The points you receive will be based on the quality of the responses not on the quantity! Each IR should be long enough to *fully* answer the question(s). Your responses should demonstrate that you have thought about the issues and have well-reasoned arguments backed up with evidence. For any materials that you quote directly make sure you use quotation marks and cite the source. Your PRs should engage your classmates in DEBATE.

**Your IR will be graded on**:

1. **Reading** **comprehension (40%**) Demonstrates an accurate and **sophisticated** understanding of the reading material.
2. **Evidence and Cogent Argument (40%**) you support your answer with the **most relevant** evidence *from the assigned readings and/or documentaries*.And you must cite your evidence (author’s last name and page number, or title of documentary) even when it’s not a quote. You have to tell your readers where you got the information!
3. **Writing (20%**)
   * Clear and comprehensible.
   * Grammatical and spelling mistakes should be minimal.
   * Material from the textbook is quoted and properly cited.

**Examples IR: (forum # 4, Note that these were written using a different book)**

**Example # 1:**

It is my belief that technology is neither good or bad, if using the definition Headrick provides us with. Headrick defines technology as the tools and skills used to be able to control nature. Within this definition, I believe technology cannot be seen as inherently good or bad. Technology just is. As is science. It would be akin, in my opinion, to asking whether math is inherently good or bad. Why can't it be neither? Almost all forms of life find one way or another to control nature. This then brings up a deeper philosophical question whether existence, in itself, is good or not - but I will try avoiding such nihilistic chasms. With this being said, however, there is a question as to whether technology, especially since the European Renaissance, has left an overall impact on the world that is for the better or for the worse. Even this question is a difficult one to answer - some argue technology has caused more harm than good, while others assert that it has helped the world in more ways than hurt. I have to agree with the latter, in that technology and science have helped the world far more than it has hurt. From the very earliest days of humankind, humans were able to devise ways to produce more food in order to reach the status of having a food surplus. By doing this, it finally allowed individuals to do other things besides hunting and searching for food all day. This was technology, allowing for humans to do more with their life. It is important to note that if all you wanted to do with your life was indeed hunt, then technology, in this instance, does not prohibit you to - it only gives you more options. It is technology that has made it so parents must not have a dozen children in order to have at least a couple survive past infancy.

There is also the downside, where it was technology that allowed Europeans to massacre indigenous populations in the Americas. But one might then argue back and say that the Aztecs were beheading people in city squares long before the Spanish arrived with their boats, but I do not wish to enter into the "technology doesn't kill people, people kill people" discussion. Rather I will say that is was technology that also allowed for Native Americans to later adapt and defend themselves against the Europeans, using cavalry and guns against them. Technology can be used for defense. Furthermore, as we learned in the entirety of Headrick's thesis, it was disease that killed the most Americans, not technology. So perhaps disease is the real problem. But as we have seen, technology, and the skills required to use it, spreads. Technology, if it is very important and thus used a lot, cannot be kept secret. Whether this is Americans using horses or Abyssinians using firearms. But it is not just weapons, but medicine, transportation, and knowledge of all kinds. This, I believe, is even more the case today with the internet. The internet, in itself, is proof to me that technology is a blessing rather than a curse. With all of humankind's knowledge and the ability to share it, let alone communicate with others, the internet has opened the world up to much more possibilities. And with it, technology will spread even faster, making the world more interdependent and cooperative than it ever has before. As Headrick concluded, technology alone cannot solve humankind's problems, but rest assured, it has done more good than harm, and it will continue to widen that gap in the future. (student, spring 2015)

**Example # 2:**

I would disagree with the people who state that technology and science have cause more harm than good on society. If you look at the benefits in terms of travel styles, medical care, our access to information and the connectivity that individuals have with one in other than the answer becomes evident.

Improvements in the medical industry have allowed for individuals to live longer and healthier lifestyles. Developments in birth control have given women the ability to control their own bodies. Vaccinations have been used to counter diseases such as polio and the measles. Improvements in sanitation by governments have given us important discoveries that improved our sewage and water filtration systems. Daniel Headrick uses examples such as improvements in sterilization methods and government health policy to highlight medicines enhancements on society. Two instances of this were “Ignaz Semmelweis’s discovery of the importance of physician’s washing their hands prior to delivering babies (reduced the puerperal fever) and Joseph Lister’s recognition that sterilizing instruments prior to surgery reduced infection rates.” [put page # here]

Advances have also helped individuals save time on completing jobs and given us the ability to accomplish more tasks. The improvements in transportation have allowed the world to become interconnected, given individuals more freedom and improved safety measures. Headrick uses the success of steamboats and aviation in his text to discuss transportations effects on the world. Steamboats in particular helped America flourish by allowing settlers access into the Midwest. “They were crucial in supplying forts and towns that were built along the Missouri River.” [put page # here]

Technology has also given humans access to information at the click of a button. The computer has allowed for communication methods to become instantaneous. Individuals are able to more research, enjoy access to their hobbies and expand ultimately expand their horizons, due to the Internet. Businesses are able to keep track of valuable information through data entry, give consumers instant access to their products and receive customer opinions on their experiences. It also has given consumers the ability to compare costs and search for more cost efficient products.

 Individuals have been given the ability to improve upon society with these tools, which has ultimately benefitted humanity as a whole. Headrick’s book *Power Over People* discussed how technological advances were dependent on the environment in which they were used, yet he does not oppose the growth of technology. Instead he suggests that humanity must be conscious about the repercussions. (student, spring 2015)