



ROBERT L. MERRITT MIDDLE SCHOOL

7TH Grade Learn-At-Home Packet

Reading

Week 4

Read the text. Then answer the questions.

from *The Railway Children*

by E. Nesbit

In the book The Railway Children, a once happy and fortunate family's life suddenly changes when the father is falsely accused of being a spy and taken to jail. The mother is left to support the three children: Bobbie, Peter, and Phyllis. They can no longer afford their home and are forced to move to a smaller place in the country. The children become fascinated with the railroad that runs near their garden and quickly become friends with the driver, guards, and passengers at the railway station. One day the children are watching a train go by when they see someone wave a newspaper at them. This makes Bobbie curious, and she keeps wondering about the significance of the newspaper. Preoccupied by her thoughts, she abandons her schoolwork and, in this excerpt, leaves to investigate.

Bobbie could not wait.

"I'll go down to the station," she said, "and talk to Perks and ask about the signalman's little boy."

So she went down. On the way she passed the old lady from the Post-office, who gave her a kiss and a hug, but, rather to Bobbie's surprise, no words except:—

"God bless you, love—" and, after a pause, "run along—do."

The draper's boy, who had sometimes been a little less than civil and a little more than contemptuous, now touched his cap, and uttered the remarkable words:—

"Morning, Miss, I'm sure—"

The blacksmith, coming along with an open newspaper in his hand, was even more strange in his manner. He grinned broadly, though, as a rule, he was a man not given to smiles, and waved the newspaper long before he came up to her. And as he passed her, he said, in answer to her "Good morning":—

"Good morning to you, Missie, and many of them! I wish you joy, that I do!"

"Oh!" said Bobbie to herself, and her heart quickened its beats, "something IS going to happen! I know it is—everyone is so odd, like people are in dreams."

The Station Master wrung her hand warmly. In fact he worked it up and down like a pump-handle. But he gave her no reason for this unusually enthusiastic greeting. He only said:—

“The 11.54’s a bit late, Miss—the extra luggage this holiday time,” and went away very quickly into that inner Temple of his into which even Bobbie dared not follow him.

Perks was not to be seen, and Bobbie shared the solitude of the platform with the Station Cat. This tortoiseshell lady, usually of a retiring disposition, came to-day to rub herself against the brown stockings of Bobbie with arched back, waving tail, and reverberating purrs.

“Dear me!” said Bobbie, stooping to stroke her, “how very kind everybody is to-day—even you!”

Perks did not appear until the 11.54 was signaled, and then he, like everybody else that morning, had a newspaper in his hand.

“Hullo!” he said, “’ere you are. Well, if THIS is the train, it’ll be smart work! Well, God bless you, my dear! I see it in the paper, and I don’t think I was ever so glad of anything in all my born days!” He looked at Bobbie a moment, then said, “One I must have, Miss, and no offence, I know, on a day like this ’ere!” and with that he kissed her, first on one cheek and then on the other.

“You ain’t offended, are you?” he asked anxiously. “I ain’t took too great a liberty? On a day like this, you know—”

“No, no,” said Bobbie, “of course it’s not a liberty, dear Mr. Perks; we love you quite as much as if you were an uncle of ours—but—on a day like WHAT?”

“Like this ’ere!” said Perks. “Don’t I tell you I see it in the paper?” “Saw WHAT in the paper?” asked Bobbie, but already the 11.54 was steaming into the station and the Station Master was looking at all the places where Perks was not and ought to have been.

Bobbie was left standing alone, the Station Cat watching her from under the bench with friendly golden eyes.

Of course you know already exactly what was going to happen. Bobbie was not so clever. She had the vague, confused, expectant feeling that comes to one’s heart in dreams. What her heart expected I can’t tell—perhaps the very thing that you and I know was going to happen—but her mind expected nothing; it was almost blank, and felt nothing but tiredness and stupidity and an empty feeling, like your body has when you have been a long walk and it is very far indeed past your proper dinner-time.

Only three people got out of the 11.54. The first was a countryman with two basketry boxes full of live chickens who stuck their russet heads out anxiously through the wicker bars; the second was Miss Peckitt, the grocer's wife's cousin, with a tin box and three brown-paper parcels; and the third—

"Oh! my Daddy, my Daddy!" That scream went like a knife into the heart of everyone in the train, and people put their heads out of the windows to see a tall pale man with lips set in a thin close line, and a little girl clinging to him with arms and legs, while his arms went tightly round her.

