



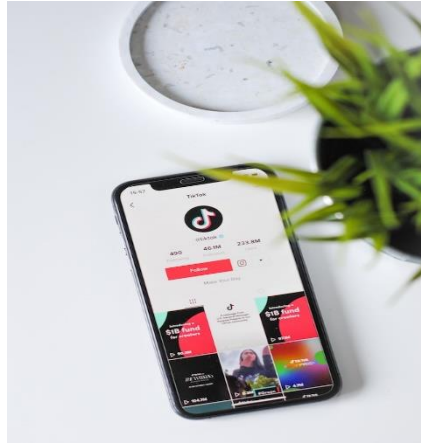
**Inclement Weather  
Resources  
ELA  
Grade 9**

**The Department of Curriculum  
&  
Instruction**

# Inclement Weather Resource

## For Gen Z, TikTok Is the New Search Engine

by Kalley Huang 2022



*In this section of the Inclement Weather Support Guide, we're reading "For Gen Z, TikTok Is the New Search Engine" by Kalley Huang. In "For Gen Z, TikTok Is the New Search Engine," Kalley Huang discusses how TikTok's relevant and engaging search results make it the preferred search engine for young people.*

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1. Read the text.
2. Answer text dependent questions
3. Complete Open Ended Written Responses

#### **Paired Text**

1. Read the text.
2. Answer text dependent questions
3. Complete Open Ended Written Responses

#### **Ways to Support your Child**

1. Ask your child about the informational texts, What was " For Gen Z, TikTok Is the New Search Engine" and the paired text, "Reality check: life behind Instagram image of 'influencers'" about?
2. **Parent Answer Keys**-Review written responses together.

#### **Related Media**

1. Watch the following clips with your child at home:
  - ['Is Gen Z killing Google? Young people prefer TikTok'](#)
  - ['Addiction to Technology is ruining lives'](#)

# ANCHOR TEXT



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

# For Gen Z, TikTok Is the New Search Engine

By Kalley Huang  
2022

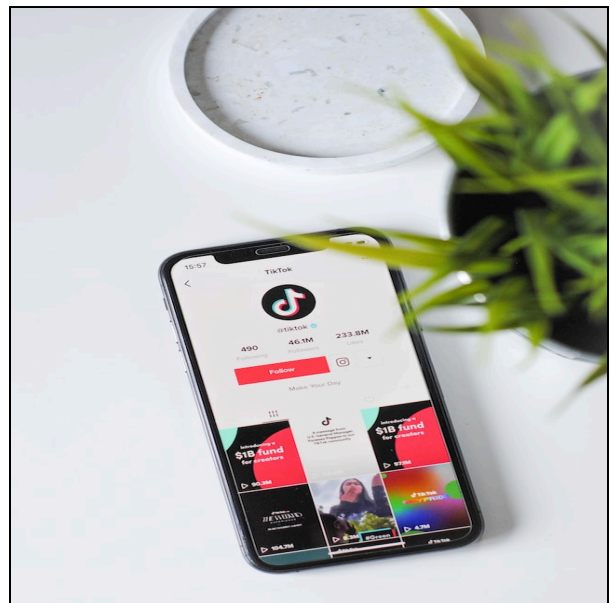
*Gen Z refers to people born between 1997 and 2012. In this article, Kalley Huang discusses how Gen Z uses the social media platform TikTok.*

***As you read, take notes on Google's response to TikTok's rise in popularity.***

- [1] When Ja’Kobi Moore decided to apply this year to a private high school in her hometown of New Orleans, she learned that she needed at least one letter of recommendation from a teacher. She had never asked for one, so she sought help.

“Teacher letter of recommendation,” she typed into TikTok’s search bar.

Ms. Moore, 15, scrolled TikTok’s app until she found two videos: one explaining how to ask teachers for a recommendation letter and the other showing a template for one. Both had been made by teachers and were easier to understand than a Google search result or YouTube video, said Ms. Moore, who is planning to talk to her teachers this month.



["The Tik Tok app 🎵🎵"](#) by Nik is licensed under CC0.

TikTok is known for its viral dance videos and pop music. But for Generation Z, the video app is increasingly a search engine, too.

- [5] More and more young people are using TikTok’s powerful algorithm — which personalizes the videos shown to them based on their interactions<sup>1</sup> with content — to find information uncannily catered to their tastes. That tailoring is coupled with a sense that real people on the app are synthesizing and delivering information, rather than faceless websites.

