

The Rise of Online Learning

COMPREHENSION • VOCABULARY • DISCUSSION

INTERACTIVE ONLINE TEST

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Reading Passage

Read the passage carefully. Each paragraph is labelled with a letter for easy reference.

A Ten years ago, most students sat in a classroom, opened a paper notebook, and listened to a teacher at the front of the room. Today, more and more people study through a screen. Online learning—also called e-learning—has grown quickly for several reasons. First, the internet is now faster and cheaper than before. A video lesson that once stopped every few seconds now plays smoothly even on a mobile phone. Second, online courses are flexible. A learner can watch a science video at 6 a.m. before work or finish a history quiz at midnight. This freedom is helpful for parents, shift workers, and travelers. Third, many famous schools and companies now offer high-quality courses on websites like Coursera, FutureLearn, or Khan Academy. Students in small towns can listen to professors from top universities without buying a plane ticket. Online learning brings clear benefits. It often costs less than face-to-face classes because there are no large buildings to heat, clean, or repair. Digital tools, such as instant quizzes, give feedback in seconds, so learners can see mistakes and improve quickly. In addition, classes usually include discussion forums where students from many countries share ideas. This global mix can open minds to new cultures and points of view. However, online learning also has challenges. Some students feel lonely because they study alone at home. Without classmates sitting nearby, it is easy to lose motivation and stop a course halfway. Internet connections can fail, and not every family owns a reliable computer. Teachers must find new ways to keep lessons clear and interesting on a small screen. For example, long texts are often cut into short videos, and games or polls are added to keep attention high. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning became a necessity. Schools closed their doors, and millions of children and adults turned on laptops to continue education. This sudden change was difficult, but it pushed teachers to explore digital tools faster than planned. Now, even after schools have reopened, many institutions keep a “blended” model that mixes classroom time with online tasks. Experts expect that future workplaces will also include regular online training, so learning skills on the internet may soon be as common as sending an email. In short, the rise of online learning offers new chances to study anywhere and anytime. Success still depends on good planning, strong support, and a reliable internet connection, but the trend shows no sign of slowing down.

Vocabulary Glossary

Key words and phrases from the passage. Study them before attempting the exercise below.

WORD / PHRASE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
flexible	able to change or be changed easily to fit different situations	<i>Her work hours are flexible, so she can start early or late.</i>
feedback	information about how well you did something, used to improve	<i>She gave me feedback on my essay to help me get better.</i>
motivation	the reason or reasons one has for acting or behaving in a particular way	<i>He has a lot of motivation to study because he wants a good job.</i>
necessity	something that you must have or do	<i>Water is a necessity for all living things.</i>
global	relating to the whole world	<i>The internet connects people in a global network.</i>
blended	a mix of different things or styles	<i>The school uses a blended approach with both online and face-to-face classes.</i>
institutions	large organizations like schools or universities	<i>Many institutions offer online courses now.</i>
reliable	can be trusted to work well or to be correct	<i>He needs a reliable car to drive to work every day.</i>

Vocabulary Exercise — Fill in the Blank

Use one word or phrase from the glossary above to complete each sentence. Each item is used only once. Answers are on the final page.

1. Many people prefer _____ work hours so they can balance their job and personal life.
2. After the test, the teacher gave us _____ to help us learn from our mistakes.
3. During the pandemic, online classes became a _____ for students to continue learning.
4. Her _____ to succeed in her career is very strong.
5. The internet has made it easier to have _____ communication with people from different countries.
6. Modern _____ often offer courses that mix online and traditional classroom learning.

Comprehension Questions

These questions are different from the online practice test. Choose the best answer (A, B, C, or D). Answers and explanations are on the final page.

Question 1

What is one benefit of online learning mentioned in the passage?

- A. It is always more expensive than traditional classes.
- B. Students have to buy plane tickets to attend classes.
- C. It allows for flexible study times.
- D. It always replaces face-to-face interaction.

