

PART 1

1. READING.

The Paradox of Digital Connection

1. In our hyper-connected era, the concept of isolation has undergone a profound transformation. Traditionally, being alone meant physical solitude, a state that allowed for introspection and creative silence. Today, however, we face a new phenomenon: "digital loneliness," where individuals feel profoundly disconnected despite being surrounded by thousands of virtual contacts. It is widely observed that social media platforms, originally designed to bridge geographical gaps, have inadvertently created emotional walls.
2. The mechanisms of these platforms are built on a "feedback loop" of validation. When we post content, we are not merely sharing an experience; we are seeking a quantifiable metric of our worth—likes, shares, or comments. Not only does this cycle create a dependency on external approval, but it also distorts our perception of reality. We compare our "behind-the-scenes" struggles with everyone else's "highlight reel." Seldom do we stop to consider that what we see online is a curated, edited, and often artificial representation of a person's life.
3. Beyond the psychological toll, there is a tangible impact on our cognitive abilities. The relentless pace of information—scrolling through endless feeds—has significantly reduced our collective attention span. We are becoming masters of skimming, yet novices at deep analysis. What is most alarming is the subtle erosion of our ability to engage in uncomfortable conversations. Because online discourse is easily avoided by blocking or unfollowing, we are losing the resilience required to navigate real-world disagreements.
4. Experts warn that unless we consciously unplug, we risk losing the "analog" skills of empathy and face-to-face negotiation. If we had prioritized meaningful, in-person interactions over the convenience of digital messaging, our social fabric would likely be much stronger today. Were it not for the occasional warning signs of burnout, many would continue this digital obsession indefinitely.
5. Ultimately, the goal is not to abandon technology—which has undeniably revolutionized our access to knowledge—but to restore the balance. We must reclaim our agency over our digital lives. It is often suggested that a "digital detox" is the only remedy, yet the solution may be more nuanced: intentionality. By choosing when to connect and when to disconnect, we can preserve our mental space. Had we adopted this mindset years ago, we might have avoided many of the anxieties that plague the modern professional. Technology should remain a tool for empowerment, not a cage of our own making. If we continue to allow algorithms to dictate our moods, we forfeit our right to live authentically.

1. Multiple Matching:

Task: Identify which paragraph (1-5) mentions the following:

- a. A specific consequence of digital habits on mental health.
- b. A comparison between past and present definitions of being alone.
- c. The suggestion that technology is not inherently bad, but requires intentional use.
- d. The negative effect of social media on physical interactions and conflict resolution.

2. Gap Fill (Summary Completion):

Task: Complete the summary using words from the text (one word per gap).

"The author argues that social media provides a false sense of (1), leading to a cycle of (2) seeking. This results in the loss of (3)_____ focus and the inability to handle (4)_____ situations, eventually urging readers to reclaim (5)_____ over their habits."

2. LISTENING

You will hear people talking in eight different situations. For questions 1-8, choose the best answer A, B or C.

1 You hear an office manager talking about someone in her team.

What does she say about him?

A He appreciates the advice she offers.

B He produces work of a high standard.

C He enjoys taking on challenging work.

2 You hear two people in a university swimming team talking about a recent training session.

How does the woman feel now?

A pleased with her performance during training

B relieved she has been selected for a competition

C keen to increase the time she spends training

3 You hear a scientist talking on the radio about a medical development.

What is he doing?

A criticising others in his field

B announcing a new discovery

C explaining a misunderstanding

4 You hear two psychology students talking about people who are famous.

They agree that famous people

A prefer socialising with other celebrities.

B dislike being recognised everywhere.

C often become bored with their lifestyle.

5 You hear a shop assistant talking to a store detective about a customer.

The shop assistant says the customer

A was polite.

B talked a great deal.

C had expert knowledge.

6 You hear two university students talking about their new football kit.

What is the woman's opinion?

A It should have been less heavy.

B It should have been provided free of charge.

C It should have been a different colour.

7 You hear a maths teacher talking about what makes his job enjoyable.

He says his job is enjoyable because

A his pupils are motivated.

B he has pleasant colleagues.

C the school is well-equipped.

8 You hear two tourist information officers talking about a tourist attraction.

What does the man say about it?

A It needs advertising more widely.

B There are few places to buy food.

C Tourists consider it old-fashioned.

3. WRITING

Write a story based on the title: "**The Day the Screen Went Dark.**"

Requirements:

- Your story must begin with the sentence: "I never imagined that a simple technical failure would change everything."
- You must include:
 - A Mixed Conditional (e.g., *If I had listened to my instincts that morning, I wouldn't be in this situation now.*)
 - A Cleft Sentence (e.g., *What I missed the most was not the connection, but the silence.*)
 - A Passive Reporting verb (e.g., *It was claimed that the outage was global, but no one really knew.*)
- Length: 180-200 words.