Expository Essay

The Oxford American Dictionary gives the following definitions:

Exposition: a comprehensive description and explanation of an idea or theory
Expository: intended to explain or describe something

Your task is to present information on some aspect of technology and reflect on its significance. Your essay should be approximately 1,000 words long, give or take a couple hundred words. Essays that are 200 words under or over the limit should be revised to bring them closer to the target.

The information must be specific, with concrete examples. It should comprise a substantial part of the paper. As much as is reasonable in an introductory course, the information should be new to some readers—that is, it should not be common knowledge. It may come from your own specialized knowledge or from your research.

The information should be presented in an organized, logical fashion. Key terms and ideas should be explained so that a reader unfamiliar with them can understand them. Ordinary terms that have special significance for your topic should be defined—not just the dictionary definition, but an explanation of what you mean by the term and how you are using it in your paper.

Besides presenting the information, you should spend some time reflecting on its significance. This might constitute a major portion of the paper, or it might be limited to a few suggestive comments, questions, or observations. If the latter, those comments should be genuinely suggestive; that is, they should encourage readers to consider the broader implications of the information presented, not be limited to merely factual or mechanical questions. (By “mechanical” I mean both automatic or unthinking comments that do not dig into the topic, and operational or “how-to” questions. For example, “How does this work?” is a less suggestive question than “How does this influence our perceptions or behavior?”

Our discussions about technology can provide a starting place for your reflections. Any of the questions that arose as we discussed and debated can be applied to your topic and serve as a foundation for your ideas. Here are some of those questions:

- How has technology transformed humanity?
- Are we dominated by it?
- What is technology?
- Has it always been central to our existence?
- At what point does technology become too much?
- Are we killing ourselves with our technology?
- Is technology human nature?