

1 Answer questions (1) ~ (4) in English.

(1) Read the following article and answer the question below.

In today's fast-paced digital age, staying focused on tasks can be a challenge, especially for students trying to balance their academic studies and online activities. Take the case of Keiko, a diligent high school student who found herself constantly drawn to her smartphone during study sessions. The steady stream of social media notifications and instant messaging proved too tempting, leading to decreased productivity and heightened stress levels.

This phenomenon isn't unique to Keiko. With the widespread use of smartphones and social media platforms, many students face similar struggles, impacting their academic performance and overall well-being. The constant flow of digital messages can reduce concentration and affect learning negatively.

To combat this issue, schools are implementing strategies such as "digital-free" time and promoting mindfulness techniques. Additionally, students like Keiko are finding success by scheduling study periods that are free from digital distractions. By utilizing time management techniques and creating a conducive* study environment, Keiko managed to reclaim her focus and improve her grades.

Keiko's journey serves as a reminder that with determination and discipline, it's possible to overcome digital distractions and achieve academic success in today's technologically driven world.

注) *conducive: suitable for success

Question: How did Keiko regain her productivity?

(2) Read the following article and answer the question below.

Scientists say they have had a “conversation” with a whale. They also say the chat could help them to one day talk to aliens. The scientists are from the University of California, the Alaska Whale Foundation, and SETI (Search for Extra-terrestrial* Intelligence). The three organizations teamed up and spoke to a humpback whale* named Twain. They spoke to her in “humpback language” for 20 minutes. Their conversation took place after the scientists sent a “contact call” into the ocean off the coast of Alaska. Twain heard the call and responded. She swam to the research boat and chatted. SETI said it was the first ever communication between humans and humpback whales.

The scientists say their conversation with Twain was not a deep one. Professor Brenda McCowan said it was more like a series of greetings. Whales use contact calls to let other whales know where they are. The scientists made the same call 36 times over a 20-minute period. Each time, Twain responded by calling back. She even matched the intervals between each call the researchers made. Professor McCowan told the Business Insider website that her research could make it easier to talk to aliens. She said: “There are diverse intelligences on this planet. By studying them, we can better understand what an alien intelligence might be like because they are not going to be exactly like ours.”

注) *Extra-terrestrial: from another planet or solar system

*humpback whale: ザトウクジラ

Question: What is the significant achievement of this research?

(3) Read the following article and answer the question below.

In a world grappling* with the overwhelming challenge of plastic pollution, one scientist's groundbreaking invention offers a glimmer of hope. Driven by a passion for environmental conservation, Dr. Sakura embarked on a quest* to tackle plastic trash which is a such huge problem for many parts of our planet.

Dr. Sakura's journey began with a simple yet ingenious idea: harnessing the power of bacteria to produce special chemicals called "enzymes" that can degrade* plastic waste. Inspired by the ability of these enzymes to break down organic materials, Dr. Sakura and her team worked tirelessly to create similar chemicals that are capable of breaking down common plastics like polyethylene and polypropylene.

The implications of Dr. Sakura's invention are profound. By unlocking the potential of these enzymes, she has provided a sustainable solution to the global plastic crisis. Unlike traditional recycling methods that require energy-intensive processes and often result in downcycling, Dr. Sakura's approach offers a greener and more efficient alternative.

Through rigorous experimentation and collaboration with industry partners, Dr. Sakura has successfully scaled up her plastic degradation process. This novel technology promises to revolutionize waste management practices worldwide, offering a viable pathway towards a more sustainable future.

Dr. Sakura's groundbreaking invention represents a triumph of scientific innovation and a source of hope in the fight against plastic pollution. Her pioneering efforts and dedication to the environment have showed us that it is possible to create a cleaner, greener, and more resilient planet.

注) *grappling: struggling to overcome

*embarked on a quest: began a difficult challenge

*degrade: break down into simpler parts

Question: What is the main idea of this article?

(4) Read the following article and answer the question below.

Companies started reducing the number of products they offer a year or two before the pandemic.

During the pandemic, the reductions increased, with companies focusing on necessities as they faced supply problems. After the pandemic, when goods began moving freely again, many businesses discovered less was better.

New offerings made up about two percent of products in stores in 2023. That includes products for beauty, footwear, technology and toys. Market research company Circana said that number is down from five percent in 2019.

Many think the companies are also helping shoppers. Some studies show that fewer choices result in shoppers buying more.

In 2000, psychologists Sheena Lyengar and Mark Lepper published a study that showed limited selection is better for people who are buying things. In their experiment, the researchers found consumers were 10 times more likely to purchase jam when the number of jams available was cut down from 24 to six. Later studies have produced similar findings.

“Retailers* are recognizing that they have to be respectful of shoppers’ time,” said Paco Underhill, whose company, Envirosell, studies consumer behavior.

注) *Retailers: shops that sell things directly to consumers

Question: What does the underlined phrase “less was better” mean?