On TikTok, “you see how the person actually felt about where they ate,” said Nailah Roberts, 25, who uses the app to look for restaurants in Los Angeles, where she lives. A long-winded written review of a restaurant can’t capture its ambience, food and drinks like a bite-size clip can, she said.

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1. **Interaction** (*noun*) the action of one upon another or others; an action in response to others

TikTok's rise as a discovery tool is part of a broader transformation in digital search. While Google remains the world's dominant search engine, people are turning to Amazon to search for products, Instagram to stay updated on trends and Snapchat's Snap Maps to find local businesses. As the digital world continues growing, the universe of ways to find information in it is expanding.

Google has noticed TikTok edging into its domain. While the Silicon Valley company disputed that young people were using TikTok as a replacement for its search engine, at least one Google executive has publicly remarked on the rival video app's search capabilities.

"In our studies, something like almost 40 percent of young people, when they're looking for a place for lunch, they don't go to Google Maps or Search. They go to TikTok or Instagram," Prabhakar Raghavan, a Google senior vice president, said at a technology conference in July.

- [10] Google has incorporated images and videos into its search engine in recent years. Since 2019, some of its search results have featured TikTok videos. In 2020, Google released YouTube Shorts, which shares vertical videos less than a minute long, and started including its content in search results.

TikTok, which is owned by the Chinese internet company ByteDance, declined to comment on its search function and products that may be in testing. It said it was "always thinking about new ways to add value to the community and enrich the TikTok experience."

Doing a search on TikTok is often more interactive than typing in a query<sup>2</sup> on Google. Instead of just slogging through walls of text, Gen Z-ers crowdsource recommendations from TikTok videos to pinpoint what they are looking for, watching video after video to cull the content. Then they verify the veracity<sup>3</sup> of a suggestion based on comments posted in response to the videos.

This mode of searching is rooted in how young people are using TikTok not only to look for products and businesses, but also to ask questions about how to do things and find explanations for what things mean. With videos often less than 60 seconds long, TikTok returns what feels like more relevant answers, many said.

Alexandria Kinsey, 24, a communications and social media coordinator in Arlington, Va., uses TikTok for many search queries: recipes to cook, films to watch and nearby happy hours to try. She also turns to it for less typical questions, like looking up interviews with the actor Andrew Garfield and weird conspiracy theories.

- [15] TikTok's results "don't seem as biased" as Google's, she said, adding that she often wants "a different opinion" from what ads and websites optimized for Google say.

Ms. Kinsey said she also loved how quickly TikTok videos presented information. Although she sometimes fact-checks what she finds on TikTok by using Google, she said, "I rarely see something that requires that much thought."

TikTok's ascent as a search engine may mean that more people stumble upon misinformation and

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2. **Query** (*noun*) a question
  3. to evaluate if something is factual or truthful

disinformation on the app, which could then be amplified and spread further, said Francesca Tripodi, an information and library science professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The platform has struggled with moderating misleading content about elections, the war in Ukraine and abortion.

TikTok's algorithm tends to keep people on the app, making it harder for them to turn to additional sources to fact-check searches, Ms. Tripodi added.

"You aren't really clicking to anything that would lead you out of the app," she said. "That makes it even more challenging to double-check the information you're getting is correct."

- [20] TikTok has leaned into becoming a venue for finding information. The app is testing a feature that identifies keywords in comments and links to search results for them. In Southeast Asia, it is also testing a feed with local content, so people can find businesses and events near them.

Building out search and location features is likely to further entrench<sup>4</sup> TikTok — already the world's most downloaded app for those ages 18 to 24, according to Sensor Tower — among young users.

TikTok "is becoming a one-stop shop for content in a way that it wasn't in its earlier days," said Lee Rainie, who directs internet and technology research at the Pew Research Center.

That's certainly true for Jayla Johnson, 22. The Newtown, Pa., resident estimated that she watches TikTok videos on her phone two hours a day, and said she had begun using the app as a search engine because it was more convenient than Google and Instagram.

"They know what I want to see," she said. "It's less work for me to actually go out of my way to search."

- [25] Ms. Johnson, a digital marketer, added that she particularly appreciated TikTok when she and her parents were searching for places to visit and things to do. Her parents often wade through pages of Google search results, she said, while she needs to scroll through only a few short videos.

