

THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE

[1] Modern life pushes us to do everything faster and with less effort. From "life hacks" to quick fixes, we are drawn to anything that promises big results with minimal work. Many people today dream of achieving success as easily as possible. On the surface, this approach seems clever: why waste energy when you can reach the same goal with less work? However, psychologists warn that this mindset can be both a strength and a trap.

[2] The modern obsession with efficiency is partly shaped by technology. With a few taps on a screen, we can order food, find information, or solve a problem instantly. This creates what researchers call "effort aversion"—a natural tendency to avoid tasks that feel demanding. In a study at the University of Oxford, participants consistently chose the easier option even when the harder one provided a better reward. The brain is wired to conserve energy, so it constantly nudges us toward the easiest route.

[3] This mentality becomes problematic when it turns into "low-effort thinking." Instead of taking time to understand complex issues, people rely on quick impressions or superficial solutions. Social media, for example, encourages instant opinions rather than thoughtful reflection. The result is a culture where many want success without struggle, fitness without sweat, and expertise without practice. Real progress rarely works that way.

[4] However, the "maximum benefit, minimum effort" mentality is not all bad. When used wisely, it can help people avoid burnout and focus on what truly matters. Productivity experts argue that "strategic laziness"—choosing what not to do—is a sign of intelligence. People who prioritize effectively often achieve more with less energy. As the proverb says: "Don't work harder, work smarter."

[5] The problem arises when the desire for minimum effort leads to minimum resilience. Without facing challenges, people don't develop patience or problem-solving skills. Researchers at Stanford University found that students who avoided difficult tasks early in life were more likely to give up easily as adults. By trying to skip the struggle, they skipped the growth as well. Success rarely comes from taking the easy road alone.

I. COMPREHENSION (15 POINTS)

BASE ALL YOUR ANSWERS ON THE TEXT.

A. CHOOSE THE BEST TITLE FOR THE TEXT. (1 pt)

1. The benefits of social media.
2. The psychology of effort and success.
3. How to become a famous researcher.

The best title is:

B. ARE THESE STATEMENTS TRUE OR FALSE? JUSTIFY. (3 pts)

1. Technology has played a role in making people want things instantly.

.....

2. Participants in the Oxford study always chose the most rewarding tasks.

.....

3. Strategic laziness is always considered a negative trait by experts.
.....

C. ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS. (3 pts)

1. According to the text, what is "effort aversion"?
.....
2. What is the main danger of "low-effort thinking" mentioned in paragraph 3?
.....
3. What did the Stanford University study reveal about students who avoid challenges?
.....

D. COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES WITH INFORMATION FROM THE TEXT. (2 pts)

1. Social media often prevents people from
2. To achieve real growth, people need to

E. FIND IN THE TEXT WORDS THAT MEAN THE SAME AS: (3 pts)

1. smart (paragraph 1):
2. superficial (paragraph 3):
3. result (paragraph 5):

F. WHAT DO THE UNDERLINED WORDS IN THE TEXT REFER TO? (3 pts)

1. this approach (paragraph 1):
2. it (paragraph 2):
3. they (paragraph 5):

II. LANGUAGE (15 POINTS)

A. FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE CORRECT WORDS FROM THE LIST. (2 pts)

sustainable - empowerment - non-profit - gaps - background

1. Many organizations work hard to provide food for the homeless.
2. Education is a powerful tool for the of women in rural areas.

B. GIVE THE CORRECT FORM OF THE WORDS IN BRACKETS. (2 pts)

1. The government is taking measures to reduce (unemploy) among graduates.
2. Scientific (discover) have changed the way we live today.

C. FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE RIGHT PHRASAL VERB. (2 pts)

look after - put off - bring about - go through - set up

1. We had to the meeting because the manager was ill.
2. It is not easy for a young entrepreneur to a new business without capital.

D. PUT THE VERBS IN BRACKETS IN THE CORRECT TENSE. (3 pts)

Last year, Ahmed (start) learning German. By the end of next June, he (complete) the advanced level. He (study) for three years now.

E. REWRITE THE SENTENCES AS INDICATED. (3 pts)

1. "I will call you tomorrow," the teacher told me.
The teacher told me

2. They are building a new library in our neighborhood.
A new library
3. Leila didn't attend the party because she didn't know the address.
If Leila

F. MATCH EACH EXPRESSION WITH ITS APPROPRIATE FUNCTION. (3 pts)

1. "I'm sorry to hear that you lost your job." | a. Expressing lack of understanding
2. "Could you please show me the way to the bank?" | b. Expressing sympathy
3. "I don't quite follow you. Could you repeat?" | c. Making a request
4. 2. 3.

III. WRITING (10 POINTS)

TASK 1: Complete the following paragraph. (4 pts)

There are many reasons why young people are addicted to the internet. First,.....

TASK 2: (6 pts)

Write an article for your school magazine giving advice to students on how to "work smarter" and achieve success in their exams without feeling stressed. (Write about 150 words).

(Do not sign your name).

[illegible]