

READING PASSAGE 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 14–26**, which are based on Reading Passage 2 below.

How Well Do We Concentrate?

- A** Do you read while listening to music? Do you like to watch TV while finishing your homework? People who have these kinds of habits are called multitaskers. Multitaskers are able to complete two tasks at the same time by dividing their focus. However, Thomas Lehman, a researcher in psychology, believes people never really do multiple things simultaneously. Maybe a person is reading while listening to music, but in reality the brain can only focus on one task. Reading the words in a book will cause you to ignore some of the words of the music. When people think they are accomplishing two different tasks efficiently, what they are really doing is dividing their focus. While listening to music, people become less able to focus on their surroundings. For example, we all have experienced times when we talk with friends and they are not responding properly. Maybe they are listening to someone else talk, or maybe they are reading a text on their smartphone and don't hear what you are saying. Lehman called this phenomenon "email voice."
- B** The world has been changed by computers and their spin-offs such as smartphones or cellphones. Now that most individuals have a personal device, like a smartphone or a laptop, they are frequently reading, watching or listening to virtual information. This increases the occurrence of multitasking in our day-to-day life. Nowadays, when you work, you may use your typewriter, your cellphone, and speak with colleagues who may drop by at any time. In professional meetings, when one would normally focus on and listen to one another, people are more likely to have a cellphone in their lap, reading or communicating silently with more people than ever. Even inventions such as the cordless phone have increased multitasking. In the old days, a traditional wall phone would ring, and the housewife would have to stop her activities to answer it. When it rang, the housewife would sit down with her legs up and chat, with no laundry, sweeping or answering the door. In the modern era, our technology is convenient enough not to interrupt our daily tasks.
- C** Earl Miller, an expert at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, studied the prefrontal cortex, which guides the brain while a person is multitasking. According to his studies, the size of this cortex varies between species. He found that for humans, it constitutes one-third of the brain, whereas it is only 4 – 5 percent in dogs and about 15 percent in monkeys. Because this cortex is larger in humans, it allows a person to be more flexible and accurate in multitasking. However, Miller wanted to know whether the cortex was truly processing information about two different tasks simultaneously. He designed an experiment in which he presented visual stimuli to his subjects in a way that mimicked multitasking. Miller then attached sensors to the patients' heads to pick up the electrical patterns of the brain. These sensors would show whether the neurons were truly processing two different tasks. What he found was that the brain neurons lit up in singular areas one at a time—never simultaneously.

- D** David Meyer, a professor at the University of Michigan, studied young adults in a similar experiment. He instructed them to solve math problems while simultaneously classifying simple words into different categories. Meyer found that when you think you are doing several jobs at the same time, you are actually switching between jobs. Even though the participants tried to do the tasks at the same time and both tasks were eventually accomplished, overall the task took more time than if the person had focused on a single task.
- E** People sacrifice efficiency when multitasking. Gloria Mark used office workers as her subjects. She found that they were constantly multitasking. She observed that nearly every 11 minutes people at work were disrupted. She found that doing different jobs at the same time may actually save time. However, despite the fact that they are faster, it does not mean they are more efficient. We are equally likely to self-interrupt as to be interrupted by outside sources. She found that in the office nearly every 12 minutes an employee would stop and, with no reason at all, check a website on their computer, call someone or write an email. If they concentrated for more than 20 minutes, they would feel distressed. She suggested that the average person may suffer from a short concentration span. This short attention span might be natural, but others suggest that new technology may be the problem. With cellphones and computers at our sides at all times, people will never run out of distractions. The format of media—such as advertisements, music, news articles and TV shows—is also shortening, so people are used to paying attention to information for a very short time.
- F** Even though focusing on a single task is the most efficient way for our brains to work, it is not always practical in real life. According to human nature, people feel more comfortable and efficient in environments with a variety of tasks. Edward Hallowell said that people are losing a lot of efficiency in the workplace due to multitasking, outside distractions and self-distractions. In fact, the changes made to the workplace do not have to be dramatic. No one is suggesting we ban e-mail or make employees focus on only one task. However, certain common workplace situations—such as group meetings—would be more efficient if we banned cellphones, a common distraction. A person can also apply these tips to prevent self-distraction. Instead of arriving at the office and checking all of your e-mails for new tasks—a common ritual—you could dedicate an hour to a single task first thing in the morning. Self-timing is a great way to reduce distraction and finish tasks one by one, instead of slowing ourselves down with multitasking.

Questions 14-18

Reading Passage 2 has six paragraphs, **A–F**.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

Write the correct letter, **A–F**, in boxes 14-18 on your answer sheet.

