

Thanh Xuan Secondary School

Full name:

Class:

READING COMPREHENSION

Đề thi chính thức chuyên sư phạm năm 2021

Passage 3

Read the following passage and choose the best answer (A, B, C or D) to the questions that follow. Write your answers (A, B, C, or D) in the corresponding numbered boxes on the answer sheet.

Reality or Virtual Reality

To know where information technology is taking us is impossible. The law of unintended consequences governs all technological revolutions. In 1438, Johanne Gutenberg wanted a cheaper way to produce hand-written Bibles. His movable type fostered a spread in literacy, an advance in scientific knowledge and the emergence of the industrial revolution.

Although no one can predict the full effect of the current information revolution, we can see changes in our daily lives. Look in any classroom. Today's teachers know they have to make lessons fast-moving and entertaining for children raised on television and computer games.

Often the changes that accompany new information technology are so subtle that we barely notice them. Before the written word, people relied on their memories. Before telephones, more people knew the pleasure of writing and receiving letters. Before television and computers, people had a stronger sense of community, a greater attachment to neighbourhoods and families. Television has glued us to our homes, isolating us from other human beings. Only one-quarter of all Americans know their next-door neighbours. Our communities will become less intimate and more isolated as we earn degrees, begin romances and gossip on the Internet, a world-wide system that allows computers to communicate with one another. The age of software will offer more games, home banking, electronic shopping, video on demand and a host of other services that unplug us from physical contact.

Is meeting face-to-face more valuable than corresponding electronically? Some neighbours still stop by when a family crisis occurs, but other people will offer condolences via e-mail. Whichever we prefer, the electronic seems to represent the future. Television teaches many of us to favour the image over the actual. The Internet pushes life beyond the old physical barriers of time and space. Here you can roam around the world without leaving home, make new friends, exchange the results of laboratory experiments with a colleague overseas, read stock prices, buy clothes, stay out of the office, conducting business via a computer that becomes your virtual office. Virtual community. Virtual travel. Virtual love. A new reality. William Gibson, whose 1984 novel, "Neuromancer", pioneered the notion of virtual living, now says that electronic communication

provides a “sensory expansion for the species by allowing people to experience an extraordinary array of things while staying geographically in the same spot”. Gibson warns, however, that the virtual can only augment our physical reality, never replace it. He applauds the countermove toward what has been called “skin” – shorthand for contact with other humans.

The desire for skin can be seen in shopping centres – people want human contact even when they could buy things via television or the telephone. Although computers and fax machines make it easier to work at home, business areas continue to grow. More people than ever are crowding into major cities, in large part because companies that provide goods and services benefit from being near one another. Employees also seek the relationships that come only from being together on a personal level with other people.

Need for skin does not negate the electronic screen’s power to mesmerise. No brain scan or biochemical study has identified a physical basis for our seemingly insatiable hunger for electronic stimulation. Computers are often more alluring than television, which already has a grip on us. Young people today spend about as much time in front of a television as in a classroom.

Technology promises more and more information for less and less effort. As we hear these promises, we must balance faith in technology with faith in ourselves. Wisdom and insight often come not from keeping up-to-date with technology or compiling facts but from quiet reflection. What we hold most valuable – things like morality and compassion – can be found only within us. While embracing the future, we can remain loyal to our unchanging humanity.

Question 1. What does the writer say about technological revolutions in the first paragraph?

- A. It’s not easy to foster them.
- B. They are followed by unforeseen results.
- C. Industrial revolution will follow them.
- D. They help the spread of literacy.

Question 2. What was one of the unplanned benefits of Gutenberg’s invention?

- A. The fact that movable type became available
- B. The fact that more people learned to read and write
- C. The spread of industry
- D. An increase in scientific experiments

Question 3. What, until recently, characterized people before television and computers?

- A. They had more direct contact with the people around them.
- B. They know other human beings in the street.
- C. They had better memories.
- D. They were very attached to writing letters.

Question 4. Gibson believes that _____.

- A. Electronic communication will contribute to the expansion of the species

- B. The Internet corresponds with our idea of what the real world is like
- C. Electronic communication should replace direct contact with other people
- D. The Internet is merely a supplement to the real world

Question 5. What social trend demonstrates that humans will seek out other humans?

- A. The rise of good employee relationships
- B. The development of business areas and cities
- C. The spread of technology to the home
- D. The provision of services by companies

Question 6. According to the writer, the electronic screen has the ability to _____.

- A. Hold our attention completely
- B. Facilitate the need for electronic stimulation
- C. Make us watch too much television
- D. Make us desire human contact

Question 7. In the writer's view, whilst willingly accepting the future we should _____.

- A. Keep up to date with the latest technology and information
- B. Not lose sight of the importance of our own mental abilities and moral values
- C. Try not to change humanity
- D. Always have faith in technology

Selected by Thom Ha