1 Reactions

Reading

1 **Read the article about ASMR. Choose the best subtitle for the article.**

1 How to make successful ASMR videos.

2 Why do companies love ASMR?

3 Understanding why ASMR is so popular.

2 **Read the article again. Tick (✓) the options that are true according to the article. There may be more than one.**

1 Topics of ASMR videos can be:

- a everyday activities that are presented in an unusual way.
- b artistic activities that people do in silence.
- c instruction videos on how to learn a particular skill.
- d films of unusual and exciting challenges that experts have completed.

2 While watching the videos, viewers describe:

- a a sense of calm.
- b feeling unpleasant physical sensations.
- c having positive feelings.
- d some pain in their head or back.

3 A study showed that ASMR reactions:

- a are not based on fact.
- b are not seen in everyone.
- c can't be influenced by the viewer.
- d do not have the same causes for everyone.

4 The effects of ASMR:

- a are better than some other relaxation activities.
- b are neither beneficial nor harmful.
- c are seen in people's bodies as well as their minds.
- d can be measured in the human body.

5 Before 2014:

- a people watched private ASMR channels on social media.
- b the only place to see ASMR was in TV adverts.
- c there were no ASMR artists on YouTube.
- d very few people knew they had ASMR.



How does it make you feel?

Soap carving

If you have ever watched videos on YouTube, then you're probably familiar with the videos that come up as suggestions for you to watch next, some of which have strange titles like 'soap cutting' or 'oil painting with commentary'. Click on these videos and you enter a whole new world – the world of ASMR.

ASMR stands for 'autonomous sensory meridian response', and the word *autonomous* means that your reaction, or 'response', is automatic – you don't control it. Here you can find, for example, a thirty-minute video showing hands, a knife and a bar of soap which is slowly cut to nothing – with only the sound of the knife scratching and scraping against the surface of the soap. Or an artist completing a painting and whispering a commentary while she does so. These types of video often have in common someone repeating actions very slowly and very, very quietly.

What is the purpose of these videos, many of which have millions of views? According to their viewers, these videos make them feel calm, relaxed and comfortable. And unusually, they also feel physical effects. Some people describe a tingling sensation that starts at the top of their head and goes down their back. Others say they feel like a warm wave is washing over their head.

So what's going on? Dr Nick Davis, of Manchester Metropolitan University, did the first study into ASMR in 2015. He studied the autonomous aspect, that is to say the effects that are independent from the viewer's control. Dr Davis found that the causes of the sensory responses that viewers describe are different for different people. However, it seems that the most common cause is a voice that speaks in a whisper. As Dr Davis explains, some people don't have any response at all to ASMR videos, but others show a strong reaction every time.

An interesting question is whether the feelings of relaxation are due to changes in the body or only in the mind. Scientists at the University of Sheffield looked at what happens to people's heart rates when they watched videos of ASMR and non-ASMR videos. Their results show that people's heart rates lower when they experience ASMR. The scientists reported that the effect of ASMR videos is similar to other stress-reduction techniques, but only in people who are sensitive to ASMR. The research suggests that ASMR may have benefits for our health.

One thing is clear: before around 2014 not many people knew anything about ASMR or even that they were sensitive to it. People discovered it mostly through YouTube and its popularity has grown as there are more and more videos to watch. Some ASMR artists, as they are known, have millions of subscribers on their channels. These days, we can also find the influence of ASMR in popular culture, from pop music to advertising. Snack foods, furniture companies and cosmetics firms have all made adverts that feature whispering and quiet sounds. You might not realize what they are doing, but these adverts seem to be effective. Unless, that is, you are one of the people who finds ASMR makes you feel annoyed, irritated or even stressed!

LIVEWORKSHEETS

3 Match the beginnings of the sentences (1–6) with the endings (a–f).

1 You might discover ASMR accidently because of	a companies started to make ASMR adverts.
2 ASMR artists often whisper, since	b people show consistent responses to ASMR videos.
3 Scientists think that the sensory reactions are real, because	c some people find it annoying.
4 ASMR is effective because of	d the way it affects heart rates.
5 Due to the popularity of ASMR,	e the way YouTube works.
6 ASMR can produce strong reactions. That's why	f this makes their viewers feel relaxed.

