

Reading Work Sample Practice Assessment

Task S-3: Are We Addicted to Smartphones? (Informational)

Instructions:

Read the following article carefully and **make notes in the margin** as you read. Your notes should include:

- Comments that show that you **understand** the selection. (A summary or statement of the main idea of important ideas may serve this purpose.)
- Questions you have that show what you are **wondering** about as you read.
- Notes that show what you can tell about **main ideas, details, character interactions and beliefs**.
- Observations about the **writer's strategies** (organization, figurative language, dialogue, word choice, point of view) and how the writer's choices affect the meaning.

Your **margin notes** are part of your score for this assessment.

Student _____
Teacher _____
School _____

SSID # _____
Class Period _____
School District _____

For the “digital generation,” smartphones are a fact of life. However, the rapid growth in smartphone technology is causing some experts to question its effect on our lives. The following article by Quentin Fottrell discusses some concerns related to the overuse of smartphones.

Are We Addicted to Smartphones?

As Americans become increasingly dependent on smartphones, recovery centers specializing in addictions and emotional problems say mobile devices are making some bad habits even worse.

“The smartphone is the tool that helps exacerbate that addiction or it’s a tool they use not to deal with that addiction,” says Joel Edwards, executive director of Morningside Recovery in Newport Beach, Calif. And with good reason: Roughly 169 million Americans owned a smartphone in May — a 70% penetration rate — market research group comScore found, and nearly two-thirds of people in their late 20s live in households with no landlines, according to data released Tuesday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “We’re dealing with more and more smartphones as part of the underlying issues. These technologies are driving addictions faster and with more intensity than ever before,” Edwards says.

Mobile devices help provide the three A’s — accessibility, affordability and anonymity, says Robert Weiss, senior vice president of clinical development for Elements, a national behavioral health company. “In 1988, you had to drive to an icky place for pornography and hope that nobody saw you,” he says. “Now, you just say, ‘Siri, show me the porn.’” Drug dealers will know an online message — “I’m in Newport Beach looking for tar or 420” — refers to black tar heroin and cannabis, Edwards adds, but those code words for drugs will go over the heads of most people. “Even a drug dealer has to take a nap occasionally, but it’s easy for people to connect with others to support that addiction,” he says.

Smartphones are also playing a central role in behavioral addictions like gaming, social networking, pornography and sex, says Hilarie Cash, co-founder of Restart Life, a recovery retreat center in Fall City, Wash. Restart Life treats

Notes on my thoughts, observations, reactions and questions:

males over 18 years of age and provides a retreat away from digital media for 35 to 90 days, helping them improve their social skills. About 95% of the addictions Restart Life deals with relate to gaming, Cash says, but there are often other issues like pornography and social networking mixed in. “With a smartphone you can do that all the time,” she says. Weiss agrees. “The last cultural revolution took place on the streets,” he says, “but this one is a lot quieter.”

A growing body of research links increased use of Facebook to marital discord. Boston University emerging media professor James Katz joins the News Hub with Sara Murray.

Young people are particularly at risk, and not just those who have addictions, says Cole Rucker, co-founder and CEO of Paradigm Malibu, an adolescent mental health and drug abuse treatment center. “Years ago, the most difficult part for them here was that they couldn’t smoke cigarettes and now the biggest challenge is they can’t have their cellphones,” he says. Teenagers suffering from depression or anxiety often use smartphones as a coping skill rather than learning to sit with their emotions and developing relationships, Rucker says. “Very often, cellphone use is just like drug use, another negative coping style, and a way to avoid thoughts and feelings,” he adds.

Although smartphones can prevent people from dealing with anxiety, they may also compound it. Those who are heavy smartphone users can’t go 10 minutes without their phone before suffering from anxiety, according to one recent study co-authored by Larry Rosen, professor of psychology at California State University and author of “**iDisorder**: Understanding Our Obsession with Technology and Overcoming Its Hold on Us.” The study is due to be published in the August 2014 edition of the journal “Computers in Human Behavior.” “Most people can’t last an hour without getting highly anxious if their smartphone is taken away,” says Rosen.

