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| **XXI Всероссийская олимпиада школьников по английскому языку 2020 / 2021**  **муниципальный этап**  **9 – 11-е классы** |

**Participant’s ID number**

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**READING**

**Time: 30 minutes**

**I. Read the text.**

**Are we losing the art of conversation?**

We asked four people who watched an online talk on technology and communication by Sherry Turkle for their opinions.

**A**

The talk certainly gave me plenty of food for thought about the way we communicate these days and how technology is changing our behaviour. People are constantly multitasking, whether it be emailing during meetings or texting in the checkout queue. I really believe it’s affecting the way we relate to each other and it’s not just in the workplace. Kids fade into the background as parents message at the dinner table or post on social networks during the school run. It’s as if we can’t bear to miss out on what our online buddies are up to, so we juggle the real and online world. My greatest concern is that we don’t give our brains a chance to switch off. It’s these precious moments when we actually process information that helps us make important decisions.

**B**

It was a fascinating talk and the speaker really hit the nail on the head with a couple of things. Take parental influence, for instance. How can we expect teenagers not to text while doing their homework when they witness their parents posting on social media while cooking the evening meal or waiting at a red light? She also made a valid point about people wanting to be in two or several places at once. So they switch back and forth between their real-life and online conversations. I see it all the time with my teenage daughter and her friends. They arrange to meet and then sit together in silence while each one engages in a different conversation online.

**C**

So much of what the speaker said rang true. I honestly believe there’s a danger that the more connected we are, the more isolated we feel. I don’t think this is such an issue for my generation who’ve lived without technology for so long. We know how to be alone and, more importantly, we know that it’s OK to be alone. But the under 20s are another kettle of fish. They’re so busy communicating that they never experience the feeling of solitude and run the risk of not learning how to enjoy their own company. In addition, they’re learning conversation through messages that can be edited and changed at the expense of learning the art of real conversation in real time with the person in front of you.

**D**

I’m not sure to what extent I agree that people are more alone, but the way we communicate has certainly evolved. We send tiny snippets of conversation or emoticons to each other and I wonder how much this actually allows us to really understand one another. This superficial conversation is replacing in-depth face-to-face interaction with its pauses, intonation and sentiment. The speaker makes a good point about how we’re getting used to conversing with machines like Siri or robots, which are totally devoid of any experience of human life. But despite such limitations, we seem to be expecting more from technology and less from each other.

**Complete the sentences to match the expressions from the text with the meanings.**

1. they say exactly how something is
2. the first thing harms the second thing
3. they are less important than before
4. it seems to be true
5. it makes you think
6. it’s completely different from something else
7. it doesn’t have something that you would normally expect it to have
8. you change between two ideas

11. If something gives you food for thought, \_\_\_\_.

12. If someone fades into the background, \_\_\_\_.

13. If someone hits the nail on the head, \_\_\_\_.

14. If you switch back and forth, \_\_\_\_.

15. If something rings true, \_\_\_\_.

16. If something is another kettle of fish, \_\_\_\_.

17. If you do something at the expense of something else, \_\_\_\_.

18. If something is devoid of something, \_\_\_\_.

**II. For items 19-25, read the text and choose the best answer for the questions below.**

**Space could solve water problems**

Have you ever tasted saltwater? I guess you have and if so, you will agree with me that it’s not very refreshing. In fact, drinking more than a few cups worth can kill you.

According to the United States Geological Survey, whose mission is to collect and disseminate reliable, impartial, and timely information that is needed to understand the nation’s water resources, about ninety-seven percent of the water on our planet is saltwater; the rest is stored in lakes, rivers, glaciers and aquifers underground. Moreover, only about one-third of the world’s potential fresh water can be used for human needs. As pollution increases, the amount of usable water decreases.

Water is the most precious and taken-for-granted resource we have on Earth. It is also one of the most threatened resources. Increased population and possible climate change will put more and more strain on supplies of this vital resource as time goes on. What could we do in this situation? Though it may seem like science fiction, the solution could lie in outer space.

I’m not saying we’re going to be teleporting to a spring on the other side of the galaxy or colonizing another planet just to have longer showers – it’s much more mundane than that. What we could achieve realistically in this century is the successful use of the solar system’s rare metals and water, barring the invention of the matrix.

You may be surprised to learn that the metal in your keys, coins, cell phone, computer, car and everywhere else, originally came to this planet from space. When Earth formed, the heavy metals sank to the center and formed a solid core. The lighter elements formed the mantle and the crust we live on. Asteroids and comets that struck the Earth brought water and metals to the surface.

There are thousands of asteroids orbiting near Earth. Most asteroids are made of rock, but some are composed of metal, mostly nickel and iron. Probes could be sent out to these to identify useful ones. Then larger probes could push them towards the Earth where they can be handled in orbit.

In order to fuel ships and probes, we simply need to find a source of water, such as a comet or the surface of the moon. We collect the water and pass an electric current through it from a solar panel. The water separates into oxygen and hydrogen, which in liquid form is a powerful rocket fuel.

Is this really possible? We may soon find out. Private company SpaceX has already started delivering equipment to the International Space Station (ISS). The ISS is proof that countries once at each other’s throats, like America and Russia, can work together and pull off multi-billion dollar projects.

Recently, a company called Planetary Resources Inc. made the news for getting big names like Google and Microsoft to invest in exploring asteroids for material gain. Although it will take many decades, it is wise to put the gears in motion now.

We’ve already landed probes on the surface of asteroids and taken samples from them. We can put something as large as the ISS, which weighs just short of 500 tons, according to National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), in orbit.

We can make a half-million-mile round-trip to get rocks from the moon. We can do all of these things already. They just need to be applied and developed in a smart way.

19. According to the author, the space water sources may be used for …

a) fuel production.

b) water supplies for spaceships.

c) moon exploration.

d) the production of electricity.

Answer: \_\_\_

20. What problem is raised in the article?

a) Cooperation in space

b) Threats of climate change.

c) Danger of drinking salt water.

d) Lack of water supplies on Earth.

Answer: \_\_\_

21. According to the author, the information published in the US Geological Survey is meant to …

a) assure the nation that there is still enough of usable water.

b) help to monitor the state of the country’s water resources.

c) demonstrate the quality of water the nation uses.

d) warn the public about the dangers of water pollution.

Answer: \_\_\_

22. The author thinks that outer space …

a) is dangerous because of asteroids.

b) is a source of important supplies.

c) is not studied properly.

d) should be colonized.

Answer: \_\_\_

23. The Google and Microsoft (paragraph 9) are mentioned to …

a) explain how Planetary Resources Inc. became famous.

b) prove that asteroids can be commercially attractive.

c) show that space research is important for computer science.

d) prove that asteroids can interfere with the Internet.

Answer: \_\_\_

24. The expression “put the gears in motion” in “…it is wise to put the gears in motion now” (paragraph 9) means …

a) to explore.

b) to begin.

c) to move.

d) to invest.

Answer: \_\_\_

25. What idea is stressed in the last two paragraphs?

a) There is room for further achievements in space exploration.

b) Asteroids are unique objects for scientific research.

c) Only smart administration can manage space programs.

d) International Space Station is the heaviest object in space.

Answer: \_\_\_

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