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Unit

1

The digital age: Are we ready?

— Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

— Arthur C. Clarke
(*British writer*)



Preview

The Internet has **changed our lives in almost every way possible**. We are connected online anytime and anywhere, communicating with each other, doing shopping, and receiving distance education. The Internet creates a digital world in which anything seems to be possible. We are aiming at **building a smart society**, which in turn will have a profound influence on our relationships with other people and technology.

While enjoying all the convenience the digital age has brought us, have you ever thought of the possible problems it has created? More and more people are relying on social media to keep in touch with each other, instead of having face-to-face conversations. So, what will be the effect on human relationships when we sacrifice conversation for connection? How will the digital world evolve in the near future? Are you really well equipped for the challenges in this digital age?



Section A

Pre-reading activities

1 Are you addicted to your smartphone? Rate each statement below and circle the score that represents your opinion to make an assessment.

1 = Strongly disagree 5 = Somewhat agree
2 = Disagree 6 = Agree
3 = Somewhat disagree 7 = Strongly agree
4 = Neutral

1 I would feel uncomfortable without constant access to information through my smartphone.



2 I would be annoyed if I could not use my smartphone when I wanted to.



3 I would be scared if my smartphone ran out of battery.



4 If I did not have a data signal or could not connect to Wi-Fi, I would constantly check to see if I had a signal or could find a Wi-Fi network.



5 If I could not check my smartphone for a while, I would feel a desire to check it.



If I did not have my smartphone with me,

6 I would feel anxious because I could not instantly communicate with my family or friends.



7 I would be nervous because I could not know if someone had tried to get hold of me.



8 I would be nervous because I would be disconnected from my online identity.



9 I would be uncomfortable because I could not stay up-to-date with social media and online networks.



10 I would feel weird because I would not know what to do.



Now add up your score. The higher the score, the more likely you are to be addicted to your smartphone.

2 **Work in pairs. Share your assessment result and discuss the following questions.**

- 1 What impacts do you think smartphones have on your relationships with people around you?
- 2 What suggestions can you offer to those who are addicted to smartphones?

Text A

- 1 On a quiet Saturday afternoon, Paul and his wife Maria are sitting at home reading their favorite books. Opposite to where they sit are their two sons: 15-year-old Jason and 12-year-old Jack, absorbed in playing chess. What's the **scenario** here? The family calls it their "offline day". From Friday night through Sunday evening, there are no video games, no computers, and no cell phones.
- 2 In our "always on" lives, such a scenario of family **convention** seems gone. Are we too **immersed** in the brilliance of the digital world? Perhaps. We cannot seem to resist the **lure** of our cell phones, even when we are in the company of others. Apparently, we have sacrificed conversation for connection.
- 3 At home, families sit together, texting, and reading emails. At work, **executives** text
- 4 during board meetings. We also text when we're on dates. Walking through a college library or the campus of a high-tech company, one sees an **identical** scenario: People are together, but each of them is in their own bubble, **furiously** connected to keyboards and tiny touch screens. The little **devices** most of us carry around are so powerful that they change not only what we do but also who we are.
- 4 It's true we've already become accustomed to a new way of being "alone together". Technology-enabled, we are able to be with one another, and also elsewhere, connected to wherever we want to be. We've been used to the idea of being in a **tribe** of one, loyal to our own party. In the silence of connection, we are comforted by being in touch with "invisible" friends and significant others, not too close, nor too far, just right.
- 5 A senior partner at a law firm describes vividly a scene in his office. Every morning, young

Connection or conversation



associates would first lay out their **suite** of technologies: laptops, **tablets**, and multiple phones. Then they would put their earphones on. “Big ones. Like pilots. They have **converted** their desks into **cockpits**,” he said. With the young lawyers sitting in their cockpits, the office becomes quiet, a quiet that does not ask to be broken. They have completely **plunged** into their virtual world.

- 6 As we can see, there is no limit to time and space in this digital world. Connection can be anytime and anywhere. Gradually, we’ve picked up a habit of **deletion** – wiping out rich human relationships. The move from conversation to connection, for example, is part of this. In fact, online connection is often a **deceptive** illusion in which we cheat ourselves, assuming we’re not alone. Worse, over time we’ll stop caring and forget there is a difference between online connection and face-to-face conversation.
- 7 We are tempted to think that our little “sips” of online connection add up to a big swallow of real conversation. No, they don’t. Even though all of these sips have their places – in politics, **commerce**, romance, and friendship, I would claim, no matter how valuable they are, it’s impossible for them to **substitute** for real conversation, where people exchange ideas and share viewpoints dynamically.
- 8 Yes, connecting in sips may work for gathering **discrete** bits of information, or for saying “I am thinking about you”, or even for saying “I love you”, but it’s far from the **adequacy** of communication when it comes to understanding and knowing one



another. Real conversation, on the other hand, is a more informative process, in which we're more caring and **observant**. We hesitate and pause and go silent, and we reveal ourselves to one another through tones and **nuances**.

- 9 While communicating on our digital devices, we unconsciously raise our expectations as well. As we increase the **volume** and **velocity** of online connection, we start to expect **acceleration** – faster answers. We ask one another simpler questions; we dumb down our communication, even on the most important matters. Face-to-face conversation, by contrast, unfolds slowly, so it teaches us patience.
- 10 In addition, our move from conversation means diminished opportunities to learn skills of self-reflection. These days, social media **continually** asks us what's "on our mind", but we have little motivation to say something truly self-**reflective**. Imagine how hard it is to do something with thousands of online friends! It is through the conversation with trusted others that we learn to **converse** with ourselves – to be honest with ourselves.
- 11 I'm not a **critic**, but I am a **partisan** for conversation. To make room for it, I see some first steps. At home, we can create "**sacred**" spaces for conversation while doing **domestic chores**: the kitchen, the dining room. We can make our cars a place free of little devices. We can be a **consultant** to our children through the demonstration of the value of conversation. At work, we can do the same thing. Employees asked for casual Fridays; managers may "**collaborate**" and introduce conversational Thursdays.
- 12 Although an "offline day" may be unbearable for tech **enthusiasts** who need to **alter** their habits, experts say it is beneficial to **assess** both the merit and **burden** of digital technology. Let's take some time away from the beeps and rings to evaluate our relationship with technology. Try to make some changes. At the beginning, it might be hard, but after a few months when a habit forms, we'll begin to realize we have already gained a lot from it. So, look up, look at one another, and let's start a conversation.

(892 words)

Culture notes

casual Friday (*also dress-down Friday*): In some companies, employees are allowed to wear clothes that are more informal than usual on Friday. This day is known as a casual Friday.

