

1. *Start by reading the questions first.*
2. *Underline any key words in the question.*
3. *Don't read every word.*
4. *Think about the order of the information.*
5. *Some of the questions might be difficult. Don't panic.*

- A. *There isn't enough time.*
- B. *Move on then go back at the end and take a guess.*
- C. *This will help you find the answer in the text.*
- D. *This will give you an idea of the information you are looking for.*
- E. *Remember it usually appears in the same order as the questions.*

IV. Test practice:

Exercise 1: Look quickly at the text on page 3 and decide what kind of text it is. What clues are there in the passage to tell you?

1. *A historical text, explaining how things changed over time.*
2. *An argument with lots of different opinions on a subject.*

Exercise 2: Read the text and complete Questions 1–6.

Questions 1–6

Choose the answer A, B or C for each question.

1. When people read articles online ...
 - A. *they find it easy to stay focused.*
 - B. *they remember more than if they read the same article on paper.*
 - C. *they find it difficult to concentrate for a long period of time.*
2. It appears that people are writing ...
 - A. *comments about things they haven't read.*
 - B. *lots of negative comments.*
 - C. *things that are not true.*
3. Michael Merzenich argues that the brain ...
 - A. *remains stable after childhood.*
 - B. *continues to change even after childhood.*
 - C. *is easily damaged.*
4. When watching a film people ...
 - A. *often don't finish watching the film.*
 - B. *always want to see something new.*

- C. sometimes find it difficult to concentrate.
5. The term 'psychological obesity' refers to ...
- A. the link between our body and our brain.
- B. the fact people prefer to read things that are not necessarily good for them.
- C. the fact our brain needs fats and sugars to function.
6. Newspaper editors ...
- A. still print stories people might not want to read.
- B. only print stories that relate to our daily lives.
- C. try to find unpleasant stories to print.

Exercise 3: Read paragraphs A and B again and complete Questions 7–10.

Questions 7–10

Complete the sentences below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

7. Around a third of internet surfers stay on a page for just a few _____.
8. The number of people who actually finish reading articles on the web is very _____.
9. By reading more online we are in danger of _____ deeper levels of thinking and understanding.
10. You are more likely to remember information from a _____ text.

Why reading online may be slowing your brain down

- A** If the person reading this article were reading online, I would need to keep things brief. A lot of you would have left already. For every 150 'readers' who open an article on the Internet, one in three of them will leave within seconds. Of the 100 who stay, only 95 will be able to concentrate and look beyond the photograph and headline at the top. Even fewer will get to the middle of the article. Put simply, only a very small number of people actually read articles on the web.
- B** Not being able to stay focused is a problem. Deeper levels of thinking and understanding may be something we are losing now much of our reading is going online. A.V. Kak found in one study that people were able to remember more information from an article that they read on paper, than a similar group who read the same article online. Imagine the effect of this on a medical student who only studies papers online. Surfing the Internet may seem like an efficient way of reading, but getting the physical text out of the library means you're less likely to forget.
- C** Even more dispiriting is the way these poor understandings are being passed on to others. Evidence suggests that people are creating links to articles they have not fully read, and

even adding comments before getting to the end. Josh Schartz, a data expert, studies the reading styles of people online. Data was not available on the exact moment when a person stopped reading and then left a recommendation. However, his research suggests that the overall number of comments and the number of people who scrolled down to the end of the article did not match. This suggests that there is a very loose relationship between reading to the end and commenting. Commenting without reading everything only creates more and more misinformation.

- D** *Studies of the brain have suggested that we should be more concerned about this than we are. Michael Merzenich has long argued against the suggestion that the brain is formed in the early years of childhood, then remains stable. Many believed that, once damaged, parts of the brain would never recover again. In fact, the brain is constantly changing and re-organising itself, losing the connections that it does not need. As people spend less time thinking for longer periods of time, their brains react by re-wiring, deleting the bits associated with careful thought, making it much more difficult in the future to think hard about issues.*
- E** *Many have argued that this is nothing new. People have always started novels and not finished them. Even films, which require a relatively short commitment of only an hour or so of our time, are sometimes unable to keep our attention to the end. However, Alvin Toffler argued that the amount of free information that is thrown at us every day is different from anything that came before. We now have so much choice that many people refuse to waste their time on anything unless it is truly fascinating.*
- F** *The problem is even worse when you consider the kind of things we read online. Unfortunately, just as our bodies are programmed to want to eat fats and sugars, things which we know are not good for us, our brains prefer to read things that are shocking, such as gossip or descriptions of others' embarrassing situations, or just looking at attractive people. In other words, we read things we know we should not. Some experts have referred to this as 'psychological obesity'.*
- G** *Editors of respectable newspapers are aware that this kind of content is popular, but they put important news stories on the front cover anyway. They know that unpleasant stories, such as the events in war-torn areas, or poverty, matter and people should know about things beyond their daily lives. Online news sites only recommend articles on things we have shown an interest in before. In other words, what Nicholas Negroponte called the 'The Daily Me', bringing personalised content, also means that you miss being introduced to new concepts. With modern online news providers, you could exist quite happily never knowing what is happening outside of your personal interests.*