"I knew something wonderful was going to happen," said Bobbie, as they went up the road, "but I didn't think it was going to be this. Oh, my Daddy, my Daddy!"

"Then didn't Mother get my letter?" Father asked.

"There weren't any letters this morning. Oh! Daddy! it IS really you, isn't it?"

The clasp of a hand she had not forgotten assured her that it was.

"You must go in by yourself, Bobbie, and tell Mother quite quietly that it's all right. They've caught the man who did it. Everyone knows now that it wasn't your Daddy."

"I always knew it wasn't," said Bobbie. "Me and Mother and our old gentleman."

"Yes," he said, "it's all his doing. Mother wrote and told me you had found out. And she told me what you'd been to her. My own little girl!" They stopped a minute then.

And now I see them crossing the field. Bobbie goes into the house, trying to keep her eyes from speaking before her lips have found the right words to "tell Mother quite quietly" that the sorrow and the struggle and the parting are over and done, and that Father has come home.

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- 1 How does Bobbie's walk to the railway station help build suspense in the plot? Select **two** options.

- (A) It makes the story longer.
- (B) It allows Bobbie to have curious conversations with other characters along the way.
- (C) It makes the reader wonder what information Bobbie is about to discover.
- (D) It helps the reader better understand the different personalities.
- (E) It helps the reader visualize the route from Bobbie's house to the railway station.

- 2 Read the following sentences from the text.

The Station Master wrung her hand warmly. In fact he worked it up and down like a pump-handle. But he gave her no reason for this unusually enthusiastic greeting.

Based on the context, what does the phrase he worked it up and down like a pump-handle tell you about how the Station Master feels?

- (A) He's amused with Bobbie.
- (B) He's angry with Bobbie.
- (C) He's suspicious of Bobbie.
- (D) He's happy for Bobbie.

- 3 Read the following sentences from the text.

Of course you know already exactly what was going to happen. Bobbie was not so clever. She had the vague, confused, expectant feeling that comes to one's heart in dreams.

In this context, the word vague means _____.

- (A) excited
- (B) unclear
- (C) lighthearted
- (D) gloomy

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- 4** The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Why is Bobbie so surprised by her father's presence on the train?

- (A)** She has no idea he is on the train until he gets off it.
- (B)** She thinks her father doesn't like riding on trains.
- (C)** She thinks the train is empty.
- (D)** She forgets what her father looks like.

Part B: Which sentence in the text tells you this?

- (A)** "Perks did not appear until the 11.54 was signaled, and then he, like everybody else that morning, had a newspaper in his hand."
- (B)** "Bobbie was left standing alone, the Station Cat watching her from under the bench with friendly golden eyes."
- (C)** "Only three people got out of the 11.54."
- (D)** "'I knew something wonderful was going to happen,'" said Bobbie, as they went up the road, 'but I didn't think it was going to be this.'"

- 5** How is Bobbie's reunion with her father an example of situational irony?

- (A)** She's disappointed when she finally sees him.
- (B)** She was waiting for someone else.
- (C)** She thinks he will be angry with her.
- (D)** She isn't expecting to see her father at the station.

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- 6** How does the author contrast different points of view in the text? Select **two** options.
- (A)** The author implies that all the characters present at the railway station, except Bobbie, know what's about to happen.
 - (B)** The author implies that Bobbie's father is the only character who knows what's about to happen.
 - (C)** The author implies that the narrator knows what's about to happen.
 - (D)** The author implies that Bobbie is the only character who knows what's about to happen.
 - (E)** The author implies that all the characters, except Bobbie and the narrator, know what's about to happen.

- 7** The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Which of the following **best** explains the theme of this text?

- (A)** It is best to avoid talking to others.
- (B)** Animals can sometimes be your best friends.
- (C)** Great things can happen even when they seem unlikely.
- (D)** Railway stations are good places to visit with people.

Part B: Which detail in the text reflects this theme?

- (A)** The Station Cat affectionately rubs herself up against Bobbie's legs.
- (B)** Even though Bobbie wasn't expecting her father to come home, he did anyway.
- (C)** Bobbie has a friendly conversation with Perks before the train arrives.
- (D)** Bobbie unexpectedly talks to several people on her walk to the station.

