

Has relying on tech affected the way we learn?

Level: Advanced (C1–C2)

Time: Approximately 90 minutes (plus extra time for research and presentation)

Business topics: Tech, learning, AI, job automation

Business language: expressions

Activities: key words, understanding the text, business language, discussion, presentation about technology and job automation

Groups: Whole class, one-to-one, pair work or small groups

Overview: This article shares examples of how relying on technology makes us worse at learning and remembering things.

1. Warmer

- a. Put students into pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the questions. Elicit ideas from each group. If you would like to extend this activity, ask students to create a mind map of vocabulary related to technology. Encourage them to include not only nouns, but *verb + noun* collocations, noun phrases and so on.

2. Find the information

- a. Emphasise that students need to skim the article quickly. Giving them a time limit of a minute might be helpful. Then ask them to provide the example(s) they found even if they feel unsure about their answers.

Key:

getting lost without GPS, artificial intelligence doing the work, AI generated text, not practising, no repetition, no spaced learning, algorithm does the work

3. Key words

- a. Ask students to complete the task individually and then compare their answers in small groups before eliciting examples from the whole class. You can also ask half the students to complete 1 to 6 and the other half to complete 7 to 12 and then work together to check and share their answers. If students need support, encourage them to complete the activity methodically by first reading the definition and example sentence, identifying the part of speech, and then scanning the paragraph for that part of speech. As an extension you can encourage students to use an online dictionary to learn what other words can be used with the words in the task.

Key:

1. *erode; eroded*
2. *impediment*
3. *shortcut*
4. *retain; retained*
5. *inflection point*
6. *grunt work*
7. *evade; evaded*
8. *master; mastered*
9. *interval; intervals*
10. *algorithm; algorithms*
11. *bulk out; bulk out*
12. *high stakes; high-stakes*

4. Understanding the article

- a. Ask students to scan the article for the information in each statement. Then to examine the answer options. Ask students to compare their answers before checking with the whole class.

Key:

1. *a (Suddenly deprived of my tech, I was unable to find my way, because I had never needed to actually learn it.)*
2. *b (efficient technology can be an impediment to learning. Only through effort and repetition, without shortcuts, can we truly retain useful knowledge.)*
3. *b (It also wrote that last paragraph, using just the prompt "much has been written about GPT-3".)*

4. a (*It's maybe simpler to ask whether the student is cheating themselves, to which the answer is surely yes.*)
5. b (*repetition means remembering*)
6. a (*demonstrating how knowledge escapes over time if not consciously remembered – and “spaced learning”, repetition over regular intervals*)
7. b (*“GPT-3 can just make up facts that aren't true and say other things that are nonsense.”*)

5. Business language

- a. Ask students to find the expressions in the text and compare their answers with a classmate before checking with the whole class. Check understanding by asking the class to come up with their own very simple definition for each expression.

Key:

1. *lean (heavily) on*
2. *stoop to*
3. *create waves*
4. *practice makes perfect*
5. *do the grunt work / do the legwork*

- b. Allow students to discuss in small groups or with the whole class. Keep corrections focused on the target expressions.

6. Discussion questions

- a. Put the students in pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss the questions. When students have covered all the questions, bring the whole class back together so that they can share their answers and any interesting information that arose from their discussions.

7. Wider business theme – AI and job automation

- a. First ask students what they understand by job automation and ask them to give you a few examples, e.g., people using a ride-hailing app like Uber instead of calling someone who used to be in charge of sending and managing cabs. Technology now does their job – the role is automated.

Then ask students to look at the table individually before working in pairs or small groups to discuss the questions. Set a time limit and ask one person from each group to summarise their discussion in five sentences.

- b. In the same groups, ask students to work together to brainstorm the different points that they might include in the presentation. You can decide to either let students present individually or in groups of three, where each student covers a point.

Encourage students to use the phrases provided to structure their presentations. Also encourage them to choose a few words from the Key Words and Business Language sections to include in their presentations.