

Beyond the Screen

1 Virtual reality, or VR, is a fascinating technology that allows people to explore computer-made worlds beyond the screen. VR systems use images, sounds, and headsets to create a virtual world. With VR, a person can look around the artificial world, move within it, and interact with it. Someone can experience a walk through a virtual rainforest without ever leaving the living room. VR is becoming more common and is now used in education, entertainment, medicine, and building design.

2 In schools, VR can make learning more engaging and fun. Imagine taking a field trip to explore ancient ruins, outer space, or the ocean—all without leaving the classroom. Active learning like this helps students stay focused and excited, so they remember more of what they learn. VR makes difficult subjects such as chemistry and anatomy easier to understand by allowing students to engage with the topics.

3 Gamers love VR because it feels like being inside a video game. It places them at the center of the action. Similarly, professional athletes can use VR to practice strategies and game moves. They can improve their skills without the physical strain of real-world training.

4 Music fans can also benefit from VR by attending live concerts featuring their favorite bands. The technology gives people a way to enjoy front-row experiences from the comfort of home.

5 In the field of medicine, VR is revolutionizing how doctors learn and practice. Surgeons can rehearse difficult processes in a risk-free environment. They can improve their skills without putting patients in danger. This technology is also being used in therapy to help patients confront and overcome their fears. For example, people who are afraid of heights can practice tasks in high, open spaces, starting with lower heights and slowly increasing them. Daniel Freeman, a clinical psychologist at the University of Oxford, explains: “The person builds up memories that being around heights is safe, and this counteracts the old fear beliefs.” VR may also help with other common fears, such as social anxiety or fear of public places.

6 VR provides a different way than paper plans for architects and engineers to see and imagine projects. Clients can take virtual tours of buildings before construction begins. Seeing the project helps them understand the work and give useful feedback.

7 However, VR does have some downsides to consider. Prolonged use can lead to dizziness or eye strain. Some people may experience immediate motion sickness. This is because what the mind “feels” in the VR world does not correspond to the body’s physical

sensations. It can make the VR experience physically unpleasant. Taking breaks during VR sessions can ease these symptoms.

8 Another concern is the potential for VR to create feelings of isolation. In virtual environments people can feel separated from the real world. Spending too much time in VR can mean less time with friends and family, which can lead to loneliness. It is important to balance VR use with real-life activities to stay connected with others.

9 Finally, cost is an important factor to consider. This technology can be expensive, which limits access for many people. Not everyone can afford VR field trips or hands-on training experiences. Making VR more affordable is essential so that more people can enjoy its advantages. Despite these challenges, VR holds immense promise as a tool for transforming our lives.

Read “Beyond the Screen.”

Write a multi-paragraph argumentative essay in which you argue whether virtual reality will have an overall positive or negative effect on society.

Use details from the passage to support your argumentative essay.

Remember to —

- clearly state your argument
- organize your writing
- develop your ideas in detail
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar

Use the space provided to write your argumentative essay.