



# Practice Exam - Digital Life and Technology

Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511 | Reading practice paper

## Exercise 1

Read the article about digital bus-stop screens in Seoul then answer the questions.

### Digital screens at bus stops

In several districts of Seoul, bus stops have become more than places to wait. Some now include digital screens showing bus arrival times, weather warnings and local information. The screens are linked to the city's transport data, so passengers can see whether a bus is delayed before they decide to wait or choose another route. Officials say the system is especially useful in winter, when standing outside for a long time can be uncomfortable.

The screens were first installed in busy areas where passengers often changed between buses and underground trains. Later, more were added near hospitals, universities and shopping streets. The aim was not to replace signs completely, because printed route maps are still useful if technology fails. Instead, the digital screens provide information that changes throughout the day, such as road delays, platform closures and emergency announcements.

Some screens also include public-service messages. During hot weather, they may remind people to drink water or avoid outdoor activity at the hottest time of the day. When air pollution levels are high, the screens advise passengers to reduce unnecessary outdoor exercise. These messages are short because people usually read them while standing or walking, not while sitting at a computer.

There have been problems. Older passengers sometimes find the changing information difficult to follow, and bright screens can be hard to read in direct sunlight. Maintenance is also expensive because the screens must work in rain, snow and heat. For this reason, transport officials test screens carefully before choosing where to install them permanently. City staff also use the screens to test which information passengers notice first, because a crowded display can be almost as confusing as no information at all. For this reason, the design team keeps the largest space for arrival times and uses smaller sections for public-service messages.

Supporters say the screens are worth the cost because they reduce uncertainty. A passenger who knows the next bus is twenty minutes away can buy a drink, walk to another stop or take the underground instead. Digital information cannot make buses arrive faster, but it can help people make better decisions while they wait. The system is reviewed every few months. If passengers report that a screen is difficult to read or placed too high, engineers can adjust the angle, brightness or wording. Officials say these small changes are important because public technology must work for people who are in a hurry.

## Exercise 1 questions

Answer the questions using information from the article. Write short answers.

1 What do some bus-stop screens show apart from bus arrival times? [1]

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2 Which city data are the screens linked to? [1]

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3 Where were the screens first installed? [1]

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4 What kind of maps are still useful if technology fails? [1]

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5 What may screens remind people to do during hot weather? [1]

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6 Give three challenges of using digital screens at bus stops. [3]

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## Exercise 2

Read the article about four digital tools (A-D). Then answer Questions 9(a)-9(i).

### **A Homework planner**

This planner helps students divide large tasks into smaller steps. It sends reminders before deadlines, but users can choose quiet hours so alerts do not arrive late at night. Teachers like it because students can attach photos of completed work. However, the planner is less useful for group projects because only one student can edit a task list at a time. The planner team found that students preferred fewer, clearer alerts rather than a long list of reminders. Some users also wanted separate colours for homework and club commitments.

### **B Library search app**

The library app shows whether a book is available and which shelf it is on. Students can reserve books, renew loans and receive a message when a requested title is ready. The app also suggests related books, although these suggestions are sometimes too broad. It works best for students who already know the author or topic they want to search for. Librarians update search terms when students report that common subjects are difficult to find. The app is less helpful when a book has been put back on the wrong shelf.

### **C Shared vocabulary deck**

The vocabulary deck allows learners to add useful words and example sentences from lessons. Classmates can practise the same set, but the teacher approves new entries before they appear for everyone. This prevents mistakes spreading through the group. The deck is popular before tests because it shows which words students have answered incorrectly several times. The class reviews the deck before tests so unclear example sentences can be rewritten. Older cards are not deleted immediately, because teachers sometimes use them for revision games.

### **D Presentation timer**

The presentation timer helps speakers keep to a time limit. It changes colour when a student has used half the time and vibrates silently when one minute remains. It does not record the speech, so students who want feedback on pronunciation need another tool. The timer is useful for nervous speakers because they do not have to keep looking at the classroom clock. Speakers can practise privately first, which makes the tool useful before assessed presentations. The vibration setting is especially helpful in rooms where a loud alarm would distract listeners.

## Exercise 2 questions

For each statement, write the correct letter A, B, C or D on the line. Each letter may be used more than once.

No.	Which digital tool...	A-D
9(a)	helps students find physical learning materials	.....
9(b)	needs a teacher to check information before it is shared	.....
9(c)	can stop reminders disturbing students at night	.....
9(d)	is useful for students who worry about speaking for too long	.....
9(e)	shows repeated mistakes made by learners	.....
9(f)	is less suitable when several students need to change the same plan	.....
9(g)	does not give students feedback on how they sound	.....
9(h)	can tell users when something they asked for is ready	.....
9(i)	uses colour to show how much time has passed	.....

## Exercise 3

Read the article about digital skills sessions at community centres then complete the notes.

### Learning everyday digital skills

Community centres in many towns now offer short digital skills sessions for people who need help with everyday online tasks. The sessions are not advanced computer courses. Instead, they focus on practical problems such as filling in online forms, finding reliable information and storing passwords safely. Organisers say many people own a smartphone but still feel nervous when a website asks them to create an account or upload a document.

