

Questions on the reading passage:

Multiple Choice Questions (Choose one answer for each):

Q1. Choose the appropriate combination of words to fill in blanks (1-A) and (1-B).

- a) 1-A: criticism; 1-B: positive
- b) 1-A: criticism; 1-B: negative
- c) 1-A: popularity; 1-B: positive
- d) 1-A: popularity; 1-B: negative
- e) 1-A: reputation; 1-B: positive
- f) 1-A: reputation; 1-B: negative

Q2. Which of the following is closest in meaning to underline (2) spontaneous?

- a) unbelievable
- b) unfocused
- c) unnatural
- d) unplanned
- e) unrelated

Q3. Which of the following is the most appropriate choice to fill in blank (3)?

- a) commitments
- b) distractions
- c) jobs
- d) problems
- e) relationships

Q4. Which of the following is closest in meaning to underline (4) camaraderie?

- a) companionship
- b) duty
- c) fairness
- d) superiority
- e) touch

Q5. Which of the following is the most appropriate example of underline (5) ergonomic equipment in this context?

- a) a home entertainment system that can stream the latest shows in every room of the house
- b) a high-quality headphone set that enables its user to communicate comfortably during a video conference
- c) a reclining sofa-chair that helps its user to sleep soundly during online business meetings
- d) an internet-connected refrigerator that provides a daily weather forecast and meal recommendations
- e) a stylish suite of weight-training machines that aids body building and muscle definition

Q6. According to the passage, what is a key drawback of remote work for workplace productivity compared to a traditional office environment?

- a) Employees suffer higher levels of stress due to longer hours at home.
- b) Interruptions by family reduce the time taken by employees to do their work.
- c) Opportunities for working with others are less frequent and less effective.
- d) Overall costs rise due to expenses for advanced IT and employee burnout.
- e) Poor internet connections and technical problems reduce efficiency.

Q7. Which impact on workplace culture is emphasized in the passage?

- a) Employees change jobs more frequently because they feel less connected to the company.
- b) Flexible working schedules are fairer and improve participation by employees with children.
- c) Greater employee isolation increases the incidence of harassment in the workplace.
- d) Improved work-life balance raises overall levels of satisfaction in the workplace.
- e) Interactive communication tools allow employees to build stronger interpersonal relationships.

Listening: Short lecture

While some criticize remote work for its challenges, many studies and real-world examples highlight its significant benefits. Rather than harming productivity and workplace culture, remote work has the potential to revolutionize how we work for the better.

First, remote work often leads to increased productivity. Without the distractions of office chatter or unnecessary meetings, employees can focus on their tasks and work at their own pace. Many companies have reported that remote employees complete more work in less time compared to their in-office counterparts. For example, a study conducted in 2022 found that 77% of remote workers said they were more productive when working from home.

Additionally, remote work enhances flexibility, which is especially important in today's fast-paced world. Employees can tailor their schedules to fit their peak productivity hours, leading to better work outcomes. Parents, caregivers, and those with long commutes especially benefit from this flexibility, which improves work-life balance and overall satisfaction.

Contrary to popular belief, remote work does not have to undermine workplace culture. With virtual team-building activities, regular check-ins, and effective leadership, remote teams can maintain a strong sense of connection. Many companies are successfully fostering a remote-first culture, where employees feel valued and supported no matter where they work. This inclusivity can even attract top talent from around the world, giving businesses a competitive edge.

Finally, remote work is cost-effective. Employees save money on commuting, meals, and work attire, while companies save on office space and utilities. These savings can be reinvested into better tools and resources to support remote teams, creating a win-win situation for all.

In conclusion, remote work is not a threat to productivity or culture but a modern solution to the challenges of traditional office life. By embracing remote work, companies can unlock new opportunities for growth, efficiency, and employee happiness.

Questions on the short lecture:

Q8~Q13. Complete each sentence using an appropriate word from the short lecture.

Q8. The constant noise of people talking and interacting in the workplace is referred to in the short lecture as “office _____”. [chatter]

Q9. Working at home allows employees to focus better and to carry out their work at their own _____. [pace]

Q10. According to a study in 2022, a large percentage of remote workers claimed to be more _____ when working from home. [productive]

Q11. With remote work, employees can adjust their work _____ to fit the hours of the day when they work most effectively. [schedules]

Q12. The flexibility of remote work is especially beneficial to those who have long _____ from their homes to their workplaces. [commutes]

Q13. Remote work reduces costs related to office premises, including costs for _____ such as gas, electricity, and water. [utilities]

Q14. According to the short lecture, what helps maintain a strong remote work culture?

- a) Activities that promote a sense of belonging to a team
- b) Allowing employees to set their own work deadlines
- c) Encouraging competition among employees to reward talent
- d) Frequent in-person meetings to supplement virtual meetings
- e) Reducing unnecessary and inefficient communications

Q15. Why is remote work cost-effective, according to the short lecture?

- a) Employees receive more generous bonuses.
- b) Companies and employees both save money.
- c) Happier employees are content with less pay.
- d) Overtime payments are smaller.
- e) There is more space in real-world office premises.

Short essay questions:

Model answer for 1.

The reading passage argues that remote work harms productivity and workplace culture. It emphasises the loss of spontaneous collaboration, slower problem-solving, and weaker team relationships. Working from home blurs boundaries between personal and professional life, increasing stress and burnout. The passage also highlights distractions at home, reduced employee loyalty, and inequalities caused by differing home conditions, such as poor internet or a noisy workspace.

In contrast, the listening passage presents remote work as beneficial. It claims productivity rises because employees face fewer office distractions and can work during their most efficient hours. Flexibility improves work-life balance, particularly for parents and commuters. It also argues that remote culture can thrive with virtual team-building and inclusive leadership, while both employees and companies save money. The lecture concludes that remote work represents a positive evolution in modern productivity. (135 words)

Model answer for 2.

There is no model answer. Students are expected to argue for their own opinions, structuring their answers into organised paragraphs that present their evidence and reasoning clearly, coming to a firm and well-supported conclusion. Written language will be assessed for its clarity, grammatical accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary, varied sentence structure, and use of cohesive devices and transition signals.