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8 How does the author's use of dialect help make the story more effective? Select **two** ways.

- ☐ **A** It helps reveal the personalities of the characters.
- ☐ **B** It helps suggest how the story will end.
- ☐ **C** It helps establish what sort of place the story happens in.
- ☐ **D** It helps establish what time period the story happens in.
- ☐ **E** It helps convey the story's theme.

Read the excerpt from a play. Then answer the questions.

from *Pygmalion*
by George Bernard Shaw

In the play Pygmalion, Eliza, also known as Liza, is a “flower girl” selling flowers on a street corner in London. One evening she tries to sell flowers to an elderly gentleman named Colonel Pickering while they both take cover from the rain. As Eliza talks to Pickering, a professor named Henry Higgins secretly takes notes while listening to Eliza speak. Professor Higgins studies speech and is interested in Eliza’s accent. He tells the girl that he could teach her how to talk like a duchess in just a matter of months. Colonel Pickering is interested in speaking more with Higgins about his work, and the two men meet at the professor’s house the next day. Eliza arrives unexpectedly at the house. Higgins’s housekeeper, Mrs. Pearce, shows her in.

PICKERING [gently] What is it you want, my girl?

THE FLOWER GIRL. I want to be a lady in a flower shop stead of selling at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. But they won’t take me unless I can talk more genteel. He said he could teach me. Well, here I am ready to pay him—not asking any favor—and he treats me as if I was dirt.

MRS. PEARCE. How can you be such a foolish ignorant girl as to think you could afford to pay Mr. Higgins?

THE FLOWER GIRL. Why shouldn’t I? I know what lessons cost as well as you do; and I’m ready to pay . . .

HIGGINS [thundering at her] Sit down.

MRS. PEARCE [severely] Sit down, girl. Do as you’re told. [She places the stray chair near the hearthrug between Higgins and Pickering, and stands behind it waiting for the girl to sit down].

THE FLOWER GIRL. Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oo! [She stands, half rebellious, half bewildered].

PICKERING [very courteous] Won’t you sit down?

THE FLOWER GIRL [coily] Don’t mind if I do. [She sits down. Pickering returns to the hearthrug].

HIGGINS. What’s your name?

THE FLOWER GIRL. Liza Doolittle.

HIGGINS. [declaiming gravely] Eliza, Elizabeth, Betsy and Bess, They went to the woods to get a birds nes'.

PICKERING. They found a nest with four eggs in it.

HIGGINS. They took one apiece, and left three in it.
They laugh heartily at their own wit.

LIZA. Oh, don't be silly.

MRS. PEARCE. You mustn't speak to the gentleman like that.

LIZA. Well, why won't he speak sensible to me?

HIGGINS. Come back to business. How much do you propose to pay me for the lessons?

LIZA. Oh, I know what's right. A lady friend of mine gets French lessons for eighteen pence an hour from a real French gentleman. Well, you wouldn't have the face to ask me the same for teaching me my own language as you would for French; so I won't give more than a shilling. Take it or leave it.

HIGGINS [walking up and down the room, rattling his keys and his cash in his pockets] You know, Pickering, if you consider a shilling, not as a simple shilling, but as a percentage of this girl's income, it works out as fully equivalent to sixty or seventy guineas from a millionaire.

PICKERING. How so?

HIGGINS. Figure it out. A millionaire has about 150 pounds a day. She earns about half-a-crown.

LIZA [haughtily] Who told you I only—

HIGGINS [continuing] She offers me two-fifths of her day's income for a lesson. Two-fifths of a millionaire's income for a day would be somewhere about 60 pounds. It's handsome. By George, it's enormous! It's the biggest offer I ever had.

LIZA [rising, terrified] Sixty pounds! What are you talking about? I never offered you sixty pounds. Where would I get—

HIGGINS. Hold your tongue.

LIZA [weeping] But I ain't got sixty pounds. Oh—

MRS. PEARCE. Don't cry, you silly girl. Sit down. Nobody is going to touch your money.

HIGGINS. Somebody is going to touch you, with a broomstick, if you don't stop snivelling. Sit down.

LIZA [obeying slowly] Ah—ah—ah—ow—oo—o! One would think you was my father.

