Recitation E

The Rise of the Selfie

What do you do when you buy some awesome new clothes? Do you show them to your friends? How about strangers? Why not post a "selfie" online? It's a great way to get "likes" from people you've never met, after all.

Every year the *Oxford English Dictionary* publishes a list of the new words it adds to the dictionary and, some time ago, one of those was "selfie." People have been taking so many selfies that it's actually become a normal part of our everyday lives. According to a recent survey, the third most common hashtag on social media is #me.

Some teenagers have a huge following from just taking selfies. Alvin Ritchie, good-looking teenager from Miami, has a social media page with only his selfies. He has over 900,000 followers! However, this fame hasn't gone to his head. As his profile says, he's just "a kid who takes pictures."

But it isn't always just harmless fun. A few years ago, Hailey Prescott, a teenager from New Zealand, posted selfies of herself wearing fashionable clothes and the pictures went viral. She quickly gained over a million followers and soon after she received offers of modeling contracts in New York.

She became very unhappy, though. She felt as if she was living a lie because her pictures didn't reflect her true personality. She was eating unhealthily just to look good for her pictures. Looking at one picture of her in tight leggings and a baggy T-shirt, she said that the picture was the only thing that made her happy that day. When she realized that her pictures were influencing other teenage girls, she decided to stop. She has been making videos since that time to warn other people of the dangers of becoming popular because of how you look.

So the message is clear. Selfies are popular, even normal, and a lot of fun. But who you are will always be more important than what you look like.

(327words)