New words

scenario /sə'nɑ:riəʊ/ *n.* [C]

- 1 a situation that could possibly happen 可能发生的事；可能出现的情况
- 2 a written description of the characters, place, and things that will happen in a film, play, etc. (电影、戏剧等的) 剧情梗概

▲ **convention** /kən'venʃən/ *n.*

- 1 [C, U] behavior and attitudes that most people in a society consider to be normal and right 习俗；惯例；常规
- 2 [C] a large formal meeting for people who belong to the same profession or organization or who have the same interests 大会；会议；集会
- 3 [C] a formal agreement, esp. between countries, about particular rules or behavior (尤指国际性的) 公约，协定

immerse /ɪ'mɜ:s/ *vt.*

- 1 (~ **oneself in sth.**): become completely involved in an activity 潜心于某事；专注于某事
- 2 put sb. or sth. deep into a liquid so that they are completely covered 使浸没(于液体中)

immersed /ɪ'mɜ:st/ *a.* (~ **in**) 潜心于某事的；专注于某事的

lure /ljʊə/

n. [usu. sing.] sth. that attracts people, or the quality of being able to do this 诱惑物；诱惑力；吸引力

vt. persuade sb. to do sth., esp. sth. wrong or dangerous, by making it seem attractive or exciting 引诱；诱惑

▲ **executive** /ɪg'zekjətɪv/ *n.* [C] a manager in an organization or company who helps make important decisions (机构或公司的) 主管，经理

▲ **identical** /aɪ'dentɪkəl/ *a.* exactly the same, or very similar 完全相同的；非常相似的

furious /'fjʊəriəs/ *a.*

- 1 (*usu. before noun*) done with a lot of energy, effort, or speed 猛烈的；强烈的；激烈的
- 2 very angry 狂怒的；暴怒的

furiously /'fjʊəriəsli/ *ad.*

- 1 猛烈地；强烈地；激烈地
- 2 狂怒地；暴怒地

▲ **device** /dɪ'vaɪs/ *n.* [C] a machine or tool that does a special job 设备；仪器；装置

tribe /traɪb/ *n.* [C]

- 1 a social group consisting of people of the same race who have the same beliefs, customs, language, etc., and usu. live in one particular area ruled by their leader 部落
- 2 a group of people with the same interests – used esp. to show disapproval (兴趣相同的) 一批(人)，一伙(多含贬义)

▲ **associate**

n. /ə'səʊʃjət/ [C] sb. who you work or do business with 同事；(生意) 伙伴

vt. /ə'səʊʃjɪt/ make a connection in your mind between one thing or person and another 联想；联系

suite /swɪt/ *n.* [C]

- 1 a group of related things intended to be used together; a set (同类物的) 系列，组，套
- 2 a set of rooms, esp. expensive ones in a hotel 套房(尤指酒店豪华套房)

▲ **tablet** /'tæblɪt/ *n.* [C]

- 1 (*also ~ computer*) a small, flat computer that is controlled by touching the screen or by using a special pen 平板电脑
- 2 a small round hard piece of medicine which you swallow 药片

注：标▲单词为四级词，未做标记单词为六级词，斜体单词为超纲词。

▲ **convert** /kən'vɜ:t/ *v.*

- 1 (cause sb. or sth. to) change in form or character (使) 转变; (使) 转换
- 2 change to a new religion, belief, opinion, etc., or make sb. do this (使) 改变 (宗教、信仰、观点等)

cockpit /'kɒk.pɪt/ *n.* [C] the area in a plane, small boat, or racing car where the pilot or driver sits (飞机、赛车的) 驾驶舱; (小船的) 座舱

▲ **plunge** /plʌndʒ/

- v.* (always + *ad.* / *prep.*) move, fall, or be thrown suddenly forward or downward (使) 突然向前冲; (使) 跌落
- vi.* (of prices, temperatures, etc.) decrease suddenly and quickly (价格、温度等) 暴跌, 骤降, 突降

▲ **deletion** /dr'i:ʃən/ *n.* [U] the action or process of deleting sth. 删除

▲ **deceptive** /dr'septɪv/ *a.* likely to make you believe sth. that is not true 欺骗性的; 误导的; 骗人的

▲ **commerce** /'kɒmɜ:s/ *n.* [U] the buying and selling of goods and services 买卖; 贸易; 商务; 商业

▲ **substitute** /'sʌbstɪtju:t/

- v.* take the place of sb. or sth. else; use sb. or sth. instead of sb. or sth. else (以...) 代替; 取代
- n.* [C] a person or thing that you use instead of the one that you usu. have, because the usual one is not available 代替物; 替代品

discrete /dr'skri:t/ *a.* clearly separate 分开的; 分离的; 离散的

▲ **adequacy** /'ædɪkwəsi/ *n.* [U] the quality of being good enough or great enough in amount to be acceptable 充分; 足够

▲ **observant** /əb'zɜ:vənt/ *a.* good or quick at noticing things 观察力敏锐的; 机警的

nuance /'nju:ɑ:ns/ *n.* [C] a very slight, hardly noticeable difference in manner, color, meaning, etc. (方式、颜色、意义等的) 细微差别

▲ **volume** /'vɒlju:m/ *n.*

- 1 [C, U] the amount of sth. 量; 额
- 2 [C, U] the amount of space that an object or a substance fills; the amount of space that a container has 体积; 容积; 容量
- 3 [U] the amount of sound produced by a television, radio, etc. 音量; (音) 响度

velocity /və'lɒsəti/ *n.* [C, U] the speed at which sth. happens or moves 速度

▲ **acceleration** /æk'selə'reɪʃən/ *n.* [sing., U] a process in which sth. happens more and more quickly 加快; 增速

▲ **continual** /kən'tɪnjuəl/ *a.* (*only before noun*)

- 1 repeated many times, often in a way that is harmful or annoying 多次重复的, 频繁的 (往往有害或恼人)
- 2 continuing for a long time without stopping 持续的; 不间断的

continually /kən'tɪnjuəli/ *ad.*

- 1 频繁地
- 2 持续地

▲ **reflective** /rɪ'flektɪv/ *a.*

- 1 thinking quietly about sth. 沉思的; 深思的
- 2 a reflective surface reflects light (物体表面) 能反光的

▲ **converse**

vi. /kən'vɜ:s/ (*fml.*) have a conversation with sb. 谈话; 交谈

n. /'kɒnvɜ:s/ [sing.] (*fml.*) (**the ~**) the opposite or reverse of a fact or statement 相反的事物; (事实或陈述的) 反面

▲ **critic** /'krɪtɪk/ *n.* [C]

