

Unit 3: Attention Literacy

1. Pre-reading Exercise

1. Do you ever walk on the street while texting or reading something on your cellphone?
2. What are your biggest distractions when you are trying to do work on your computer?
 ___ email ___ news sites ___ social networking ___ games
 ___ Youtube ___ other
3. Do you think you are good at *multitasking*?
4. Do you ever get distracted when you try to do some work on your computer? What distracts you?

2. Vocabulary match the words with their definitions:

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----|---|
| a) abandon | ___ | able to do something |
| b) capable | ___ | to take attention away from someone or something |
| c) accomplish | ___ | the rate at which work is completed |
| d) distract | ___ | not clear in meaning |
| e) vague | ___ | to make (something unwanted) as small as possible |
| f) devote | ___ | to give up (something) |
| g) productivity | ___ | to succeed in doing (something) |
| h) minimise | ___ | to use (time, money, attention, etc.) for something |

Now fill in any blanks possible:

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverb
	abandon	<i>abandoned</i>	xxxxxx
	accomplish		xxxxxx
	xxxxxx	capable	
	distract		
	devote		
	xxxxxx	vague	
	minimise		

3. While reading

1. Fill in the blanks with the words from the vocabulary exercise.
2. Find a phrasal verb (two words) that means to start doing something: _____
3. Find a phrasal verb (two words) that goes with "time": _____

4. Comprehension questions:

1. Are people good at multitasking?
2. What happens to people's walking ability when they are using a smartphone?
3. What are the most common distractions for Internet users?

5. Discussion questions:

1. Which of these things have you done? (check ✓)
 used your smartphone while watching TV or a movie
 bumped into someone while using your smartphone while walking
 used your smartphone while sitting with friends in a restaurant
 browsed the Internet or texted a friend while listening to a lecture in class
2. What tasks do you think it's okay to do while multitasking? What tasks do you think you should give your undivided attention to?
3. Some studies suggest that females are better at multitasking than men. Do you think this is true? Why or why not?

6. Phrasal Verb Focus

1. Match the meaning of **set out** with its use in the example sentences:

- a) to begin traveling (in a particular direction)
- b) to start doing something
- c) to move or organise things so they can be seen/used

- He's happy because he accomplished what he set out to do.
 The campers decided they would set out for the lake in the morning.
 Have you set out the dishes for dinner yet?

2. Match the meaning of **make up** with its use in the example sentences:

- a) to forgive each other after a fight
- b) to invent a story, lie, or plan
- c) to do something helpful or good for someone (after doing something wrong)
- d) to combine to produce something
- e) to put makeup on someone's face

- I'm sorry I was late. Can I make it up to you by paying for lunch?
 Mark and Tom had an argument, but they made up afterwards.
 Sylvia made herself up for the party.
 Social media websites make up a large portion of the Internet these days.
 Most of Fraser's story was true, but he made up the last part.

Article: The problem with multitasking

From Youtube to Facebook to our own email inboxes, the Internet is full of potential distractions. With all of these things that can _____ us, it is sometimes difficult for us to _____ tasks by their deadlines.

Multitasking is one way that people try to **make up** for lost time. Multitasking can be as simple as eating a sandwich while watching a Youtube video to much more complex undertakings such as trying to listen to a university lecture while writing a homework assignment due next class and answering a friend's text all at the same time.

The problem is that most humans are not very _____ of doing this kind of multitasking well. While we may think that doing two things at once is a timesaver, studies show that when a person's attention is divided between two or more tasks, they finish the tasks more slowly, and they make more mistakes. A good example of this is walking while using a smartphone: the average person normally walks 4.4 feet per second, but while they are texting, they only walk 3.3 feet per second, and they are less likely to walk in a straight line.

Does this mean we should _____ multitasking completely? Not necessarily. Instead, people should think carefully about what tasks they need to _____ their full attention to. Eating a sandwich while watching a Youtube video is unlikely to result in lost _____, but when you are trying to finish typing a report, it is probably best to _____ potential distractions.

Luckily, our attention, like a muscle, can be strengthened through exercise. Here are some tips for exercising your attention:

1. Know what your distractions are (the most common distractions are usually social networking sites, email, news sites and online games).
2. Set clear goals for what you want to accomplish while online (if your goals are _____, it is easier to become distracted).
3. When using the Internet, occasionally ask yourself "Am I wandering off task?".
4. Use your distraction websites as a reward. After you accomplish what you **set out** to do, allow yourself to visit one of your distraction sites.
5. If you don't have the willpower to limit your distractions, you may have to go cold turkey. Try leaving your smartphone at home or using software that blocks distracting websites except for certain times of the day.

For years, many of us have been worried about managing our time, but perhaps we should be more focused on managing our attention. If more people could do this, perhaps we could get more done, and bump into fewer people on the street.

TOEIC Practice

1. I have a lot of homework due this week so I can't afford any _____.

- a) distracting
- b) distract
- c) distraction
- d) distractions

3. His _____ to this project should be reason enough to give him a raise.

- a) deviation
- b) devotion
- c) deviated
- d) devoting

5. He has devoted himself _____ his job.

- a) in
- b) with
- c) on
- d) to

7. It was quite the _____ to finish all of that work by the deadline.

- a) accomplished
- b) accomplishment
- c) accomplish
- d) accomplishing

9. I _____ remember talking to John at the Christmas party last year.

- a) vagueness
- b) vaguely
- c) vague
- d) vogueness

2. Is this computer _____ running the new software?

- a) capable of
- b) capable to
- c) capable with
- d) capable on

4. The team should be able to finish this project with _____ problems.

- a) minimally
- b) minimal
- c) minimize
- d) minimizing

6. Students' _____ suffers when they spend too much time on social media.

- a) producing
- b) produce
- c) productivity
- d) product

8. The company _____ the project because it was getting too expensive.

- a) abandoned
- b) abandonment
- c) abandons
- d) abandoning

10. You need to have a lot of _____ to resist checking your Facebook account every day.

- a) willingness
- b) will
- c) willing
- d) willpower