

Reading

Uses of Leisure Time

A

Although it may seem that people are working more, studies show that we have more leisure time than ever before. Yet researchers are reporting higher levels of both stress and **obesity**. These reports appear to be a sign that we are not using our leisure time to our best advantage.

B

Health experts agree that the best way to restore body and mind is to spend time in nature pursuing a comfortable level of **physical** exercise. Spending time in natural surroundings is especially **crucial** now because, for the first time, a majority of the world's population live in cities. Recent studies show that **intellectual** function weakens as a result of the energy expended simply sorting out the **overwhelming** stimuli of city life. Tests demonstrate that people **suffer** decreases in attention span, memory, and problem-solving ability after taking a short walk on a busy city street or **merely** seeing pictures of city life. Tests also show that time spent in the city results in a decreased ability to concentrate and to control **emotions** and impulses. On the other hand, spending time in the country produces the opposite effects.

C

Unfortunately, as society becomes more centered¹ on city life, we have to **rejuvenate** ourselves in nature **deliberately** rather than as a matter of course. Yet research shows that we are not spending our leisure time **rejuvenating** ourselves. Around the world, the most popular way to spend free time is watching television. This, the most **passive** of **pastimes**, is how Americans spend more than half their leisure time. Globally, the next most popular is using the Internet, also **passive**, and it ranks as the most favored² among the billions in China. The third is shopping, which may be slightly more active but is still as far from nature as possible. Modern shopping malls remove shoppers from everything natural, leaving them to experience the outdoors only between the paved parking lot³ and the mall doors.

¹BrE: centred

²BrE: favoured

³BrE: car park

D

Children are most negatively affected by city life. Parents are **reluctant** to let children play freely in the city, fearing for their health and safety, and nature is something many children in the city may never have a chance to experience. Childhood **obesity** and **depression** are reaching **epidemic** levels. **Authorities** have begun to **acknowledge** the problem, and innovative programs⁴ that give children an opportunity to spend time in nature are being introduced in countries around the world.

E

Vacations⁵ are the most **obvious chunk** of leisure time. The countries with the most vacation time are Italy, with an average of forty-two days a year, and France, with thirty-seven. The **industrious** Americans have the least: thirteen days. Yet the country most satisfied with their vacations are not the Italians but the British. The British usually divide up their vacation time, taking it in pieces throughout the year rather than all at once. Of all nationalities, the British spend the most time vacationing outdoors in their national-trust parks, where they **engage** in a comfortable level of physical activity. The British report the greatest satisfaction with their leisure time. Perhaps the rest of the world would do well to follow their lead.

Answer the questions about **Uses of Leisure Time**.

Questions 1-3

The reading passage contains five paragraphs, **A-E**.
Which paragraphs discuss the following information?
Write the correct letter, **A-E**.

- _____ 1. The most popular pastimes in different countries around the world
- _____ 2. Why it is crucial to spend time in nature
- _____ 3. In which country people spend the largest chunk of vacation time engaged in outdoor activities

⁴BrE: programmes

⁵BrE: Holidays

Questions 4–6

Choose the correct letter, **A**, **B**, **C**, or **D**.

4. We can best rejuvenate ourselves by spending time engaged in
A physical activities.
B passive activities.
C activities with children.
D activities in the city.
5. When children do not spend time in nature, they
A fear for their health and safety.
B suffer from obesity and depression.
C are reluctant to spend time with their parents.
D have more time to develop their intellectual functioning.
6. The overwhelming character of city life affects our
A interest in nature.
B choice of pastimes.
C relationships with children.
D emotions and intellectual function.

My Words

Write the words that are new to you. Look them up in the dictionary and write their definitions.

Words

Definitions

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Word Families

noun	authority	The authorities decided to keep the park open in the evenings so families could spend more time in nature.
verb	authorize ¹	The school director authorized the teachers to spend a larger chunk of the school day outdoors with their students.
adjective	authoritative	According to an authoritative source, spending time in nature improves our health.
adverb	authoritatively	The expert wrote authoritatively about the topic of exercise and its effects on mental health.

noun	deliberation	After deliberation, he decided to spend some time every day engaged in outdoor activities.
verb	deliberate	The group deliberated for an hour before reaching a decision.
adjective	deliberate	It is obvious that people need to make a deliberate decision to spend more time in nature.
adverb	deliberately	We need to spend time in nature deliberately.

noun	emotion	The stress of city life can make emotions difficult to control.
adjective	emotional	Children who don't spend a lot of time playing outdoors can end up with emotional problems.
adverb	emotionally	People respond emotionally to the overwhelming stimuli of the city.

¹BrE: authorise

ESSENTIAL WORDS FOR THE IELTS

noun	industry	His favorite pastime is building model ships, and he always goes about this activity with great industry.
adjective	industrious	He is always industrious even when engaged in leisure-time activities.
adverb	industriously	He worked on his project industriously.

noun	intellect	The stress of city life has effects on the intellect.
noun	intellectual	I enjoy reading the works of the great intellectuals of the nineteenth century.
adjective	intellectual	Some people enjoy spending their leisure time engaged in intellectual activities.
adverb	intellectually	Some people look for experiences that engage them intellectually.

noun	reluctance	Reluctance to spend time in nature is a problem for modern children.
adjective	reluctant	People can be reluctant to leave their familiar city surroundings to explore unknown places.
adverb	reluctantly	They reluctantly agreed to spend their vacation at a national park.

Word Family Practice

Choose the correct word family member from the list below to complete each blank.

It is crucial to acknowledge the importance of leisure-time activities. They are not merely a way to use up free time. They are important for our physical and **1**..... health. We need to choose activities that rest our minds and bodies so that we can feel rejuvenated when we return to work and can do our jobs more **2**..... . Some people enjoy **3**..... pastimes; other people choose different sorts of leisure-time activities. The key is to be **4**..... about choosing a pastime that is active rather than passive. Many people feel **5**..... to be physically active after a tiring week at work. However, **6**..... tell us that this is actually the best way to decrease stress and relax.

- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. emotions | emotional | emotionally |
| 2. industry | industrious | industriously |
| 3. intellect | intellectual | intellectually |
| 4. deliberation | deliberate | deliberately |
| 5. reluctance | reluctant | reluctantly |
| 6. authorities | authorizes | authoritative |

Dictionary Skill

Different Meanings

Many words have more than one meaning.

Read the definitions below. Then read the sentences and write the letter of the correct definition for each sentence.

QUESTIONS 1-2

en-gage [en-GAYJ]

A verb. to participate

B verb. to hire

- _____ 1. The school *engaged* a special teacher to teach classes about nature.
- _____ 2. Every afternoon, the children *engage* in outdoor activities.

QUESTIONS 3-4

in-dus-try [IN-dus-tree]

A noun. hard work

B noun. production and sale of goods

- _____ 3. Many people in this city work in the clothing *industry*.
- _____ 4. *Industry* will help you move up in your profession, but don't forget to spend some time in leisure activities as well.

Listening

CD 1
Track
7

Listen to the talk. Complete the notes below.
Write **NO MORE THAN ONE WORD** for each answer.

Research on Leisure

People engaged in **1**..... pastimes don't feel rejuvenated.

Popular Pastimes:

2..... Activities

- Sports
- Playing with children
- Gardening

3..... Activities

- Reading
- Playing computer games
- Doing puzzles
- Using the Internet

Activities that exercise both our minds and bodies help us avoid **4**..... and **5**.....