HIGGINS. If I decide to teach you, I'll be worse than two fathers to you. Here [he offers her his silk handkerchief]!

LIZA. What's this for?

HIGGINS. To wipe your eyes. To wipe any part of your face that feels moist. Remember: that's your handkerchief; and that's your sleeve. Don't mistake the one for the other if you wish to become a lady in a shop.

Liza, utterly bewildered, stares helplessly at him.

MRS. PEARCE. It's no use talking to her like that, Mr. Higgins: she doesn't understand you. Besides, you're quite wrong: she doesn't do it that way at all [she takes the handkerchief].

LIZA [snatching it] Here! You give me that handkerchief. He give it to me, not to you.

PICKERING [laughing] He did. I think it must be regarded as her property, Mrs. Pearce.

MRS. PEARCE [resigning herself] Serve you right, Mr. Higgins.

PICKERING. Higgins: I'm interested. What about the ambassador's garden party? I'll say you're the greatest teacher alive if you make that good. I'll bet you all the expenses of the experiment you can't do it. And I'll pay for the lessons.

LIZA. Oh, you are real good. Thank you, Captain.

HIGGINS [tempted, looking at her] It's almost irresistible. She's so deliciously low—so horribly dirty—

LIZA [protesting extremely] Ah—ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oooo!!! I ain't dirty: I washed my face and hands afore I come, I did.

PICKERING. You're certainly not going to turn her head with flattery, Higgins.

MRS. PEARCE [uneasy] Oh, don't say that, sir: there's more ways than one of turning a girl's head; and nobody can do it better than Mr. Higgins, though he may not always mean it. I do hope, sir, you won't encourage him to do anything foolish.

HIGGINS [becoming excited as the idea grows on him] Never lose a chance: it doesn't come every day. I shall make a duchess of this draggletailed guttersnipe.

LIZA [strongly deprecating this view of her] Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oo!

HIGGINS [carried away] Yes: in six months—in three if she has a good ear and a quick tongue—I'll take her anywhere and pass her off as anything. We'll start today: now! this moment! Take her away and clean her, Mrs. Pearce . . .

HIGGINS [storming on] Take all her clothes off and burn them. Ring up Whiteley or somebody for new ones. Wrap her up in brown paper till they come.

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- 9 Read the following lines from the play.

PICKERING [gently] What is it you want, my girl?

THE FLOWER GIRL. I want to be a lady in a flower shop stead of selling at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. But they won't take me unless I can talk more genteel. He said he could teach me. Well, here I am ready to pay him—not asking any favor—and he treats me as if I was dirt.

What does the phrase as if I was dirt tell you about how Professor Higgins behaves toward Liza? Select **two** options.

- (A) He behaves disrespectfully toward her.
- (B) He wants her to stay off his furniture.
- (C) He acts as if he thinks he is better than she is.
- (D) He expects her to grow plants for him.
- (E) He worries that there might be bugs on her.

- 10 Read the following lines from the play.

LIZA [rising, terrified] Sixty pounds! What are you talking about? I never offered you sixty pounds. Where would I get—

HIGGINS. Hold your tongue.

LIZA [weeping] But I ain't got sixty pounds. Oh—

What does the phrase Hold your tongue tell you about the characters?

- (A) that Professor Higgins wants Liza to use her hand to grab her tongue
- (B) that Professor Higgins wants Liza to be quiet
- (C) that Liza is sticking her tongue out at Professor Higgins
- (D) that Liza is hiding the money away from Professor Higgins in her mouth

Name: _____ Date: _____

- 11 Read the following lines from the play.

PICKERING. You're certainly not going to turn her head with flattery, Higgins.

MRS. PEARCE [uneasy] Oh, don't say that, sir: there's more ways than one of turning a girl's head; and nobody can do it better than Mr. Higgins, though he may not always mean it. I do hope, sir, you won't encourage him to do anything foolish.

HIGGINS [becoming excited as the idea grows on him] Never lose a chance: it doesn't come every day. I shall make a duchess of this draggetailed guttersnipe.

LIZA [strongly deprecating this view of her] Ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oo!

Based on the context, what is the meaning of deprecating?

- (A) flattered by
- (B) supportive of
- (C) saddened by
- (D) disapproving of

- 12 How do the stage directions that appear in brackets help you better understand the characters? Select **three** options.