- 1 sb. who criticizes a person, organization, or idea 批评者
- 2 sb. whose job is to make judgments about the

good and bad qualities of art, music, films, etc. (艺术、音乐、电影等的)评论家, 批评家

partisan /ˌpɑːtɪˈzæn/

- n.* [C] a person who strongly supports a particular leader, group, or idea 坚定的支持者; 铁杆拥护者
- a.* strongly supporting a particular political party, plan, or leader, usu. without considering the other choices carefully (对某个政党、计划或领导人)偏袒的, 盲目支持的

sacred /ˈseɪkrɪd/ *a.* very important or greatly respected 很重要的; 神圣的; 深受尊重的

▲ **domestic** /dəˈmestɪk/ *a.*

- 1 (only before noun) relating to family relationships and life at home 家庭的; 家事的
- 2 relating to or happening in one particular country and not involving any other countries 国内的; 本国的

▲ **chore** /tʃɔː/ *n.* [C] a small job that you have to do regularly, esp. work that you do to keep a house clean 家庭杂务; 日常琐事

▲ **consultant** /kənˈsʌltənt/ *n.* [C] sb. whose job is to give advice on a particular subject 顾问

▲ **collaborate** /kəˈlæbəreɪt/ *vi.* work together with a person or group in order to achieve sth., esp. in science or art (尤指在科学或艺术方面)合作, 协作

▲ **enthusiast** /ɪnˈθjuːzɪəst/ *n.* [C] sb. who is very interested in a particular activity or subject 热衷者; 爱好者; 热心的人

▲ **alter** /ˈɔːltə/ *v.* change, or make sb. or sth. change (使)变化; (使)改变

▲ **assess** /əˈses/ *vt.*

- 1 make a judgment about a person or situation after thinking carefully about it 评价; 评定
- 2 calculate the value or cost of sth. 对...估价; 估计...的成本

▲ **burden** /ˈbɜːdn/

n. [C] a duty, responsibility, etc. that causes worry, difficulty, or hard work (义务、责任等的)重担, 负担

vt. (be ~ ed with / by sth.) have a lot of problems because of a particular thing 被某事物所困扰; 承受某事物的负担

Phrases and expressions

plunge into sth. enter earnestly or wholeheartedly into some activity or situation (认真而专注地)开始从事, 投身于

pick sth. up learn a new skill or start a habit without intending to (无意间)学会(新技能); 开始养成(习惯)

wipe sth. out destroy, remove, or get rid of sth. completely 彻底毁灭; 勾销; 去除

add up to sth. produce a particular total or result 总数是; 结果是

dumb sth. down present news or information in a simple and attractive way without many details so that everyone can understand it – used to show disapproval (为使大家能够理解而)降低...的标准, 使...简单化(含贬义)

make room for sb. / sth. provide space for sb. or sth. 为...提供空间

Proper names

Maria /məˈriːə/ 玛丽亚(人名)

Jason /ˈdʒeɪsən/ 贾森(人名)

Reading comprehension

Understanding the text

1 Answer the following questions.

- 1 What activities are the family not allowed to do on their “offline days”?
- 2 According to Para. 3, to what extent are we influenced by the little devices most of us carry around?
- 3 What does the author think of the idea that our little “sips” of online connection will substitute for real conversation?
- 4 According to Para. 8, what can we do in real conversation but cannot in online connection?
- 5 What can a face-to-face conversation teach us?
- 6 What can we learn from the conversation with trusted others?
- 7 What is the author’s attitude toward conversation?
- 8 What is the author’s suggestion for evaluating our relationship with technology?

Critical thinking

2 Work in pairs and discuss the following questions.

- 1 Do you believe people can truly get to know each other simply via online communication? Why or why not?
- 2 What impact does social media have on people’s social skills?
- 3 How do you think technology will change communication in the future?

Language focus

Words in use

3 Fill in the blanks with the words given below. Change the form where necessary. Each word can be used only once.

alter assess collaborate
discrete furious immersed sacred
scenario substitute velocity

- 1 He entered the film industry, taking small roles and writing _____ for a famous film company.
- 2 In doing translation, one should not _____ the meaning of the original to suit one’s own taste.
- 3 Without warning, there was a(n) _____ storm and the waves swept over the boat.
- 4 Doctors consider it their _____ duty to protect and save the lives of their patients.
- 5 The question was how to maintain that kind of _____ for a vehicle that weighed considerably more than 3,300 pounds.
- 6 They are able to take _____ ideas, thoughts, and generalizations and weave them into meaningful patterns.
- 7 They needed someone to _____ for a pianist who couldn’t make it, and her professor recommended her.
- 8 Let’s embrace Chinese culture this summer and get _____ in the richness of traditional Chinese music and dance!
- 9 The Chinese scientific community will _____ with their international peers in frontier science research.
- 10 At the end of the semester, students will be _____ on their proficiency in writing and speaking in English.

Word building

-ance

与某些动词结合构成名词，表示相关的行为、状态或过程。

attend
endure
perform
admit
assure
clear
dominate
rely



attendance
endurance
performance
admittance
assurance
clearance
dominance
reliance

-ed

及物动词的过去分词常可用作形容词，表示事物已受到相应影响。一些不及物动词的过去分词也可作形容词，表示某人或某物已完成某事。

assure
excite
involve
distract
retire



assured
excited
involved
distracted
retired

4 Fill in the blanks with the words given below. Change the form where necessary. Each word can be used only once.

admittance assurance clearance
distracted dominance
reliance retired

- The _____ of the Internet and mobile devices means that anything that can be used effectively with them is likely to be a success.
- Younger children may have problems paying attention in class, and would easily get _____.
- The competitive entrance examination for _____ to this university was such that hundreds of applicants were turned down each year.
- My dad is _____ and decides to devote his leisure time and energies to his passion: painting.
- Too much _____ on teachers telling them what to do next might hinder the development of children's independent thinking.
- Investors need _____ that the risk taken by the company is acceptable to them.
- The careless _____ of trees could cause economic damage through degradation (退化) of the soil.

注：粗体单词为本单元新学派生词。



Banked cloze

5 Fill in the blanks by selecting suitable words from the word bank. You may not use any of the words more than once.

- | | | |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| A anticipate | F diminishes | K mutual |
| B approval | G furnishes | L obsession |
| C attain | H immersed | M removal |
| D concentrate | I lure | N scenario |
| E continual | J maintain | O succession |

Through online interactions, young people can share ideas, acquire information, and be exposed to many opportunities out there. Social media gives them the avenue to make new friends and allows them to 1) _____ contact with their old friends.

However, too much social media also leads to addiction. We are quite familiar with the 2) _____ of people sitting next to each other, not talking, but just staring at their phones. Young people are more likely to be 3) _____ in social media rather than spend time with their families and friends. They may check their social media accounts first thing in the morning and check social media updates last thing before going to sleep. With too many distractions, they cannot fully 4) _____ on their tasks.

