

Speed Reading Practice for Summer Seminar: No. 1

Name: _____ / Date: __/__/__ Score: __ / 3 🕒 7 min

以下の英文を読んで、本文の内容と一致するものを①～⑧の中から 3 つ選びなさい。

The Unexpected Value of Boredom

In modern society, boredom is generally regarded as an unpleasant condition that should be avoided whenever possible. People waiting for a train immediately check their phones, while those eating alone often
5 watch videos or scroll through social media. Digital technology has made entertainment constantly accessible, allowing us to fill almost every unoccupied moment. Yet some psychologists argue that our determination to eliminate boredom may deprive us of an experience that plays a significant role in creativity, self-reflection, and personal
10 development.

Boredom occurs when people cannot engage their attention in a satisfying activity. It is often accompanied by restlessness, frustration, and a strong desire for stimulation. For this reason, boredom has usually been associated with negative outcomes. People who experience it
15 frequently may behave impulsively, abandon demanding tasks, or seek excitement without carefully considering the consequences. Persistent boredom can also indicate that individuals feel disconnected from their work, education, or relationships. It would therefore be misleading to claim that boredom is always beneficial.

Nevertheless, brief periods of boredom may encourage the mind to operate in a different manner. When people are not occupied by an immediate task, their attention can turn inward. They may begin to recall past experiences, imagine possible futures, or establish connections between ideas that initially appeared unrelated. This mental activity is
25 sometimes called “mind-wandering.” Although mind-wandering can interfere with concentration when careful attention is required, it may also facilitate creative thought by allowing ideas to emerge without being strictly controlled.

Several experiments have examined this possibility. In one type of
30 study, participants are first instructed to perform a monotonous activity, such as copying telephone numbers or reading a repetitive list. They are

then asked to suggest unusual uses for an ordinary object. In some experiments, those who completed the monotonous task produced more original suggestions than participants who had immediately begun the creative exercise. Researchers have proposed that boredom motivated
5 the participants to search for more stimulating thoughts, thereby increasing their willingness to explore unconventional ideas.

However, boredom alone does not automatically generate creativity. A person who feels bored may simply become irritated or choose the easiest available distraction. For boredom to contribute to creative
10 thinking, individuals must have both the opportunity and the mental resources to reflect. Someone who is exhausted, anxious, or under intense pressure may not benefit from an empty period of time. Likewise, a student who reaches for a smartphone at the first sign of discomfort gives the mind little chance to move beyond its immediate dissatisfaction.

15 The widespread use of digital devices has intensified this issue. Smartphones are not inherently harmful; they provide access to information, communication, and practical assistance. The problem arises when people use them automatically whenever their attention is not occupied. This habitual response may gradually reduce their
20 tolerance for silence, repetition, and temporary inactivity. Consequently, activities that require sustained effort, such as reading a complex book or solving a difficult problem, may seem unnecessarily frustrating.

Some educators have therefore begun to emphasize the importance of “unstructured time.” This does not mean forcing students to remain
25 inactive for long periods. Rather, it means providing occasional opportunities in which they are not given immediate instructions or entertainment. During such periods, students may observe their surroundings, reconsider a problem, or pursue an idea that interests them. The objective is not boredom itself but the intellectual
30 independence that can sometimes emerge from it.

Boredom should thus be understood neither as an enemy to be eliminated nor as a magical source of inspiration. Its value depends on how people respond to it. Constant stimulation may be comfortable, but it can prevent the mind from exploring ideas that require time and
35 patience to develop. By resisting the urge to fill every quiet moment, people may discover that apparent emptiness is not always empty. Sometimes it is the space in which curiosity begins.

語数:約 510 語

- ① Digital technology has almost completely eliminated boredom from modern life, enabling most people to concentrate on demanding intellectual tasks without experiencing frustration or restlessness.
- ② Frequent or persistent boredom may lead to impulsive behavior and may suggest that individuals feel detached from important areas of their lives, such as work or relationships.
- ③ Mind-wandering is described as harmful in all circumstances because it prevents people from concentrating and makes it difficult for them to connect previously unrelated ideas.
- ④ Some experiments suggest that completing a repetitive task before a creative exercise may encourage participants to produce more original ideas than those who begin the exercise immediately.
- ⑤ The passage claims that boredom inevitably produces creativity, provided that individuals remain without digital entertainment for a sufficiently long period of time.
- ⑥ People who are exhausted or extremely anxious may gain little creative benefit from boredom because effective reflection requires suitable opportunities and adequate mental resources.
- ⑦ The author argues that smartphones are fundamentally harmful and should therefore be prohibited in schools, workplaces, and other environments requiring sustained concentration.
- ⑧ Unstructured time is intended mainly to teach students to tolerate prolonged inactivity rather than to encourage independent thought or the pursuit of personal interests.

実戦的な時間配分: 合計:7 分

問題文・タイトル確認:10 秒

本文通読:3 分 30 秒

①～⑧の判断:2 分 40 秒

本文に戻って確認:30 秒

マーク・最終確認:10 秒

1.	boredom[bó:rdəm]	退屈、倦怠
2.	unpleasant[ʌnplézənt]	不快な
3.	determination[ditə:rmənɛɪʃən]	決意、強い意志
4.	eliminate[ilímənɛɪt]	～を取り除く、排除する
5.	self-reflection[sɛlf riflɛkʃən]	自己省察、内省
6.	engage[ɪŋɡeɪdʒ]	～を引きつける、従事させる
7.	restlessness[réstləsənəs]	落ち着きのなさ
8.	stimulation[stímjuléɪʃən]	刺激
9.	impulsively[ɪmpʌlsɪvli]	衝動的に
10.	persistent[pɜrsístənt]	持続する、長引く
11.	indicate[ɪndikɛɪt]	～を示す
12.	disconnected[dɪskənɛktɪd]	切り離された、疎外された
13.	mind-wandering[máɪnd wàndərɪŋ]	心がさまようこと、無意識の思考
14.	interfere[ɪntərfiər]	妨げる、邪魔をする
15.	facilitate[fəsílətɛɪt]	～を促進する、容易にする
16.	emerge[imé:rdʒ]	現れる、生じる
17.	monotonous[mənátənəs]	単調な、変化のない
18.	repetitive[ripétətɪv]	反復的な、繰り返しの
19.	unconventional[ʌnkənvénʃənəl]	慣例にとらわれない
20.	mental resources[méntl rɪsó:rsɪz]	精神的な余裕、精神的能力
21.	exhausted[ɪgzó:stɪd]	疲れ切った
22.	inherently[ɪnhíərəntli]	本質的に
23.	habitual[həbítʃuəl]	習慣的な
24.	tolerance[tálərəns]	耐える力、寛容さ
25.	sustained[səstéɪnd]	持続的な、維持された