- (A) They tell the way in which the characters say their lines.
- (B) They give information about the time it takes for the characters to say their lines.
- (C) They give information about the characters' emotions.
- (D) They tell how the characters move or behave.
- (E) They give information about the characters' backgrounds.

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- 13** This question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Which statement summarizes the **main** conflict that drives the plot?

- (A)** Mrs. Pearce and Liza are jealous of one another.
- (B)** Liza and Professor Higgins have a confrontational relationship.
- (C)** Mrs. Pearce and Professor Higgins have a mother/son relationship.
- (D)** Colonel Pickering does not support Professor Higgins teaching Liza.

Part B: What is the main conflict that drives the plot of the play? Select **two** details that reveal the conflict that drives the plot.

- (A)** Liza says to Professor Higgins, "Ah—ah—ah—ah—ow—ow—oooo!!! I ain't dirty: I washed my face and hands afore I come, I did."
- (B)** Liza says to Mrs. Pearce, "Here! You give me that handkerchief. He give it to me, not to you."
- (C)** Professor Higgins says to Liza, "Somebody is going to touch you, with a broomstick, if you don't stop snivelling."
- (D)** Mrs. Pearce says to Colonel Pickering, "Oh, don't say that, sir: there's more ways than one of turning a girl's head; and nobody can do it better than Mr. Higgins, though he may not always mean it. I do hope, sir, you won't encourage him to do anything foolish."
- (E)** Colonel Pickering says to Mrs. Pearce, "I think it must be regarded as her property, Mrs. Pearce."
- (F)** Mrs. Pearce says to Liza, "You mustn't speak to the gentleman like that."

Read the texts. Then answer the questions.

Limit Your Screen Time!

Over the last several decades, people have increasingly replaced face-to-face contact with screen time, whether by playing video games, browsing the Internet, or texting with others. The results of this increased time in front of a screen are poorer physical fitness, increased attention problems, and a growing detachment from others. As a country, we should set strict parameters to limit our exposure to screens—and increase our exposure to each other. It's estimated that most children spend five to seven hours a day in front of a screen for one reason or another. This exposure leads to a host of problems.

Health

People who sit in front of a screen for long periods of time engage less in physical activity. And, due to the influence of junk-food commercials on television, the food they eat is frequently unhealthy. Together, these factors lead to a wide variety of health problems.

Attention and Mood Problems

Watching television or using a computer for more than two hours a day can sometimes lead to attention problems. Screens can trigger a "stress response," causing overstimulation in a child. Playing video games heightens the problem even more. And a study in England found that children who spent more than two hours a day in front of screens had greater psychological difficulties. The kids reported greater feelings of sadness than those who received less screen exposure. This problem occurred even when the children balanced the screen time with regular physical activity.

Relationships with Others

People addicted to the Internet or gaming have shown atrophy, or shrinkage, in the gray matter areas of their brains. These areas are related to processing. Damage to one specific region, called the insula, results in decreased empathy for others and a reduced ability to link physical signals with emotions. These deficiencies can affect personal relationships with others. During one study conducted by the University of California, Los Angeles, researchers divided sixth graders into two groups. One of the groups went without access to technology, instead spending time at an outdoor-education camp. The other group had normal access to phones, computers, and televisions. At the end of the five-day period, researchers showed the two groups of sixth-graders the pictures of 50 people's faces. The researchers then asked the kids to identify the emotions reflected in the faces.

The kids who'd attended the camp and refrained from using technological devices did significantly better in identifying the emotions than the other group of kids did. Going just five days without any exposure to technology somehow enabled the group to read emotions better. The researchers attributed the difference in responses to the fact that the kids at camp had far more direct interaction with people.

People may ask why the problem with screen time is any worse now than it was before. After all, people have been watching television since the 1950s. While this is true, the more recent advent of cell phones, personal computers, and gaming devices has greatly increased our level of screen exposure.

We now know that technological devices can have an adverse effect not just on our health but on our relationships as well. It is important for families, schools, and communities to recognize the problems associated with too much screen exposure. We should disconnect from our devices and reconnect with each other.

