

A. Read the text below and respond to tasks A1 and A2.

1

A lot of discussion has been going on lately on the value of being empathetic. However, a phenomenon that is very often observed in modern societies, esp. in urban communities and among younger generations, is that of apathy, i.e., lack of interest or enthusiasm not only about individual but also collective matters. But how have we come to this point?

An often cited cause is the fact that we are overly exposed to news, social media and global crises. So much so that this daily exposure has led to what is called “desensitization” or “emotional fatigue”. In other words, too much exposure makes us immune to the bad news, to the point that we become totally indifferent to it. We only spend a couple of minutes at best, or just a few seconds, reading about it, and then we go on to the next headline that catches our eye.

Another possible reason why people have become so apathetic could be that they have lost their faith and trust in institutions. In recent years, we have witnessed too much corruption on all levels of public life to have trust in institutions such as government, justice or security forces.

It could also very well be that modern life places a lot more emphasis on the individual rather than the community. This translates into an outlook on life where the individual values their own personal life, success, career and well-being much more than the communal good, which could explain why communal responsibility is not among our top priorities.

Finally, the hectic modern lifestyle most city dwellers are forced to follow has led many of us to mental fatigue or burnout. Under such conditions, people do not have the energy or will to engage with broader issues of social concern since their precious microcosm consists of only them and their families.

As is obvious, apathy is a serious problem in modern societies because, after all, how can a society advance if its own citizens do not care about it? Can it be reversed? It certainly can with the right interventions, e.g., awareness campaigns and proper education.

A. ΚΑΤΑΝΟΗΣΗ ΓΡΑΠΤΟΥ ΛΟΓΟΥ

(30 points)

A1. Answer questions 1-3, based on information from the text (max. 30 words each).

(3 x 4 points = 12 points)

1. What would be a suitable title for this text?

2. What is the purpose of the text?

3. According to the text, what is the cause of people feeling burnt out?

A2. Choose the correct answer (A, B or C) for items 4-9, based on information from the text.

(6 x 3 points = 18 points)

4. What is the main concern expressed in the text?

- A. Modern societies are too focused on personal success.
- B. The widespread decline of empathy is threatening social progress.
- C. Urban populations are increasingly turning to social media for news.

5. What does the text suggest is a consequence of excessive exposure to distressing content?

- A. People become more motivated to take action.
- B. Audiences develop immunity to emotional impact.
- C. Social media users become more selective with their news sources.

6. In the text, which factor is linked to diminishing trust in institutions?

- A. overregulation by government agencies
- B. lack of transparency in media coverage
- C. widespread corruption across public sectors

7. According to the author, how has individualism influenced societal apathy?

- A. It has made people more competitive in the workplace.
- B. It has shifted focus away from community well-being.
- C. It has led to higher rates of career dissatisfaction.

8. What is implied about the impact of burnout on civic involvement?

- A. Burnout encourages people to volunteer in their local communities.
- B. It causes individuals to prioritize short-term goals over social causes.
- C. It reduces individuals' capacity to care about public issues.

9. What solution does the author suggest to counteract apathy?

- A. tighter regulation of media and online platforms
- B. government incentives for community service
- C. raising awareness and improving education

B1. Use the correct form of the words (A-H) to complete the gaps (10-14) in the following text, as in the example. There are TWO words you do not need.

(5 x 2 points = 10 points)

A. <i>popular</i> (example)	B. equal	C. look	D. lack
E. flex	F. adapt	G. use	H. rely

The example is in **bold** and *italics*.

The Future of Education: Online Learning

No one denies that the (**ex.**) *popularity* of online learning has been on the rise in recent years mainly because of its many benefits. For example, it is a solid fact that it makes education more accessible than ever before in human history. However, its disadvantages should not be (10) _____. One that is very often quoted by students is the lack of motivation they experience when they find themselves outside the traditional classroom. But teachers, too, face many challenges as they struggle against (11) _____ of access to the necessary tools such as (12) _____ internet and devices. In addition, (13) _____ to the new method of learning delivery and its many tools always remains a big issue for both learners and teachers. If we are to ensure that students benefit from online learning, every effort has to be made to pair the (14) _____ it offers with quality education.

B2. Fill in the gaps with TWO words in the statements of column B so that they are similar in meaning to the statements (15-19) of column A, as in the example.

(5 x 2 points = 10 points)

Example: Mary hasn't eaten meat for over two years.	It has been over two years since Mary <u>last ate</u> meat.
COLUMN A	COLUMN B
15. As soon as I turned left, I saw the hospital.	_____ left, I saw the hospital.
16. The authorities will examine all the complaints made about the power cut.	The authorities will _____ all the complaints made about the power cut.
17. He was really sorry for all the trouble he caused.	He _____ all the trouble he caused.
18. Wear sun cream because it might be very sunny on the beach.	Wear sun cream _____ it is very sunny on the beach.
19. She went to bed, but she didn't brush her teeth.	She went to bed _____ her teeth.

B3. Choose the best option A-F (Column B-headings) for items 20-24 (Column A paragraphs). There is ONE option you do not need.

(5 x 2 points = 10 points)

Bill Gates – The Philanthropist

COLUMN A		COLUMN B
20. Bill Gates is widely known as the co-founder of Microsoft and as one of the few people worldwide that have defined modern society in terms of technological advancement. It is this side of him as a corporate titan that enabled his philanthropic metamorphosis into a global philanthropist.	A.	<i>Battling Humanity's Hardest Frontiers</i>
21. One would say that philanthropy was the natural outcome of his upbringing: both his parents were civic-minded, and his Harvard years exposed him to global issues. But his philanthropic work is not of the usual type; his is more strategic in the sense that it is focused on measurable outcomes and driven by data. In fact, Gates is an advocate of the "Giving Pledge", i.e., the moral obligation of the super-wealthy to give back to the community, and of technology as a tool for human progress and not only for profit.	B.	<i>Legacy and the Unresolved Dilemma</i>
22. Together with his ex-wife, Melinda, he founded the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, whose main mission is to help alleviate global issues. In the case of medical diseases such as polio, malaria and HIV/AIDS, the Foundation funds not only research that could result in the production of more effective vaccines but also the improvement of healthcare infrastructure in developing countries. However, it also supports education reform through scholarship programmes and curriculum improvement, and agricultural resilience through scientific innovation.	C.	<i>Dual Identity in the Public Eye</i>
23. Nonetheless, his philanthropic endeavours have often come in for harsh criticism. They are often accused of lack of transparency, since all decisions making is done behind closed doors, and of a narrow scope despite claims to a global appeal. The heaviest criticism, though, is that of ethical dissonance, or the impossibility of balancing philanthropy with for-profit enterprises.	D.	<i>Scrutiny Beneath the Spotlight</i>
24. Regardless of these voices of negativity, Gates has set an example for other tech multi-billionaires to follow: that of large-scale philanthropy with a long-term vision; philanthropy viewed as part of systemic change. However, one question is yet to be answered: can private initiatives solve public problems?	E.	<i>The Rise of Software Empires</i>
	F.	<i>Principled Giving Through Precision</i>

TASK: An international science magazine is running a special edition on space exploration. They have asked readers to contribute articles giving their opinion on the issue. Write an article (**180–200 words**) for the magazine answering the following question:

"Is space exploration still a valid pursuit?"

In your article, you should:

- a. give **reasons** why space and its exploration have fascinated people so much, and
- b. describe **two ways** in which space exploration has advanced humanity.

Provide your own title for your article.

Do not mention your name anywhere in the text.