

Australia Bans Social Media for Children

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Australia has started a new rule that bans kids under 16 from using major social media apps like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, and others. These companies must delete accounts belonging to users younger than 16 and stop them from making new ones. If they don't follow the rules, the companies could be fined millions of dollars.

To help enforce the ban, many kids have had to take age-verification tests. Some of these tests haven't worked perfectly, and a few underage kids have still passed them. The government says the system won't be perfect right away.

Parents have very different reactions. Some are upset because their kids feel left out when their friends still seem able to use social media. Others think the ban is helpful because their children were becoming addicted to social media. A few parents even admit they are teaching their kids how to get around the rules.

The ban is getting attention from other countries that might copy Australia's idea. The government plans to carefully study the results to see whether the ban helps kids--like improving their sleep, schoolwork, and mental health--or whether it causes new problems, like kids learning to use unsafe parts of the internet.

Social media companies now have to report back to the government about how well they're following the rules and how many accounts they have removed. The government says the public will be able to see this information.

Comprehension Questions:

1. What is the main idea of the article?
 - a) Social media is fun for teenagers in Australia.
 - b) Australia is testing a new age-verification technology.
 - c) Australia is trying a law to protect children from social media.
 - d) Parents in Australia agree about social media rules.
2. Some parents are teaching their kids how to get around the rules. What does "get around" mean?
 - a) To avoid something.
 - b) To understand something.
 - c) To follow something carefully.
 - d) To agree with something.



3. Kids feel left out when their friends still seem able to use social media. What does "left out" mean?

- a) Feeling happy and included.
- b) Feeling tired and bored.
- c) Feeling excluded or forgotten.
- d) Feeling angry and violent.

4. Which of these statements is false?

- a) Some underage kids still manage to access social media.
- b) All parents agree the ban is good.
- c) Social media companies can be punished if they don't follow the rule.
- d) The government will study whether the ban works.

5. What can we understand about the parents who teach kids how to get around the rule?

- a) They strongly support the ban.
- b) They believe the rule will be easy for companies.
- c) They don't know how social media works.
- d) They want their kids to keep using social media.

6. Why are other countries watching Australia's ban closely?

- a) They want to make money from it.
- b) They may copy the plan if it is effective.
- c) They want to ban the internet completely.
- d) They are moving to Australia.

7. What might happen if the ban works well?

- a) Kids might sleep better and focus more on school.
- b) Kids might stop going to school.
- c) Kids might lose interest in hobbies.
- d) Parents might stop using the internet.

8. What might be one possible problem caused by the ban?

- a) Kids might start using more dangerous websites.
- b) Kids might learn to use safer online tools.
- c) Kids might read more books.
- d) Parents might spend more time with them.

9. Why might some kids feel upset about the new rule?

- a) They think social media is boring.
- b) They don't understand technology.
- c) They want to join new sports teams.
- d) They feel separated from friends who still use it.

10. What does the article suggest about the age-verification tests?

- a) They are 100% perfect and stop all children.
- b) They are not a perfect solution yet.
- c) They are only for parents to use.
- d) They are the same in every country.

Speaking and Writing Activities:

- Discuss these questions with a partner or a small group.
- Choose one topic and write a response to it. Show your writing to a classmate or teacher.

1. Do you think kids under 16 should be allowed to use social media? Why or why not?
2. If your country made the same rule as Australia, how do you think kids and parents would react?
3. What do you think is a good way to check someone's age online? Do you think this kind of system can really work?