

Multitasking in the age of new media

Level

Intermediate and above

Tasks

Comparing how much time students spend using media and communications
 Guessing figures media usage in the UK, and scanning an article on this topic
 Reading an article about multitasking
 Guessing the frequency of words taken from the article
 Discussing questions arising from the article

How to use the lesson

1 Write the word 'multitasking' on the board and check students have met it. If they haven't, can they guess what it means? Issue the worksheet and let students estimate how much time they spend a day on the various activities and then compare their answers. Elicit some answers from the students to get an idea of how much time is spent on surfing, texting, watching TV etc.

2 Ask students to study the report extract and choose the option they think is correct. Students then scan the article and check their answers.

Answers:

(a) 7 hours (b) 3.8 hours (c) 13.5 million

3 Students read the complete article. Ask them to tell you the main points in the article. Ask them about the tone, which is light-hearted and informal. You may wish to look at any useful vocabulary at this point: e.g. *commuting* / *regulator* / *deteriorating* / *norm* / *fuss*.

4 Remind students of the word frequency system in the Macmillan English Dictionary. Ask students to study the frequency box and decide if the words in the box are red (three star, two star or one star) or black (no stars).

Answers:

Red three star	<i>trend</i> / <i>Internet</i> / <i>TV</i>
Red two star	<i>executive</i> / <i>mobile phone</i> / <i>slave</i>
Red one star	<i>fuss</i> / <i>deteriorate</i> / <i>surf</i>
Black	<i>Smartphone</i> / <i>commute</i> / <i>multitasking</i>

5 Divide students into small groups to discuss the questions. Monitor and support as necessary. Students report back on their discussion to the whole class. Encourage questions and discussion. Finally, give language feedback on any major language errors you notice.

Related websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://www.ofcom.org.uk/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_multitasking#Popular_Commentary_on_Practical_Multitasking

<http://www.metro.co.uk/tech/838973-facebook-and-google-may-make-you-more-stupid>

<http://blog.penelopetrunk.com/2006/12/10/10-tips-for-time-management-in-a-multitasking-world/>