The Upside of Screen Time

A lot of people argue that we should spend less time in front of screens. They say we devote too much time to activities like surfing the Internet and playing video games. But critics fail to acknowledge the upside of these activities. In fact, these practices can actually improve children's learning skills and moods and also help create greater bonds between people. For this reason, we should be more hesitant to condemn any time spent in front of a screen.

Video Games

Studies have shown that gaming can help develop such cognitive skills as reasoning, memory, and spatial navigation. These skills can be useful in a person's personal and professional life. For example, good spatial-navigation skills are often necessary in fields such as engineering and technology.

Furthermore, studies have shown that video games involving roleplaying can help improve a person's problem-solving skills and games requiring quick thinking can help players learn how to make decisions more quickly. Simple video games, which are quick and easy, can improve a player's mood by helping him or her relax.

Successfully playing a video game can also help build a player's self-esteem and sense of achievement. But even when a player doesn't do well, he or she gains some benefits. Video games can help teach players to be persistent and resilient in the face of failure. They can also help players cope with feelings like aggression and separation in a non-threatening environment. These skills can ultimately help people address similar challenges in their daily lives.

One common misconception of gamers is that they're socially isolated people. In fact, it's estimated that 70% of gamers play with friends, while many others engage in virtual play with worldwide communities. This exposure allows gamers to develop cooperation and team-building skills. Furthermore, those who play on teams rather than individually report a lower occurrence of hostile feelings. This is even the case when gamers play more aggressive video games. In fact, Oxford University conducted a study that found that children who played video games every day, but for less than one hour per day, had more positive social interactions than children who either didn't play any video games at all or who played for longer than three hours a day. So the key may be not to eliminate game time completely but to limit it to a reasonable amount of time.

The Internet

Video games aren't the only screenbased activity that provides social benefits to participants, however. The Internet also offers many chances for people to connect with others. Social networking sites, for example, allow people to share their interests with each other. And online virtual study groups let students interact and exchange ideas. Some researchers even believe that online study groups help students learn more effectively than they would by studying on their own.

To summarize, people need to take a more measured approach to forbidding screen time. Activities like gaming and social networking can actually help develop important cognitive and social skills. They can even put us in a better mood. And who doesn't want that?

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Answer these questions from "Limit Your Screen Time!"

- 14 Read the following sentences from the text.

People addicted to the Internet or gaming have shown atrophy, or shrinkage, in the gray matter areas of their brains. These areas are related to processing. Damage to one specific region, called the insula, results in decreased empathy for others and a reduced ability to link physical signals with emotions. These deficiencies can affect personal relationships with others.

Based on the context, what is the insula?

- (A) It's a component in a video game.
- (B) It's a feature on a website.
- (C) It's an area in the brain.
- (D) It's a type of emotion.

- 15 What purpose do the headings in the text serve? How do these sections help you better understand the text? Use details to support your ideas.

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- 16** The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: What are the central ideas of this text? Select **two** options.

- ☐ **A** Commercials about junk food often lead to unhealthy eating habits.
- ☐ **B** People spend too much time in front of screens.
- ☐ **C** Attending an outdoor-education camp will help you recognize other people's emotions more easily.
- ☐ **D** Gaming is the most damaging type of screen exposure.
- ☐ **E** Too much screen time can have many negative effects on people's lives.

Part B: Which sentences in the text **best** support this view? Select **two** options.

- ☐ **A** "The results of this increased time in front of a screen are poorer physical fitness, increased attention problems, and a growing detachment from others."
- ☐ **B** "It's estimated that most children spend five to seven hours a day in front of a screen for one reason or another."
- ☐ **C** "And, due to the influence of junk-food commercials on television, the food they eat is frequently unhealthy."
- ☐ **D** "Playing video games heightens the problem even more."
- ☐ **E** "The kids who'd attended the camp and refrained from using technological devices did significantly better in identifying the emotions than the other group of kids did."

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Answer these questions from "The Upside of Screen Time."

- 17 Read the following sentences from the text.

Studies have shown that gaming can help develop such cognitive skills as reasoning, memory, and spatial navigation. These skills can be useful in a person's personal and professional life. For example, good spatial-navigation skills are often necessary in fields such as engineering and technology.

Based on the context, what is the meaning of cognitive?

- (A) unimportant and disconnected
- (B) related to knowledge and understanding
- (C) cheerful and carefree
- (D) having to do with movement

- 18 Which of the following **best** describes the author's point of view about screen time?

