

Mindfulness

1. Look at the definition of mindfulness and discuss the questions.

'Mindfulness means paying attention to your thoughts, feelings, or something outside yourself, in a relaxed but very focused way.'

- Have you heard of mindfulness before? What do you know about it, if anything?
- Why do you think it has become so popular?
- What do you think might be the benefits of mindfulness?

2. Read the article about mindfulness and check your ideas.

Mindfulness

Have you ever driven somewhere and realised when you arrived that you couldn't really remember anything about the journey? Or have you ever eaten far more biscuits than you meant to, almost without thinking about it? Or have you stayed up much later than you planned, or even all night, binge-watching 'just one more' episode of a TV series? All of these are examples of mind/lessness. When we live this way, we are not as awake as we could be, and not fully living our lives.

What exactly is mindfulness?

When we are mindful, we are more conscious of our thoughts, our actions and what is happening around us. We might notice a beautiful sunset or really listen carefully to what a friend is saying, rather than planning what we're going to say next. We are also more aware of our own feelings and our thoughts. Jon Kabat Zinn, who has done a lot to make mindfulness popular, says mindfulness is: 'Paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and without judging.'

So we are consciously deciding what to pay attention to, we are not worrying about the past or planning for the future and we are not trying to control or stop our thoughts or feelings – we're just noticing them.

Why is mindfulness so popular now?

For most people life is getting busier and busier. Technology means that we always have something to do and there isn't much opportunity to just 'be'. People are often multi-tasking: texting while watching TV, or even looking at their phone while walking along the pavement. People are working longer hours and bringing work home. The more we do the more stressed we feel. Mindfulness can be a way of reducing this stress.

What are the benefits of mindfulness?

Research shows that mindfulness reduces stress and depression. It can help you to concentrate, have a better memory and to think more clearly. It can also help people to manage pain better and to improve their sleep, and it can even help you lose weight because you won't eat that whole packet of biscuits without thinking!

3. Read the article again and make notes under the following headings. Find at least three examples in the article of the following:

- a. examples of NOT being mindful.
- b. examples of being mindful.
- c. reasons life is getting busier.
- d. benefits of practising mindfulness.

4. Match the vocabulary from the article (1-5) with the definitions (A-E). Which of these actions are likely to make you feel more stressed? Why/why not?

1. judging	a. doing two or three things at the same time
2. paying attention	b. having a bad opinion of something or someone
3. worrying	c. watching, listening or thinking about something carefully
4. binge-watching	d. watching lots of TV episodes at once
5. multi-tasking	e. thinking about unpleasant things that might happen

5. Complete the sentences using the words in the box. Check your answers by finding the sentences in the article.

as and more many much than

1. Have you ever eaten far ____ biscuits ____ you meant to?
2. Have you stayed up ____ later ____ you planned?
3. When we live this way, we are not ____ awake ____ we could be.
4. For most people life is getting busier ____ busier.
5. The ____ we do the ____ stressed we feel.

6. Rewrite the sentences.

1. As people practise mindfulness more, they deal better with problems.
The more...
2. Mindfulness is easier than many people think.
Mindfulness isn't as.....
3. Since I started practising mindfulness, I haven't felt very stressed at all.
I have felt far...
4. Every day he gets more stressed.
He is getting more and.....
5. It's easier to concentrate when it's quiet.
The quieter...