

# The Digital Divide: Unequal Access to Technology

COMPREHENSION • VOCABULARY • DISCUSSION

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## Reading Passage

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

- A** In today's world, technology plays a crucial role in daily life, influencing how we communicate, work, and learn. However, not everyone has equal access to it, which creates significant disparities in opportunities. The digital divide refers to the gap between those who have easy access to the internet and modern devices, and those who do not. In many urban areas, residents enjoy high-speed internet connections and the latest smartphones, which allows them to work remotely, attend online classes, and stay connected with friends and family effortlessly. Conversely, in rural regions or economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, people often struggle with slow internet speeds or even a complete lack of service. This disparity can hinder educational opportunities and limit job prospects for those without reliable technology, making it difficult for them to compete in a technology-driven job market.
- B** The impact of the digital divide extends beyond mere access to devices. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many students had to switch to online learning. Students in well-connected areas could easily adapt to this new mode of education, while others faced significant challenges. Some lacked the necessary equipment, such as laptops or tablets, while others had to find creative solutions to connect to the internet, often relying on public Wi-Fi or shared devices. Non-profit organizations have emerged to help bridge this gap by providing devices and internet access to those in need. They work tirelessly to ensure that students and families can gain the technology they require for educational success. However, much work remains to ensure that everyone can benefit from the advantages technology provides. Tackling the digital divide is essential for creating a more equitable society where everyone has the chance to succeed, regardless of their economic background or geographic location.

## Vocabulary Glossary

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

WORD / PHRASE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
<b>crucial</b>	very important or necessary	<i>It is crucial to drink water every day to stay healthy.</i>
<b>disparities</b>	big differences between two or more things	<i>There are disparities in the quality of education between cities and villages.</i>
<b>hinder</b>	to make it difficult for someone to do something	<i>Heavy rain can hinder travel by making roads slippery.</i>
<b>prospects</b>	chances or possibilities for success or progress	<i>She has good job prospects because she studied hard.</i>
<b>equitable</b>	fair and equal for everyone	<i>The teacher gave an equitable amount of time to each student during the exam.</i>
<b>emerged</b>	came out or became known	<i>A new leader emerged after the election.</i>
<b>tackle</b>	to try to solve a problem	<i>We must tackle pollution to protect our planet.</i>
<b>geographic</b>	related to the physical location or features of a place	<i>The geographic features of the area include mountains and rivers.</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. The new policy aims to create an \_\_\_\_\_ system for all students.
2. The company \_\_\_\_\_ as a leader in the tech industry last year.
3. High unemployment rates can \_\_\_\_\_ economic growth in the region.
4. Efforts to \_\_\_\_\_ the digital divide are important for social equality.
5. Many countries have different \_\_\_\_\_ features like mountains and deserts.
6. There are significant \_\_\_\_\_ between the wealth of different neighborhoods.

## Comprehension Questions

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*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 the main reason the digital divide affects job prospects?**

- A. Lack of access to reliable technology
- B. High cost of education
- C. Limited government support
- D. Poor transportation infrastructure

### Question 2

**How did some students manage to continue their education during the pandemic despite the digital divide?**

- A. They used public Wi-Fi and shared devices.
- B. They attended physical classes.
- C. They learned from textbooks at home.
- D. They received personal tutors.

### Question 3

**What role do non-profit organizations play in the digital divide?**

- A. They provide devices and internet to those in need.
- B. They build new schools in remote areas.
- C. They fund government technology projects.
- D. They offer free online courses to everyone.

### Question 4

**What challenge is commonly faced by residents in rural regions?**

- A. Lack of high-speed internet
- B. Overcrowded schools
- C. Expensive housing
- D. Frequent power outages

## Discussion & Writing Prompts

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

1. Paragraph A discusses the digital divide's impact on job prospects. How might this influence the economy in your area, and what can be done to improve the situation?

2. According to Paragraph B, non-profit organizations help bridge the digital divide. In what other ways can communities support this effort, and why might these methods be effective?

3. The passage mentions students using public Wi-Fi during the pandemic. What are the potential risks of relying on public internet, and how could these be addressed?

# Answer Key

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Q1 A

Q2 A

Q3 A

Q4 A

## VOCABULARY EXERCISE

FIB1 equitable

FIB2 emerged

FIB3 hinder

FIB4 tackle

FIB5 geographic

FIB6 disparities

## Comprehension Question Explanations

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

### 1. What is the main reason the digital divide affects job prospects?

✓ A — Lack of access to reliable technology The passage states that lack of reliable technology limits job prospects.

✗ B — High cost of education The passage does not mention the cost of education as a reason.

✗ C — Limited government support Government support is not discussed in the context of job prospects.

✗ D — Poor transportation infrastructure Transportation infrastructure is not related to the digital divide.

### 2. How did some students manage to continue their education during the pandemic despite the digital divide?

✓ A — They used public Wi-Fi and shared devices. The passage mentions students using public Wi-Fi and shared devices.

✗ B — They attended physical classes. Physical classes are not mentioned as a solution during the pandemic.

✗ C — They learned from textbooks at home. Learning from textbooks is not highlighted in the passage.

✗ D — They received personal tutors. Personal tutors are not discussed as a solution.

### 3. What role do non-profit organizations play in the digital divide?

✓ A — They provide devices and internet to those in need. Non-profits help provide technology access to those lacking it.

✗ B — They build new schools in remote areas. Building schools is not mentioned as their role.

✗ C — They fund government technology projects. Funding government projects is not discussed.

✗ D — They offer free online courses to everyone. Offering free courses is not mentioned in the context of their role.

### 4. What challenge is commonly faced by residents in rural regions?

✓ A — Lack of high-speed internet The passage states rural areas struggle with slow or no internet.

✗ B — Overcrowded schools School overcrowding is not mentioned in the passage.

✗ C — Expensive housing Housing costs are not discussed as a challenge.

✗ D — Frequent power outages Power outages are not mentioned in the context of the digital divide.

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