Social media also leads to 5) _____. Some people are crazy about likes and comments and they will do anything to get them on a daily basis. Everything they do, they want to post on social media to get some form of 6) _____ from strangers. They work tirelessly to buy the latest clothes, eat expensive meals, and visit unusual places, just for a show. They even do things that they would never do in real life just to impress people. Since they cannot get the same popularity in real life as they do in social media, they yield to the 7) _____ of social networks. However, many of them live in 8) _____ fear of being less popular. Everything falls apart when

their popularity really 9) _____, and they may even get into serious psychological problems.

The creators of social networks perhaps did not 10) _____ that their creations would bring these problems. Doing away with social media may not be practical, but some form of regulation should be put into place to ensure that people can really benefit from the technology.

Expressions in use

6 Fill in the blanks with the expressions given below. Change the form where necessary. Each expression can be used only once.

add up to dumb ... down
in the company of lay ... out make room for
pick ... up plunge into wipe ... out

- 1 The cheerful guy who wore virtual reality glasses _____ the virtual world.
- 2 It has been the tradition in China that elderly people live in a familiar environment, preferably _____ their children.
- 3 Chinese isn't a subject that can be _____ in a month, and you can't accomplish your goal of mastering the language unless you work at it for years.
- 4 He _____ the map across the table and took another look at it.
- 5 The live music, the wild dancing, and the amazing lights all _____ an exciting theatrical experience.
- 6 Since space is limited, we sometimes have to say goodbye to old things in order to _____ new items.
- 7 The magazine has a reputation for being very thorough, although critics claim that it has been _____ in recent years to cater to the mass market.
- 8 This marks another historic step toward _____ the absolute poverty that has plagued the nation for centuries.

Structure analysis and writing

Structure analysis

Developing an argumentative essay

In writing an argumentative essay, the writer attempts to make a strong argument for or against a controversial point or defend a position on which there is a difference of opinion. Generally, the writer starts by stating a position on an issue, and then gives reasons, supported by evidence, for agreeing with that position. In this unit, you will learn about the typical structure of an argumentative essay and some specific tips on how to write it.

A good argumentative essay may follow the following structure:

- 1 **Introduction:** The first part of your essay should introduce the topic with a brief explanation of it, some background information, and a thesis statement. Your thesis is a statement of your position on a specific controversial topic, and it should be a concise, one-sentence summary of your main point or claim.
- 2 **Body:** This part usually comprises several paragraphs that explain the reasons why you support your thesis. Each paragraph should explain a different idea or give a different piece of evidence. You could use the patterns of development such as exemplification, comparison / contrast, and cause / effect that have been talked about previously.
- 3 **Refutation / Opposition (optional):** You can also address opposing points of view and explain why you disagree with them. Considering a topic from different angles adds credibility and helps you gain the reader's trust.
- 4 **Conclusion:** In this part, you should restate your thesis and summarize what has been discussed in your body paragraphs. Rather than introducing new facts or more arguments, a good conclusion appeals to the reader's emotions. In some cases, you may include a call for action. By inspiring the reader to agree with your argument, you can tell them what they need to think about, do, feel, or believe.

The structure can be best illustrated by Paras. 7-11 of Text A as a mini version of an argumentative essay, as is shown on the next page.

Introduction (Para. 7)

Controversial argument:

We are tempted to think that our little “sips” of online connection add up to a big swallow of real conversation.



Thesis statement:

I would claim, no matter how valuable they are, it’s impossible for them to substitute for real conversation, where people exchange ideas and share viewpoints dynamically.



Body (Paras. 8-10)

Connecting in sips is far from the adequacy of communication when it comes to understanding and knowing one another.



Real conversation is a more informative process, in which we reveal ourselves to one another through tones and nuances.

In online communication we unconsciously raise our expectations. We start to expect acceleration – faster answers.



Face-to-face conversation teaches us patience.

Online communication means diminished opportunities to learn skills of self-reflection.



Conversation with trusted others helps us learn to converse with ourselves – to be honest with ourselves.



Conclusion (Para. 11)

Restatement of the thesis statement:

I’m not a critic, but I am a partisan for conversation.



Call for action:

To make room for it, I see some first steps.

Structured writing

Read the sample essay and see how the essay is structured.

Topic

Is big data a good thing?

Introduction

Controversial argument: Big data will invade people's privacy and we should ban the use of it.

Thesis statement: We should not ban the use of big data, for big data can benefit people in many ways.

Body

Supporting point 1: People can use big data to improve their lives.

Supporting point 2: Companies can use big data to improve their operations and services.

Supporting point 3: The government can use big data to improve its management efficiency.

Refutation / Opposition: The concern about the invasion of people's privacy is overstated.

Conclusion

Big data is playing a more and more important role in our society.

Big data is changing people's lives in ways they could have never imagined. Some people worry that big data may invade their privacy and urge that we should ban the use of it. However, from my point of view, we should not ban the use of big data, for big data can benefit people in many ways.

First, people can use big data to improve their lives. With the help of big data, they can have a better understanding of their health and thus make some improvements. Through analysis, big data knows a lot about people's tastes in music, movies, shopping, or even travel, and it can help them make the proper choice whenever they need to.

Second, companies can use big data to improve their operations and services. Based on big data analysis, they can refine their marketing, cut unnecessary costs, and better use their resources. They can also develop better business strategies, and be more responsive to customers' wants and needs.

Third, the government can use big data to improve its management efficiency. Take emergency responses, for example. In stopping the spread of a pandemic, the government, relying on the analysis of big data, is able to take control of the whole situation and make feasible plans to deal with the various problems it has to face.

Some people may worry about the invasion of people's privacy and see big data as a monster. In fact, this concern has been overstated. Lawmakers have already taken that into consideration and new laws have been passed to protect people's privacy and ensure their security in using big data. So there's no need to be too worried about it.

To conclude, big data is playing a more and more important role in our society. As long as we can keep a close watch on it, big data can help build a better life for all.

7 Write an essay of no less than 140 words on one of the following topics. One topic has an outline that you can follow.

Topic

Is smart technology making us dumb?

Introduction

Controversial argument: Smart technology is damaging our cognitive abilities and making us dumb.

Thesis statement: Smart technology is actually making us smarter.

Body

Supporting point 1: Smart technology helps us become more knowledgeable.

Supporting point 2: Smart technology helps us learn better.

Supporting point 3: Smart technology helps us be more innovative.

Refutation / Opposition: People worry that smart technology is making us dumb, but this is not true and not supported by scientific evidence.