His researchers split a group of 163 college students into light, moderate and heavy smartphone users. Half the students sat in silence without their phones and half with them turned off and out of sight. Regardless of where their phone was, the light users showed no increase in anxiety for the entire 75 minutes, the moderate users showed a slight increase between 10 and 20 minutes, but the heavy users showed more anxiety than the light users at the 10-minute mark, and their anxiety continued to rise until the experiment ended. “Most young people, who are among the heaviest users of their smartphones, can’t last an hour without getting highly anxious if their smartphone is taken away,” he says.

As Americans depend even more on their cellphones, recovery centers say that mobile devices are making some bad habits even worse. Joel Edwards, Morningside Recovery executive editor, joins the News Hub with Sara Murray.

Of course, smartphones typically facilitate existing addictions or underlying emotional problems rather than cause them. “They may be addicted to sexual content on their phone or gaming on their phone in the same way that people are addicted to gambling rather than casinos,” Weiss says. “There is no treatment for cellphone addiction or Internet addiction.” The basic criteria for figuring out whether you have a problem includes whether your behavior interrupts your work, family life, beliefs or life goals, and has negative consequences. “People don’t become addicted without some underlying deficit,” Weiss says. “They have

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a need to find something that is not in their life in another place.”

That said, there’s also a growing body of research supporting “**nomophobia**” — the fear of being without your cellphone. Nearly half of Americans (47%) say they couldn’t go a day without their smartphone, according to a survey released last week by Bank of America and 41% of people said losing their iPhone would be “a tragedy,” according to a 2010 Stanford University poll. “I have really bad anxiety if I can’t get to my phone,” says Kevin Raposo, 30, a technology blogger in Boston. “I leave it within hands’ reach by my bedside.”

It isn’t always clear when dependence on a smartphone has become a problem. The counselors at Morningside Recovery try to find out what need smartphones are filling and find a way to replace that through group therapy, journaling, and walking in nature. “We put our clients in front of a group of people and actually have them carry on a conversation,” Edwards says. While anxiety and depression could be the main problems, the issue could also be due to loneliness or work-related stress — for example, when a father checks his office emails while sitting at the dinner table, he says. And the consequences of smartphone dependence can be just as dire as a substance dependence. “Texting while driving and drinking while driving is the same kind of crazy,” Edwards says.

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Demonstrate Understanding

1. In the article, several experts explain the problems they see with increased smartphone use. Complete the chart below to show your understanding of the reasons given by two of these experts. One example is provided to help you get started. Be sure your responses reflect what the experts say about the **problems** with increased smartphone use.

Expert’s Name	The problem(s) this expert sees
<i>Joel Edwards at Morningside Recovery</i>	<i>Addictions are happening faster & with more intensity because of smartphone use</i>

Demonstrate Understanding

2. What is “nomophobia”? What do studies suggest about how common nomophobia may be in America?

Develop an Interpretation

3. The article mentions a study written by Larry Rosen (7th paragraph). The study’s title includes the word “iDisorder.” What does Rosen’s creation of the word “iDisorder” suggest about the results of the study? Use evidence from the text to support your explanation.

Develop an Interpretation

4. At the end of the fourth paragraph, Robert Weiss says that, “The last cultural revolution took place on the streets, but this one is a lot quieter.” What do you think he is trying to say by “...a quiet revolution”? **Include evidence from the article** to support your ideas about what Weiss may be suggesting.

Develop an Interpretation

5. The article’s final paragraph describes an approach used at Morningside Recovery. Write a brief summary of the strategy Morningside uses and explain why you think these techniques **would** or **would not** be effective to use with people who have cell phone addictions.

Description/Summary of the Strategy	Your interpretation of why the strategy would or would not be effective. Explain your thinking.

Analyze Text

6. What is the **author’s purpose** in writing this article? Is the author trying to entertain, inform, or persuade? How can you tell? **Include text evidence** from the article that helps you determine the author’s purpose.

Analyze Text

7. The article provides information and quotations from five different experts and two major studies. **Why** does the author rely so heavily on the information from these experts and studies?

Discuss **one or more** instances of expert information that you feel is especially helpful in the article.

Analyze Text

8. In the second paragraph, the author includes information about the percentage of people who own smartphones. Although the article doesn't directly state the connection, why is this information important in the article? In what ways does it help the reader to understand the points being made?