

Look at the magazine article and do the exercises to improve your writing skills.

Preparation

Match the vocabulary with the correct definition and write a–h next to the numbers 1–8.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1..... solitude | a. a word made from the first letters of each word in a longer phrase |
| 2..... findings | b. to not use the opportunity to have or enjoy something |
| 3..... the here and now | c. a word that has become fashionable and is used a lot |
| 4..... an acronym | d. something that can be noticed or studied, especially something unusual |
| 5..... a phenomenon | e. results of research or investigation |
| 6..... left out | f. being on your own |
| 7..... to miss out (on something) | g. not included |
| 8..... a buzzword | h. the present moment |



Something to be worried about?

Have you heard of FOMO? FOMO is an acronym that stands for 'fear of missing out'. It's the feeling that you need to know what everyone else is doing at every moment and then worrying that everyone is having much more fun than you are. If you suffer from FOMO you feel the need to check for updates on social media regularly, all through the day and often through the night too. I'm sure you'll agree that this is the downside of living surrounded by technology.

These days FOMO has become a buzzword. There are articles in the press, reports on TV, discussions on chat shows and a growing number of books like Professor Sherry Turkle's *Alone Together*, in which she talks about this growing phenomenon. Turkle interviewed large numbers of teenagers while she was researching her book and her findings are quite worrying.

Turkle argues that being constantly connected actually leads to a new kind of solitude. Let's start with when we're alone at home. We want connection with other people, so we reach for our phone to check social media. But when we see photos and updates of other people having fun, we start feeling left out and we feel sorry for ourselves. We wanted connection but we end up feeling more isolated.

On top of this, even when we're actually enjoying ourselves and present in the photos, we still aren't satisfied. Now we're afraid we're missing out on something else. We even interrupt a face-to-face conversation to check status updates or to chat online. In fact, a large number of people now say they prefer texting to talking because it is easier to control than a real-time conversation. But really this makes it more difficult to develop relationships and feel close to people – another example of how technology makes us think we are connected but actually leaves us feeling unsatisfied.

It seems to me that we need to think carefully about when and how we choose to use social media. Why don't you test yourself to see how long you can go without checking for updates? Go on, give it a go! Take a moment to be on your own and see how it feels. It might help you enjoy life more in the here and now, and worry less about everywhere and everyone else.

Top Tips for writing

1. Think of an interesting title to make readers want to read on.
2. Introduce the subject of the article in the first paragraph.
3. The first sentence in each paragraph should summarise the main idea of the paragraph.
4. Ask questions and talk directly to the reader to get their attention.
5. Use different expressions to introduce and emphasise your points.

1. Check your writing: matching

Match the first sentence to the rest of the paragraph.

There are some worrying statistics about FOMO.	The best way to deal with this is to use your phone responsibly.
Research shows that FOMO is affecting students' sleep.	There are several reasons why students need to get a good night's sleep.

- Sleep is not only vital for your mental and physical well-being, but it also improves learning. If you sleep well, you are better able to concentrate, remember things, pay attention, make decisions and be more creative.
- According to scientists, a growing number of students are waking up in the middle of the night to check social media. They are afraid of missing a comment or an opportunity to take part in a chat.
- Twenty-three per cent of 12- to 15-year-olds wake up nearly every night to use social media. Another fifteen per cent wake up at night once a week for the same reason. One in three students are constantly tired and unable to function to their full capacity.
- Get into the habit of switching it off at night. The world won't end and your social media will be waiting to greet you in the morning! I'm sure you won't have missed anything important.

2. Check your writing: reordering

Put the words in order to make questions or sentences and write them on the line below.

- heard FOMO? Have of you
.....
- you test yourself? don't Why
.....
- Take to moment be a on your own.
.....

4. on, Go it! try

.....

5. life in the Enjoy more now. and here

.....

6. Is be scared about? something FOMO to

.....

3. Check your writing: gap fill

Complete the sentences with one word.

1. Have you heard _____ FOMO?

2. FOMO is an acronym that stands for 'fear of missing _____'.

3. I'm sure you'll agree that this is the downside of living surrounded _____ technology.

4. _____ days FOMO has become a buzzword.

5. There are a number of books like Professor Sherry Turkle's *Alone Together*, in _____ she talks about this growing phenomenon.

6. Being constantly connected leads to a new kind of solitude. Let's start _____ when we're alone at home.

7. _____ top of this, even when we're actually enjoying ourselves and present in the photos, we still aren't satisfied.

8. _____ fact, a large number of people now say they prefer texting to talking.

Discussion

Do you agree that social media makes us feel lonelier sometimes?