Conclusion

Smart technology is changing our lives and benefiting us in positive ways.

More topics

- Will AI (artificial intelligence) cause mass unemployment?
- Should parents monitor their children’s use of the Internet?

Section B

Reading skills

Following the structure of a text

The structure of a text, which helps to fulfill the author's purpose in writing, refers to the internal pattern of organization of a text. There is considerable evidence that knowing how a text is organized influences the comprehension of the text. Readers who are familiar with the structure of a text expect the information to unfold in certain ways, and they can better recognize the author's purpose and follow the author's ideas efficiently.

In this unit, you will learn how to follow the text structure to facilitate reading comprehension. Generally, most texts contain structural elements that the author uses to arrange and connect ideas. Structural elements in texts vary. It is important to get to know various text structures, which mainly include the following ones.

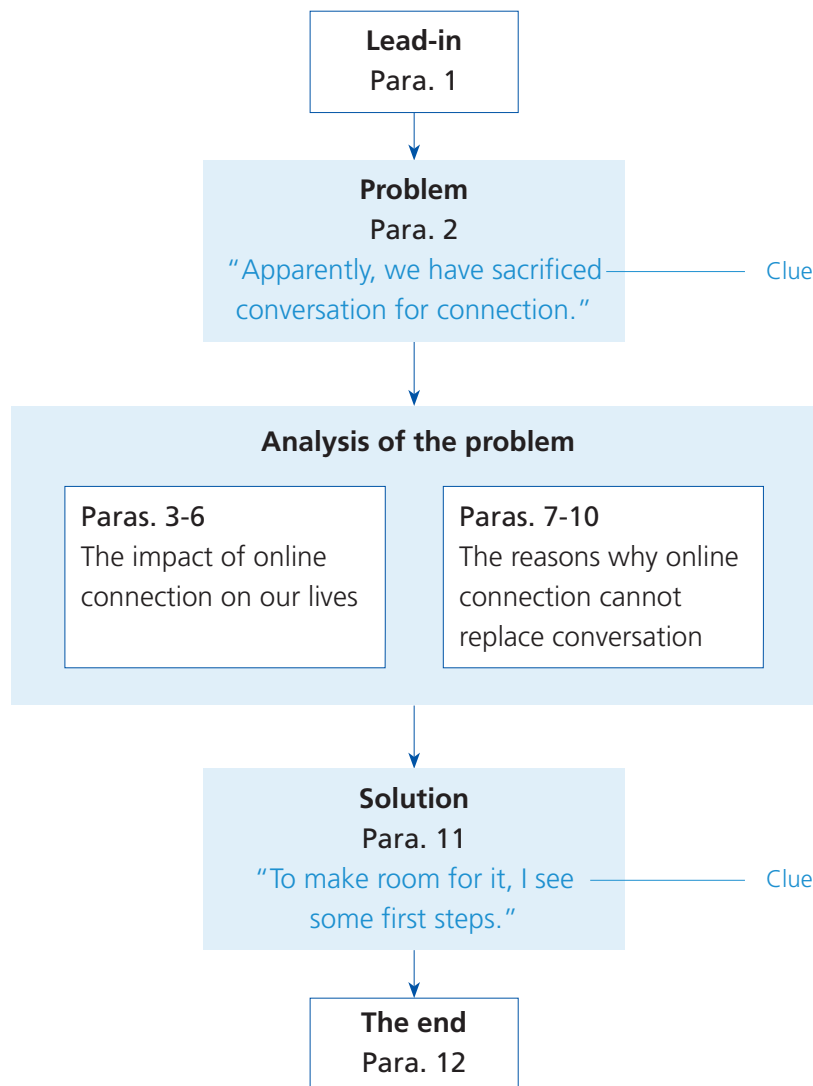
- **Description:** The author describes a topic.
- **Sequence:** The author lists items or events in numerical or chronological sequence, either explicitly or implicitly.
- **Comparison / contrast:** The author compares and / or contrasts two or more related events, topics, or objects that are alike and / or different.
- **Cause / effect:** The author explains one or more causes and / or describes effects.
- **Problem / solution:** The author raises a problem and then offers solutions.

The ability to identify and analyze these text structures helps you to comprehend the text more easily by understanding how one paragraph relates to another and to the whole text. So it is important that you be able to identify the clues which indicate text structures, and have a clear picture in your mind for each structure.

Take Text A, for example. Para. 1 starts with the description of a family "offline day", which serves as an attention-getter in the text. The purpose of the attention-getter is to grab the reader's attention and give them some context of the text. At the end of Para. 2, the concluding sentence "Apparently, we have sacrificed conversation for connection" is actually introducing the problem that echoes the title of the text "Connection or conversation". From Para. 3 on, detailed description of how serious the problem is in our family, on campus, and in the office unfolds step by step to show us the drawbacks of online connection in our lives.

If you are familiar with the text structures introduced above, you will naturally infer that this could be a problem / solution text structure. To test whether it is true, you could just follow the text with this judgment in your mind. In Para. 11, you read the sentence: "To make room for it, I see some first steps." This is when you are assured that the solution is finally going to be offered.

Using a graphic organizer to illustrate the structure is another important way to help you better understand a text. Let's take Text A as an example.



- 1 As you read Text B for the first time, try to figure out its text structure after reading the first several paragraphs with the help of the signal words that you have spotted. Then read the whole text and draw a graphic organizer of it. Compare your graphic organizer with your partner's to see if both of you understand the author's writing purpose in the same way.

Text B



Living in the digital

- The technological advances that arrived in a swift fashion in the mid-1990s have reshaped the very fabric of society, and modern technologies have attracted various population groups in different areas. It is no exaggeration to say that technology has impacted upon the lives of everybody, in one way or another. However, this is often quite **subliminal** and somewhat **ironic** given the bold nature of the **imposition** of digital technology on our lives. It's true that the digital world has changed our lives in almost every way possible.
- To start with, do you still remember the days when teachers used chalk, **dusters**, and blackboards? They are almost never used today. Black has turned white, in the form of **interactive** whiteboards. To go one step further, the days of children having to carry a bag with printed books will probably be a distant memory in the future. With the **advent** of the age of the tablet, they are starting to use the impressive electronic devices to read e-books. More importantly, schools now come equipped with Wi-Fi or **broadband** to ensure instant Internet access for study and research purposes.
- Likewise, how often do you see children playing games on a smartphone, laptop, or mobile game device of one kind or another? Probably more often than you see them playing outside with their friends. Children of the modern age are incredibly tech **savvy**,
- my goodness, almost from the time they learn to talk. They don't have to learn how to use technology but are able to be informed, keeping **abreast** of the latest technological developments, because technology is simply a part of who they are. They grow up with it, they know it, and they cannot survive without it.
- Dramatic changes can also be felt at home. As the modern family is busier than in the past, **hectic** family life seems dominated by all-things-convenient. Luckily, cooking is now made easy and a lot quicker thanks to hundreds upon hundreds of cooking apps, online **recipes**, how-to-cook videos, etc. Quite **literally**, technology has made cooking accessible and enjoyable to all. Furthermore, the days of battling other **siblings** for rights of the sole TV in the living room have gone and become a thing of the past. Now, children have their own laptop on which to watch their choice of TV shows, movies, videos, etc.
- Then how about our workplace? Nearly a decade ago, one had to sit in the office all day long. Not so now though! Many companies, whether **headquarters** or **affiliates**, actively encourage working from home, and this is becoming more and more common as employers realize that employees do not require round-the-clock **monitoring** in the completion of their daily tasks. In addition, technology has led to the widespread use of online video