"God bless," she said she thinks. "You could have gotten that in seconds."

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4. to establish firmly and unchangeably

## Text-Dependent Questions

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. What is the central idea of the text?
  - A. TikTok is a better search engine than Google for people who are looking for answers to less typical questions.
  - B. TikTok has improved its algorithm to be able to respond more quickly to disinformation than Google.
  - C. TikTok is replacing Google as a way for young people to quickly find answers to their questions.
  - D. TikTok has changed the format of its app to match the way that Google shares results.
  
2. As it is used in paragraph 13, the word "relevant" shows that teenagers feel that the answers TikTok returns are —
  - A. more fun.
  - B. more helpful.
  - C. more thorough.
  - D. more interesting.
  
3. How do paragraphs 17-19 contribute to the article?
  - A. by explaining an important new feature of TikTok's app
  - B. by introducing a downside of TikTok's use as a search engine
  - C. by sharing how old and young people view TikTok differently
  - D. by comparing the results for the same search from TikTok and Google
  
4. Why does the author quote Jayla Johnson in the article?
  - A. to suggest that older people should consider using TikTok
  - B. to argue that young people are more tech savvy than older people
  - C. to contrast the ways older and younger people search for information
  - D. to demonstrate that young people have shorter attention spans than older people
  
5. How does the author support their claim that Google is concerned about TikTok's increasing popularity as a search engine?

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## Open Ended Written Response

**Directions:** Write your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas.

1. Are the ways that the teenagers use TikTok in the article more similar or different to the ways that you search for information? Explain.

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2. How do companies like TikTok create change? How did Google create change when it was first developed? What do the changes that these companies have brought to the world show about how technology has changed the ways we live our lives?

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3. What are the benefits and drawbacks of Google and TikTok as search engines? Which do you prefer to use for the following purposes: learning new information, deciding where to go out to eat, researching for a paper, getting a recommendation for a new T.V. show?

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# PAIRED TEXT



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

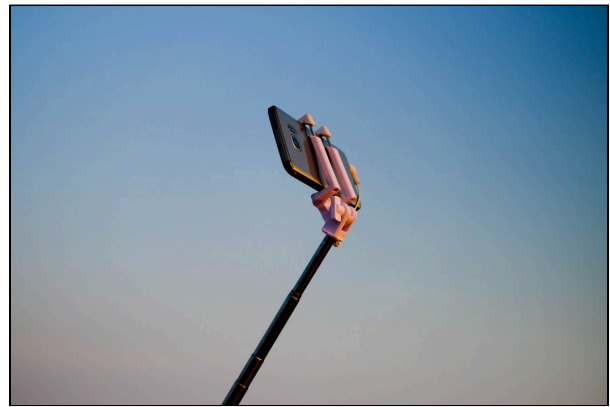
# Reality check: life behind Insta-glam image of 'influencers'

*Online they feature in glossy posts as the epitome of cool. But that is often worlds apart from how they live their lives.*

By Suzanne Bearne  
2019

*As consumers of social media, we don't always know the amount of work that goes into being an "influencer." In this text, Suzanne Bearne reveals how the world of social media influencing isn't as glamorous as it may seem. As you read, take notes on the challenges that social media influencers face.*

- [1] Standing amid the reeds and staring pensively into the distance, Jordan Bunker looks every part the moody model, dressed head to toe in black – in a direct contrast with the setting. Another image from his portfolio shows him in industrial environs,<sup>1</sup> sporting a minimalist brown trench coat as he looks directly at the camera.



*"Selfie" by Steve Gale is licensed under CC0.*

However, the reality for the 24-year-old is far from the glamour associated with the fashion world. In his pyjamas in bed – he's fighting a cold – at the home he shares with his parents in Leicester, Bunker says his set-up is worlds apart from the pensive street-style glossy shots of him kitted out in designers Paul Smith, Grenson and Joseph on his Instagram page, which has amassed 17,500 followers.

"All isn't how it is perceived on Instagram," he says. "People assume I have a great life and everything is handed to me. I live with my parents and I work from a desk in my room; it's not like I have a separate working space or office."

Bunker is one of a growing army of "micro-influencers", social media personalities with a following of between 10,000 and 100,000.

- [5] The growth of social media has resulted in the rise of the influencer who, at the top end, can make millions a year through the endorsement of products.

But these high earners are a very small minority: those like Bunker earn significantly less, while still maintaining the attention of thousands of young people.