The best sessions begin with a needs check. Tutors ask learners what they want to do online and what usually goes wrong. Some learners need help changing privacy settings, while others want to book appointments or use online banking safely. By starting with real tasks, tutors avoid teaching skills that learners will not use again. This also helps learners feel that the session is relevant rather than embarrassing.

Volunteers are trained to avoid taking control of a learner's device for too long. They may demonstrate one step, but the learner should repeat it themselves. This matters because people quickly forget instructions if someone else has done the whole task for them. Tutors also encourage learners to write down key steps in their own words, especially when a process includes several screens. Sessions are often repeated at different times of day so that shift workers, parents and older residents can attend. Centres also keep printed guides for learners who want to practise again at home. When a task involves several screens, tutors ask learners to pause and explain the next step before continuing.

Security is a major part of the sessions. Learners practise recognising secure websites, checking messages before clicking links and creating strong passwords. Tutors do not ask people to reveal private information, and learners are reminded to close accounts before leaving shared computers. Organisers say confidence grows when people understand both the benefits and the risks of online services. The long-term aim is independence. Organisers do not expect everyone to become confident immediately, but they want learners to leave knowing where to find help and how to avoid common online risks. Some centres invite learners back a week later to try the same task without one-to-one support.

### Exercise 3 questions

Complete the notes using information from the article. Write short words or phrases.

Notes	Write short answers
10 What the sessions focus on	- ..... - ..... - .....
11 How tutors help learners become independent	- ..... - ..... - ..... - .....

## Exercise 4

Read the article about using a digital calendar then answer the questions.

### My calendar experiment

I used to keep all my plans in my head. That worked when my week was simple, but it became impossible once I joined a club, started helping my younger sister with homework and had several exam deadlines. My friend suggested using a digital calendar. I agreed, although I thought it would make me feel more controlled by my phone rather than less.

At first, I added too much detail. I created reminders for homework, meals, exercise and even when to pack my bag. By the third day, my phone was buzzing so often that I ignored most alerts. The calendar was not the problem; the way I used it was. I deleted half the reminders and kept only events that affected another person or had a real deadline.

The most useful change was sharing one calendar with my family. My parents could see when I had club practice, and I could see when my sister needed collecting from art class. This did not remove every argument, but it stopped the repeated question, 'Why didn't you tell me?' I also became more realistic about travel time because the calendar made crowded days visible.

There were still limits. When I was tired, I sometimes moved tasks forward without thinking, which only created a bigger problem later. I also learned not to put private notes into a shared event. A calendar can organise time, but it cannot decide what matters most. I still had to choose whether a task was urgent, important or simply something I wanted to avoid. The experiment also made me notice how often I confused being busy with being organised. A full calendar looked impressive, but it was only useful when the information helped me make a decision.

After a month, I kept using the calendar, but in a simpler way. It did not make me perfectly organised. It made my week easier to see. That was enough. Digital tools work best for me when they reduce the number of things I have to remember, not when they try to manage every minute of my life. I now review the calendar every Sunday evening and remove tasks that no longer matter. That short review prevents the tool becoming another place where old worries collect.

## Exercise 4 questions

For each question, choose the correct answer, A, B or C.

### 12 Why did the writer first try using a digital calendar? [1]

- A His week had become harder to manage.
- B His parents bought him a new phone.
- C He wanted to stop doing homework.

### 13 What mistake did the writer make at first? [1]

- A He shared too much private information.
- B He forgot to add real deadlines.
- C He created too many reminders.

### 14 Why was the shared family calendar useful? [1]

- A It stopped his sister attending art class.
- B It made family plans more visible.
- C It allowed his parents to control all his tasks.

### 15 What did the writer realise about moving tasks forward? [1]

- A It could create more difficulty later.
- B It was the best way to avoid stress.
- C It only mattered for shared events.

### 16 What does the writer say a calendar cannot do? [1]

- A show travel time
- B choose priorities for a person
- C remind people about deadlines

### 17 What is the writer's final view of digital tools? [1]

- A They should manage every minute of the day.
- B They work only when shared with family.
- C They are useful when they make life easier to remember.

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## Exercise 1

1. weather warnings / local information
2. transport data
3. busy areas
4. printed route maps
5. drink water / avoid outdoor activity at the hottest time of the day
6. difficult to read in direct sunlight; expensive to maintain; must work in rain, snow and heat

## Exercise 2

9(a) B; 9(b) C; 9(c) A; 9(d) D; 9(e) C; 9(f) A; 9(g) D; 9(h) B; 9(i) D

## Exercise 3

### 10 What the sessions focus on

- filling in online forms
- finding reliable information
- storing passwords safely

### 11 How tutors help learners become independent

- begin with a needs check
- the learner should repeat it themselves
- write down key steps in their own words
- printed guides for learners who want to practise again at home / practise again at home

## Exercise 4

12 A; 13 C; 14 B; 15 A; 16 B; 17 C

12 A - He had clubs, family responsibilities and exam deadlines.

13 C - His phone buzzed so often that he ignored alerts.

14 B - Everyone could see practices and collection times.

15 A - Moving tasks forward created a bigger problem later.

16 B - It cannot decide what matters most.

17 C - He says tools work best when they reduce what he has to remember.