worlD

conferences; as a result, colleagues are no longer obliged to even meet in a face-to-face environment, removing yet another element of the business **arena** of old.

6 **Aligned** with this fashion of convenience is our leisure. In the past, holidays were **invariably** booked through **travel agents** or a **dedicated** provider, based upon their sales skills and packages together with **brochures**. Sometimes, the most unappealing destination could be made to look like a **luxurious** five-star resort. Now, people are a lot more **discerning**, thanks to the abundance of online booking **sites** and online reviews of every leisure facility the world over. We search the Web to find the cheapest flights and avoid extra charges. We also book **accommodations** based upon our requirements and check out exactly what we will do before we even arrive!

7 In the everyday **practicality**, digital technology has also established its **credibility** in changing our old-fashioned personal life. While we used to stand in line at the bank during our lunch break, now we perform most of our banking online, mainly **via** our smartphones. While we formerly walked to the shop to buy the daily newspaper, now we can access news sites worldwide and download news apps at the touch of a screen. While we used to head to the video store to choose the latest release, now we can download movies online at the click of a mouse.

While we used to play simple, yet wonderful, **console** games, now we can play them through the Internet against people from all around the world.

8 When it comes to social life, there are now so many social platforms cropping up that it's difficult to keep up with them. It's somewhat funny, though, that our social life is kind of **akin** to "emotional **blackmail**". Even those who have desperately tried to **evade** all things social have found it's simply impossible to avoid. Today people are more engaged in connection than conversation. Social media has become an essential part of life and a place for people to catch up with existing friends, rekindle friendships from the past, or meet new people from **overseas** ..., because they can.



9 As we can see, the digital revolution has changed our lives to such an extent that the way we exist as a civilization has almost completely altered with no point in history for comparison. We **concede** that advanced technology is probably **erasing** rich human relationships, but it shows no signs of slowing down. It'll continue to **flourish** and bring a lot of potential to transform the way we live in the **foreseeable** future. Are you ready for that?

(897 words)

New words

subliminal /sʌb'lɪmɪnəl/ *a.* affecting your mind in a way that you are not conscious of 潜意识的；下意识的；潜在的

▲ **ironic** /aɪ'rɒnɪk/ *a.*

- 1 an ironic situation is one that is unusual or amusing because sth. strange happens, or the opposite of what is expected happens or is true (情况) 有讽刺意味的，出乎意料的，令人啼笑皆非的
- 2 using words that are the opposite of what you really mean, often in a joking way (遣词用字) 讽刺的，用反语的(常以开玩笑方式)

▲ **imposition** /ɪmpə'zɪʃən/ *n.* [U] the introduction of sth. such as a rule, punishment, and tax (规章、惩罚、税种等的) 实施

duster /dʌstə/ *n.* [C] a cloth for removing dust from furniture 抹布；掸子

▲ **interactive** /ɪntər'æktɪv/ *a.*

- 1 an interactive computer program, television system, etc. allows you to communicate directly with it, and does things in reaction to your actions (计算机程序、电视系统等) 交互的，互动的
- 2 involving talking and working together 合作的；相互交流的

advent /'ædvent/ *n.* [sing.] (*written*) (the ~ of sth.) the time when sth. first begins to be widely used 某事物的出现(或到来)

broadband /'brɔ:dbænd/ *n.* [U] a system of connecting computers to the Internet and moving information, such as messages or pictures, at a very high speed 宽带(连接计算机和因特网，用于高速传输信息的系统)

savvy /'sævi/ *a.* (*AmE*) (*informal*) having practical knowledge and understanding of sth; having common sense 有见识的；懂实际知识的；通情达理的

abreast /ə'brest/ *ad.* (keep / stay ~ of sth.)

make sure that you know all the most recent facts or information about a particular subject or situation 了解某事物的最新情况

hectic /'hektɪk/ *a.* very busy or full of activity 繁忙的；忙乱的

recipe /'resəpi/ *n.* [C] a set of instructions for cooking a particular type of food 烹饪法；食谱

▲ **literally** /'lɪtərəli/ *ad.*

- 1 used to emphasize the truth of sth. that may seem surprising (强调事实可能令人惊讶) 真正，确实
- 2 according to the most basic or original meaning of a word or expression 按照原义；根据字面意思

sibling /'sɪblɪŋ/ *n.* [C] (*fml.*) a brother or sister 兄；弟；姐；妹

▲ **headquarters** /,hed'kwɔ:təz/ *n.* [C]

(*pl.* **headquarters**) the main building or offices used by a large company or organization 总部；总公司；总办事处

affiliate

- n.* /ə'fɪliət/ [C] a company, organization, etc. that is connected with or controlled by a larger one 支会；分社；子公司；附属机构
- v.* /ə'fɪliet/ become part of or form a close relationship with a group or organization (使)附属；(使)隶属

▲ **monitor** /'mɒnɪtə/ *vt.* carefully watch and check a situation in order to see how it changes over a period of time 监视；监测；检测；监督

arena /ə'ri:nə/ *n.* [C]

- 1 (the business / political / public, etc. ~) all the activities and people connected with business, politics, public life, etc. 商业 / 政治 / 公众等舞台
- 2 a building with a large flat central area surrounded by seats, where sports or

entertainments take place (四周设有座位、供比赛或表演的) 场地

align /ə'laɪn/ *vt.*

- 1 organize or change sth. so that it has the right relationship to sth. else 使一致
- 2 publicly support a political group, country, or person that you agree with 公开支持; 与... 结盟