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1. environment

While regularly seen dressed in on-trend menswear, Bunker is actually on a modest freelance income of about £30,000, with most stemming from social media, blog posts and guest talks.

"It's quite a humble salary but I'm quite proud of it," he admits. He charges between £500 and £1,000 to promote a brand on his Instagram feed or blog.

The scale of the industry is substantial and growing – market research firm Statista says the value of the global Instagram influencer market is set to reach \$2.38bn in 2019 from \$1.07bn in 2017.

- [10] Earlier this year, more than a dozen celebrities, including Alexa Chung and Ellie Goulding, pledged to change the way they label social media posts after the competition watchdog clamped down on the practice of stars being paid for endorsing products without disclosing they were being rewarded by the company.

The Competition and Markets Authority said it had secured formal commitments from 16 celebrities to state clearly if they have been paid, or received gifts or loans of products that they endorse.

But for the micro-influencers, the paydays enjoyed by the stars are still a long way away. With pictures on the Instagram grid of her modelling a new watch or a blow dry, Emily Lavinia is the first to put her hands up and admit her online persona doesn't reflect reality.

"It is more glamorous and together than I probably am," says the 28-year-old. "I actually have 'imposter syndrome'<sup>2</sup> and don't feel that proud. I try to air this idea that I'm incredibly confident – it helps me get to where I am and makes other people believe in you. A lot of it is smoke and mirrors."

Looking around her one-bedroom flat in Fitzrovia in central London, she reels off items she's been "gifted" since she started writing about tech, sex, beauty and wellness on her blog [aceandboogie.com](http://aceandboogie.com) in 2017.

- [15] "There's a Google Home, candles from brands, everything in the kitchen is gifted, there's a big Range cooker, pink and gold crockery, cupboards with healthy food and protein powders. I get spa breaks – I can't remember the last time I paid for a facial or to get my hair done. But I do try to be generous and give stuff to charities and friends."

In February, she was gifted around £2,000 of products. "I feel very lucky. But I wouldn't want anyone to think that it was just handed to me. I have worked hard for it."

Blogging comes in addition to her other job with a skin clinic brand. She spends several hours a day updating her social media, which can usually command between £250 to £500 for a sponsored<sup>3</sup> post or blog.

"If an influencer works hard, puts the hours in, does all things like networking and having a creative eye to create inspiring content, it can be lucrative,"<sup>4</sup> says Edward East, chief executive and founder of influencer marketing agency Billion Dollar Boy. "Obviously, the bigger your numbers and better your engagement, the

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2. is a psychological pattern in which an individual doubts their skills, talents or accomplishments
  3. receiving money in exchange for advertising through a post
  4. **lucrative** (*verb*) profitable

more you can earn.”

According to East, micro-influencers with around 10,000 followers can command about £250 for featuring a brand in their Instagram post, while those with 10 times as many can expect to receive about £800.

- [20] With 30,000 monthly page views, and a combined 70,000 following across all social platforms, Ana Silva O'Reilly's "Mrs O Around The World" travel blog provides an income of about £75,000 a year – a very healthy stream in addition to her job.

“For most people, this would be a full-time salary, but I have been on a six-figure salary for 10 years as a marketing consultant. I don't want to increase the money on the blog as I'd have to make compromises,” she says.

She is selective, she says, about the brands she works with. “I say no to 90% of the work. I work with brands that I'm a customer of.”

This includes a partnership last year with tourism board Visit California, which involved creating videos and blog posts during a three-week trip to Palm Springs, Beverly Hills and Newport Beach. Such campaigns can net her in the region of £5,000 to £10,000.

Mike Aspinall's craft-related blog was designed to be an outlet to share his passion while studying for a chemistry degree six years ago. But “The Crafty Gentleman” gained a dedicated following and now attracts 10,000 monthly views, while his Instagram account has 4,730 followers – netting an extra £10,000 a year.

- [25] The 28-year-old, who lives in Nottingham and works in digital marketing, spends 10-15 hours on his blog every week, and works with brands on sponsored posts using their product within a craft project. He charges in the region of £250-£350 for such projects, which he usually does once to twice a month.

“People often look at bloggers and think their life is as neat and Pinterest-worthy as their content. For every one of my blog tutorials, there have been weeks of back-and-forth emails, research, planning and crafting.”

