Advantages and Disadvantages of the Internet – A short Play

**PART A - Raising the issues**

**Narrator**: Sara and Nina are talking together with Anja, who is telling them she will go on her vacation to Florida, the USA.

**Anja**: Yes, my parents have already bought flight tickets to Florida, the USA. I guess I will enjoy some swimming in the sea, visit Disneyland and maybe I will also meet Ariana Grande there.

**Sara**: What, Ariana Grande? She is my favorite singer. You'll be a really lucky girl if you meet her. Break up with your girlfriend- I'm a bored- what a cool song!

**Nina**: It's true. Cool. Ariana Grande is also a very humanitarian person. She's got Italian roots. And she is the person followed by most followers on Instagram.

**Anja**: OK, no problem. I'll let you know if I get to see her show.

**Narrator**: During the summer, Anja published a photo of herself with Ariana Grande on her Facebool account and sent it to Nina and Sara. As soon as she saw the image of Anja together with Ariana Grande, Sara immediately called Nina on her mobile phone.

**Sara**: Hey. Nina, have you already received Anja's mail? With a photo of Anja and Ariana Grande in the attachment?

**Nina**: Yes, I have. What can you say about it?

**Sara**: I do not like the fact that she managed to see Ariana live and meet her. I'm so jealous!

**Nina**: Calm down, Sara. Anja will tell us more when she returns from Florida.

**Narrator**: It's September and the girls are back in school. Anja initially told her schoolmates that she was in Florida, but then she accidentally told another schoolmate, Natasha, the truth. She spent her summer holidays at home and her picture with Ariana Grande was photoshopped, in order for Anja to boast that she was really in Florida. Natasha told the other girls what had happened.

**Sara**: Natasha, I can not believe what Anja did to us. The meeting with Ariana Grande was a fake story! Now I will post something to her Facebook account, and I will photoshop her photos. I don't take kindly to being tricked.

**Narrator**: Sara has begun photoshopping photos of Anja and posting them on her Facebook site. Many of Sara's Facebook friends as well as some anonymous people, joined Sara in her comments about how Anja misbehaved. Anja even started receiving hate messages about her photoshopped photos with Ariana Grande. Anja broke down crying and called her friend Natasha.

**Anja**: I do not understand the haters. They do not know me, but they make nasty comments and tell lies about me. It's happening to other people too. But what do you do with this? A first person hates the second one while the second person hates the third one.

**Natasha**: Facebook actually recommends you accept as friends only persons you personally know. But on the ather hand, haters are gonna hate no matter what you do, especially if they can hate in an anonymous way.

**Anja**: But I wanted to have thousands of Facebook friends.

**Natasha**: Can't you see the difference between real friends and Facebook friends? You have got only few really good friends in your life in reality but for Facebook friends you accepted just everyone. It's better to have fewer Facebook friends than to be forced later on to unfriend them.

**Narrator**: Natasha then leaves Anja and goes to Sara and Nina to propose a solution to the dispute. Sara and Nina talk.

**Nina**: It was not right what you did, Sara. You know I heard one day that some girl was persuaded by others to cut her hair short. When she did it and posted it on the Internet, people began to mock her. In fact one friend posted a comment that she wasn't normal due to cutting her hair short. The friend's comment hurt her deeply. They have not spoken to each other since then.

**Sara**: You're right, Nina. I'll apologise to Anja.

**Natasha:** I once watched a movie. It was about some girl who was commented upon due to her physical appearance. She was deeply hurt. Her friend found out about this and told everything to her parents who deleted athe girl's Facebook profile and account on the internet. The girl began to lose weight and she became more and more anorexic.. She went to the psychiatrist. In the end, she stopped using the internet though previously she was addicted to it, even to the advertising messages like you have won the prize of a free t-shirt.

**Nina**: When I was younger, I found one guy on the internet. He said: If you ever see me in town, tell your mum and dad that you'll go with me to have a photo session! As if I would.

**Sara**: This guy was clearly nuts but at least there were no hate speech or lies, like in the Anja's case.

**Nina**: It's true. The Internet can also be useful for making positive contacts. A few years ago I wrote to Jeremy Hanson, the author of Roblox's computer games on Youtube. I managed to enter his online his game. I said, Oh, my God, I can not believe I'm in the game together with the famous gamer. He's really cool. I tried to call you, so you could record me playing and make me famous, but you did not answer.

**Sara**: Can you believe it, when our grandparents were young there was no internet, computer games, social media or mobile phones – life must have been so different then.

**PART B – Finding the positives**

**Narrator**: So the girls apologise to each other and agree to think more seriously about their online behaviour in future.

**Anja**: It makes no sense to deal with social networks. I'll just shut off myself from everything. I can't go through this sort of negativity again.

**Nina**: It's nonsense. The internet can also be used for something positive.

**Sara**: It's true. I have just received an invitation from the Youth for Climate Justice

**Anja**: From whom?

**Sara**: From the Youth for Climate Justice. They sent me links for youtube videos by Greta Thunberg.

**Natasha**: Who? Who is this Greta?

**Sara:** Look, I'll show you.

**Narrator**: Schoolmates are viewing her videos on Youtube.

**Anja**: Cool.

**Anja**: Yes, this Greta is so cool.

**Sara**: In short, 16-year-old Swedish girl, Greta Thunberg, will take a year off in this school year to devote her time to climate action. This has spurred a global climate justice movement involving mostly children. Many young people around the world skip their lessons on Fridays to show it's a high time for changes in our societies. We, the young people, will be the main victims of the climate change and will bear its consequences.

**Anja**: Fridays' climate school strikes? Great. It's cool. Why would only teachers be allowed to organise a strike as they are not the ones who will change the world anyway? Only the young people can change the world so our strikes will be meaningful.

**Sara**: But we have no influence in our societies. When the European elections were held, my brother really wanted to vote, but he could not because he was not an adult. He says that the young should have the right to vote when they are 16 years old.

**Anja**: Of course, if young people had the right to vote, they could change a lot. For example some people tweet that refugees threaten our lives, religion and civilization.

**Natasha**: These are just their delusions, fake news. When their words are read by their children in the future, they will probably feel ashamed. What they write about the refugees that they are all bad, that's pure fake news. There are positive and negative people everywhere. They say that refugees are in fact only economic migrants, but how can you distinguish who really is a refugee and who is a migrant? Anya, what would happen if you had needed a visa for the US? Then you wouldn't have been able to make selfies with Ariana Grande in Florida, haha.

**Narrator**: They are all laughing

**Sara**: My brother says that no wall or barbed wire has ever stopped people from migrating. It is necessary to eliminate the causes of problems. I remember once a demonstration against immigrants in the USA when the protesters were carrying banners with slogans to send all immigrants home. Then, some Native American man appeared with his own slogan saying that he completely agreed with what they wanted. You see, such protest defied logic - as according to it only Native Americans would be allowed to remain in the USA and nobody else.

**Natasha**: It's true. My distant relatives from Cleveland would have to return to Slovenia in such circumstances.

**Narrator:** Everybody is laughing.

**Nina**: I think we've learned something about the Internet. It is like a knife. You can use a knife in a positive way if you cut bread or other food, or in a negative way when you harm someone with it. It's the same with the Internet. You can use it for something positive like, for example, Greta Thunberg does, or for something negative like hate speech. How will we use it in the future?

**All in one voice**: For a positive purpose, of course.