

NEWS BREAK

Article: **Australian kids and parents adapting to social media ban**

Section: **MAIN, A11**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, March 1, 2026**, of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

Feel free to adapt this lesson for your students. For instance, some educators may assign this as a homework task, while others might facilitate the reading and discussion of questions within small groups or larger class discussions.

****Please take a moment to review all NIE content before classroom use to ensure it is suitable for your students.****

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Learning Objectives:

After reading the article, students will be able to analyze the real-world implementation and early impact of Australia's world-first social media ban for minors.

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the meaning of the word.

Various messenger and gaming services including Roblox, WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger are **exempt**.

Exempt Guess:

Exempt Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. From the coast of Queensland to the bush of the Northern Territory, something rather odd has happened in some homes in Australia: Smartphones lie unnoticed on the kitchen table in the morning, children are scrolling significantly less, and family members are interacting with each other much more. It's been almost three months since Australia became the first country in the world to introduce a general social media ban for those under _____.
2. The government justified its groundbreaking move, which took effect Dec. 10, by saying it wanted to give children their _____ back — and also protect them from cyberbullying and disturbing images.
3. Companies face fines of up to 49.5 million Australian dollars (U.S. \$ _____ million) for violations.
4. The new rules apply to what platforms?
5. Albanese called social media the “_____” of society.
6. Accounts deactivated In January, the government announced that since the law came into effect, more than _____ million accounts belonging to children and young people had been deactivated, deleted or restricted.
7. In December, the messaging app asked hundreds of thousands of users to verify their age. This could be done with an Australian bank account, an age assessment using facial recognition or documents such as a passport or driver's license. Some parents say that most teenagers have quickly found ways to _____ the ban.
8. Many teachers say that they're dissatisfied with the ban and that they feel left alone with the _____ of the law.
9. More than _____% of teachers said they used YouTube for teaching purposes. While there is a ban on young people's accounts, YouTube can still be used in the classroom, leading the majority to complain about a lack of clear guidelines.
10. A preliminary finding showed that _____ violates European law with its continuous automatic playback of videos and highly personalized recommendations. The company, which rejects the findings, now faces a fine.

Class Discussion Questions:

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first, I thought _____, but now I think _____?

Deeper-Dive “Connect & Explain” comprehension questions for small groups, entire classes or journal entries and/ or essay prompts for extended enrichment:

- The "Childhood" Mandate: The Australian government claims it wants to "give children their childhood back." Does a government have a moral right to define what a "proper" childhood looks like? Why or why not?
- To enforce the ban, companies use facial recognition and government IDs. Is the benefit of protecting minors from "disturbing images" worth the potential privacy risk of giving tech giants more biometric data?
- The law bans Instagram and TikTok but exempts Roblox and WhatsApp. Since cyberbullying and "scourge" behavior can happen on any digital platform, is this distinction logical, or is it a fundamental flaw in the law?
- The article mentions 15-year-olds using makeup or older siblings to bypass age checks. If a law is easily circumvented, does it still serve a purpose as a "social deterrent," or does it simply teach young people how to break the law?
- Many teachers in the article feel "left alone" by this ban. Is it more effective for a society to *prohibit* access to social media, or to *integrate* it into the curriculum to teach responsible usage?
- Prime Minister Albanese called social media a "scourge." How does this strong language affect the generational gap? Does labeling a central part of Gen Z's social life as a "plague" help or hinder open dialogue between parents and children?
- The PM suggests kids are back to "riding bikes and reading books." If social media is removed, do you believe teenagers will naturally gravitate toward "wholesome" activities, or will they simply find new digital loopholes?
- With fines up to \$35 million USD, tech companies are deactivating millions of accounts. Do you think these companies are acting out of a genuine concern for child safety, or are they simply performing "damage control" to protect their profits?

NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please [register online](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655. Copyright © 2026 The Seattle Times Company