

Part 1. Read the quotes below. Do you agree or disagree with each one?

<i>"Boredom is the wellspring of creativity – kill it, and you kill the well."</i>	<i>"We've engineered every idle moment out of existence, and called it convenience."</i>
<i>"A bored mind isn't an empty mind; it's a mind left alone to wander."</i>	<i>"The moment we feel the faintest flicker of boredom, we reach for a screen to scratch it."</i>

Part 2. Choose one option in each pair and explain your choice.

A five-minute wait with your phone	or	A five-minute wait with your thoughts
A quiet weekend with nothing planned	or	A packed weekend, back-to-back
Silence	or	Background noise
Daydreaming on your commute	or	Scrolling on your commute
An unstructured evening	or	A scheduled evening

Part 3. Which of these are true for you? Tick your answers, then compare with a partner.

- I check my phone the moment I feel the faintest flicker of boredom.
- I can't remember the last time I sat and did absolutely nothing.
- I find silence uncomfortable rather than relaxing.
- Some of my best ideas come to me when my mind is left to wander.
- I feel a flicker of unease when my phone battery is running low.
- I've deliberately left my phone at home just to see what would happen.

Part 4. Read each situation. What would you do? Discuss your choice, or come up with your own idea.

You're stuck in a waiting room with no phone signal and nothing to read. What would you do?

1. *Strike up a conversation with a stranger.*
2. *Let your mind wander and see where it goes.*
3. *Feel your patience wear thin within minutes.*
4. *Run through a mental to-do list, just to feel productive.*

Your flight is delayed by three hours, and there's no Wi-Fi. What would you do?

1. *People-watch and invent stories about the other passengers.*
2. *Feel a genuine sense of dread at being cut off.*
3. *Use the dead time to think through a problem you've been avoiding.*
4. *Pace, fidget, and generally struggle to sit still.*

A friend suggests a weekend with absolutely nothing planned — no itinerary, no screens after 6pm. What would you do?

1. *Jump at the chance; it sounds exactly like what you need.*
2. *Agree, but secretly dread it.*
3. *Negotiate a compromise — maybe just a few screen-free hours.*
4. *Politely decline; it sounds like your idea of hell.*

Part 5. In small groups, rank these from 1 (you'd reach for your phone immediately) to 6 (you could sit with it easily). Compare your rankings and explain your choices.

- Waiting for a coffee order
- Waiting for a lift
- A silent car journey
- An advert break
- A meal alone in a restaurant
- Standing in a queue

Part 6. Stand up and ask your classmates questions. Find someone who...

- ...has left their phone at home on purpose.
- ...gets genuinely uncomfortable in silence.
- ...has had a great idea while doing something mind-numbingly dull, like queuing or showering.
- ...checks their phone within minutes of waking up.
- ...has gone a full day without a screen in the last year.
- ...finds background noise essential, even when they're not really listening to it.

Part 7. Before you ask, guess your partner's answers. Then ask and check — how many did you get right?

- How many times a day would your partner guess they check their phone?
- Would your partner rather be bored or overstimulated?
- Has your partner ever deliberately gone without their phone for a whole day?
- Does your partner get their best ideas when their mind is idle, or when they're focused?

Part 8. Read both viewpoints. Which is closer to your own opinion?**Viewpoint A**

Boredom is being engineered out of our lives, and we're worse off for it. Constant stimulation is eroding our capacity to think deeply, to create, or simply to sit with ourselves.

Viewpoint B

This is nostalgia dressed up as psychology. We haven't lost anything — we've just found better ways to fill our time than staring at a wall.

Part 9. Discuss the following questions.

- Does boredom serve a purpose, or is it simply wasted time?
- Has technology genuinely changed your relationship with idle moments, or is this overstated?
- Are children today capable of being bored in the way earlier generations were? Does it even matter?
- What's the real difference between being bored and being at rest?

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- Is tolerating boredom a skill you can build, or are some people just naturally better at it?

Part 10. Tell your partner about a time you were genuinely bored — no phone, nothing to do — and what happened as a result.

Think about:

- Where you were, and how the boredom started.
- How long it lasted, and how it felt as it went on.
- Whether anything came out of it — an idea, a memory, a realisation, or simply relief when it ended.

Reflection

Complete the sentences in your own words.

1. The last time I was truly bored, with nothing to distract me, was...
2. If I had an unplanned, screen-free afternoon, I would probably...
3. One thing boredom has taught me is...
4. I would / wouldn't like more boredom in my life because...