

Reading

1 Read the article on page 57. What is its main purpose?

- to entertain
- to persuade
- to inform

2 Read the article again. In which paragraph can you find the following information?

- The timing of a decision affects the outcome of the decision. ____
- We make careless decisions when suffering from decision fatigue. ____
- We make a choice based on which decision is simpler to make. ____
- We can convince our brains that we have the ability to make a sound decision. ____
- We purchase unnecessary items when suffering from decision fatigue. ____
- Decisions we make can be both major and minor. ____
- When tired, we may choose to make no decision at all. ____
- Factors determining a decision were not those expected. ____

3 Complete the sentences with a word/phrase from the article.

- When tired, we make _____ decisions or no decisions at all.
- Criminals with a similar _____ can receive different decisions about parole.
- Our _____ is affected by decision fatigue as we take the easy option.
- A tired brain may focus on one effect of a decision without _____ other effects.
- _____ the day ahead to avoid decision fatigue later.
- Decide on the things that are more _____ to you first.

4 Choose the correct option a, b or c.

- In paragraph 2, the writer uses shopping to
 - bring humour into the text.
 - exemplify the effect of decision-making.
 - show similarities between the past and present.
- In paragraph 3, the writer uses research to
 - support an argument.
 - highlight a decision.
 - evaluate a process.
- In paragraph 4, the writer uses questions to
 - contrast two decision-making scenarios.
 - review the decision-making process.
 - criticise the way in which we make decisions.
- In paragraph 6, the writer mentions a study to help
 - illustrate one effect of decision fatigue.
 - suggest an alternative to decision-making.
 - persuade the reader to complete an action.

5 Match the words in the box with the definitions.

assess clarity conserve deteriorate
fatigue sound thoughtless
willpower

- controlling your mind and body to achieve something _____
- something which is clear _____
- great tiredness _____
- good or acceptable _____
- make a judgement after thinking carefully about something _____
- become worse _____
- without thinking _____
- save _____

6 Choose the correct alternatives.

Ben88

I have to make decisions all day long and my brain power definitely ¹*conserves/deteriorates* as the day goes on. In the morning, I make ²*sound/thoughtless* decisions, but by the afternoon I can't.

MagsL

I find it hard to make decisions with any ³*clarity/fatigue* when I'm tired. They tend to be ⁴*sound/thoughtless* and therefore, a bit rubbish!

RickyS

When I have a routine, I can easily say no to a bar of chocolate, but when my routine is all over the place, my ⁵*clarity/willpower* disappears. My brain is unable to ⁶*assess/conserve* the choices sensibly and says 'yes' every time!

Zanne

If you suffer from ⁷*clarity/fatigue* when it comes to decision-making, ⁸*assess/conserve* brainpower by asking someone to make the decision for you!



The rise of decision fatigue

¹Have you ever felt as if choosing between an americano and a latte was just one decision too many? If so, then you might have been suffering from decision fatigue. Even the simplest of decisions can get us down if it comes after having made dozens of other choices. It's estimated that we can make as many as 70 decisions each day, from the fairly everyday *What cereal should I buy?* to the more significant *Who shall I vote for in this election?*

²Decision-making was once easy, according to my grandparents. The local shop sold one type of butter, one type of bread and one type of cheese. These days, just going to the supermarket can result in decision fatigue. By the second to last aisle, we find ourselves throwing the first things we see into the basket. That's because our brains become mentally tired from thinking through all possible consequences of an action. The result is one of two things – we make thoughtless, and therefore, potentially poor, decisions to conserve some energy (throwing things in the basket we don't really want) or we do nothing to conserve all energy (not bothering to vote).

³Decision fatigue can actually be very serious. When a person has to make several decisions in a row, the ability to make sound decisions can deteriorate. In one study, researchers found that judges deciding whether or not to offer prisoners parole were influenced not by the type of crime or the type of victim as we might think, but by the time of day in which they made their decision. If two prisoners with the same background had their cases assessed at different times of the day, the decision made late in

the afternoon was more likely to be 'no parole' than the decision made first thing in the morning.

⁴Decision fatigue can also have an effect on our willpower. If we have a choice between cooking a healthy meal and ordering pizza, the latter is more attractive as it's the easier decision to make – (*What pizza do I want?*) The former is more challenging as it'll require more decisions – (*What meal? What goes in it? How should I cook it?*, etc.). If you're trying to live your life in a particular way, decision fatigue can seriously affect your ability to do it.

⁵It also explains why sometimes we're persuaded to buy things we don't need. We've just spent an hour negotiating the price of a new car at a dealership. Now they're asking us whether we want to pay extra for a year's set of cleaning materials to keep it looking brand new. Our brains are tired, all we can think about is one outcome – how we want to keep our car shiny – so we say yes without considering the other, potentially more negative, outcomes, for example the money we waste as we never clean our own car.

⁶There are ways to overcome decision fatigue. Plan your day first thing in the morning while your brain's fresh so that you're clear about what meals you're going to have and whether or not you're going to the gym, for example. Focus on the most significant things first to make sure you make those decisions with as much clarity as possible. You can also try telling yourself that you have sufficient brainpower, even if you're tired. One study found that this was enough to help you make a good decision.