

NEWS BREAK

Article: **A look inside the ‘revolution’ that’s fighting to help people reclaim their attention spans**

Section: **BUSINESS, C7**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, May 3, 2026**, of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

Feel free to adapt this lesson for your students. For instance, some educators may assign this as a homework task, while others might facilitate the reading and discussion of questions within small groups or larger class discussions.

****Please take a moment to review all NIE content before classroom use to ensure it is suitable for your students.****

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Learning Objectives:

After reading the article, students will understand how technology-especially smartphones and social media-affects attention, focus, and real-life connections, and to explore ways people are trying to take back control of their time and attention.

Pre-Reading Discussion:



- What do you think the article will be about, using this picture?
- Are there any clues? What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the meaning of the word.

A 'revolution' against devices Two decades after Steve Jobs premiered the iPhone, a small but passionate movement — with offshoots in several countries — is rebelling against the **omnipresent** screen.

Omnipresent Guess:

Omnipresent Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. “ _____ ” groups are popping up around the world.
2. More than a dozen millennials gathered in a brownstone apartment in Brooklyn and placed their phones in a metal colander before two hours of reading, drawing and conversation — anything but staring at _____.
3. Nearly 20 people in their 30s stared at their cellphones for a few minutes. Then they set them down and looked at their bared palms for a while. Then those of their neighbors. The exercise was meant to drive home the importance of paying attention to _____, not the gleaming little screens that have taken over our world.

4. Yet cultural changes start small, and the rebellion is growing against what many call “_____.”
5. Fox was inspired to join the movement when he attended a 2015 Tame Impala concert at Radio City Music Hall. It felt as if everyone in the audience was _____ on their phones instead of immersing themselves in the music. “I realized the phones are literally getting in the way of the things I love,” Fox said.
6. A growing backlash D. Graham Burnett is a historian of science at Princeton University and one of the authors of “Attensity! A Manifesto of the Attention Liberation Movement,” making him a pillar of the growing backlash against the corporate harvesting of _____.
7. Along with MS NOW host Chris Hayes’ bestselling “The Sirens’ Call: How Attention Became the World’s Most Endangered Resource,” Burnett’s work is part of a growing body of literature calling for people to move away from screens and pay attention to _____.
8. “We create our events and gatherings with different themes. One of them is connecting with yourself through creative activities or reading or writing or puzzling,” said co-founder Ilya Kneppelhout. “Really something that makes you slow down and reflect, go _____.”

Class Discussion Questions:

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first, I thought _____, but now I think _____?

Deeper-Dive “Connect & Explain” comprehension questions for small groups, entire classes or journal entries and/ or essay prompts for extended enrichment:

- The article describes “attention activism” as a growing movement. How is this similar to past social movements (e.g., environmental, labor, or civil rights)? What makes a movement successful?
- The phrase “human fracking” is used to describe how companies extract attention. What does this metaphor suggest about the relationship between individuals and corporations? Is it accurate or exaggerated?
- How does the rise of smartphones compare to other major technological shifts in history (like television or the printing press)? What are the similarities and differences in how they affected society?
- What role do large companies (like Apple) play in shaping personal behavior? Should governments regulate how tech companies design their products? Why or why not?
- The article shows people voluntarily limiting technology use. How does this relate to the concept of individual responsibility vs. government responsibility in a democracy?

- The article mentions people feeling more connected without devices. How does this challenge or support the idea that technology brings people together?
- How might constant digital distraction impact civic engagement (voting, staying informed, participating in community issues)? Explain the possible consequences for democracy.
- Do you think the “attention liberation movement” has the potential to create lasting change? Use evidence from the article and at least one historical or modern example to support your argument.

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