

MODULE 1



TR. 3 DIRECTIONS: You will hear a text about **a flying incident during the Second World War** twice. Before you listen to it, you have **1 minute** to read the questions. While listening for the first time, you can look at the questions and the suggested choices, but you are not allowed to take notes. When you hear the whole text, you have **3 minutes** to answer the questions on your answer sheet, choosing among **A, B** or **C**. Then you will hear the text again and will have **1 minute** to check your answers.

- 1. During the Second World War, it was ordinary for a non-flying staff member of the Royal Air Force to aid in the take-off of planes in all kinds of weather.**
A) True B) False C) No information in the text
- 2. Margaret Horton misunderstood the signal of the pilot, so she jumped off the plane's tail immediately.**
A) True B) False C) No information in the text
- 3. If it hadn't been for the vigilance of the Control Tower crew, the incident would have ended tragically.**
A) True B) False C) No information in the text
- 4. The incident may be put down to the unprofessional way in which the squadron was being managed.**
A) True B) False C) No information in the text
- 5. Lieutenant Cox got fined and reprimanded for putting the life of a colleague under threat.**
A) True B) False C) No information in the text



TR.4 DIRECTIONS: You will hear a text about **enhancing life quality** twice. Before you listen to it, you have **1 minute** to read the questions. While listening for the first time, you can look at the questions and the suggested choices, but you are not allowed to take notes. When you hear the whole text, you have **3 minutes** to answer the questions on your answer sheet, choosing among **A, B** or **C**. Then you will hear the text again and will have **1 minute** to check your answers.

- 1. According to the research discussed by the presenter going to the gym very often is not altogether a shortcut to good health.**
A) True B) False C) No information in the text
- 2. Our sitting and standing patterns influence us on a level as deep as our DNA components.**
A) True B) False C) No information in the text
- 3. In the experiment described in the talk, individuals had to record how long they spent sitting against doing active exercise daily.**
A) True B) False C) No information in the text
- 4. According to another study we lose on average 3,4 years of our life by simply sitting and watching TV longer.**
A) True B) False C) No information in the text
- 5. Both pieces of research conclude that a sedentary way of life is especially bad for people on the wrong end of middle age and older as opposed to younger individuals.**
A) True B) False C) No information in the text



TR. 7 DIRECTIONS: You will hear a text about **student loans in the UK** twice. Before you listen to it, you have **2 minutes** to read the questions. While listening for the first time, you can look at the questions and the suggested choices, but you are not allowed to take notes. When you hear the whole text, you have **4 minutes** to answer the questions on your answer sheet, choosing among **A, B, C** or **D**. Then you will hear the text again and will have **1 minute** to check your answers.

- 1. The text primarily deals with ... in the UK.**
 - A) the overall cost of studying at university
 - B) the ridiculously high interest on student loans
 - C) the high cost of student accommodation
 - D) the ratio between student loans and the interest paid on them

- 2. To be able to live fairly well, currently one needs ...**
 - A) £1,000 a month
 - B) £350 a month
 - C) £40 a week
 - D) NONE of the above

- 3. According to the author students ... are in a worse situation.**
 - A) from less well-off families
 - B) from a more affluent background
 - C) who have not taken out loans
 - D) who dispose of £350 a month

- 4. According to the text, students**
 - A) must start a part-time job alongside their studies.
 - B) will have to fall back on their relatives only.
 - C) are given a heavy financial responsibility too soon.
 - D) should first make sure they will be able to return their loans.

- 5. According to the presenter the current situation with student maintenance loans**
 - A) can hardly teach them to become frugal and careful with money.
 - B) will lead to the number of students dropping dramatically in future.
 - C) potentially may be turned into an asset on their credit ratings.
 - D) does not mean students need to take out more loans or enter their overdraft.

DIRECTIONS: Read the text below. Then read the questions that follow it and choose the best answer to each question among **A**, **B** or **C**, marking your answers on your answer sheet.

Time for a digital detox?

I'm curled on the sofa, officially watching an old film on BBC2, but my right hand keeps twitching for my smartphone. The background music is a 1970s tune and I want to identify it with my *Shazam* app. Then I'll go online and find out more about the band.

I like the dress the heroine's wearing. I'll google 'blue dress white collar' and when I find something similar, I'll order it in one click. I glance at *Twitter* to see if anyone else is watching, but then I am distracted by a friend's text. Oh, did the hero just die? I missed it. I could ask my husband but he's busy on email.

