

Magistrale 1 LM 37 LETTORATO A.A. 2020-21

COGNOME NOME MATR

INDIRIZZO EAAS /SLLT CFU..... GIUDIZIO SCRITTO

12cfu students do both parts of the exam. 6cfu students do one part only

PART ONE : PARAPHRASE AND SUMMARY

You have 80 minutes to complete Part 1.

What is the Snowflake Generation?

Avinash Bhunjun, Metro

Why are young adults being referred to with reference to this term? The Snowflake Generation is (1) **a label thrown around a lot at the moment** and one that many are not happy about, even claiming that the label itself is causing them mental health issues. The "snowflake generation" is a disparaging term now commonly used to refer to young people, who are perceived to be over-sensitive and intolerant of disagreement. The suggestion is that, like snowflakes, these people are delicate individuals and easily go into melt-down when faced with comments they find objectionable.

'Snowflake' was one of the Collins Dictionary's 2016 words of the year, along with 'Brexit', 'hygge' and 'Trumpism'. Collins defines the term as: 'the young adults of the 2010s, viewed as being less resilient and more prone to taking offence than previous generations'. It's also argued that it originated in Chuck Palahniuk's Fight Club novel – emphasised in David Fincher's 1999 film adaptation. Fight Club was released in 1999 and used the phrase too. The film starred Brad Pitt as the protagonist of an underground recreational fight club, who says to his young followers: 'You are not special. You are not a beautiful and unique snowflake.' The term as used in the film signified (2) **a person who believes their status as a unique individual means they are destined for great success.** This,

however, is not the definition generally adopted by today's young adults.

Research by insurance firm Aviva found that most young people think the term is being unfairly applied, while 74 per cent think it could have a negative effect on young people's mental health. The figures also show that young people are more likely to have experienced stress, anxiety and depression in the last year. Almost half of adults between 16 and 24 said they had experienced stress or anxiety, compared to just over a third of all UK adults.

The firm's medical expert, Dr Doug Wright, said the term could cause problems. "Our findings suggest that young adults are more likely to be experiencing mental health problems, so using a phrase which criticises this age group could add to this issue. "Any term used disparagingly on a segment of the population is inherently negative. The phrase, which originated in America, has particularly come to refer to universities and students who use "trigger warnings" to alert readers or listeners to potentially distressing material, and "safe spaces", which are meant to be free of certain opinions or ideas. It is also used to imply that **(3) young people are over-sensitive and quicker to take offence than previous generations of students.** Chuck Palahniuk in an interview earlier this year took credit for the term, adding: "My friends

who teach in high school tell me that their students are very easily offended."

Writing about the Snowflake Generation in The Times last week, Philip Collins reported the opinion of 'the YouTube psychologist, Jordan Peterson' to show **(4) the lengths that snowflakes go to silence debate.** Peterson's argument is that he shouldn't be forced to refer to a person by the pronoun of their choice. If sexuality isn't a choice, he states, why is gender a choice? where is the evidence? A straightforward debate most reasonable people would conclude. However, a debate on this topic is completely out of the question according to "human rights" activists. You can even be prosecuted in Canada if you don't refer to the individual by the pronoun of their choice.

Collins asserts that there are now university course materials marked by trigger warnings that books may contain colonial, racist or sexist ideas that are **(5) apt to cause offence.** These he considers a "micro-aggression" seeking out the coded insults buried in everyday exchanges that can be found anywhere by someone determined to see nothing else. Any remark 'can be construed as offensive by someone who is looking for offence'. These non-disputes on campus are stretching the definition of harm to breaking point. What is still unclear is whether most students or just a small subset of them agree with the intolerance of opposing ideas.

However, isn't it interesting how the privileged older writers look to dismiss any attempt to counter inequality by using insults against the young? Snowflake, is but the latest popular example.

The government is clearly prepared to resist the demands of the Snowflake Generation. The universities minister Jo Johnson, told colleges this week that the new regulator, the Office for Students, will create a blacklist of universities that

have a policy of not offering a platform to perfectly respectable speakers. The law, she argues, prohibits all manner of vicious statements. Truly egregious speech is already outside the law and a university, a temple of learning and discussion, should be an arena in which intelligent people allow truth to emerge from the free collision of ideas

PARAPHRASE

Re-state clearly and concisely the ideas expressed in the 5 underlined phrases in bold being sure to reference the subject of the sentence if a pronoun is used. You may need to reformulate the whole sentence as well as change word class to do this effectively. You do not need to find synonyms for: snowflake, 'Snowflake Generation', university, trigger warnings.

SUMMARY

In your own words write a clear and concise summary of the key points contained in the article remembering to attribute sources of information. You are advised to write a first draft then work on it to produce a final version. The finished summary should be between 130 and 150 words. You will be penalised if you exceed the limit by more than 10%.

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PART TWO: ESSAY

You have 90 minutes to complete your essay. You will lose marks for short or incomplete essays. Online and paper dictionaries may not be used in the exam.

Write an appropriately structured essay in 350-450 words with this title:

To be or not to be a ‘snowflake’. What would your stance be?

Instructions

Make sure you follow a clear line of argument from your introduction to conclusion. Your essay should be properly punctuated, written in a formal register, with adequate paragraphing and contain appropriate grammar and vocabulary. The following articles may give you some ideas. You must include points from the articles in your answer, paraphrasing or quoting them and integrating them into your writing. You should keep direct quotation to an absolute minimum.