- (A) People should spend far less time in front of screens.
- (B) Internet screen time is acceptable, but people should avoid playing video games.
- (C) Screen time can result in many positive effects for a person, and we should be more accepting of it.
- (D) People who spend a lot of time in front of screens can develop useful skills but also can become socially isolated.

- 19 What is the author's purpose for writing this essay? Use details from the text to support your ideas.

Argumentative Performance Task

Task

It's sometimes difficult for people to get along. We all have our own ideas about how things should be. Sometimes we don't agree with each other.

For this task, you will be writing an argument related to the topic of speech. Before you write your analysis, you will review two sources that provide more information about freedom of speech and the need for civil discourse. Take notes while you read.

After you have reviewed these sources, you will answer some questions about them. Briefly scan the sources and the three questions that follow. Then go back and read the sources carefully to gain the information you will need to answer the questions and write an argument.

In Part 2, you will write an argument on a topic related to the sources.

Directions for Part 1

You will now read two sources. You can re-examine the sources as often as you like.

Research Questions

After reading the research sources, use the remaining time in Part 1 to answer three questions about them. Your answers to these questions will be scored. Also, your answers will help you think about the research sources you have read, which should help you write your argument.

You may refer to the sources when you think it would be helpful. You may also refer to your notes. Answer the questions in the space provided.

Source #1: Freedom of Speech

The founders of our country considered freedom of speech a right that everyone was born with. That is why they ensured the protection of this right under the Bill of Rights' First Amendment. However, understanding exactly what is covered under freedom of speech can sometimes be a challenge.

Examples of Protected Speech

Nonverbal symbols are generally protected under freedom of speech because they're seen as extensions of free speech. (The use of symbols to desecrate someone else's property is not covered under freedom of speech, however.) In 1965, public school students wore black armbands to school to protest the Vietnam War. In a landmark decision made in 1969, the Supreme Court upheld the students' right to freedom of speech in wearing the armbands.

People are allowed to condemn speech for its offensive nature. But forbidding someone from sharing his or her thoughts can become a constitutional issue. "Fighting words," or comments made to a specific person that might provoke a violent reaction, are not protected by freedom of speech. But offensive comments that are more generally shared are. For example, "hate speech" is protected when it's not directed at a specific person. This is speech that targets certain groups of people based on specific traits. These traits might be a person's religion or national origin, for example. Upholding one group's civil rights and another person's right to freedom of speech can create a challenging atmosphere, however.

Examples of Unprotected Speech

Making or distributing obscene materials is not covered by the First Amendment, nor are certain types of obscene speech. Certain school-related activities, such as printing articles in the school newspaper over the objections of the school administration, are also not covered.

Difficulties with the First Amendment

Many people find it difficult to understand why offensive language like hate speech is protected by the First Amendment. But organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union think the best way to fight offensive language like hate speech is not to forbid it. Instead, the organization promotes using speech itself to fight it. In other words, if a university invites a controversial public figure to speak on campus, the student body should do its best to refute the person's ideas. It should not try to forbid the speech. The ACLU contends that getting controversial ideas out in the open actually makes them easier to oppose. It might even bring about a change in the person's controversial ideas. Allowing offensive speech, the ACLU argues, also helps unite different organizations to speak out against the ideas contained in the speech.

Freedom of speech can sometimes make us uncomfortable. It requires us to listen to ideas that we don't necessarily agree with or that make us angry. But in a democracy, it's important to allow for a free exchange of ideas to keep the country moving forward.

Source #2: The Return of Civil Discourse

With the advent of the Internet, communication between people has become both more informal and more universal. The lack of formality has often resulted in discussions tainted by rudeness and disrespect. As a result, an effort is underway to bring civility back to discussions.

Of course, determining exactly what incivility is can be difficult. One scholar defines it as behavior that threatens democracy, denies the personal freedoms of people, or stereotypes particular social groups. The scholar makes a distinction between this type of uncivil communication and more harmless acts, such as writing in all-capital letters or using sarcasm. While this type of behavior may be seen as impolite, she argues, it is nonetheless civil. In fact, many researchers see examples of argumentation and mildly bad manners as beneficial to a debate. They argue that these behaviors tend to move the debate forward.

