

# Attention Economy: Are We the Product?



Advanced (C1-C2)

## Part 1. Discuss the following questions.

1. When do you usually reach for your phone without thinking? What tends to trigger it?
2. Have you ever opened an app “for a minute” and then realised you’ve been scrolling for far longer than you intended? What happened?
3. In your opinion, are people genuinely more distracted today, or do we simply notice it more?
4. Do you think your phone helps you stay informed and productive, or does it mostly eat away at your time?

## Part 2. Complete the sentences in your own words.

1. Sometimes I catch myself checking my phone even when \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I tend to lose track of time when I’m \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I’ve definitely fallen down a rabbit hole when \_\_\_\_\_.
4. One digital habit I know isn’t great for me is \_\_\_\_\_.



### Part 3. Read the statements and discuss the questions.

- "If you are not paying for the product, you are the product."
- "In today's digital world, attention is the most valuable currency."
- "Social media companies are not competing for your money – they are competing for your time."

#### Discuss:

- Which statement do you agree with most? Why?
- Do you think any of these statements are exaggerated or misleading?
- What do you think the term attention economy means?

### Part 4. Watch the video: Attention Economy – You Are the Product. As you watch, think about what surprised you, what ideas you strongly agree with, and what you disagree with.

### Part 5. Discuss the following ideas from the video.

1. "If you are not paying for it, you are not the customer – you are the product being sold."
2. "Every minute you spend on social media is a minute spent making money for someone else."
3. "Social media platforms are intentionally designed to be addictive."
4. "Social media companies employ top psychologists to create dopamine-driven products."
5. "Notifications and personalised content create a habit loop that keeps users coming back."

#### Discuss:

- Which of these ideas feels most accurate to you?
- Which one do you find most worrying?
- Is there anything here you disagree with?



**Part 6. Discuss the questions.**

1. Have you ever opened an app for a few minutes and realised an hour has passed?
2. What kinds of content are most effective at capturing people's attention?
3. Why do you think short videos have become so popular?
4. Do you think algorithms understand our behaviour better than we do?

**Part 7. Read the two viewpoints. Which one do you agree with more? Explain your reasoning.**

**Viewpoint A**

Social media companies are deliberately exploiting human psychology. They design platforms to keep people scrolling, clicking, and checking notifications because more attention means more profit.

**Viewpoint B**

Social media platforms simply give people what they want. If users spend hours scrolling, it's because they choose to, not because they are being manipulated.

**Part 8. Discuss the scenarios.**

**Scenario 1**

A new social media platform launches that removes algorithms completely.  
Would people still use it?

**Scenario 2**

A government limits social media use to one hour per day.  
Would this be a good idea?

**Scenario 3**

You are offered a job designing apps that keep users online longer.  
Would you take the job?

## REFLECTION

**Complete the sentences in your own words.**

1. One idea from the video that really stuck with me is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The most worrying aspect of the attention economy might be \_\_\_\_\_.
3. One digital habit I've started to question recently is \_\_\_\_\_.
4. If I could change one thing about how I use technology, it would be \_\_\_\_\_.

