Name: _____

READING

A WEEK WITHOUT MY *smartphone*

by David Sharpe

1 When I read that we spend three hours every day checking our smartphones, I was surprised. What was I missing in the real world when walking down the street, lost in a virtual world of social media updates and videos of dogs on bicycles? I promised myself I would use my smartphone less ... but it didn't happen. But then my phone died, and I had to wait a week for a new one. Would I survive? I thought it would be hard, but, in fact, it was pretty easy – and surprising, in a good way, for a number of reasons!

2 The first result was pretty amazing – on the first day in the office without my phone, I was thinking more deeply and concentrating more. I had rediscovered my brain! Not having access to my favorite apps meant that I wasn't interrupted every five minutes by social media alerts, soccer scores, and WhatsApp group messages. Without these distractions, I was more productive and felt satisfied that I'd done a better job.

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3 Another result was that I actually talked to people more and felt more connected to them, although we weren't in constant contact online. At lunch with friends one day, I realized I was being more responsive to their news and sympathetic to their problems because I wasn't constantly checking my phone. Another day I was in a new city and I asked people for directions instead of using an app. Their kindness made me feel welcome, and I discovered my brain has a very good GPS!

4 I was worried that I would be bored without my phone as entertainment, but, actually, I enjoyed it – I'd forgotten how much I love books and newspapers. I'd also forgotten how much I enjoyed doing Sudoku puzzles. I had an app for that on my smartphone, but never used it. Doing one every day in the newspaper felt a lot more special, and it became part of my morning routine. My brain felt a lot sharper and much more ready for the day ahead as a result.

5 One completely unexpected result of not having a smartphone was that I slept so much better and felt more awake in the morning. At night, I relaxed with a book before going to sleep, instead of watching Netflix or reading the news on my phone. Apparently, the blue light from smartphone screens makes our brain think it's morning, so it's releasing chemicals to wake us up, just when we're trying to get to sleep. That's not very smart!

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6 Of course, at times, it was extremely inconvenient to have no cell-phone Internet connection, but, all in all, there were a lot of benefits to not being connected 24/7. Although I was jumping for joy when my new smartphone arrived, I'm a lot more careful about how much I use it now. So, if you think you use your smartphone too much, put it away for a few days and see what happens. You never know, you may become smarter!

Read the first sentences of paragraphs 2-6 quickly. What is the main idea of each paragraph? Match the paragraphs with the ideas a-e.

a With no smartphone, he felt less tired.
b He worked better.
c He communicated more often face-to-face.
d There were more advantages than disadvantages.
e He found things to do to entertain himself.

Read the whole text. Are the sentences True or False?

1 The writer stopped using his smartphone because of an article he read. _____
2 Normally his smartphone distracts him when he's working. _____
3 He has become a better listener when he's with friends. _____
4 He doesn't enjoy reading books and newspapers any more. _____
5 The light from smartphone screens helps us sleep. _____
6 The writer now uses his smartphone differently than before. _____

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