▲ **invariably** /ɪn'veəriəbli/ *ad.* always 始终如一地; 一贯地

▲ **agent** /'eɪdʒənt/ *n.* [C] a person or company that represents another person or company, esp. in business 代理人; 代理商; 经纪人

travel agent *n.* [C] a person or business whose job is to make arrangements for people wanting to travel, e.g. buying tickets or arranging hotel rooms 旅行代办人; 旅行代理商

dedicate /'dedɪkeɪt/ *vt.*

- 1 use a place, time, money, etc. only for a particular purpose 把...专用于
- 2 give all your attention and effort to one particular thing 致力于; 献身于

dedicated /'dedɪkeɪtɪd/ *a.*

- 1 (*only before noun*) made for or used for only one particular purpose 专用的
- 2 sb. who is dedicated works very hard at what they do because they care a lot about it 满腔热忱的; 有奉献精神的

▲ **brochure** /'brəʊʃə/ *n.* [C] a thin book giving information or advertising sth. 手册; 小册子

▲ **luxurious** /lʌg'zjuəriəs/ *a.* very expensive, beautiful, and comfortable 豪华的; 华丽舒适的

discern /dɪ'sɜːn/ *vt.* (*not in progressive*) (*fml.*) notice or understand sth. by thinking about it carefully (仔细思考之后) 觉察出, 弄清楚, 辨明

discerning /dɪ'sɜːnɪŋ/ *a.* showing the ability to make good judgments, esp. about art, music,

style, etc. (尤指对艺术、音乐、时尚等) 有鉴赏力的, 有眼光的, 鉴别力强的

▲ **site** /saɪt/ *n.* [C]

- 1 a website 网站
- 2 a place where sth. important or interesting happened (发生过重要或有意思的事件的) 场所, 地方, 地点

▲ **accommodation** /ə,kɒmə'deɪʃən/ *n.* [U] (~s) (*BrE accommodation*) a place for sb. to stay, live, or work 住处; 工作场所

▲ **practicality** /,præktɪ'kæləti/ *n.*

- 1 [U] how suitable sth. is, or whether it will work 可行性; 实用(性)
- 2 **practicalities** [pl.] the real facts of a situation rather than ideas about how it might be 实际的事情; 实际情况

credibility /,kredə'bɪləti/ *n.* [U] the quality of deserving to be believed and trusted 可信度; 可靠性

▲ **via** /'viə/ *prep.*

- 1 using a particular person, machine, etc. to send sth. 通过(某人、某机器等)传送(某物); 借助于
- 2 traveling through a place on the way to another place 经过; 取道

console

n. /'kɒnsəʊl/ [C] a small piece of electronic equipment that you connect to a screen, used for playing video games (游戏的) 操作板, 操控器

vt. /kən'səʊl/ try to make sb. feel better when they are unhappy or disappointed 安慰

akin /ə'kiːn/ *a.* (*fml.*) (~ to sth.) very similar to sth. 与某事物相似的; 与某事物类似的

blackmail /'blækmeɪl/ *n.* [U]

- 1 when sb. tries to make you do what they want by making threats or by making you feel guilty if you do not do it 胁迫; 感情勒索

- 2 when sb. tries to get money from you or make you do what they want by threatening to tell other people your secrets 勒索; 敲诈; 讹诈

evade /ɪ'veɪd/ *vt.*

- 1 find a way of not doing sth., esp. sth. that legally or morally you should do 逃避, 规避 (尤指法律或道德责任)
- 2 avoid talking about sth., esp. because you are trying to hide sth. 回避谈论 (某事物, 尤因试图隐瞒)

▲ **overseas**

ad. /əʊvə'si:z/ to or in a foreign country that is across the sea 向国外; 在海外; 在外国

a. /əʊvəsi:z/ happening or existing in a country across the sea from your country (在)海外的; (在)国外的

concede /kən'si:d/ *v.* admit that sth. is true or correct, although you wish it were not true (不得不)承认

▲ **erase** /ɪ'reɪz/ *vt.* remove sth. completely 清除; 消除; 消灭

▲ **flourish** /'flʌrɪʃ/ *vi.* develop well and be successful 繁荣; 兴旺; 成功

▲ **foreseeable** /fɔ:'si:əbəl/ *a.*

- 1 (**in / for the ~ future**) for as long as it is possible to know what is likely to happen 在可预见的将来
- 2 (**in the ~ future**) fairly soon 不久; 很快

Phrases and expressions

(in) one way or another / one way or the other used for saying that sth. will definitely happen, even though you do not know what method will make it happen 不管怎样, 不管以何方式 (某事都会发生)

check sb. / sth. out establish the truth or inform oneself about sb. or sth. 查实; 了解

stand in line (*AmE*) wait in a line of people until it is your turn to do sth. 排队

crop up appear or happen, esp. when it is not expected (尤指意外地) 出现, 发生

catch up with sb. talk to sb. whom you have not seen for some time in order to find out what they have been doing in the interim 通过交谈了解彼此的近况

Reading comprehension

Understanding the text

2 Choose the best answer to each of the following questions.

- 1 What is ironic about digital technology as mentioned in Para. 1?
 - A It develops very fast but people can keep up with it easily.
 - B Some population groups get addicted to it while others are fed up with it.
 - C It has invaded everything in our lives but we are not always aware of its impact.
 - D Many people cannot live without it but deny that it has reshaped their lives.
- 2 Why may children not have to carry printed books in the future?
 - A Children may use tablets to read e-books.
 - B Children may become used to studying at home.
 - C Children may be provided with interactive whiteboards in the classroom.
 - D Children may leave their books in the classroom rather than bring them home.
- 3 Which of the following is not true about children in the digital world?
 - A They cannot survive without technology.
 - B They are incredibly good at using electronic devices.
 - C They can keep up with the latest technological developments.
 - D They play games on electronic devices as often as they play outside with their friends.
- 4 What changes does digital technology bring to the modern family?
 - A The modern family is much busier.
 - B People enjoy the convenience of ready-made food.
 - C Cooking becomes easy and enjoyable to many people.
 - D Siblings often battle for their choices of TV programs.

- 5 Why do more companies encourage working from home?
 - A It is an effective way to cut costs.
 - B Employees don't need constant monitoring.
 - C Employees can work more efficiently at home.
 - D More companies are located far from the city center.
- 6 What changes does digital technology bring to the leisure domain?
 - A People prefer going to Internet-famous places.
 - B People prefer watching shows online to traveling.
 - C People become more discerning when booking their holidays.
 - D People search the Web for what to do once they arrive at their destination.
- 7 What changes does technology bring to our social life?
 - A People are more willing to make new friends.
 - B People value face-to-face conversation more.
 - C People have learned to keep up with so many social platforms.
 - D People find it simply impossible to avoid social interactions.
- 8 According to the author, what will happen as a result of the digital revolution?
 - A The pace of life will be much faster.
 - B Human relationships will be enriched.
 - C Our civilization will be changed little by little.
 - D Our lives will continue to change in the future.

