



BRANCHE	SECTIONS	ÉPREUVE ÉCRITE
Anglais	B, C, D, E, F, G	Durée de l'épreuve : 2 h 30 Date de l'épreuve : 7 juin 2019

Being Bored Can Be Good for You - If You Do It Right.

Jamie DuCharme for Time Magazine - January 4, 2019

If brilliant ideas are what you are looking for, try getting bored first. That's the takeaway of a study published recently in the journal *Academy of Management Discoveries*, which found that boredom can spark individual productivity and creativity.

In the study, people who had gone through a boredom-inducing task — methodically sorting a bowl of beans by colour, one by one — later performed better on an idea-generating task than peers who first completed an interesting craft activity. The bored folks outperformed the artists both in terms of idea quantity and quality, as ranked by objective outsiders who assigned uniqueness scores to each one.

Those findings are likely no surprise to Sandi Mann, a senior psychology lecturer at the University of Central Lancashire in the UK. Mann is the author of *The Upside of Downtime: Why Boredom Is Good*, and a proponent of embracing the emotion, negative connotations and all.

Being bored can be a good thing for your mind, imagination and productivity. At its core, boredom is “a search for neural stimulation that isn't satisfied,” Mann says. “If we can't find that, our mind will create it.” As demonstrated by the new study and plenty others before it, boredom can enable creativity and problem-solving by allowing the mind to wander and daydream. “There's no other way of getting that stimulation, so you have to go into your head,” Mann says. You may be surprised by what you come up with when you do.

Daydreaming can be “quite a respite¹” and provide a brief escape from day-to-day life, Mann says. But it's also beneficial to simply step away from screens, work and other stressors long enough to feel bored. Studies have shown, for example, that modern tools including work emails, social media and dating apps can strain mental health — so taking a break can be a valuable opportunity to recharge.

Mann says it's important not to confuse boredom with relaxation. A purposefully tranquil activity, such as yoga or meditation, likely doesn't meet the definition of trying and failing to find stimulation. To tap into true boredom, she suggests picking an activity that requires little or no concentration — like walking a familiar route, swimming laps or even just sitting with your eyes closed — and simply letting your mind wander, without music or stimulation to guide it. It's also crucial to unplug during

¹ a short period of rest or relief from something difficult or unpleasant

this time, Mann says. Our cultural attachment to our phones, she says, is paradoxically both destroying our ability to be bored, and preventing us from ever being truly entertained.

“We’re trying to swipe and scroll the boredom away, but every time we get our phone out we’re not allowing our mind to wander and to truly solve our boredom problems,” Mann says, adding that people can become addicted to the constant dopamine hit of new and novel content that phones provide. “Our tolerance for boredom just changes completely, and we need more and more to stop being bored.”

Next time you find yourself in line at the grocery store, in a tedious meeting or killing time in a waiting room, resist the urge to scroll. You’re bound to get bored — and your brain, mood and work performance just might improve.

(530 words used)

Comprehension (20m)

Answer the following questions in your own words.

1. What were the different people asked to do in the study? What was the outcome? (8)
2. Explain the difference between relaxation and boredom as portrayed by the text! (4)
3. In what way does Mann believe our phones to be standing in the way of our creativity? What advice does she give? (8)

Personal opinion (10m)

React to the question below. Indicate your word count. Your answer must not exceed 150 words.

Can creativity be taught?

Essay (30m)

Write a well-structured essay of between 300 and 400 words on one of the topics below. Do not forget to copy the title and to indicate your word count.

1. Some people think that e-books are the death of paper books while others believe that paper books will never disappear. Discuss the likelihood of both these predictions.
2. In the name of public health, fast food companies should not be allowed to advertise. Discuss.
3. The best way to solve global environmental problems would be to increase the cost of fuel. Discuss.