

## Answers for Discursive or factual passages

### Passage 1: The Double-Edged Sword of Social Media

(a) (ii) offering access to expert discussions and global perspectives.

(b) (ii) Fear of missing out

(c) The anonymity of the internet can embolden individuals to engage in harmful behavior like cyberbullying, which they wouldn't do in face-to-face interactions.

(d) The primary design goal of social media algorithms is to keep users engaged on the platform for as long as possible.

(e) Positive: It offers access to educational content and fosters a sense of community.  
Negative: It can cause anxiety, negatively impact self-esteem, and lead to addiction.

(f) A "balanced and mindful approach" is important for students to use social media as a positive tool for learning and connection, rather than allowing it to become an addiction that harms their studies and real-life interactions.

(g) curated

(h) The phrase "double-edged sword" implies that social media has both significant benefits and serious drawbacks.

### Passage 2: The Rise of Online Learning

(a) (ii) its flexibility and personalized pace.

(b) (iii) The unequal access to technology and the internet.

(c) Online learning fosters a "global classroom environment" by breaking down geographical barriers, allowing students from different cultures to access the same courses and collaborate with each other.

(d) A student's self-discipline and time management skills are tested in an online learning setup.

(e) A major social drawback of online learning is the feeling of isolation and a reduced sense of community that can result from the lack of face-to-face interaction.

(f) The author's suggestion is to create a blended model of education that combines the strengths of both traditional schooling and virtual learning.

(g) repository

(h) Digital literacy is considered an essential skill because it is crucial for navigating and succeeding in the modern, technology-driven workplace.

### Passage 3: Our Planet, Our Responsibility: Tackling Plastic Pollution

(a) (iii) persists in the environment for a very long time.

- (b) (ii) Tiny pieces that plastic breaks down into.
- (c) Plastic pollution harms marine animals when they mistake plastic items for food or get entangled in discarded plastic waste like fishing nets.
- (d) The first two 'R's are Reduce and Reuse.
- (e) The production of plastic contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, which exacerbates climate change.
- (f) Individuals can combat plastic pollution by choosing reusable bags and bottles, and by participating in community clean-up drives.

(g) exacerbating

- (h) "The bill is now due" means that the negative environmental consequences of our long-term, convenient use of plastic have become severe and can no longer be ignored.

#### **Passage 4: The Unspoken Struggle: Why Mental Health Matters**

- (a) (iii) should be discussed openly and prioritized.
- (b) (ii) a reluctance to talk about mental struggles.
- (c) The phrase "the elephant in the room" signifies an obvious, major problem that people actively avoid discussing or acknowledging.
- (d) Two stressors for students mentioned in the passage are the pressure of academic performance and peer relationships.
- (e) Schools and homes can help by creating a safe and supportive environment where open conversations about mental health are encouraged, thus normalizing the topic.
- (f) Two positive habits mentioned are mindfulness and regular exercise.
- (g) resilience
- (h) It is important to "normalize" conversations about mental health to remove the stigma and fear associated with it, encouraging individuals to seek help without shame.

#### **Passage 5: Beyond the Textbook: The Importance of Sports in Education**

- (a) (ii) essential for a holistic and complete education.
- (b) (ii) Improved memory and concentration
- (c) From experiencing both victory and defeat, students learn to handle outcomes with grace, which builds their resilience and character.
- (d) Sports act as a "stress-buster" by providing a healthy physical outlet for the academic and social pressures students face.
- (e) Two life skills mentioned are teamwork and perseverance.

**(f)** The "real-world camaraderie" of a sports team is considered particularly valuable today because it provides a necessary counterbalance to the increasing dominance of digital interaction.

**(g)** indispensable

**(h)** In this context, a "holistic education" refers to an approach that aims to develop all aspects of a student—academic, physical, social, and emotional—rather than focusing narrowly on textbook knowledge.

#### **Passage 6: The Age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

**(a)** (iii) A traditional printed newspaper

**(b)** (ii) process vast amounts of data quickly.

**(c)** "Bias in AI systems" refers to a situation where algorithms produce unfair outcomes because they reflect and sometimes worsen existing human prejudices present in the data they are trained on.

