten times as many friends on social media as they do in real life, according to a government report.

Titles

2 Circle the best title for the article on page 22. Why are the other options not suitable?

- A** Students need to learn how to make friends *It argues in favor of the issue.*
- B** New course on making friends seen as a waste *It argues against the issue.*
- C** Should a social skills class be in the school curriculum?

Introductions

3 Study the prompt on page 22. Then write the introduction using the words given. *Suggested answers*

- 1 (new high school subject / introduced / one which / aim / teach students / form / meaningful friendships / peers)
A new high school subject may be introduced, one which will aim to teach students how to form meaningful friendships with their peers.
- 2 (from what I gather / this proposal / receive / mixed reactions / students / which / like / examine)
From what I gather, this proposal has received mixed reactions from students, which I would like to examine.

Topic sentences

4 Use the words given to write the topic sentence of this body paragraph. *Suggested answer*

On the one hand, many adolescents lack the experience and skills to cultivate genuine friendships.

(one hand / many / adolescents / lack / experience / skills / cultivate / genuine / friendships) Especially due to the time spend online, a great percentage of teens simply do not have a large circle of friends with whom they interact. According to expert Marcy Brown, not having enough friendships during adolescence can lead to more serious problems in adulthood.

5 Read the topic sentence of this body paragraph. Then use the words given to develop the main point. *Suggested answer*

However, a course geared to teaching social skills could be a waste of valuable class time.

(only / limited / time / cover / broad / curriculum / in high school)

There is only a limited amount of time to cover the broad curriculum in high school.

(in fact / teacher / suggest / add / one hour / daily classes / to cover / program / and provide / well-rounded education)

In fact, one teacher has even suggested adding one hour of daily classes to cover the program and provide a well-rounded education.

Prepare to write

6 Complete the writing plan. Then look at the **LANGUAGE BANK** and write an article for **Writing Task B** on page 22.

Title Main idea of the article	Should a social skills class be in the school curriculum?
Introduction • Rephrase the topic • Refer to opposing views	A new high school course may be introduced that will teach students how to cultivate friendships with their peers. From what I gather, this proposal has received mixed reactions from students, which I would like to examine. On the one hand, proponents of the social skills course argue that fostering positive relationships with peers is crucial for young people, but they generally lack the skills to do so. There are many reasons for this state of affairs. To begin with, bullying is a serious concern in many schools. Almost a quarter of young people say that they have been bullied, according to a 2024 survey. A course geared to socialization will emphasize how abusive this behavior is and could teach troubled students how to feel empathy for others. In addition to this, acquiring interpersonal skills will assist them for the rest of their lives. Child psychologist Jessie Banes notes that young people who lack social skills may struggle as adults, so learning how to collaborate with their peers at a younger age is essential.
Body paragraph 1 One view and reasons why	However, there are some who oppose this idea, believing that there is no need to devote an entire course to developing social skills. Most high school students have a group of close friends that they see on a daily basis and who provide a valuable support system. A recent report informs us that only two percent of teenagers claim that they do not have a close friend. This being the case, the course is not necessary. It should also be underlined that the high school curriculum should be all about acquiring knowledge, not making friends. While I could see the value of some anti-bullying seminars, I do not believe that an entire social skills course would be time well spent.
Body paragraph 2 • Opposing view and reasons why • Express your opinion clearly	
Conclusion A brief summary and an interesting final statement	All in all, I realize that communicating effectively and fostering relationships are valuable skills for all people, regardless of age. I just can't support the idea of having a course to teach them. These are skills that students should acquire naturally through everyday interactions with their peers.

LANGUAGE BANK

Citing sources

According to a 2023 report, ...
 As reported by the experts, ...
 ... states that / explains how ...
 A survey reveals that ...
 A recent study indicates that ...
 As psychologist ... claims/warns, ...

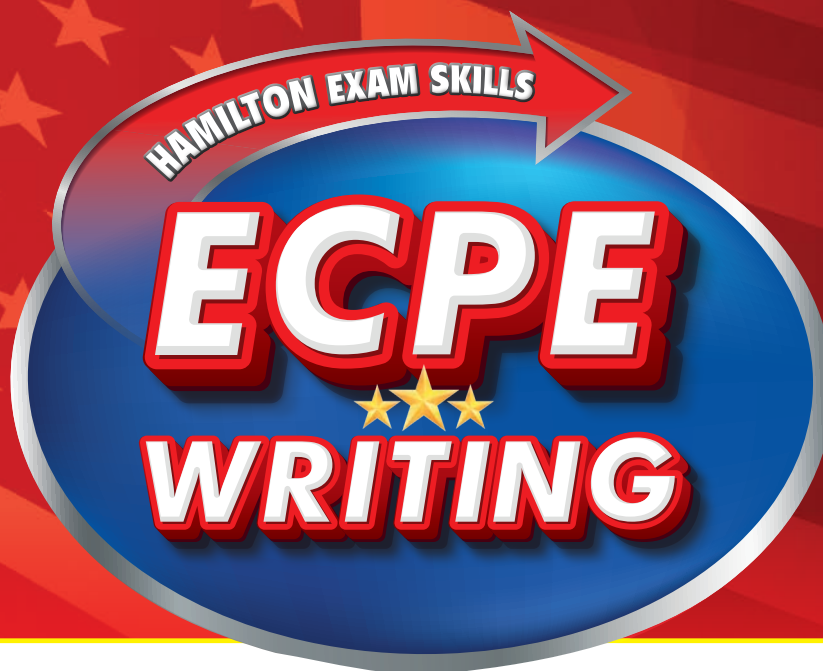
Talking about friendship and communication

cultivate friendships
 acquire social skills
 communicate effectively
 feel empathy for others
 collaborate with
 foster positive relationships
 everyday interactions with peers
 meaningful connections
 interpersonal skills
 valuable support system

7 After you have finished, go through the **Checklist** to make sure you have considered all the points.

Checklist

- My introduction rephrases the topic. ☐
- I've used at least one source to support a main idea. ☐
- I've given reasons and examples for my points. ☐
- I've used linking expressions to connect ideas and guide the reader along. ☐
- Each body paragraph starts with a topic sentence that makes it clear what the paragraph is about. ☐
- Each topic sentence is developed and supported by an example or source. ☐
- I've debated both sides of the issue and expressed my opinion. ☐
- I've checked my writing for grammar and spelling mistakes. ☐



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