Name: Class:

The Truth About Multitasking

READING Read the sentences and then the article that follows. Focus on meaning and look for clues to help you complete the text with the sentences. **Write A, B, or C into the correct boxes to complete the text.**

A. Your productivity decreases when you constantly interrupt yourself by switching from task to task.

B. What surprised researchers was that there was a handful of individuals (2.5 percent) who showed no decline in their performance, a few of whom actually showed improved performance when tasks were combined.

C. They would be better off doing each task separately.

Surprise: Very few people can actually multitask!

Those who can are the rare exception. Most people who think they are multitasking are actually just shifting their attention rapidly from one thing to another, giving them the impression they are able to do two or more things at the same time.

For the vast majority of people, performing two demanding tasks at once makes them do worse at both tasks. (1). _____ A 2010 University of Utah study investigated what happened to participants' driving ability when they attempt to do other things while driving (in this case, memorize words and solve math problems). Researchers found that 97.5% of the 200 participants showed a *significant decrease* in both their driving abilities and memory skills when multitasking. (2). _____ Researchers dubbed this small percentage of participants "supertaskers." More research is needed: will those participants always be able to do well when performing the two tasks at once? What about tasks other than the ones used in the study?

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For most of us, multitasking is inefficient and stressful to the brain. Constantly shifting your attention hurts your concentration and slows learning. (3). _____ You fragment your attention. You lose time.

Even though you may try to do several things at once, the brain does not like it and does not get used to it. Research on university students' media multitasking revealed that heavy multitaskers were less competent at doing several things at once as light multitaskers. (In the study, media included such things as print media, television, computer-based videos, such as YouTube, music, video games, email, texting, cell phone use, web surfing, and other computer-based applications, such as word processing. Students in the study were using these in various combinations.) As the study indicates, spending time multitasking does not make you better at it – in fact, it's just the opposite.

The bottom line:

(Complete the following with your own ideas)

1. Do/Don't

   _____

2. Do/Don't

   _____

3. Do/Don't

   _____

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