Regardless of incivility's exact definition, the public's perception of its growth is well documented. A 2011 survey of 1,000 Americans found that 65% of respondents believed the country had a general problem with incivility. Nearly half of the respondents found social networks to be uncivil. A majority of those surveyed also believed that the problem would worsen. About half of them blamed social networks for this increase. Almost 50% of those surveyed had "defriended" or blocked someone. And more than one-third had stopped visiting social network or other online sites due to incivility.

Critics attribute the current state of incivility on web sites to different factors. First, some people see anonymity as an easy way for people to exchange ideas in an undignified manner. A person can easily assume a fictional name or falsify a profile. That way, no one will ever know his or her true identity. As a result, the anonymous person feels free to insult whatever or whomever he or she wants. And because the person's identity is hidden, no consequences result. Sometimes these people are referred to as "anons" due to their anonymous nature. Other times, they're called "trolls." These are people who specifically try to provoke online arguments with others or make off-topic comments to detract from the current conversation.

Another factor that's seen as contributing to the incivility crisis is a general disregard for learning the art of debate. It's been argued that citizens should receive more training to learn what makes communication acceptable or unacceptable. In addition, they must be held accountable for sticking to the guidelines of appropriate behavior.

Of course, others argue that people are no more uncivil now than they have been in the past. The difference, they say, is that the Internet merely offers people a much larger forum for broadcasting their opinions. As a result, the commentary, whether civil or uncivil, reaches a much larger audience.

Nonetheless, people are taking action to try to discourage the use of rude or demeaning communication as much as possible. For example, some web sites enlist staff moderators to determine the appropriateness of readers' comments. These moderators decide which comments are or are not allowed to appear on the site.

Other sites use moderation software that makes a similar determination by automatically searching for off-topic or angry language in a post. Many colleges and universities are also making strides to encourage healthy debate. They are establishing specific centers and institutions devoted to advocating and practicing civil discourse.

A true democracy requires a healthy exchange of ideas. However, many take issue with the ways in which some ideas are exchanged. More than one approach might be necessary for discouraging unseemly behavior. But it is certainly helpful to revisit the practices that keep debates honest and clean and help us avoid falling into a void of uncivil behavior.

Name: _____ Date: _____

21 According to "Freedom of Speech," how does the American Civil Liberties Union feel about the expression of controversial ideas?

- ☐ **A** People should be allowed to express controversial ideas.
- ☐ **B** People should be forbidden from expressing controversial ideas.
- ☐ **C** People should be allowed to express some, but not all, controversial ideas.
- ☐ **D** People should only be allowed to express controversial ideas in a university setting.

22 How do the two sources focus on different aspects of speech in society? Cite details from **both** sources to support your ideas. Be sure to identify the source of each piece of information by title or number.

Name: _____ Date: _____

- 23** Which source would be more useful for making the argument that people need to develop better and more appropriate debate skills? Explain why, and provide at least two pieces of evidence from that source to support your ideas. Be sure to identify the source of each piece of information by title or number.

Directions for Part 2

You will now look at your sources; take notes; and plan, draft, revise, and edit your argument. You may use your notes and refer to the sources. Now read your assignment and the information about how your argument will be scored; then begin your work.

Your Assignment

Your teacher would like you to write an argument about controlling speech in society using the two sources you have read. You have decided to write an argument stating that the best way to control speech in society is to self-monitor. Write a multi-paragraph argument that explains some of the speech issues society faces and why self-monitoring is the best solution to the problem. Your argument will be read by the teacher and students in your class. In your argument, clearly state your claim and support it by using thoroughly developed reasons and evidence taken from both sources you have read.

Argumentative Article Scoring Your article will be scored using the following:

- 1. Organization/Purpose:** How clearly did you state and maintain your claim with a logical progression of ideas from beginning to end? How logically did your ideas flow from beginning to end? How often did you use effective transitions? How effective was your introduction and your conclusion?
- 2. Evidence/Elaboration:** How well did you provide evidence from sources about your argument? How well did you elaborate with specific information?
- 3. Conventions:** How well did you follow the rules of grammar usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling?

Now begin work on your argumentative article. Manage your time carefully so that you can plan, write, revise, and edit the final draft of your article. Write your response on a separate piece of paper.

