

# GED Practice Essay

The passages present arguments for and against an office installing instant messaging software. Write a response analyzing the arguments in both passages and determining which argument is stronger. Use relevant and specific evidence from the passages to support your response.

Take approximately 45 minutes to write your response. Be sure to plan, draft, and evaluate your writing.

## Memo 1

From: Carter Moran

Subject: Instant Messaging Will Improve Communication

Recently, there has been office discussion about installing instant messaging software that will allow quick, efficient text communication between employees from our desktops. We should install this software as soon as possible to improve communication.

Instant messaging saves time. If I have a quick question, I can message someone down the hall or on the next floor. I don't have to walk across the office. I don't need to interrupt someone's train of thought. When my coworker has a moment, she can respond to my message. No time is wasted.

Because it's easy and quick, instant messaging can replace unneeded meetings or long email messages. It makes communication informal, encouraging people to ask questions and stay in touch about projects.

Some people have raised concerns that instant messaging software might be used for personal chatting with friends. It could be distracting. However, this problem is easily solved by choosing software that's limited only to employees. Team members can have the benefits of relaxed and constant communication, while remaining focused at their desks. Managers can check chats to make sure that the software is not misused between employees.

Communication is essential for our jobs. The more we talk about our projects, the better our work will be. Instant messaging is a tool to improve that communication.

## Memo 2

From: Arturo Grayson

Subject: Instant Messaging Can Harm Productivity

As we consider the decision to implement instant messaging for our employees, I would like to contribute some thoughts. It is easy to jump on the pro-instant-message bandwagon. The technology seems a simple way to ask questions and discuss projects. However, intuition about how instant messaging can help productivity may easily be wrong.

Instant messaging can be a distraction to many employees. The technique of “blocking” your time can increase productivity. It is better to spend one hour at the beginning of the day addressing emails than to check your emails constantly throughout the day. You save time switching between tasks. Instant messaging does not allow this. Employees may be constantly distracted by questions or comments, which can reduce focus on their main tasks. Instead of instant messaging, planned meetings and emails can decrease distractions.

One 2005 study in the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* looked at how instant messaging was used in a high-tech firm. On one hand, it found that employees were more connected and worked together in new ways. However, it also found that employees used instant messaging to stay more distance from bosses and managers. By avoiding face-to-face and other forms of communication, employees stayed at a distance instead of communicating more closely.

Instant messaging could easily harm our productivity. Employees might be distracted by constant messages, and they could communicate less effectively with their bosses. It is probably not the best decision for our company.

Use this worksheet to write a practice essay in response to the prompt. When you take your GED essay, you'll only have one space to write in, but make sure you have a beginning, middle, and end to your essay.

**Beginning, 1 Paragraph: Introduction and Main Idea**

**Middle, 3 Paragraphs: Details and Support**

**Ending, 1 Paragraph: Conclusion**