

READING COMPREHENSION

Read the text carefully. Complete the task on the next page.

Are We Reaching Photo Overload?

Oluban, a 38-year-old living in Birmingham, England, has only a handful of birthday photos from when she was young. But her eight-year-old-son, Arlo, has “easily 200,” captured by different attendees on their smartphones. “Practically every second of his life is documented,” she says.

It’s impossible to say how many smartphone photos are taken worldwide in a year, but at least one market-research firm predicts the number will approach two trillion in 2025. Oluban alone has more than 150,000 pictures on her phone uploaded to the cloud: selfies with Arlo, sunsets, butterflies, ice cream. They’re instantly accessible, searchable, and shareable.

Today’s smartphone-totting masses record much more data about their lives than any previous generation. It’s natural to ask: Does that change anything about the way we remember our lives? Autobiographical memory – our recollection of personal life events – is central to how we understand ourselves. “Memories are crucial for defining who we are,” says Fabian Hutmacher, a German psychologist. “They are a sort of reservoir that we refer to whenever we think about our lives.”

But recalling a memory isn’t as straightforward as playing back a video. “Our memory is not faithful,” says Julia Soares, assistant professor of psychology at New Mexico State University. Photos can support that reconstructive storytelling, and researchers agree that images often help jog memory by surfacing details or emotions we might otherwise forget. Hutmacher, though, argues that photos are more than just a cue to call up what’s stored in our heads. They’re actually changing how we retain memories in the first place. Remembering, he says, is no longer purely internal – it’s an interaction between our minds and all that personal data we’ve off-loaded onto hard drives, smartphones, and social media.

If our memories are partly constructed through what we photograph and what we choose to revisit, then our devices aren’t just reflecting our past. They’re shaping which moments we remember, how vividly, and how well we interpret our personal histories.

Taking more pictures doesn’t necessarily lead to stronger memories. A 2013 study by cognitive psychologist Linda Henkel found that photographing objects can actually impair memory, with participants appearing to rely “on the external device of the camera to remember for them.” Hutmacher explains it this way: “If you go to a concert and you spend 90 minutes filming, focusing on getting a good angle, then it reduces your enjoyment of the situation.”

The trouble is that most people don’t regularly revisit their photos. And if we don’t review or organize them, pictures can become overwhelming, making it harder to encounter meaningful ones.

Of course, outsourcing our memories to technology is nothing new. Human civilization is built on technology created to preserve and export what’s in our heads: Instagram, floppy disks, the printing press, even language itself. But technology is temporary. Hard drives will fail, and social media companies may fall.

Source: National Geographic, December 2025, Volume 248, Number 06, pages 96-98 (abridged, adapted)

READING COMPREHENSION – CONTINUATION

Task: *Based on what you have read in the article, complete the statements below. You must fill in 1 word or 2 words (the number of missing words is indicated). You have to use words from the article or word forms derived from them. The statements do not follow in the same order as the information appears in the article.*

1. Taking too many pictures of objects may lead to the of memory.
(1 word)
2. According to the psychologist, remembering is an interconnection between our and the transferred personal data.
(1 word)
3. Oluban's pictures, to the cloud, can be accessed
(2 words)
4. The aim of technology developed by mankind is to and our ideas and emotions.
(2 words)
5. For storytelling, pictures can often trigger memory by certain attributes and emotions.
(1 word)
6. Autobiographical memory our personal life episodes.
(1 word)
7. If your photos remain disorganized, they can become for you.
(1 word)
8. Revisiting photos also influences the interpretation of our
.....
(2 words)
9. Memories help us our identity.
(1 word)
10. Shooting a whole concert on your camera may deprive you of the of the event.
(1 word)

..... / 10 pts

V O C A B U L A R Y

Task: Fill each blank space in the article below with the correct form of the word in capital letters.

Grand Green Ambitions

In the arid plains of western Senegal, Africa's (1) **AMBITION**

Great Green Wall Project is well under way. In 2007, African Union leaders
conceived a (2) and creative initiative to fight **COURAGE**

..... (3) by planting one **DESERT**

..... (4) line of vegetation before 2030 that would **MASS**

stretch nearly 5,000 miles across 20 countries. If successful, the multibillion-
dollar (5) will be one of the largest steps ever **RESTORE**

taken to bring back (6) land. **DEGRADATION**

Marieme Samba Ba is (7) of the organization **TREASURE**

And Book Am Am (Together We Share Wealth), which is an all-female
..... (8) food cooperative in Mbaye Awa. **SENEGAL**

Critics of the Great Green Wall describe it as expensive and hard to monitor.
Political (9), terrorist attacks, and climate change **STABLE**

are some of the major hurdles. But after meeting Samba Ba, you are left with
little doubt. She comes across as a disciplined and

..... (10) woman who takes her role very seriously. **CONSCIENCE**

..... / 10 pts

G R A M M A R

Task: Fill each of the numbered blanks in the passage with one suitable word which has only a grammatical function in the text.

Tips for Would-Be Translators

EXAMPLE: (0) is

The role of the translator in enabling literature to pass beyond its natural frontiers (0) receiving growing recognition. (1) view of the general increase in this field, it is (2) surprising that many people with literary interests and a knowledge of languages should think of adopting translating (3) a full-time or part-time occupation. Some advice may (4) usefully given to such would-be-translators.

The first difficulty the beginner will encounter is the unwillingness of publishers (5) entrust a translation to anyone who (6) not already established a reputation (7) sound work. The least publishers will demand (8) commissioning a translation is a fairly lengthy specimen of the applicant's work, (9) if unpublished. Perhaps the best way the would-be-translator can begin is (10) select some book of the type which they feel competent and eager to translate, translate a substantial section of the book, and then submit the book and the translation to a suitable publisher. (11) probably, however, publishers will reject the book as (12), but if they are favourably impressed (13) the translation, they (14) very possibly commission some other book of a similar nature (15) they already have in mind.

..... / 15 pts

LISTENING

CONSULTANT OF COLOURS AND ARCHITECTURAL SPACES

You will hear Lauren Battistini talking about her job of a consultant of colours and architectural spaces. Decide if the following statements are true (T), false (F), or the information was not given (NG). Underline the correct letter/letters. You will hear the recording twice.

1. **T / F / NG** Lauren Battistini considers consulting architectural spaces as a more inventive job than one in the fashion industry.
2. **T / F / NG** Lauren's exclusive aim in her current job is to uplift the aesthetic value of properties.
3. **T / F / NG** In her work with clients, Lauren puts forward her vision of new colour schemes.
4. **T / F / NG** According to Lauren, our perception of colours is also determined by certain aspects of physics.
5. **T / F / NG** Lauren's consulting of business logos has brought her a substantial financial profit in the recent period.

..... / 5 pts

Autorka: PhDr. Eva Žitná

Recenzentka: PaedDr. Anna Brisudová

Korektor: Joshua M. Ruggiero

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