Critical thinking

3 Work in pairs and discuss the following questions.

- 1 Do you prefer reading an e-book or a printed book? Why?
- 2 Apart from what has been mentioned in the text, can you provide other evidence that digital technology has changed our lives in almost every way possible?
- 3 How can we prepare ourselves for living in the digital world?

Collocation



Today, few of us can *resist the lure* (B3U1A) of new technology. We are digitally connected to one another. Compared to face-to-face conversation that *unfolds slowly* (B3U1A), online connection enables us to *share viewpoints* (B3U1A) more conveniently and is suitable for people living a *hectic life* (B3U1B). Furthermore, social media can easily *rekindle friendships* (B3U1B) from the past. It seems that high technology now plays an *essential part* (B3U1B) in every aspect of our lives. It has *established its credibility* (B3U1B) in *altering habits* (B3U1A) and bringing about *dramatic changes* (B3U1B) in our society. And, its *widespread use* (B3U1B) has *raised our expectations* (B3U1A) of a good life. Some people, however, think that a better world is only a *deceptive illusion* (B3U1A). Because of online connection, people have *diminished opportunities* (B3U1A) and *little motivation* (B3U1A) for real conversations, and rich human relationships may become a *distant memory* (B3U1B). Anyway, like it or not, our world has been almost *completely altered* (B3U1B) and will continue to be changed by technology in the *foreseeable future* (B3U1B).

4 Complete the following passage by filling in the blanks with appropriate collocations from the texts. You are provided with the first letter(s) for each of the collocations. Change the form where necessary.

How often have you seen a couple at a restaurant absorbed in their phones instead of talking with each other? Most of us may agree that this occurs all too frequently. It seems that in-person connection has become less valuable than the digital one, which has 1) *es* _____ its *cred* _____ in the eyes of young people. Ironically, it is precisely our need for constant in-person interaction that plays an 2) *es* _____

p _____ in fueling digital interaction. However, digital and in-person interactions are definitely not interchangeable. On the one hand, we love technology – most of us could never be without our smartphones. On the other hand, we are wired to love real and physical interaction, for the joy of 3) *sh* _____ *v* _____ with someone face-to-face is not a 4) *de* _____ *il* _____ in any sense.

However, nowadays we seem to prefer digital interaction to face-to-face conversation. We would like to have better relationships with our colleagues, but when faced with a choice between dropping by their office and shooting them an email, many of us may have 5) *lit* _____ *mo* _____ for the former. As a consequence, we have 6) *di* _____ *op* _____ for deeper communication. We are sacrificing in-person conversation for digital interaction. Indeed, the 7) *wide* _____ *u* _____ of digital technology in recent years has brought about 8) *dra* _____ *ch* _____ to what we do and who we are, and 9) *com* _____ *al* _____ our ways of interaction.

How can we break the spell? If the march of digital interaction is inevitable in today's 10) *hec* _____ *l* _____, breaking the spell means not simply avoiding digital interaction but knowing when digital or in-person interaction is the right way to communicate, and how to 11) *re* _____ the *l* _____ of digital communication when face-to-face conversation would be better, although it often 12) *un* _____ *sl* _____.

We believe this can help deal with the problem in the 13) *fore* _____ *fu* _____. Without a doubt, some types of communication are better on our mobile devices. For example, we can discuss where to meet and how to get there. But when we use the same technology for more complex matters, it fails us. Deep communication through conversation in person may work better in this case.

Stories of China



A Smartphone
is all you need



No cash? Your smartphone will do nicely. Chinese consumers who are used to spending their cash on technology are increasingly relying on a tech solution to pay for just about anything, from breakfast to booking a vacation.

To see how far I could go in Beijing without a wallet, I spent a day armed only with my smartphone.

A beautiful day started with a great breakfast. I paid for a local delicacy called *jianbing* at a food stall (摊位) with my smartphone. By scanning a QR code (二维码), I transferred six *yuan* to the stall owner.

I then passed a small supermarket – each checkout counter carried a sign that proclaimed: “Welcome to use mobile payment!”

When it comes to transportation around the capital, you can order a cab or a private car through ride-hailing services (叫车服务). Mobile payment is accepted. If you don’t fancy waiting in traffic, there are also bikes for rent. You can unlock these bikes by scanning a QR code and pay a very cheap rent for the ride.

Many shops have incentives to use mobile payment services because this way they can engage customers better. After I paid for a sandwich and a cup of coffee at a restaurant

with my smartphone, the waitress asked me to “follow” their public account so they could send me coupons (优惠券) and a virtual membership card. On the door of a nearby fashion boutique (时装店), there was another sign: “Welcome to use mobile payment!” Shops also accept credit cards, but not using mobile payment may be considered backward.

Mobile payment goes beyond daily purchases. You can also pay utility bills and credit card bills, or invest in money market funds.

From food stalls to shopping malls, almost every place I stopped by in this corner of Beijing accepted mobile payment. When

making a purchase, all I needed to do is tap on the phone, scan the QR code, and make the payment in a second or two. Mobile payment has really changed the way of life in China. Chinese shoppers nowadays do not have to carry cash around; they just need to carry their phones around. Cash really is becoming a thing of the past.



Translation



Translate the following paragraph into English.

近年来，随着互联网技术的迅猛发展，互联网经济已成为一个热门话题。以电子商务为代表的互联网经济已成为中国经济发展的重要引擎（driving force）。我国政府提出了“互联网+”的概念，以推动互联网与医疗、交通、教育、金融、公共服务等领域的结合。这将为互联网经济的发展提供更多发展机遇和更广阔的发展空间。

Conducting the experiment “No smartphone for a day”

As can be seen in this unit, technology nowadays affects people’s lives and work enormously. In this unit project, you are going to carry out an experiment in which the participants are asked to turn off their smartphones for a full day. The purpose is to find out whether the absence of a smartphone might have different effects on different people.



Step 1 Work in groups of three or four and choose several participants for the project. The participants should vary in age, sex, profession, education level, personality, or anything that you think might make them perform differently if they are not allowed to use their smartphones.

Step 2 Carry out the experiment. Ask the participants to turn off their smartphones and cut access to the Internet for an entire day.

Step 3 When the experiment is finished, interview the participants. Use the following questions as references to get their responses.

- 1 Did you feel anxious after you had turned off your smartphone?
- 2 How did you spend your time that day?
- 3 Did you feel more capable of concentrating without your smartphone?
- 4 What have you learned from the experience of staying away from your smartphone?

Step 4 Work in groups again and compare and analyze the participants’ responses and summarize your findings.

Step 5 Present your findings to the class.