Multitasking and technology

LEVEL
Advanced

NUMBER
C1_4053R_EN

LANUAGE
English

Goals

- Can read and understand a complex text on the impact technology has had on multitasking.

- Can evaluate the impact of technology on our concentration and present my own view on multitasking and time management.

Do you **excel** at multitasking? A lot of technology promises to help us multitask and manage our time more effectively.

However, researchers claim that our growing **dependence on technology** can have **adverse** effects, especially on our concentration.

Define what the terms multitasking and time management mean to you!

time

balance

pressure

concentration

deadline

Are you a multitasking and time management whizz?

You're going to be asked a series of questions about your multitasking and time management skills.

Be honest with your answers and we will review the results at the end of the quiz!

Quiz:

You're relaxing and drinking a cup of tea when the phone rings. What do you do?

1. drink the tea while talking on the phone

2. forget the tea, you can make another after the call

3. you don't hear the phone, the tea tastes so good

4. spill the tea over yourself on the way to the phone

lingoda

**You have an important deadline for a report submission.
You really need to make a good impression!
What do you do?**

1. start the work immediately by making notes

2. start the night before the submission date

3. you miss the deadline and avoid your boss all day

4. start a couple of days before the deadline

Quiz

How would you describe your ability to complete two tasks simultaneously?

1. amazing, give me more tasks, I can never have enough

2. okay, neither will be done perfectly but you will cope

3. absolutely terrible, I can only do one thing at a time

4. pretty good, it depends how interesting the tasks are

**A friend is coming over for dinner in half an hour.
What are you doing?**

1. putting the final touches to my delicious homemade masterpiece

2. still at the supermarket

3. still in bed, I forgot

4. Still cooking but it should be ready for their arrival

Discuss how you think you did in the quiz...

Are you a multitasking extraordinaire?

Could you improve your time management skills?

How good are you at multitasking and time management?

The results are in!

If you got **mostly 1s** then you have **excellent multitasking** and **time management skills**.

If you got **mostly 2s or 3s** then you may need to work on them a little! What could you do to improve?

If you got **mostly 4s** then you are somewhere in the middle. You are able to multitask and your time management is average, but could you improve?

Do you agree with the results?

How would you describe your time management and multitasking abilities?

Multitasking and technology

As technology has advanced, so has our ability to multitask. Now we can send emails on the road, or have video phone calls with friends in another country while preparing our dinner! We are able to use numerous pieces of technology **simultaneously.** We can watch a film on our laptop whilst keeping one eye on our smartphone waiting for an all-important email **notification** to arrive.

However, recent research has unveiled that increased media and technology usage may be having **detrimental** effects on our cognitive and emotional well-being. Scientists in England have discovered that people who use multiple pieces of technology at one time may suffer from reduced grey matter density in specific areas of the brain. This **ground-breaking** research is the first study to discover a connection between brain structure and multitasking on different media devices.

Multitasking and technology

Technology has greatly benefitted us as humans, it allows us constant access to current information as well as the ability to be **perpetually** in contact with our wider network of friends and family. Technology can enable our learning and development, as well as our communication. This **continual** stream of available information can provide stimulation but it may also **hinder** us.

New vocabulary

Can you match the new vocabulary from the text with its appropriate synonym? Then use the new words in a sentence of your own, preferably about technology.

hinder

negative

detrimental

constant

perpetual

prevent

Do you use technology to multitask in any of the ways described?

Do you think the **continual** streams of information available to us helps or **hinders** our ability to multitask?

Multitasking

Does multitasking work? Does it really benefit us?
Identify the pros and cons of multitasking in the situations detailed below.

writing a homework assignment while watching TV

video calling your parents while baking a cake

taking a work call while driving

watching a foreign language film while looking up new words on your smartphone

Multitasking and technology

In science, researchers speak about the difference between **deep attention** and **hyper attention mode**. Hyper attention mode **correlates** with an animosity towards boredom and routine. People who are **predisposed** to hyper attention mode have a preference for simultaneously interacting with various forms of information communication. They require high levels of stimulation and may become impatient. Teenagers and young adults are frequently stereotyped as being happier in hyper attention mode. Many young people have never known a life without laptop computers, tablets and smartphones as they were born into a technologically advanced world. Today, young people are competent in managing a life that involves multitasking in hyper attention mode.

Multitasking and technology

The opposite of hyper attention mode is deep attention mode. Deep attention mode **denotes** the ability to focus one's attention on a single stream of information, whilst having the ability to ignore any outside stimulus. A typical example of deep attention mode could be spending several hours curled up in an armchair completely **transfixed** in a book.

Deep attention mode versus hyper attention mode
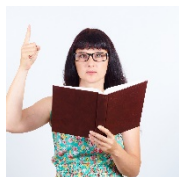
Reflect on the text you have just read and answer the questions below.

1   Can you explain the difference between deep attention and hyper attention mode?
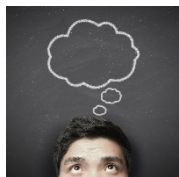
Deep attention mode versus hyper attention mode

Reflect on the text you have just read and answer the questions below.