4 Read the sentences from different research studies. Do they suggest the evidence is strong (S) or weak (W)?

1 The most common cause of ASMR seems to be a very quiet voice. _____

2 Research into the physical effects of yoga shows clear benefits in the areas of blood pressure and heart disease. _____

3 Noise pollution is likely to increase anxiety in some groups of people. _____

4 Loud music may affect men and women differently. _____

5 Physical exercise has been consistently shown to improve sleep. _____

6 Listening to music while you work might help you concentrate. _____

Grammar

Forming questions

1 Put the words in the correct order to make questions about emotions.

1 smile / you / makes / what / ?

_____

2 it / means / this / emoticon / 'Hello,' / doesn't / ?

_____

3 were / why / surprised / news / you / by / my / ?

_____

4 like to know / were / if / we'd / happy / our / with / suggestion / you.

_____

5 you / coffee / don't / love / fresh / the / of / smell / ?

_____

2 Rewrite the questions about symbols as indirect questions. Begin with the expression given.

1 What does this emoji mean? Can you tell me _____ .

2 Does every language use the same system? I'd like to know if _____ .

3 Can you download these new emojis? Do you know whether _____ ?

4 How did you put the symbol in your message? Could you show me _____ ?

5 Does this symbol look Japanese or Korean? Do you think _____ ?

6 Did all the emoticons appear OK in my email? I wonder if _____ .

3 Choose the correct option in the subject questions about text messages.

1 *What / Which* makes text messaging so popular?

2 How many cultures *do use / use* 'Western' style emoticons?

3 *What / Who* invented emoticons?

4 Who *does send / sends* the most texts in your family?

5 *Which / Who* organization develops emoticons?

6 What *does come / comes* between brackets in the 'Asian' style face emoticon?

4 Complete the questions about communication with the correct question tag.

1 It isn't difficult to use this chat app, _____?

2 Text messages are free now, _____?

3 We can't send big files with this system, _____?

4 You sent those emails, _____?

5 You want to join our mailing group, _____?

6 Your brother hasn't changed his phone number, _____?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

5 Choose the correct option to complete the negative questions. There is one extra item.

Aren't you	Can't you	Didn't you	Isn't it
Shouldn't we	Weren't they	Wouldn't you	

1 A: There's no Wi-Fi signal here.
B: _____ use your data on your phone?
2 A: I was confused by Dani's reaction in the argument.
B: _____ know some people smile when they're angry?
3 A: Shall we sign the contract now?
B: _____ read it again first?
4 A: I can't believe they're late again.
B: I know. _____ think they could apologize?
5 A: What's the password for the Wi-Fi?
B: _____ written on the back of the router?
6 A: There aren't any envelopes left, I'll buy some more.
B: _____ ordered last week?

6 Complete the conversation about a text message with one word or contraction in each space.

Clara: Look at this message from Nil. Do you think he's being serious?

Meera: Let's see. Hmm, it's hard to say, [1]_____ it?

Clara: I know, because there's no smiley at the end or anything.

Meera: But [2]_____ he normally use emojis in his texts?

Clara: I'm not sure, to be honest.

Meera: Why [3]_____ you scroll back through his messages and have a look?

Clara: OK, so … yes, there's a smiley face, and there's a wink one, so yes, he's used loads.

Meera: [4]_____ he? Oh dear.

Clara: You don't really think he's angry with me, [5]_____ you?

Meera: [6]_____ knows? He's your brother, you know him better than me.

Pronunciation

Using stress for emphasis (1)

1 1.1 Listen to the questions and underline the word that is stressed.

1 You don't think he's angry with me, do you?
2 You don't think he's angry with me, do you?
3 He's your brother, isn't he?
4 He's your brother, isn't he?
5 I'm not sure about that, to be honest.
6 I'm not sure about that, to be honest.

2 Match these responses (a–c) with a sentence (1–6) in Exercise 1.

a Actually, he's my cousin.
b No, he just sounded a bit impatient.
c OK. What would help you decide?