Last year, he says, he used most of his annual leave to work on various blog projects or to talk at craft events or film TV shoots. “Don't get me wrong,” he says, “I absolutely love it – it's just a lot of work.”

The perception that blogging is simply pointing a camera and pressing click a few times a day is something the micro-influencers are keen to dismiss. However, the industry that has arisen out of nowhere could disappear almost as quickly as it appeared.

Lucie Greene, an analyst in consumer behaviour from New York consultancy J Walter Thompson Intelligence, said consumers were starting to get tired of these carefully curated feeds.

- [30] “We're seeing a rising awareness of how social media use and influencer culture affects mental health, from Fomo (Fear of Missing Out), to driving compulsive, addictive consumption, to feelings of isolation. Brands are also pushing back against the murky unregulated world of influencers – big brands and groups like Unilever are starting to be openly vocal about their mistrust of influencers.”

Unilever's chief marketing officer said last year that the consumer products giant would avoid working with influencers who had bought followers – a practice prevalent in the industry.

## Text-Dependent Questions

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. What is the central idea of the passage?
  - A. Social media influencers will do whatever it takes to get endorsements from companies, sometimes losing themselves in the process.
  - B. Social media influencers and celebrities are constantly at odds, because of the lack of transparency behind their endorsements.
  - C. Social media influencers have been gaining in popularity, but making a career of getting sponsored by companies is challenging.
  - D. Social media influencers are easily able to work with companies, because they endorse products during their free time.
  
2. How does Bunker's experience contribute to the text's central idea?
  - A. Bunker's experience reveals that being an influencer is really hard work, but it is also profitable.
  - B. Bunker's experience reveals that influencers are really transparent and honest about their lives.
  - C. Bunker's experience reveals that companies jump at the chance of sponsoring an influencer.
  - D. Bunker's experience reveals that his life isn't as glamorous as it seems on social media.
  
3. What does the phrase "smoke and mirrors" mean as it is used in paragraph 13?
  - A. content that is intended to disguise the truth
  - B. content that is intended to intrigue the audience
  - C. content that is intended to build trust and engage
  - D. content that is intended to be transparent and authentic
  
4. What connection does the author draw between influencers and the companies that sponsor them?
  - A. Influencers don't trust companies because they don't feel like companies pay them enough for their endorsement.
  - B. Influencers and companies need to align and form a trusted relationship in order to both feel good about the partnership.
  - C. Companies do extensive research into the influencers that they choose but influencers don't do any work in the partnership.
  - D. Companies always mistrust influencers because they don't know how they gained their followers or whether they are authentic.

5. How does the author develop her central idea over the course of the passage?

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## Open Ended Written Response

**Directions: Write your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas.**

1. As the article discusses, advertising has changed significantly since the rise of Instagram. Do you think it's a positive change that individuals are getting paid to advertise goods on social media? Why or why not?

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2. What do you think are some of the positive and negative effects that social media influencing has had on individuals and on society? Would you want to be a social media influencer? Why or why not?

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# ANSWER KEYS



# Answer key > For Gen Z, TikTok Is the New Search Engine

by Kalley Huang ● 2022

1. What is the central idea of the text?

9-10.RI.KID.2 ^

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development; provide an objective or critical summary.

- A. TikTok is a better search engine than Google for people who are looking for answers to less typical questions.
- B. TikTok has improved its algorithm to be able to respond more quickly to disinformation than Google.
- C. **TikTok is replacing Google as a way for young people to quickly find answers to their questions.**
- D. TikTok has changed the format of its app to match the way that Google shares results.

2. As it is used in paragraph 13, the word "relevant" shows that teenagers feel that the answers TikTok returns are –

9-10.RI.CS.4 ^

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

- A. more fun.
- B. **more helpful.**
- C. more thorough.
- D. more interesting.

3. How do paragraphs 17-19 contribute to the article?

9-10.RI.CS.5 ^

Analyze how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text.

- A. by explaining an important new feature of TikTok's app
- B. **by introducing a downside of TikTok's use as a search engine**
- C. by sharing how old and young people view TikTok differently
- D. by comparing the results for the same search from TikTok and Google

4. Why does the author quote Jayla Johnson in the article?

9-10.RI.CS.5 ^

Analyze how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text.

