

EXERCISE 8

Quickly skim read the next paragraphs. Then do the exercise.

Paragraph D

However, there are several downsides to this form of technology. Firstly, no one would disagree that email puts pressure on people to respond immediately as soon as they find a new message in their inbox. A recent French report says that anxiety and general tiredness has risen dramatically amongst office workers, largely because they carry their digital devices with them, feeling obliged to constantly check for new mail from clients. A further problem is how to write an email, especially when communicating with people we don't know well. In the past, everyone knew that it was 'correct' to begin a letter 'Dear Sir/Madam' and end with 'Yours faithfully'. Nowadays, these phrases often feel too formal. No one wants to give the wrong impression when writing an email, but without 'rules', this can easily happen.

Paragraph E

Another significant impact technology has had on methods of communication is in the field of education. Traditionally, if someone wanted to take a higher education course, they would have to travel to attend lessons on a university campus. Nowadays, it is possible to take a range of courses through distance learning, and the number of these is likely to rise in the next few years. What is the appeal of studying this way? Many online courses encourage students to take part in online forums and post comments about their learning experiences, reading assignments and projects. They must also comment on their classmates' posts. In one way, this approach certainly appears to encourage communication.

Paragraph F

However, some surveys have found the opposite to be true. Because online students are physically separated, and indeed may never have met, they do not have the opportunity to build a good relationship. Students who come to campus regularly have the chance to get to know and support each other, and feel part of a community, so when they are asked to comment on the other person's work, they can do this in ways they know the other person will appreciate. For example, some students prefer their peers to be direct

in their criticism, whereas others might prefer a more sensitive approach. But when students are asked to comment on the work or opinions of people they have never met, they are often reluctant to do so. Interestingly, one of the main reasons why people give up studying on their online courses is that they miss the face-to-face interaction with others. Certainly technology has made our lives more 'convenient' but perhaps also more complicated. There are many questions still to be answered about how we can and should use our modern digital tools to enable effective communication, an evolutionary skill that has been centuries in development.

Match the paragraphs with the general topics. Look at the text on page 1 again if you need to.

1. the advantages of studying online

- D
- E
- F

2. problems that occur at work and in formal situations because of digital communication

- D
- E
- F

3. the disadvantages of studying online

- D
- E
- F