

Life through a lens: How Britain's children eat, sleep and breathe

1. A generation of 'multitasking' children are living their daily lives -including eating and falling asleep -to the accompaniment of television, according to a survey of youngsters' media habits. The flickering of the screen accompanies most of them before they go to school, when they return home, as they consume their evening meal and then -for 63%, far more than read a book each day -in bed at night. The study of five to 16-year-olds shows that four out of five children now have a TV set in their bedroom.
2. So ubiquitous has television become that many children now combine it with other activities, including social networking online, flicking their eyes from laptop to TV screen and back again. Even if they are focusing on the television, young people are now reluctant to commit to one programme, with boys in particular often flipping between channels to keep up with two simultaneous shows at once. The findings, from the market research agency Childwise, will fuel concerns that childhood is increasingly about private space and sedentary activities and less about play, social interaction or the child's own imagination.
3. The government's recent Children's Plan, while attempting to calm panic over claims of 'toxic' childhood, focused on improving play facilities as a means of ensuring a more balanced life for screen-bound youngsters. Today's survey findings indicate a revival in television-watching among children after three years of decline, driven mainly by more girls watching soaps such as Keeping up with the Kardashians and New Girl.
4. Internet use - now that the social networking bug is biting younger than ever -is also continuing to grow at a far greater rate than the brief fall-off in TV viewing. That means British children spend an average of five hours and 20 minutes in front of a screen a day, up from four hours and 40 minutes five years ago. The rise results in a decline in reading books for pleasure which will alarm many parents. While four out of five children read books in their own time, only a quarter do so daily and 53% at least once a week.
5. The report, based on interviews with 1,147 children in 60 schools around England, Scotland and Wales, found television viewing now averages 2.6 hours a day across the age group, though one in ten say they watch more than four hours daily. The survey, which has been conducted annually for 14 years, asked for the first time whether children watched television while eating dinner or in bed before going to sleep. It found that 58% watch during their evening meal, while 63% lie in bed watching the screen (rising to almost three-quarters of 13 to 16-year-olds). Two-thirds - particularly the youngest children - watch before school, and 83% turn on the television after returning home.
6. Rosemary Duff, Childwise research director, said television was now "almost woven into children's lives",

but added that the quality of viewing had changed. "A lot of television viewing has lost the 'pay it attention' feel it used to have. It used to be less ubiquitous but much higher in its importance whereas now it is widespread but just part of the background, not just at home but wherever you go."

7. Anecdotal evidence indicated that children now multitask, keeping one eye on the television as they flick through magazines or use the computer, Duff added. Boys asked by the company to choose between programmes on different channels frequently refused, saying they would 'watch both'. "They flick from one to another and cannot conceive that they should have to make a decision. They are puzzled that you should put them in a situation of having to make one or another choice."
8. Computers are also now a key part of children's private worlds. "The Internet is now an essential part of most young people's lives," says the study, with 85% of five to 16-year-olds accessing the Net, and over a third (including a quarter of five to six-year-olds) owning a computer or laptop of their own. On

average, they go online just over four times a week, spending two hours each time.

9. The survey shows a rise in Internet use, particularly among younger children, driven primarily by a boom in the use of social networking sites, primarily Facebook. Communication, says the report, "has overtaken fun (e.g. online games) as the main reason to use the Internet and study is now far behind". Almost three quarters (72%) of children have visited a social networking site, and over half have set up their own profile - sometimes lying about their age to sidestep minimum age safeguards. Children as young as eight are now signing up.
10. Kathy Evans, policy director of the Children's Society, which is conducting its own inquiry into modern childhood, said there was now "mounting public and professional concern about the potential impact of children's TV and Internet viewing habits". The inquiry will report next month on children and technology as part of its two-year investigation.