**(d)** AI can benefit human workers by automating repetitive and dull tasks, which frees up humans to concentrate on work that requires creativity and strategic thinking.

**(e)** Benefit: It has the potential to solve complex global problems.

Concern: It could cause widespread job loss due to automation.

**(f)** A "strong sense of responsibility" is needed to ensure that AI is developed and used ethically for the good of all humanity, preventing issues like bias, privacy violations, and other negative consequences.

**(g)** mundane

**(h)** Calling AI a "transformative technology" means that it is fundamentally and significantly changing the way we live, work, and interact with the world around us.

#### **Passage 7: Fast Fashion and Its Environmental Cost**

**(a)** (ii) quickly bringing new, trendy clothes to the market.

**(b)** (iii) intense use of water.

**(c)** A "culture of disposability" is a mindset where people view products, like clothing, as items to be used for a short time and then easily thrown away.

**(d)** Their production relies on fossil fuels, and because they are non-biodegradable, they persist in landfills for centuries, causing long-term pollution.

**(e)** The core idea behind "slow fashion" is a more conscious and sustainable approach to clothing, emphasizing quality over quantity and ethical production.

**(f)** Consumers can challenge fast fashion by repairing their old clothes instead of discarding them and by choosing to buy second-hand items.

**(g)** sheer

**(h)** The phrase means that while fast fashion appears affordable and appealing on the surface, its true cost is severe and often unseen damage to the environment.

#### **Passage 8: The Importance of Digital Citizenship**

**(a)** (iii) using technology in a safe, responsible, and ethical way.

**(b)** (ii) The trail of data a person leaves online

**(c)** Digital literacy is important because it equips people with the ability to find and critically evaluate online information, which is essential to distinguish facts from misinformation.

**(d)** 'Netiquette' refers to the code of polite and respectful conduct online, including communicating courteously and avoiding harmful behaviour like cyberbullying.

**(e)** A responsible digital citizen critically evaluates the source of information, tries to confirm its accuracy, and avoids sharing information they know or suspect to be false.

**(f)** It is important to be mindful of your digital footprint because it is often public and permanent, and can influence how others see you, potentially affecting future opportunities like college admissions or jobs.

**(g)** paramount

**(h)** The statement is a reminder that online communications are with real human beings who have emotions, so one should always be kind and respectful.

#### **Passage 9: The Gig Economy: A New Way of Working**

**(a)** (iii) short-term contracts and freelance work.

**(b)** (ii) Flexibility in work hours and location

**(c)** 'Gig workers' are independent workers who perform short-term or freelance jobs, often found through digital platforms, instead of holding a permanent position with one employer.

**(d)** Two drawbacks are the lack of job security and the absence of benefits like paid sick leave and health insurance.

**(e)** It provides opportunities by lowering the entry barriers to many jobs, allowing people to start earning with minimal resources (like a smartphone), which helps those who might not fit into a traditional employment structure.

**(f)** The challenge is for society to adapt its laws and social support systems to provide financial security and legal protection for the growing number of gig workers.

**(g)** supplement

**(h)** The author means that the freedom and flexibility that the gig economy offers should not be achieved by sacrificing the fundamental rights and security (like stable income and benefits) of the workers.

#### **Passage 10: The Lost Art of Hobbies**

- (a) (iii)** pleasure and relaxation.
- (b) (iii)** memory and problem-solving.
- (c)** According to the author, the space for hobbies is shrinking because of the intense focus on achieving academic grades and career goals, leaving little time for non-goal-oriented pursuits.
- (d)** A hobby can boost self-esteem by providing a sense of mastery and accomplishment in a non-competitive, personal activity.
- (e)** The social benefit is that hobbies can connect you with like-minded people through clubs or groups, creating a sense of community and belonging.
- (f)** It is an investment in a person's mental and emotional well-being.
- (g)** indulgence
- (h)** Studying for a grade is an external requirement focused on a specific outcome (the grade), while learning as a hobby is an internal desire pursued for personal joy and fulfilment, where the process is as important as the result.