

Remote Work and Work-Life Balance

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** In recent years, remote work has transformed the way we approach our jobs. With advancements in technology and a growing emphasis on flexibility, many companies have adopted work-from-home policies. This significant shift has allowed employees to save time on commuting, which can often be two hours or more each day. For instance, Jane, a marketing manager in New York City, has found that by working from home, she can spend more quality time with her family and pursue hobbies like painting, which she previously struggled to fit into her busy schedule. However, the blurred lines between work and personal life can create various challenges. Without a clear separation, some individuals find themselves working late into the evening or checking emails during weekends, leading to burnout and stress, which can affect their overall well-being and productivity.
- B** To maintain a healthy work-life balance, it is essential for remote workers to establish clear boundaries. Creating a dedicated workspace at home can help signal to the mind when it is time to work and when it is time to relax, making it easier to switch between roles. Additionally, setting specific work hours and communicating them to colleagues can minimize interruptions and help maintain focus. John, a software developer in San Francisco, has implemented these strategies effectively and reports feeling more productive and less stressed as a result. He emphasizes the importance of taking regular breaks and engaging in physical activities, such as jogging or yoga, to recharge both mentally and physically. Ultimately, while remote work offers significant advantages, it requires conscious effort and discipline to maintain a balance that promotes both productivity and personal well-being.

Vocabulary Glossary

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

| WORD / PHRASE | DEFINITION | EXAMPLE SENTENCE |
|----------------------|---|--|
| transformed | when something changes completely into something different | <i>The internet has transformed how we find information.</i> |
| emphasis | special importance given to something | <i>The teacher put emphasis on the need to study every day.</i> |
| flexibility | the ability to change or be changed easily | <i>Flexibility in work hours helps employees manage their time better.</i> |
| commuting | traveling regularly between home and work | <i>She spends two hours commuting to the city every day.</i> |
| blurred | not clear or easy to see | <i>The lines between work and home life can become blurred.</i> |
| boundaries | limits that define where one thing ends and another begins | <i>Setting boundaries can help keep work and personal life separate.</i> |
| interruptions | things that stop someone from continuing what they were doing | <i>Frequent interruptions make it hard to finish my tasks.</i> |
| recharge | to restore energy or strength | <i>Taking a short walk can help you recharge during the workday.</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 rules allow more _____ in how employees manage their work hours.
2. She finally found time to paint after reducing her _____ hours.
3. The company places a lot of _____ on customer satisfaction.
4. Setting _____ helps remote workers keep work and home life separate.
5. He needed a break to _____ after the long meeting.
6. The _____ lines between work and home made it hard for her to relax.

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 a major benefit of remote work mentioned in the passage?

- A. Increased commuting time
- B. More time for hobbies
- C. Higher salary
- D. More office meetings

Question 2

Why might remote workers experience burnout?

- A. Too much time with family
- B. Working late and checking emails on weekends
- C. Lack of work tasks
- D. Too many hobbies

Question 3

What advice is given to help remote workers maintain work-life balance?

- A. Work from a coffee shop
- B. Create a dedicated workspace
- C. Avoid talking to colleagues
- D. Work longer hours

Question 4

What strategy does John use to manage stress?

- A. Ignoring emails
- B. Setting unclear work hours
- C. Engaging in physical activities
- D. Working through lunch

Question 5

How does the passage describe the impact of technology on remote work?

- A. It has made remote work harder
- B. It has transformed remote work
- C. It has no effect on remote work
- D. It discourages remote work

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. The passage mentions Jane benefiting from remote work by spending more time with her family and hobbies. How do you think remote work impacts family life in your culture?

2. According to the passage, John uses physical activities to manage stress while working remotely. What other methods could be effective for remote workers to reduce stress?

3. The passage highlights the importance of setting work hours and boundaries. Do you think these strategies are effective in all industries? Why or why not?

Answer Key

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Q1 B

Q2 B

Q3 B

Q4 C

Q5 B

VOCABULARY EXERCISE

FIB1 flexibility

FIB2 commuting

FIB3 emphasis

FIB4 boundaries

FIB5 recharge

FIB6 blurred

Comprehension Question Explanations

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

1. What is a major benefit of remote work mentioned in the passage?

✓ **B — More time for hobbies** The passage states that remote work allows more time for hobbies, as seen in Jane's example.

✗ **A — Increased commuting time** Remote work reduces commuting time, not increases it.

✗ **C — Higher salary** The passage does not mention salary as a benefit.

✗ **D — More office meetings** Remote work reduces the need for office meetings, not increases them.

2. Why might remote workers experience burnout?

✓ **B — Working late and checking emails on weekends** The passage mentions that blurred lines can lead to working late and checking emails on weekends, causing burnout.

✗ **A — Too much time with family** The passage suggests spending time with family is a benefit, not a cause of burnout.

✗ **C — Lack of work tasks** The passage indicates there is often too much work, not a lack of it.

✗ **D — Too many hobbies** Hobbies are mentioned as positive, not a cause of burnout.

3. What advice is given to help remote workers maintain work-life balance?

✓ **B — Create a dedicated workspace** The passage suggests creating a dedicated workspace to help maintain balance.

✗ **A — Work from a coffee shop** The passage does not mention working from a coffee shop.

✗ **C — Avoid talking to colleagues** Communicating with colleagues is advised, not avoiding them.

✗ **D — Work longer hours** The passage emphasizes setting work hours, not working longer.

4. What strategy does John use to manage stress?

✓ **C — Engaging in physical activities** John engages in physical activities like jogging or yoga to manage stress.

✗ **A — Ignoring emails** The passage does not mention ignoring emails as a strategy.

✗ **B — Setting unclear work hours** John sets specific work hours, not unclear ones.

✗ **D — Working through lunch** The passage does not mention working through lunch as a strategy.

5. How does the passage describe the impact of technology on remote work?

✓ **B — It has transformed remote work**

The passage states that advancements in technology have transformed the way we approach our jobs.

✗ **A — It has made remote work harder**

The passage suggests technology has improved, not made it harder.

✗ **C — It has no effect on remote work**

The passage clearly states technology has an effect.

✗ **D — It discourages remote work**

The passage suggests technology encourages, not discourages, remote work.

MORE B2 LEVEL READING PRACTICE

Letters Refugee Camp Family Story Hope — <https://www.esl-tests.com/reading/b2/letters-refugee-camp-family-story-hope>

Global Health Preparedness Lessons Recent Pandemics — <https://www.esl-tests.com/reading/b2/global-health-preparedness-lessons-recent-pandemics>

Climate Migration Communities Move — <https://www.esl-tests.com/reading/b2/climate-migration-communities-move>