It's fair to say I'm a digiholic. Virtually every second of my day is spent with my phone at an arm's reach. But I'm far from the worst offender. The average person checks their phone every six and a half minutes – 200 times a day. One in four of us admits to spending longer online each day than we do asleep, while 73 per cent say that we would struggle to go the whole day without our phones or computers.

My children, it appears, are going in the same direction. Aged eight and six, both adore nothing more than to go 'on the *iPad*'. The elder emails her friends whenever she can and is begging to be allowed to join *Facebook*. By the age of seven, the average British child born today will have spent an entire year of his or her life made up of 24-hour days, in front of a screen, a statistic that's causing many middle-class parents to approach digital devices with the horror previously reserved for deep-fried Mars bars.

'I'm seeing more and more parents who want advice because their children are spending too much time on screens,' says Frances Booth, author of *The Distraction Trap*, who runs family and individual coaching sessions on 'digital detoxing'. 'They're worried that their children aren't learning how to communicate properly, that they never read any more and that their learning is being affected because they're constantly being distracted by phone messages.'

'To counter this, families are agreeing to go one evening a week, or a weekend without technology, or to go on holidays with digital devices banned,' she adds. Booth is concerned with the effect that 'multi-tasking', the process by which we use various gadgets simultaneously to play games, watch television, chat to friends and google pictures of cute puppies, is having on our brains.

Research shows that doing even just two or three tasks at once puts far more demand on our brains than doing them consecutively. 'We are doing so many things, all we are doing is processing on a surface level. This has serious consequences for learning,' Booth confirms.
Perhaps you should go on Digital Detox too?

- 1. The author of the text is a psychologist offering counseling to people who have problems overusing digital devices.**
A) True B) False C) No information in the text
- 2. Doing several things at a time and using a number of electronic gadgets simultaneously affects mostly children and young people.**
A) True B) False C) No information in the text
- 3. Almost half of the world population now spends more time on the internet than sleeping.**
A) True B) False C) No information in the text
- 4. In general, most parents are concerned about their children's 'online habits'.**
A) True B) False C) No information in the text
- 5. It can be inferred that the text draws quite a pessimistic picture of humanity's digital future, unless something is changed.**
A) True B) False C) No information in the text

MODULE 2

Space Fever

Picture this: you and your three best friends or your honey manage to finally escape work and get away for the weekend. You're on the beach, the sun is shining, the waves are gently rolling in and the warm breeze tickles your skin. It's quiet. Peaceful. Idyllic. You lean back into your chaise lounge and check out your friend back in Ohio's most recent status update on BuzzFeed.

If this sounds even remotely plausible to you then you've probably already caught the disease: Space Fever. A Yoga guru warned of this disease back in 1995. 'Space Fever is a disease in which you cannot be comfortable in the space you are in... it happens to humanity when progress is faster technically than imaginable,' he warns.

Think of the last time you showed up to meet friends at a cool new restaurant and beat them there. What did you do next? Perhaps as soon as the tiniest bit of social anxiety or discomfort crept in, out came the iPhone to remove you from your current space – the one that didn't give you the immediate gratification you were looking for.

What about your jogging routine? Do you soak up the beauty of nature – switching up your route based on what blocks or paths feel right that day? Do you breathe deeply and try to sense the Vitamin D seeping into your skin while the chirping of birds accompanies you? Or are your earbuds in – connecting you to your iPod that is not only tuning out the outside world, but also has a preselected list of music?

So it seems logical there's a reason why (most) parents have a 'no phone, no TV' at the table rule. It's because they want the family to spend some actual time, existing together in the space they are currently in. If Dad is mentally at the Yankees game, Mom's in her *Etsy* store checking on her craft sales and the kids are doing digital battle with mythic villains, then who's really there eating together? Disembodied skin bags that have caught a disease that is contagious and more common than the common cold: Space Fever.

Only a few years ago, we were much less susceptible to Space Fever. Sure, you could read a book or put on your walkman but there was no way to 'time travel' away when feeling antsy or bored. We had to be where we were – sometimes in an uncomfortable social situation and sometimes on a beautiful beach or

at a lovely dinner with our family. There wasn't an option to go anywhere else and because of this, we didn't experience this same discomfort of being in our current space.

- 1. In the text, Space Fever is described as a(n)**
 - A) harsh refusal to talk to your family and friends.
 - B) clever strategy to avoid boredom and idleness.
 - C) idyllic escape from an unwanted reality.
 - D) unbeatable tendency to overuse electronic devices.