A. READING COMPREHENSION

A1. Multiple Matching

Match the words on the left with their corresponding meaning on the right! Be careful, there are two explanations you do not need! (4)

| | |
|---|------------|
| a | ubiquitous |
| b | flick |
| c | revival |
| d | decline |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | a reduction in the amount or quality of something |
| 2 | the process of becoming active, successful or popular again |
| 3 | the way you do things in your own style |
| 4 | to move your eyes quickly |
| 5 | can be found everywhere |
| 6 | involves a lot of sitting and not much exercise. |

Solution grid

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d |
| | | | |

A2. Multiple Choice:

Mark the most suitable answer with a cross! (4)

| | |
|----|---|
| 1. | What does the phrase 'children now multitask' mean? |
| A | They perform several tasks on their computers. |
| B | They can watch TV, read a magazine and use a computer at the same time. |
| C | They are unable to make firm decisions. |
| D | They can chat with several friends via Facebook. |

| | |
|----|---|
| 2. | What is the main reason for the increase in the number of hours children spend in front of a screen? (§ 3) |
| A | More girls are watching soaps |
| B | There has been a large increase in Internet use. |
| C | The use of social networking sites. |
| D | The TV is running during meals. |

| | |
|----|---|
| 3. | What is the main reason for children's use of the Internet? |
| A | To play online games. |
| B | To grow up faster. |
| C | To use sites like Facebook. |
| D | To bother their parents. |

| | |
|----|--|
| 4. | Which of these statements describes the conclusion of the survey best? |
| A | People are worried that children are spending too much time in front of TV and computer screens. |
| B | Children's use of computers and TV viewing habits should be regarded as normal. |
| C | The internet is now an essential part of people's lives. |
| D | An increase of children's knowledge about media. |

A3.Short answer questions / Sentence completion (4 credits)

Focus on paragraph 4, 5, 6 only!

Complete/answer the sentences by providing the information from the text. Use words from the text only. (4)

1. What could be a consequence of the increasing amount of time that children sit in front of a screen?

•

2. How often has the survey of youngsters' media habits been carried out?

•

3. What has changed regarding the significance of watching TV?

Nowadays it is _____ but only _____

FOS BOS HOF

A4. Gapped Summary (5 credits)

Focus on paragraph 7-10 only!

Fill in the gaps with words from the text. They appear in the same order as in the text. One word per line. Note that you are not allowed to change the words in any way!

Parents tell stories about their children that they can watch TV while reading _____ or playing computer games. They don't even need to choose between different TV channels because they can watch several simultaneously. So they are really _____ when adults tell them to decide for one option.

Youngsters also use the computer on a regular basis these days. The _____ teenager browses the internet over eight hours a week. Furthermore not only teenager but _____ children at the age of 12 and younger increase their usage of the internet, sometimes pretending to be much older than they are. This new trend of children using media is closely examined by an organization that tries to find out about _____ consequences of the increase in media usage.

B. Grammar

B1. Participles (9 credits)

Re-write the sentences by using PARTICIPLES!

1. The girls who went to the disco were happy.

→ _____

2. Because the pupils knew that a test would soon be due, they learned.

→ _____

3. The school which was founded in 1895 is modern.

→ _____

4. I know some good books which were written by English writers.

→ _____

5. Peter sat in his room and waited for me.

→ _____

6. The test which was done by us was easy.

→ _____

C. Argumentative WRITING

Choose one of the following topics and write about 180 words. (18 credits)

1. Should students be allowed to use cell phones in school?
2. Should electric cars be a priority in plans to fight global warming?

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A. READING COMPREHENSION

A1. Matching (4)

Solution grid

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d |
| 5 | 4 | 2 | 1 |

A2. Multiple Matching (4)

1b

2a

3c

4a

A3. Short answer questions/ Sentence completion (4)

1. *The rise results in a decline in reading books for pleasure*

2. *Annually for 14 years*

3. *Nowadays it is widespread but only part of the background*

A4. Gapped Summary (5)

Parents tell stories about their children that they can watch TV while reading magazines or playing computer games. They don't even need to choose between different TV channels because they can watch several simultaneously. So they are really puzzled when adults tell them to decide for one option.

Youngsters also use the computer on a regular basis these days. The average teenager browses the internet over eight hours a week. Furthermore not only teenagers but particularly children at the age of 12 and younger increase their usage of the internet, sometimes pretending to be much older than they are. This new trend of children using media is closely examined by an organization that tries to find out about potential consequences of the increase in media usage.

B. Grammar

B1. Participles (9)

1. The girls going to the disco were happy.

2. Knowing a test would soon be due, the pupils learned.

3. The school having been founded in 1895 is modern.

4. I know some good books written by English writers.

5. Peter sat in his room waiting for me.

6. The test done by us was easy.