Form 8: Screen Time

Part 1

My Name: ____________________________

My Partner’s Name(s): ____________________________

Today’s Date: ____________________________

My Teacher’s Name: ____________________________

My Grade (Circle One): 6th  7th  8th
Directions:

In this activity you are going to read an article from a health magazine. The author of the article is a high school student named Andre Vetchkin. Andre wants to persuade you. He wants you to agree with him. Your job is to read the article and answer some questions. Later, you will read a letter from a reader named Emma Ross-Hart. Emma disagrees with Andre Vetchkin. In the end, you get to decide who you agree with.

Before you read...

Look at the article by Andre Vetchkin. Look at the title, the images, and the first sentence of each paragraph.

What do you think screen time is? Discuss the meaning of screen time with your partner and write down your best guess. Then, write down three examples of activities that count as screen time.

Definition of screen time:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Examples of screen time activities:

1. _______________________________________
2. _______________________________________
3. _______________________________________
While you read...

Now read Andre Vetchkin’s whole article. While you read the article:

• Underline any words that you don’t know.
• Try to guess the meaning of the words from the context.

After you have finished reading...

Work with your partner to answer the questions. Write down your own answers, but discuss them with your partner.

Tips for working together:

• Discuss the questions to make sure you understand them.
• Try to agree on the answers before you write them down.
  o Remember: You can look back at the article at any time.
• Ask your partner about things you don’t understand.

When you are ready, go to the next page.
Interview your partner about his or her daily screen time. Use the example question and the screen time activities below. Then write down what you learn in the space provided.

**How many hours do you spend . . . each day?**

- watching TV
- watching videos online
- playing video games
- texting and chatting
- browsing the internet
- using social media
- watching movies
- watching videos online
- using social media
- watching movies
- using social media

My partner spends ___ hours _________________________ each day.

My partner spends ___ hours _________________________ each day.

My partner spends ___ hours _________________________ each day.

1. What is Andre Vetchkin’s **main argument**? Circle the best answer.
   
   A. Young people need to take the time to eat better.
   
   B. Young people need to reduce the amount of time they spend in front of screens.
   
   C. Young people need to use computers more wisely.
   
   D. Young people need to learn how to concentrate on schoolwork and studying.

2. According to Andre Vetchkin, what is the **main reason** young people should reduce their screen time?

   A. To be healthier and to improve their ability to concentrate.
   
   B. To become better at sports and music.
   
   C. To reduce the amount of dopamine in their bodies.
   
   D. To become less dependent on modern technology.
**Directions:** Decide whether the sentences in the table are **correct** or **incorrect** based on the information in the article.

- If a sentence is correct, circle **Correct**.
- If a sentence is incorrect, circle **Incorrect** AND **quote the article** to explain why it is incorrect.
- **Two examples have been done for you.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SENTENCES</th>
<th>ANSWERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong> An increase in screen time means an increase in time spent being inactive.</td>
<td>Correct Incorrect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong> People who spend a lot of time in front of screens consume the same amount of candy and soda as other people.</td>
<td>Correct Incorrect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who spend more time in front of screens being sedentary have less time to prepare healthy foods.</td>
<td>Correct Incorrect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing screen time will probably have little effect on America’s obesity problem.</td>
<td>Correct Incorrect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Too much screen time is not good for a person's mental health. It ___ concentrate.

Research shows that screen time ____ the level of dopamine in a person’s brain.

Dopamine ____ energy. Unfortunately, a person’s brain ____ the very high levels of dopamine. A person may have trouble concentrating on activities that might be less fun, like schoolwork. Teachers ____ students have shorter attention spans because of their increased screen time.
Directions: There are sentences from paragraphs 1, 4 and 5 in the table below.

- Decide if each sentence expresses a fact or an opinion.
- Check (✓) Fact if the statement expresses a fact.
- Check (✓) Opinion if the statement expresses an opinion.
- One example has been done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentences from the article</th>
<th>Fact</th>
<th>Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Example:</em> There is scientific evidence that too much screen time is causing both physical and mental health problems.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 It is time for us to change our habits and spread the word about screen time.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 When dopamine is released, we experience a good, energetic feeling.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 By setting small goals and working on them one-by-one, we can reduce screen time and improve our health.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Directions: Andre Vetchkin introduces some words and terms that he thinks the readers might not know. He defines the words in his article. Find each word in the “Word or Term” column and write down Andre Vetchkin’s definition from the article. You do not have to use Andre Vetchkin’s exact words—just make sure the meaning is correct.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word or Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>screen time</strong></td>
<td>the number of hours each day a person spends consuming entertainment media such as television, internet, and video games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entertainment media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sedentary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high-calorie foods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obesity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attention span</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dopamine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Directions: For numbers 19 to 21, fill in the blanks with words from the ANSWER CHOICES. Write the entire word in the blank. Pay attention to the word endings, and make sure the sentences make sense.

**ANSWER CHOICES**

| entertainers | entertaining | entertained | entertainment |

Example: To be healthy, we all need to balance **entertainment**, with exercise, work, and study.

