



Digital Life and Technology

Multiple choice: digital wellbeing | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you read.

1. Which apps make it easiest to lose track of time?
2. Could you stop using one app for a month? Why, or why not?
3. How can students use technology without feeling controlled by it?
4. What is the difference between relaxing online and wasting time?

Exercise 4 at a glance

Read one longer text and answer six multiple-choice questions. Choose A, B or C. The correct answer may depend on attitude, purpose or a detail across a whole paragraph, not just one matching word.

2. Read for overall understanding

Read the article. What did Sam learn from changing one digital habit?

A month without short videos

by Sam Okafor

When our English teacher asked us to keep a screen-time diary, I expected mine to look normal. I knew I watched short videos after school, but I told myself it was only for a few minutes while I relaxed. The diary was uncomfortable reading. I was not online all evening, but I was checking the same app again and again: before homework, during homework and when I should have been getting ready for bed. I decided to stop using short-video apps for a month, partly because I wanted to prove I could. I also noticed that I remembered very little of what I had watched the previous evening, which made the time feel even stranger.

The first week was harder than I expected. I kept picking up my phone without thinking, opening a folder and then remembering the app was gone. That was when I realised the problem was not only the videos. It was the habit of reaching for my phone whenever a task became boring. I replaced the app with a vocabulary quiz at first, but that still kept me on the screen. Eventually I put my phone in the kitchen during homework and used a cheap alarm clock in my bedroom. At the start, I kept replacing one distraction with another, so I had to think about the reason I was avoiding the work.

Some friends thought the challenge sounded extreme. One said short videos helped him discover music and news, which is true. I did not want to pretend that all online entertainment was useless. What surprised me was how often I watched things I did not even enjoy. The app moved so quickly that I rarely chose anything deliberately. Without it, I still used the internet, but I searched for specific things: a guitar tutorial, a recipe, or information for school. A few videos were genuinely useful, but useful clips were mixed with dozens of others that I watched only because they appeared automatically.

My sleep improved after about ten days. I had assumed I was tired because of homework, but the bigger problem was delaying bedtime. If I watched videos late at night, I kept telling myself I would stop after the next one. Reading a book was different because I noticed when I was tired. I also finished homework earlier, not because I suddenly became more intelligent, but because I stopped interrupting myself every few minutes. The change was not immediate, but after several evenings I stopped feeling that bedtime was something I could keep moving later.

At the end of the month, I put one short-video app back on my phone. That might sound like failure, but it was not. I changed the settings, removed notifications and decided not to use it after dinner. I also kept the phone-out-of-bedroom rule. The challenge did not teach me that technology is bad. It taught me that digital wellbeing is about making choices before an app makes them for you. I now see the app as something I can use occasionally, not something that should fill every empty moment in the day.

3. Strategy focus

Underline the key words

Before reading the options, underline the key words in the question. Watch for small traps such as time, reason, attitude or change.

4. Exam-style multiple-choice questions

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

Question 1

Why did Sam decide to stop using short-video apps?

- A He wanted to test whether he could change his behaviour.
- B His teacher told the class to delete entertainment apps.
- C He was spending every evening online without a break.

Question 2

What did Sam realise during the first week?

- A Vocabulary apps were more useful than video apps.
- B Deleting one app made homework much more enjoyable.
- C His phone habit was linked to avoiding boring tasks.

Question 3

What point does Sam make about short videos in the third paragraph?

- A They are less educational than people usually claim.
- B They can be useful, but he often watched them without real choice.
- C They stopped him learning music and cooking skills online.

Question 4

Why did Sam start sleeping better?

- A He stopped delaying bedtime with repeated videos.
- B He had less homework to complete in the evening.
- C He replaced all online entertainment with reading.

Question 5

How does Sam feel about reinstalling one app?

- A He worries that the challenge has failed.
- B He sees it as part of a more controlled approach.
- C He thinks notifications will help him use it sensibly.

Question 6

What does Sam mean by saying users should make choices before an app makes them?

- A Apps should be deleted before they become popular.
- B Technology companies should make all settings private automatically.
- C People need clear habits before they start using distracting apps.

5. Follow-up tasks

1. Discussion: Which phone habit would be hardest for you to change?
2. Strategy: Check two answers by underlining the sentence or short section that proves each one.
3. Writing: Write advice for students who keep checking their phones while studying.
4. Vocabulary: Circle words and phrases connected to screen time, habits and digital wellbeing.

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Multiple choice: digital wellbeing

2. Read for overall understanding

Suggested answer: He learned that technology was not the whole problem; his automatic habits and lack of planning mattered too.

4. Exam-style multiple-choice questions

1. A; 2. C; 3. B; 4. A; 5. B; 6. C

1. A - The diary made him uncomfortable, and he wanted to prove he could stop.
2. C - He noticed he reached for his phone whenever a task became boring.
3. B - He accepts they can help people discover things, but says he often watched without choosing deliberately.
4. A - He says the bigger problem was delaying bedtime by watching one more video.
5. B - He says it was not failure because he changed settings and rules.
6. C - He means users should decide limits and habits before the app controls their attention.