Question 2

How did online learning change during the COVID-19 pandemic according to the text?

- A. It decreased as schools closed.
- B. It became necessary for continuing education.
- C. It was ignored by most schools.
- D. It stayed the same as before.

Question 3

Why might some students find online learning challenging?

- A. They have too many classmates.
- B. They do not have enough flexibility.
- C. They feel lonely while studying alone.
- D. They find internet connections always reliable.

Question 4

What does the author suggest about the future of online learning?

- A. It will become less common.
- B. It will require less planning.
- C. It will stop being necessary.
- D. It will continue to grow and evolve.

Question 5

What was one effect of the pandemic on teachers, according to the passage?

- A. They had to stop using digital tools.
- B. They explored digital tools faster than planned.
- C. They went back to only classroom teaching.
- D. They found digital tools unhelpful for teaching.

Discussion & Writing Prompts

Each prompt references a specific detail from the passage above. Use for classroom discussion or a short written response (150–200 words).

1. Paragraph B mentions famous schools and companies offering courses online. How do you think this access impacts students in small towns?

2. According to paragraph D, some students feel lonely studying online. How can online courses be designed to reduce this loneliness?

3. The passage states in the last paragraph that online learning shows no sign of slowing down. Do you think this trend will continue in the next decade, and why?

Answer Key

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Q1 C

Q2 B

Q3 C

Q4 D

Q5 B

VOCABULARY EXERCISE

FIB1 flexible

FIB2 feedback

FIB3 necessity

FIB4 motivation

FIB5 global

FIB6 institutions

Comprehension Question Explanations

Why the correct answer is right — and why each wrong option is incorrect.

1. What is one benefit of online learning mentioned in the passage?

- ✓ C — It allows for flexible study times. The passage states that online courses are flexible, allowing study at any time.
- ✗ A — It is always more expensive than traditional classes. *The passage says online learning often costs less, not more.*
- ✗ B — Students have to buy plane tickets to attend classes. *The passage mentions that students do not need to buy plane tickets.*
- ✗ D — It always replaces face-to-face interaction. *The passage notes that some institutions use a blended model, not completely replacing in-person classes.*

2. How did online learning change during the COVID-19 pandemic according to the text?

- ✓ B — It became necessary for continuing education. The passage explains that online learning became a necessity during the pandemic.
- ✗ A — It decreased as schools closed. *The passage states online learning increased as schools closed.*
- ✗ C — It was ignored by most schools. *The passage notes that schools adopted online learning, not ignored it.*
- ✗ D — It stayed the same as before. *The passage indicates there was a significant change in online learning during the pandemic.*

3. Why might some students find online learning challenging?

- ✓ C — They feel lonely while studying alone. The passage mentions that students may feel lonely when studying alone.
- ✗ A — They have too many classmates. *The passage discusses loneliness from being alone, not having too many classmates.*
- ✗ B — They do not have enough flexibility. *The passage highlights flexibility as a benefit, not a challenge.*
- ✗ D — They find internet connections always reliable. *The passage mentions unreliable internet as a challenge, not reliability.*

4. What does the author suggest about the future of online learning?

✓ D — It will continue to grow and evolve.

The passage suggests the trend of online learning shows no sign of slowing down.

✗ A — It will become less common.

The passage indicates that online learning will continue to grow, not become less common.

✗ B — It will require less planning.

The passage notes that success still depends on good planning.

✗ C — It will stop being necessary.

The passage implies that online learning will remain necessary as it evolves.

5. What was one effect of the pandemic on teachers, according to the passage?

✓ B — They explored digital tools faster than planned.

The passage states that teachers explored digital tools faster than planned due to the pandemic.

✗ A — They had to stop using digital tools.

The passage says teachers used digital tools more, not less.

✗ C — They went back to only classroom teaching.

The passage notes that teachers did not return only to classroom teaching.

✗ D — They found digital tools unhelpful for teaching.

The passage implies that teachers found digital tools helpful, not unhelpful.

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