Vocabulary

Emotions

1 Look at the pairs of similar adjectives. Underline the one that expresses a stronger emotion.

1	astonished	surprised
2	frightened	petrified
3	furious	angry
4	calm	relieved
5	thrilled	happy

2 Complete the sentences with the adjectives you underlined in Exercise 1.

1 My brother used to get _____ with me when I borrowed his clothes without asking.
2 I was _____ at how quickly you learned Japanese. I thought it would be really difficult.
3 I hadn't done enough revision, so I was _____ that the exam was cancelled.
4 My friend has never been abroad because he's _____ of flying.
5 We finally decided to go on a round-the-world trip and I'm so _____ about it.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

3 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the word given.

1 I'd love to start going to the gym after work, but I just can't get _____. *motivate*

2 I get really _____ with my slow internet connection sometimes. *patience*

3 We went up in a hot air balloon at the weekend. What a _____ experience! *thrill*

4 I think I did quite well in my exam. I am _____ about my results. *optimism*

5 Lots of people are _____ of snakes, but I think they are amazing. *petrify*

6 The way all the cyclists finished the race in the rain was _____. *astonish*

7 I'm not too _____ about my grades at the moment. I'm sure I'll do well in the end. *concern*

8 I was _____ to find out my friend's illness wasn't serious. *relief*

Focus on

Adverbs of degree

2 Choose the correct adverb to complete the sentences.

1 A: I thought Sami was coming on holiday with us.

B: He was, but he can't get away from his job. He's *really / slightly* disappointed.

2 A: Did you watch all the episodes of that show in one day?

B: A day and a night. And now I'm *completely / tremendously* exhausted.

3 A: Fred seems very quiet in class these days.

B: I know, I'm *slightly / totally* concerned that he's finding the course difficult.

4 A: Is that your first attempt at painting a portrait?

B: Yeah. It's not very good. I'm *really / relatively* happy with it, I suppose.

5 A: I'm *a bit / completely* worried about my exams next week.

B: That's natural, but I'm sure you'll do well.

6 A: You're going to do the fun run, aren't you?

B: Yes – and I'm *quite / slightly* sure it will be great.

7 A: Was Amal upset about you breaking her headphones?

B: Not at all. I talked to her and she was *a bit / totally* cool with it.

8 A: You must be thrilled to get a place at drama school.

B: Well, yes, it's one of the top schools in the country. I'm *relatively / tremendously* excited about going.

Pronunciation

Short and long vowels

1 13 Listen to the sentences. Circle the underlined sound you hear in the word in bold.

1 I was **astonished** I'd passed my driving test. /ɪ/ / /iː/

2 We're **delighted** to welcome you to our organization. /eɪ/ / /aɪ/

3 I'm sorry for getting **impatient** the other day. /eɪ/ / /aɪ/

4 I'm so **pleased** to meet you at last. /ɪ/ / /iː/

5 I was **relieved** to get there on time. /ɪ/ / /iː/

6 I'm **thrilled** about my place on the course. /ɪ/ / /iː/

Listening

1 14 Listen to three conversations about unexpected surprises. Tick (✓) the things the speakers mention.

coach drivers _____

a credit card _____

a next-door neighbour _____

a parking fine _____

a shopping mall _____

a stolen car _____

a traffic warden _____

a wedding in the country _____

wedding photographs _____

LIVEWORKSHEETS

2 1.4 Listen to the conversations again. Which sentences are true? More than one option may be correct. In each case, what helped you decide? The speaker's tone of voice, their words or both?

1 In conversation 1:
   a the man is embarrassed about the mistake he made.
   b the woman is surprised that the story was interesting in the end.
   c the man is pleased that he has told the story.

2 In conversation 2:
   a the woman was shocked when she saw the empty room.
   b the woman is still angry with the coach drivers.
   c the man didn't really believe the story.

3 In conversation 3:
   a the woman is bored by the man's story.
   b the man was worried about telling the truth.
   c the man's father was furious with him.

Writing

1 Match ~~Rewrite~~ the sentences using some of these expressions to replace the underlined phrases. Check that you use verbs in the correct form.

ages	be in touch with	be up to
catch up	drop you a line	go for it
have no idea	keep you posted	the latest

1 I haven't heard from you for a long time.
2 I just thought I would write to you.
3 What have you done recently?
4 I'm really sorry – I didn't know that you aren't feeling well at the moment.
5 It would be great to see you again and exchange news properly.
6 I'll contact you again soon.

LIVEWORKSHEETS