- 2. Digital devices are presented in the text as**
 - A) intricate tools which aid human-to-human interaction.
 - B) clever machines used by naughty kids willing to spite their parents at dinner time.
 - C) powerful instruments which help people escape from the current place and time.
 - D) pieces of equipment employed in space travel and interstellar communication.

- 3. The author calls modern people 'disembodied skin bags' in order to**
 - A) express her detachment from them.
 - B) sound the alarm at their behaviour.
 - C) praise the new levels of human ingenuity.
 - D) account for their passion for technologies.

- 4. As used in the text in the last paragraph, the word 'antsy' means**
 - A) nervous.
 - B) envious.
 - C) cautious.
 - D) relaxed.

- 5. The most logical continuation of this text would deal with**
 - A) descriptions of a device-free past.
 - B) advice on coping with space fever.
 - C) suggestions to call your nearest and dearest.
 - D) ideas about discarding electronic gadgets safely.

Citizen Science

Every day, in all kinds of weather throughout Sydney's winter months, Wayne Reynolds wakes up two hours before dawn. He then makes his way to Cape Solander, a rocky point overlooking the Pacific Ocean at Botany Bay, in Sydney's south, where he spends an average of nine hours a day whale watching.

Last winter Reynolds, a retired mechanic and a founding member of the Cape Solander Whale Migration Study, helped count an unprecedented 2646 humpbacks during 68 consecutive days of watching the ocean from the Cape Solander lookout. The toughest times were the wild days 'when the wind's blowing in your face or you've got really bad rain or fog,' he says.

'We had a blue whale which stayed around for two hours and two southern right whales,' Reynolds says of recent sightings. 'And Bladerunner (a celebrity humpback) who is easy to recognise because she was hit by a very big boat and has got propeller marks down her body... like vertical stripes.'

His cetacean hunt began in earnest in the mid-90s, long before 'citizen science' – the term for scientist-led and volunteer-fuelled research collaborations – became popular.

A long-time whale lover with time on his hands, 49-year-old Reynolds deduced that an annual oceanic migration was probably taking place close to the ocean near his home in Sutherland, New South Wales. He headed to Botany Bay National Park, scanned the panoramic vista across to the Tasman Sea and began counting. Very quickly he realised he was right. That was in 1997.

Every year since, he and his volunteer colleagues have spent each May to July scanning the ocean from first light until dusk in an attempt to spot as many of the estimated 14,000-18,000 migrating humpbacks as they can.

There is nothing new about ordinary folk pitching in to help on scientific projects. Amateur star-gazers and bird-watchers have been making observations for centuries. As far back as the mid-1770s, US Founding Father Thomas Jefferson became so fascinated by the weather that he started recording regular temperature observations – something now regarded as a stepping stone in the development of that country's weather service.

One of the main ways science benefits is financial. Without volunteer labour, many endeavours can be difficult to fund. For example, the Cape Solander whale

project would have cost the government hundreds of thousands of dollars had citizen scientists not been involved.

What is changing is how scientists are harnessing the enthusiasm of amateurs, as well as the scope, scale and impact of these ventures.

But citizen science is also prompting scientists to become more imaginative. At the University of Washington in the US, biochemist David Baker devised an online jigsaw puzzle game called *Foldit*, in which players decode and design three-dimensional proteins to show researchers new ways to understand protein structures.

1. Wayne Reynolds does his whale watching activities

- A) only at daybreak.
- B) when it is windy and rainy.
- C) when dusk sets in.
- D) in one season.

2. Being a 'whale-watcher' of a long experience he is now able to

- A) recognise individual cetaceans.
- B) give relevant advice to marine scientists.
- C) share good practices with like-minded people.
- D) set up whale-watching organisations.

3. His and his fellows' task is to

- A) protect whales from predators.
- B) identify where there is ample food for whales.
- C) establish why whales swim in Botany Bay.
- D) watch over the number of the whale population.

4. Such people are necessary mainly because they

- A) contribute to scientific research without being paid.
- B) popularise love of nature.
- C) found serious research establishments.
- D) are not limited by their formal education.

5. 'Regular' citizens' participation in different science-related activities is

- A) condemned as potentially dangerous.
- B) mocked at as ridiculously ill-conducted.
- C) described as adequately helpful and inspiring.
- D) praised as indispensably vital.