- A. to suggest that older people should consider using TikTok
- B. to argue that young people are more tech savvy than older people
- C. to contrast the ways older and younger people search for information**
- D. to demonstrate that young people have shorter attention spans than older people

5. How does the author support their claim that Google is concerned about TikTok's increasing popularity as a search engine?

9-10.RI.IKI.8 ^

Evaluate how reasoning and evidence affects the argument and specific claims in a text.

**Answers will vary. Students should explain that the author uses quotes and changes that Google has implemented to show the company's concern with TikTok's increasing popularity as a search engine. In paragraphs 8-9, the author highlights a "Google executive" who responded to "TikTok edging into its domain." The author shares that "Prabhakar Raghavan, a Google senior vice president" said that "something like almost 40 percent of young people, when they're looking for a place for lunch, they don't go to Google Maps or Search. They go to TikTok or Instagram" (Paragraph 9). This highlights Google's concern that their market may be moving away from their search engine to social media apps like TikTok. The author also mentions changes that Google has made to make their search engine more appealing to young people who may otherwise use TikTok to search. The author shares that Google has "incorporated images and videos into its search engine in recent years" including TikTok videos and YouTube Shorts (Paragraph 10). The author cites these changes to suggest that Google is responding to concerns that people are using their search engine less and turning to TikTok instead.**

# Answer key > Reality check: life behind Insta-glam image of 'influencers'

by Suzanne Bearne ● 2019

1. What is the central idea of the passage?

9-10.RI.KID.2 ^

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development; provide an objective or critical summary.

- A. Social media influencers will do whatever it takes to get endorsements from companies, sometimes losing themselves in the process.
- B. Social media influencers and celebrities are constantly at odds, because of the lack of transparency behind their endorsements.
- C. **Social media influencers have been gaining in popularity, but making a career of getting sponsored by companies is challenging.**
- D. Social media influencers are easily able to work with companies, because they endorse products during their free time.

2. How does Bunker's experience contribute to the text's central idea?

9-10.RI.KID.2 ^

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development; provide an objective or critical summary.

- A. Bunker's experience reveals that being an influencer is really hard work, but it is also profitable.
- B. Bunker's experience reveals that influencers are really transparent and honest about their lives.
- C. Bunker's experience reveals that companies jump at the chance of sponsoring an influencer.
- D. **Bunker's experience reveals that his life isn't as glamorous as it seems on social media.**

3. What does the phrase "smoke and mirrors" mean as it is used in paragraph 13?

9-10.RI.CS.4 ^

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

- A. **content that is intended to disguise the truth**

- B. content that is intended to intrigue the audience
- C. content that is intended to build trust and engage
- D. content that is intended to be transparent and authentic

4. What connection does the author draw between influencers and the companies that sponsor them? 9-10.RI.KID.3 ^

Analyze how an author presents and develops key ideas and events to impact meaning.

- A. Influencers don't trust companies because they don't feel like companies pay them enough for their endorsement.
- B. Influencers and companies need to align and form a trusted relationship in order to both feel good about the partnership.**
- C. Companies do extensive research into the influencers that they choose but influencers don't do any work in the partnership.
- D. Companies always mistrust influencers because they don't know how they gained their followers or whether they are authentic.

5. How does the author develop her central idea over the course of the passage? 9-10.RI.KID.2 ^

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development; provide an objective or critical summary.

Answers will vary; students should discuss how the author introduces the real stories of a few influencers to address the challenges that social media influencers face. First the author introduces Bunker. Though Bunker seems really put together and professional in his modeling shots, he is quick to admit that real life "isn't how it is perceived on Instagram," (Paragraph 3) and then goes on to mention that he works really hard to make 30,000 pounds a year, and still lives with his parents. The author continues to mention that though a small minority of influencers are making a really high salary, many influencers are working really hard and making a much smaller sum. Another challenge in the industry is that not all influencers and celebrities are transparent about when they are being sponsored by a company or not, affecting the authenticity of the account and the endorsement. The author shares the story of Emily Lavinia who is quick to admit that "her online persona doesn't reflect reality" (Paragraph 12) and constantly doubts herself and her confidence as she constantly compares herself to others through social media. And lastly, the author mentions Mike Aspinall's story who addresses the challenge that even though each post looks easy, "For every one of my blog tutorials, there have been weeks of back-and-forth emails, research, planning and crafting" (Paragraph 26). Through these personal stories, the author addresses her main idea that even though the work of an influencer may look fun and easy, it's a lot of hard work, and it's not often profitable.