Reading and Understanding

1 Read and discuss.

Look at the picture and discuss the questions.

1 What do you think the teenagers in the picture are doing?
2 What do you think the word "Screenagers" might mean?

2 Read and choose.

Read the article and decide which statement is not true.

1 Many teenagers are addicted to their smartphones.
2 Teenagers spend most of their time in front of screens.
3 Excessive screen time is negative regardless of content.
4 Too much screen time can affect teenagers negatively.

NEWSPAPER

15/09/2019 Sunday www.englishform.com №1864648

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'Screenagers'

What is the longest amount of time you have gone without using your mobile phone? How many people can go a whole day or even a few hours without checking their phone? Technology is a big part of our lives and many teenagers, who have grown up in the generation known as **digital natives**, are **addicted to** their mobile devices.

Ruston, the director of a documentary called *'Screenagers'*, says that most teenagers cannot stop playing with their phones. 'My son wanted to play more video games and my daughter was always on social media,' she said. Her teenagers are not the only ones **glued to** their devices. A recent study showed that on average, teenagers spend nearly nine hours a day in front of a screen. But how do teenagers spend their time online? According to the study, watching *YouTube* is the most popular way to spend time online and will consume over 40 minutes of a person's day. *Facebook* is almost as popular as *YouTube*, with young people spending an average of 35 minutes a day using it. *Snapchat* and *Instagram* are used for 25 minutes and 15 minutes per day, respectively. The least popular social media for this age group is *Twitter*.

Excessive screen time can lead to serious problems and even harm the physical development of young people's brains. For example, research has shown that too much screen time can lead to a decrease in a teenager's **attention span**. Studies have also shown that 80% of video games contain violent content, and teenagers who play these games may develop aggressive thoughts and actions. However, the good news is that research also indicates that some video games, such as games where you help someone or work with others, can make teenagers more helpful .

One thing that is clear is that teenagers often struggle with self-control. Even though they may know that playing computer games or **streaming videos** is less productive than doing school work, it is difficult for them to reduce their screen time. Therefore, it is important that parents monitor their children. At the same time, parents should remember that this is how today's teenagers live. If screen time is not negatively affecting a young person's school work or physical, mental or social development, parents should not worry too much.

In conclusion, it is important to realise that excessive screen time does not always have negative **consequences**. The content and context of a teenager's screen use is more important than the amount of time they spend in front of a screen.

3 Read and answer.

Read the article in Activity 2 again and answer the questions below.

According to the article ...

1. On average, how many hours per day do teenagers spend online?
2. What problems can excessive screen time cause?
3. Which is the most popular social media platform for this age group?
4. Do all video games contain violent content?
5. What do you think the writer means in the statement *'The content and context of a teenager's screen use is more important than the amount of time they spend in front of a screen.'*?

4 Read and match.

Look at the word and expressions in bold in the article in Activity 2.
Match them to their meanings below.

1. the length of time for which a person is able to concentrate on a particular activity
2. a person who was born or has grown up since the use of digital technology became common
3. to pay very close attention to (something, especially a television)
4. more than necessary or normal
5. when a person uses something uncontrollably for example smartphones, computers, and gaming systems
6. something that happens as a result of a particular action or set of conditions
7. to play videos online without downloading them

5 Discuss.

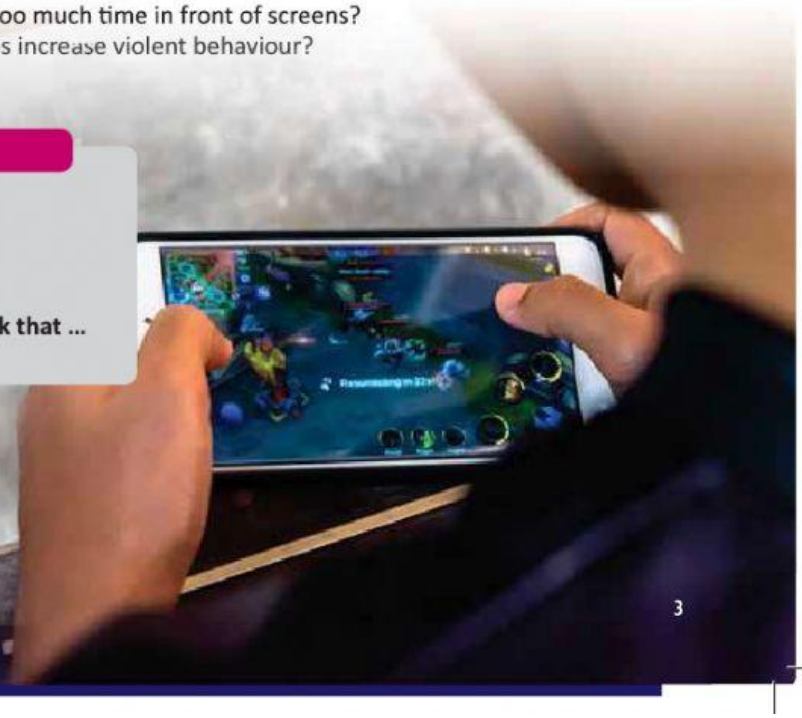
Discuss the questions with a partner.
Use the expressions for giving your opinion from the Useful Language box in your discussion.

1. Why do you think teenagers spend too much time in front of screens?
2. Do you think that online video games increase violent behaviour?

Useful Language

Giving your opinion

In my opinion, ...

I think/ believe/ feel that ...

Based on my own experience, I think that ...