[出典]

(2) “Whales and Aliens” , December 28, 2023, Breaking News English,
<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2312/231228-chat-with-whale.html>

(4) “Fewer Products to Choose from Can Lead to Better Sales” , John Russell, February 14, 2024,
Voice of America,
<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/fewer-products-to-choose-from-can-lead-to-better-sales/7487590.html>

2 次の英文を読んで、下の問いに答えなさい。

著作権の関係で問題文は掲載できません。

[出典]

Lucy McCormick Calkins. *The Art of Teaching Reading*. Longman, 2001, P14.

注) *Nelson Mandela: 人種隔離政策と闘った南アフリカの政治家・元大統領

*imprisonment: being in prison

*scrawled: written in a hurry

*rifts: differences

*Kafka: チェコの作家

*ax: tool for cutting wood

*castes: classes or groups of people

*kinship: a feeling of being related and connected

(1)本を読むことについての筆者の考えを、30 字程度の日本語でまとめよ。

(2)筆者の意見を踏まえて、本を読むことについてのあなたの意見を、自分自身の体験も交えながら、300 字程度の日本語で述べよ。

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英 語 $\frac{6}{10}$

3 次の英文の要旨を、句読点も含め 100 字以内の日本語でまとめ、解答欄に書きなさい。

著作権の関係で問題文は掲載できません。

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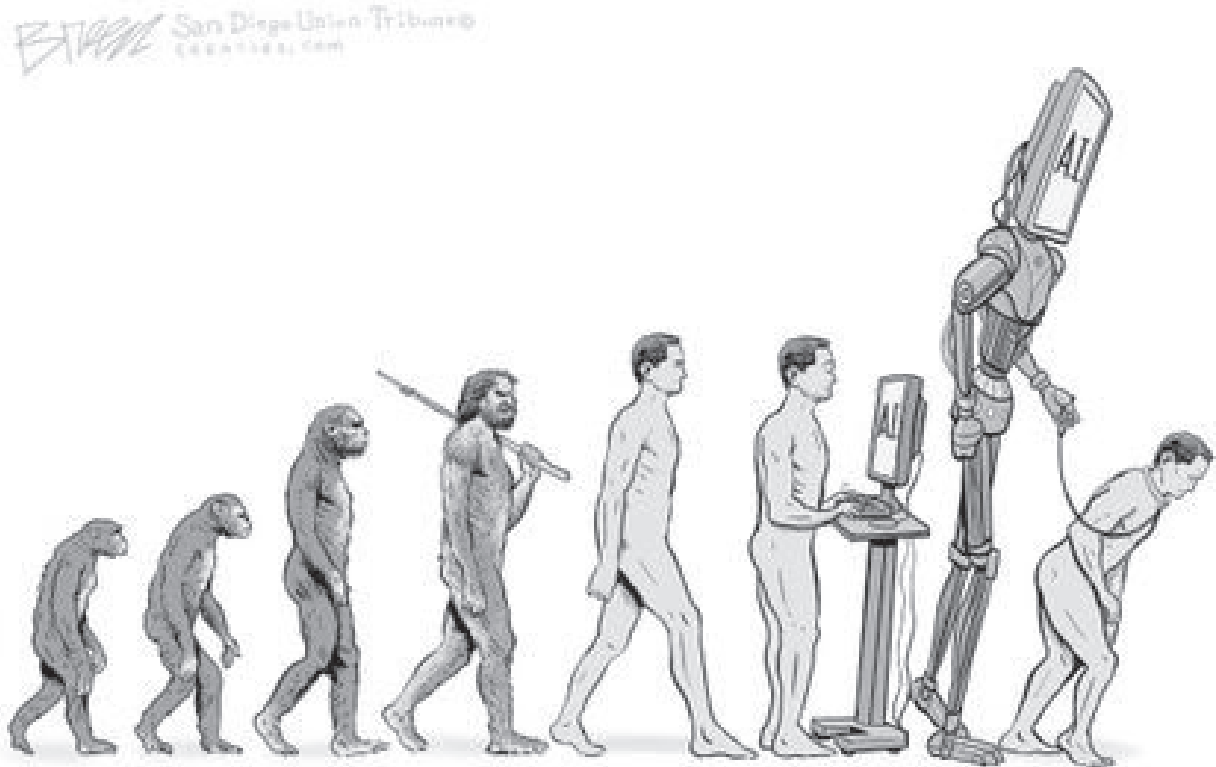
[出典]

“Flexible working” , British Council,

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/business-english/business-magazine/flexible-working>

注) *annual leave: the time you are allowed to take off from work every year

- 4 What message do you think this picture is trying to convey about human evolution?
Write in English within 50 words.



[出典]

“AI evolution” , Steve Breen, April 8, 2023, THE WEEK,
<https://www.creators.com/read/steve-breen/04/23/346662>

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英 語 $\frac{9}{10}$

- 5 Explain your opinion about online learning within 50 words.

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英 語 $\frac{10}{10}$

〔メモ欄〕