THE OXFORD STUDENT

Who Are The Snowflake Generation And Why Are They Fun To Hate?

9th June 2019 by Clotilde De Maricourt

“You are not special. You are not a beautiful and unique snowflake. You are the same organic and decaying matter as everyone else” – *Fight Club*’s Tyler Durden bluntly informs us.

One of the words to make its entry into the 2016 Collins English dictionary, the term ‘snowflake’ is often used as a derogatory shorthand to refer to millennials, a generation said to be easily offended, attention-seeking and lacking resilience. Snowflakes are accused of living in a bubble of righteousness, and shutting down free speech when it comes into conflict with their own opinions. While this term cuts across a generational divide, millennials being accused of being weaker than previous generations; it is also a politically-charged insult, most often hurled at the left by conservatives.

The word ‘snowflake’ itself refers in part to the uniqueness of each snowflake, the idea being that each and every one of us is special. Snowflakes are also delicate and fragile, a metaphor suited to the overly-sensitive and sheltered nature this group is accused of embodying.

Campus uprisings have taken place across the US, and increasingly across the UK to defend a ‘no-platforming’ policy preventing speakers perceived as having offensive views from speaking at universities. Stoked by the outrage (and coverage) engendered by controversial comments, the Oxford Union in contrast makes a point of emphasising the ‘non-PC’ nature of some of the speakers it invites. Whether or not we agree with the provocative tactic of providing a platform for controversial ideas; shutting down public figures whose views diverge from our own simply gives more credence to the accusation of snowflakes living in their own sheltered echo chambers, in which opposing opinions are quelled rather than debated.

Snowflakes are also branded as overly self-entitled, averse to any form of criticism and holding the belief that their emotions take precedent over discussion. Without undermining the importance of being in touch with one’s feelings or engaging in self-care, the fact remains that resilience is an important skill, especially when the time comes to leave the education ‘bubble’ and face the ‘real world’. Millennials are not endowed with less intelligence than previous generations, but perhaps what they lack is thicker skin. Constructive criticism shapes character and performance, and

taking it as a personal offence inhibits self-improvement and illustrates a form of close-mindedness which is unlikely to be seen in a positive light by employers.

This propensity for sensitivity is therefore justified by some as a response to an overwhelming avalanche of information regarding the worrying state of the world. However, many critics worry that the snowflake generation has taken this too far, finding constant cause for offense and victimisation – ‘whining’ rather than acting.

THE CONVERSATION

Shelly Haslam-Ormerod, Senior Lecturer in Mental Health and Wellbeing, Edge Hill University

From the baby boomers of the mid 1940s to the early 60s to Generation X yuppies who came of age in the 1980s – labelling generations is nothing new. For today’s millennials, who came of age around the early 2000s, the charge of “snowflake” has been attached to criticise their perceived sensitivity. Research has shown that labels such as these create stigma – and stigma’s role in mental health is an age-old problem. Flippant stereotyping of a generation as weak based on their mental well-being contradicts efforts to reduce mental health stigma. It also undermines the goal of ensuring society values mental health equally with physical health.

Exposing the 'weak millennial' myth

The label’s connotations need to be challenged. In reality, the millennial generation are resilient in countering the legacies left by older generations. Millennials are consuming fewer drugs and alcohol than previous generations and youth turnout at the 2017 general election in the UK was reported to be the highest in 25 years. Moreover, the emotional intelligence of millennials shines through their continued efforts to oppose injustice. Their resilience is also clear in their efforts to excel despite the challenges they face. Ultimately, the snowflake label is unfair because it encourages stigma and evokes hatred.

What I've Learned From Teaching the 'Snowflake Generation' About Trauma

By Kate McQuade

Kate McQuade teaches at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts

I teach a high school course on trauma literature, and my students belong to a generation described as the most coddled, stressed and easily traumatized in history. So the question of how much trauma to expose my students to, and why I’m doing it is often, very sincerely, on my mind.

Until recently, my students were “millennials”; now, “Generation Z.” Whatever you call them, they’re a cohort stereotyped as too fragile for difficult literature, too desirous of trigger warnings to survive being challenged, too self-involved to think beyond their own insular bubbles and face the hard truths of the real world.

But after twelve years of teaching this course, which covers some of the most emotionally difficult texts in contemporary literature—narratives of war, genocide, slavery and their still-present aftermaths—I’m pretty sure the popular characterization of my young students is wrong.

In particular, I don’t buy the narrative that this generation lacks the resilience necessary for difficult literature, nor that trigger warnings facilitate their rejection of it. For years, I’ve watched my students circle tirelessly around questions so difficult their answers regularly elude us. I believe a comfort with unanswerable questions is one reason my Gen Z students are especially good at grappling with this literature. Their desire for trigger warnings isn’t, I think, an incurious attempt to hide from that world, but rather to change its infrastructure in a way that will allow them to navigate it—to seek its deeper truths with the aid of warning signs and safety rails that any explorer moving through increasingly uncertain terrain would appreciate. This is why every September, I assign my students the most difficult books I can find. I don’t do this to traumatize them, nor to take a stand against trigger warnings (which I give my students regularly). And I’m certainly not trying to expose my students to a literature that will “toughen them up” for the world beyond our school’s walls. Literature is neither contagion of nor inoculation against trauma. Literature is practice. “But this too is true: stories can save us,” writes Tim O’Brien in *The Things They Carried*. I hang on tight to that idea, year after year, on the first day of school. Not because these stories will save my students. But because I’m hoping my students will grow up and save the rest of us.