19. Musicians, comedians, and other ________________ can often be seen on television.

20. Some older people are not very ________________ by video games and Facebook.

21. Today the internet is full of ________________ websites, videos, games and music.
Directions: Part of paragraph 4 is pasted below. The word “this” is bolded and underlined. What does “this” refer to? Circle the best answer from the choices.

There is also evidence that screen time harms our mental health. Psychologist Dr. Aric Sigman researches the impact of screen time on attention span—the length of time we can concentrate on challenging tasks without becoming distracted. Success in school and work requires us to pay attention to many things that are less entertaining than video games or television. Dr. Sigman’s research shows that screen time can make it harder for us to do this. The reason is that screen time causes our brains to release large amounts of dopamine—a chemical produced in everyone’s brain.

A. screen time  
B. dopamine  
C. paying attention  
D. mental health

Directions: Complete the sentences based on the information in the article. Use the words in parentheses, and follow the pattern “the more . . . , the more . . . .” When you are done, read your sentences with your partner to make sure they make sense.

Example: Idea from paragraph 3:
The more time you spend being inactive, ____________________________, the more likely you are to __________ eat unhealthy foods ____________________________. (unhealthy foods)

Idea from paragraph 3:
The more candy and soda you consume, ____________________________, ____________________________, the more likely you are to be unhealthy ____________________________. (obese)

Idea from paragraph 4:
(screen time) ______________________________________________________
________________________, the more likely you are to have attention span problems.

Idea from paragraph 4:
The more your brain gets used to dopamine, ____________________________, ____________________________, (focus)
In paragraph _____, the author discusses what young people can do if screen time has become a bad habit.

In paragraph _____, the author presents statistics on screen time.

In paragraph _____, the author describes how screen time can hurt our ability to concentrate.

In paragraph _____, the author discusses the relationship between screen time and unhealthy eating habits.
The average amount of time young people spend in front of screens has been rising

People who spend a lot of time being entertained in front of screens get high levels of dopamine

Obesity is a risk for people who get little exercise and eat lots of unhealthy foods

It is important for young people to reduce the amount of time they spend in front of screens

**Topic of the article**

**Research findings**

**Health risks**

**Author’s opinion**

**ANSWER CHOICES**

A. People may begin to have trouble focusing on things that are not very entertaining.
B. The average amount of screen time for young people may rise in the years ahead.
C. Teachers across America are concerned about screen time.
D. Being too sedentary leads to bad eating habits.
Before you go on, read Emma Ross-Hart’s letter with your partner.

**Directions:** Read the sentences in the table below. After reading each sentence, check “Yes” or “No” to indicate whether or not it is something Emma Ross-Hart said in her letter. One example has been done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does Emma Ross-Hart say this?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andre Vetchkin needs to be realistic.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is possible to have a lot of screen time and still be healthy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screen time is one of the biggest problems facing young people today.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma Ross-Hart has had trouble concentrating at school due to her screen time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people should try to lead healthier lives.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example:

Andre Vetchkin needs to be realistic. ☑
**Directions:** Let’s compare Andre Vetchkin’s opinions about screen time with Emma Ross-Hart’s opinions.

- In the table below, first circle “Yes” or “No” to show the author’s opinion.
- Next, use the ANSWER CHOICES to fill in the blanks in the table with reasons and details that the authors use to support their opinions. Two answer choices will not be used!

**ANSWER CHOICES**

A. Research shows that people who have more screen time eat more unhealthy foods.
B. Many people use their mobile phones to watch videos while working out at the gym.
C. Healthy activities set a good example for young people.
D. Too much screen time can hurt our ability to pay attention and concentrate.
E. People should eat healthier food while playing video games and watching TV.
F. It is more important to increase healthy activities than it is to reduce screen time.

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**Andre Vetchkin vs. Emma Ross-Hart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Does [Name] think that young people can have a lot of screen time and still be healthy? (circle one answer.)</th>
<th>What reasons and details does he/she give? (choose two from the ANSWER CHOICES)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 32 | Does **Andre Vetchkin** think that young people can have a lot of screen time and still be healthy? (circle one answer.) | [33] ___  
[34] ___ |
| 35 | Does **Emma Ross-Hart** think that young people can have a lot of screen time and still be healthy? (circle one answer.) | [36] ___  
[37] ___ |
**Directions:** Based on what you have read today, **draw lines** to show what Andre Vetchkin and Emma Ross-Hart **might** think about screen time.

**Example:**

- **38** Having a lot of screen time can result in making your schoolwork seem less interesting.
- **39** Instead of reducing screen time we should emphasize improving the quality of screen time.
- **39** There is a clear connection between screen time and unhealthy eating.
- **40** It is not true that all people who spend a lot of time in front of screens have attention span problems.
- **41** Video games can be a part of a healthy young person’s lifestyle.
Directions: You have read an article and a letter. Each author made an argument about screen time. Now it is time for you to decide whose argument was stronger.

- Choose the author who you agree with more.
- Use specific information from what you read to explain why you think their argument was the strongest.

Who do you agree with more about screen time?

☐ I agree with Andre Vetchkin more.
☐ I agree with Emma Ross-Hart more.

Now write a paragraph to explain your choice. 
*Remember to use specific reasons from the article and letter you have read.*

___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________