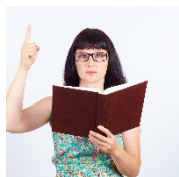**1** Can you explain the difference between deep attention and hyper attention mode?

2 What tasks do you think might be better suited to deep attention mode? Come up with a list of at least 5 tasks.

Deep attention mode versus hyper attention mode

Reflect on the text you have just read and answer the questions below.

1 Can you explain the difference between deep attention and hyper attention mode?

2 What tasks do you think might be better suited to deep attention mode? Come up with a list of at least 5.

3 Now reflect on your own experience. How difficult do you find it to concentrate on those 5 tasks? Do you think it's challenging to be in deep attention mode?

Multitasking and technology

A **much-maligned** aspect of our interaction with technology, especially when it comes to simultaneous usage of different pieces of technology, is that we are somehow losing our ability to act in deep attention mode. Deep attention mode is better suited to work or tasks that involve high degrees of concentration. As we adapt to operating in hyper attention mode, there is a growing general **consensus** amongst researchers that this inability to focus for prolonged periods of time could lead to problems, specifically in terms of our feelings of happiness and fulfilment.

Multitasking and technology

A recent scientific study unearthed startling results about human's attention span and tech gadgets. The study found that increased use of technology shortens our attention span. This means that the more time we spend in hyper attention mode, the more difficult it becomes for us to enter deep attention mode. In turn, this can lead to feelings of unhappiness and a constant **craving for stimulation**. Additional side effects of the inability to concentrate in deep attention mode could have an impact on learning, social skills, and our ability to relax and unwind. If we are always searching for stimulation then will we ever feel truly satisfied?

What does it mean if something is **much-maligned**?

What is described as much-maligned in the text?

Can you give three other examples of this phrase in use?

Practise summarising!

Oh dear! Your friend was supposed to show up to this English class but they didn't make it.

Can you summarise the previous text for them?

Is losing our ability to enter deep attention mode a cause for concern?

Why or why not?

Education and technology

Imagine you work for the education department of your home country. You are launching an initiative in schools to educate children about technology use. What would be the key elements of this education programme? Outline and present your plans!