- 14** a reference to a domestic situation that does not require multitasking
- 15** a possible explanation of why we always multitask
- 16** a practical solution to multitasking in the work environment
- 17** relating multitasking to the size of the prefrontal cortex
- 18** more time spent doing two tasks at the same time than doing one task at a time

Questions 19-23

Look at the following statements (Questions 19-23) and the list of scientists below.

Match each statement with the correct scientist, **A–E**.

Write the correct letter, **A–E**, in boxes 19-23 on your answer sheet.

NB You may use any letter more than once.

- 19** When faced with multiple visual stimuli, one can only concentrate on one of them.
- 20** Doing two things together may be faster but not better.
- 21** People never really do two things together even if you think you do.
- 22** The causes of multitasking lie in the environment.
- 23** Even minor changes in the workplace will improve work efficiency.

List of Scientists

- A** Thomas Lehman
- B** Earl Miller
- C** David Meyer
- D** Gloria Mark
- E** Edward Hallowell

Questions 24-26

Complete the sentences below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 24-26 on your answer sheet.

- 24** A term used to refer to a situation when you are reading a text and cannot focus on your surroundings is _____.
- 25** The _____ part of the brain controls multitasking.
- 26** The practical solution to multitasking at work is not to allow the use of cellphones in _____.

题号	答案	精确定位句 (原文)	解释
14	B	<i>“In the old days, a traditional wall phone would ring, and the housewife would have to stop her activities to answer it. When it rang, the housewife would sit down with her legs up and chat, with no laundry, sweeping or answering the door.”</i>	描述了过去家中接电话时可以把其它家务完全停下，不需要多任务处理。
15	E	<i>“With cellphones and computers at our sides at all times, people will never run out of distractions.”</i>	将随身电子设备视为人们总在多任务的原因。
16	F	<i>“... group meetings—would be more efficient if we banned cellphones, a common distraction.”</i>	给出在职场中“禁用手机”这一可行做法。
17	C	<i>“He found that for humans, the prefrontal cortex constitutes one-third of the brain, ... This allows a person to be more flexible and accurate in multitasking.”</i>	将多任务能力与前额叶皮层大小联系起来。
18	D	<i>“... overall the task took more time than if the person had focused on a single task.”</i>	说明同时做两件事耗时更长。

题型 2：科学家观点配对 (19-23)

题号	答案	精确定位句 (原文)	解释
19	B (Earl Miller)	<i>“... the brain neurons lit up in singular areas one at a time—never simultaneously.”</i>	发现视觉刺激下大脑一次只能专注于一个目标。
20	D (Gloria Mark)	<i>“Doing different jobs at the same time may actually save time. However, ... it does not mean they are more efficient.”</i>	指出速度快 ≠ 效果好。
21	A (Thomas Lehman)	<i>“... believes people never really do multiple things simultaneously.”</i>	强调所谓多任务只是表象。
22	D (Gloria Mark)	<i>“With cellphones and computers at our sides at all times, people will never run out of distractions.”</i>	认为多任务的根源在外部环境 (科技与干扰)。
23	E (Edward Hallowell)	<i>“The changes made to the workplace do not have to be dramatic.”</i>	强调细小调整即可提升工作效率。

题型 3：句子填空 (24-26)

题号	答案	精确定位句 (原文)	解释
24	email voice	<i>“Lehman called this phenomenon ‘email voice.’”</i>	术语 “email voice” 描述读信息而忽视周围的情形。
25	prefrontal cortex	<i>“... studied the prefrontal cortex, which guides the brain while a person is multitasking.”</i>	指明控制多任务的大脑部位。
26	group meetings	<i>“... common workplace situations—such as group meetings—would be more efficient if we banned cellphones...”</i>	建议在会议中禁用手机以解决多任务问题。

我也重新把两段文字仔细对照了一遍——22 题更贴切的确还是 **D Gloria Mark**，而不是 E。关键在于题干用的是 “*The causes of multitasking lie in the environment*”，而 Mark 的研究正是把「外部科技（手机、电脑、媒体格式）」视为多任务现象的根源；Hallowell 主要谈的是效率下降的原因和改进方案，并没有明确把 “环境” 当成导致人们开始 multitask 的动因。

对比两位学者的原文

学者	原文关键词	与题干 “环境是多任务的原因” 匹配度
Gloria Mark (段 E)	“ <i>With cellphones and computers at our sides at all times, people will never run out of distractions.” “...<i>new technology may be the problem</i>.”</i>	直接指出：技术/电子设备 = 外部环境 → 持续分心 → 多任务；完全呼应 “causes lie in the environment”。
Edward Hallowell (段 F)	“ <i>people are losing a lot of efficiency in the workplace due to multitasking, outside distractions and self-distractions</i> .”	重点是 “效率损失” 归因于 multitask + 外部干扰，而非说明 为什么人们会 multitask。环境因素只是降低效率的一部分。