

ISE III

Sample Independent listening task – Technology and happiness

Examiner rubric

You're going to hear part of a talk about technology. You will hear the talk twice. The first time, just listen. Then I'll ask you to tell me generally what the speaker is talking about. Are you ready?

The task will play once

Can you tell me in one or two sentences what the speaker was talking about?

Give the candidate some blank notepaper.

Now listen to the talk again. This time make some notes as you listen, if you want to. Then I'll ask you to tell me to what extent the speaker agrees that technology causes happiness and why. Are you ready?

The task will play once

Now tell me to what extent the speaker agrees that technology causes happiness and why. I'll stop you after one minute.

Audio script

With the rapid growth of technology in the last twenty years some researchers have been studying the effect this has had on the general happiness of the population. Recent surveys have shown that up to 75% of the world's population have access to mobile phones and this number is increasing rapidly. The advantages of this are obvious, but do these advances actually make people happier? The research that's been done so far considered happiness both in the sense of people feeling happy at a particular point in time and also as having a sense of general well-being. The results tend to show positive links between both these forms of happiness and advances in communications technology. This is more evident in regions where access to the internet and mobile technology is relatively new. Suggesting that the novelty factor of new technology also increases happiness. Some of the reasons for this positive link may be self-evident. The fact that having regular contact with family and friends is good for well-being has been well-established. And information technology makes communication between them easier. The ability to transfer and receive information instantly assist us greatly in other tasks essential to well-being. Finding out about employment opportunities and subsequently applying for jobs is one example. Also, mobile phones have been shown to be more important for well-being in more remote regions where access to newspapers or television is limited. However, mobile technology can make people too accessible. A study in the USA has shown that the use of mobile phones is blurring the boundaries between work and home increasing work worries while at home. Another study suggests that people who use the internet more experience more stress. It perhaps disengages them more from family and other social ties which are seen as good preventers of stress. There's also a feeling that as we come to take technology for granted we become more frustrated when it lets us down. So, when we think about whether technology makes us happier, the answer is that it certainly has the potential to do so but it's no more than a tool. It needs to be used both sparingly and sensibly.

Answers

Main point/gist: More and more people in the world are benefiting from advances in technology. Research has shown that there is a link between advances in communication technology and happiness. However the fact that it is now so easy to communicate with others can lead to problems (any broadly similar formulation is acceptable)

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Novelty ▶ Contact with loved ones ▶ Help with tasks ▶ Access to information ▶ Useful for people living in remote places ▶ Gives employment opportunities <p>Why</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ It improves our feeling of well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Work worries ▶ More stress ▶ Frustrated when it fails ▶ Blurs boundary between work and home

Ultimately speaker believes it can cause happiness, but should be used sensibly.