■ Remember, you want to stress the positive aspects of technology use. However, you also want to promote an awareness of how technology can have an impact our cognitive abilities!
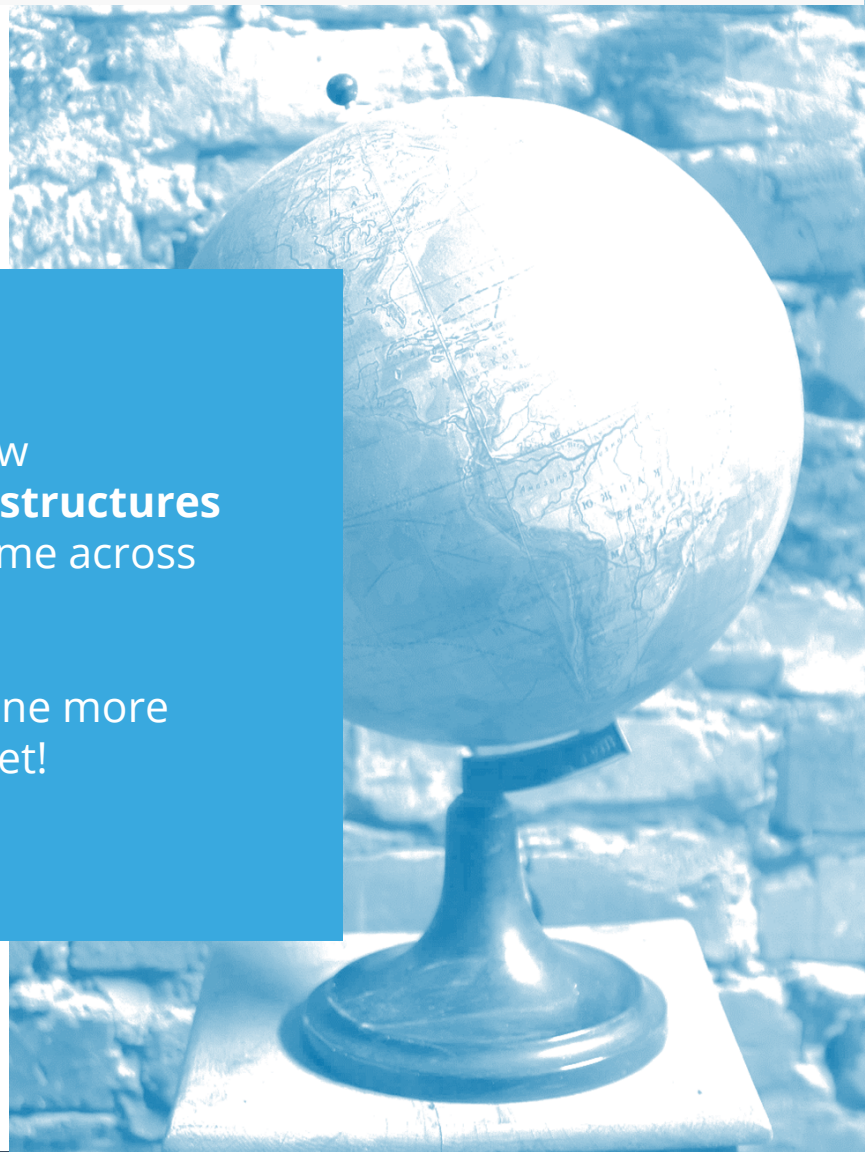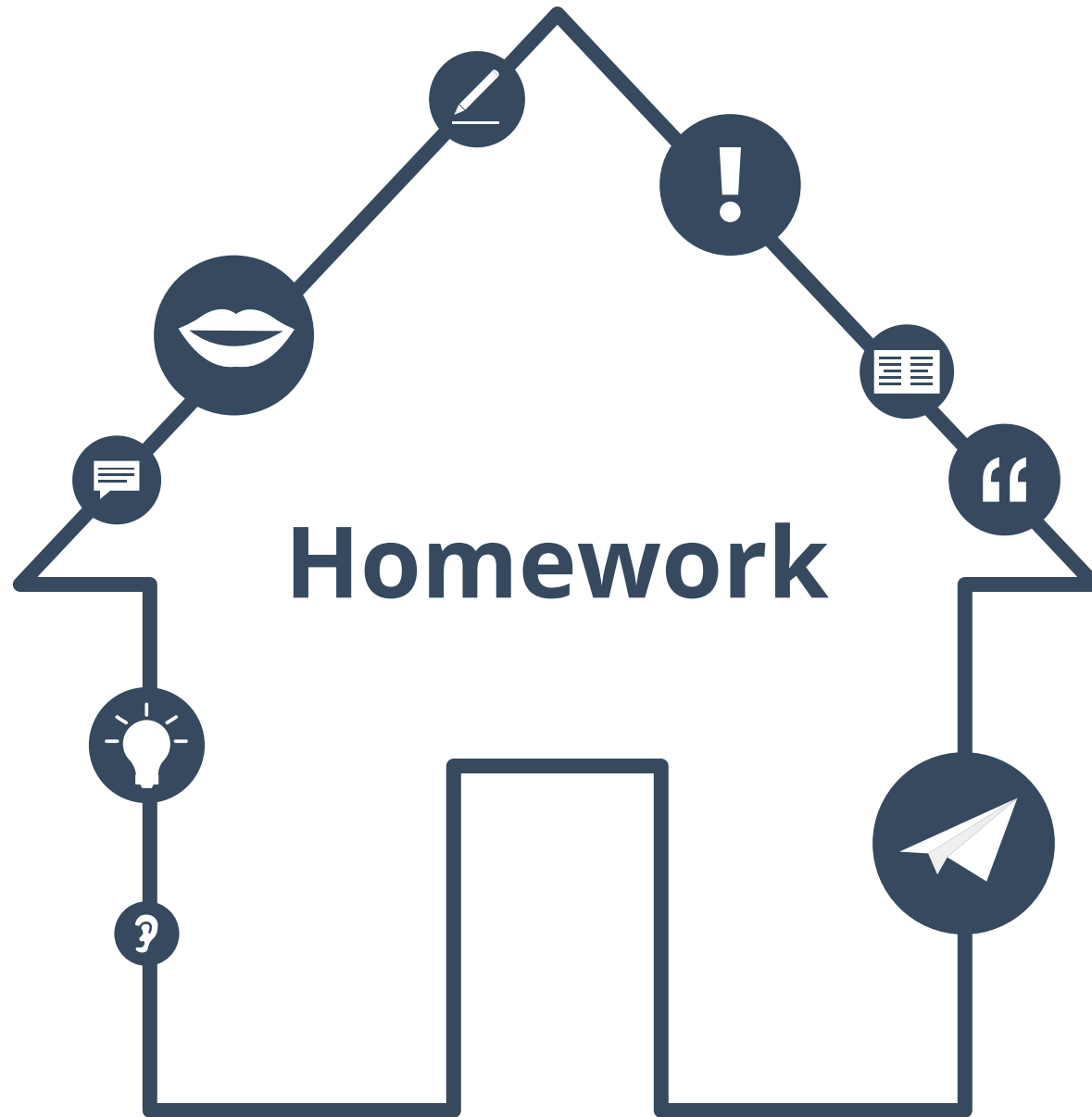
Reflect on this lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary**, **phrases**, **language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!

Homework

How could you develop your time management and multitasking skills? Using the new vocabulary from today's class to write a list of actions you could take to improve.

New vocabulary

hinder

Homewark writing activity

Write about your own personal experience of multitasking. How much do you rely on technology? Remember to include some discussion of deep versus hyper attention mode.

Aim to write at least 250 words!

About this material

This material is provided by

lingoda

lingoda Who are we?

Why learn English online?

What kinds of English classes do we offer?

Who are our English teachers?

How do our English certificates work?

We also have a language blog!