

**Part-A****Sample answer sheet****Read the following text and answer the questions that follow :**

In the twenty-first century, humanity celebrates what it believes to be an age of unparalleled liberty and empowerment. With smartphones in every pocket and the internet connecting every corner of the planet, information flows faster than ever before. A single tap allows one to speak, learn, trade, and even influence millions. Yet beneath this exhilarating surface of interconnectivity lies a quiet contradiction. The same technology that grants access to knowledge also governs the pathways to it. People proudly proclaim their freedom online, unaware that their choices are subtly orchestrated by unseen algorithms. The digital realm promises liberation from ignorance and isolation, but in reality, it often creates dependence, distraction, and manipulation. The individual, who once sought autonomy, now lives under the illusion of control while being invisibly monitored, categorized, and commodified.

The transformation of attention into an economic asset marks a defining shift in modern civilization. Historically, power was exerted through visible means—kings, armies, and laws. Today, it flows through invisible circuits of data and design. Corporations compete not for land but for human attention, which has become the new currency of control. Every swipe, scroll, and click is recorded, analyzed, and sold to predict or influence behavior. Social media platforms are designed not merely to inform or entertain, but to addict. Infinite scrolling, targeted notifications, and algorithmic recommendations exploit psychological impulses that keep users engaged for hours. The more time people spend online, the more profit companies extract from their engagement. This commodification of attention has turned leisure into labor; users are both workers and products in a vast digital marketplace. While the tools of technology claim neutrality, their architecture reveals intent—an intent to shape thought and behavior.

This silent form of influence has given rise to what thinkers call “surveillance capitalism,” a system that thrives on the extraction of personal data. Every online action—searches, purchases, even idle browsing—feeds into predictive algorithms that learn to anticipate desires before they are consciously formed. Governments, too, have adopted similar tools, justifying surveillance in the name of national security. The philosopher Jeremy Bentham once envisioned a prison where inmates could be observed without ever knowing when they were watched—the Panopticon. In the digital era, this metaphor has become reality on a global scale. Instead of prison guards, algorithms observe; instead of cells, we inhabit social media platforms. This new form of observation is invisible yet omnipresent, transforming freedom into performance. People behave differently when they know they might be watched, and thus, digital life becomes an endless act of self-presentation. In the name of safety and convenience, privacy has been quietly surrendered.

Beyond technology, the consequences of this system reach deeply into the human psyche. The modern individual’s sense of identity is increasingly intertwined with digital validation. Likes, comments, and followers have become the new metrics of worth, and social comparison has replaced genuine connection. Individuals curate polished versions of themselves online, constructing idealized identities that often bear little resemblance to reality. As a result, authenticity fades while anxiety grows. People compare their unfiltered lives with the highlights of others, leading to dissatisfaction, insecurity, and a persistent sense of inadequacy. Ironically, the platforms designed to unite humanity often magnify loneliness and alienation. The craving for digital approval fuels dependency and reinforces the illusion that happiness can be quantified by numbers on a screen. The very tools meant to empower the mind are now shaping the emotions, values, and perceptions of billions.

Yet technology itself is not the villain. It is a mirror reflecting the intentions of its creators and users. The same internet that manipulates can also liberate, educate, and transform. Activists use social networks to challenge oppression; educators democratize knowledge through open learning; and artists reach global audiences without intermediaries. But genuine empowerment demands awareness. To be truly free in the

digital era is to understand how freedom is engineered and how easily it can be taken away. It requires conscious resistance to manipulation, a willingness to question convenience, and a commitment to protect the sanctity of thought. The future of digital freedom will depend not on machines but on the mindfulness of their users. Without awareness, humanity risks becoming a paradoxical species—one that can touch the stars yet fails to control the devices it created.

1. **Answer the following questions in your own words without copying any sentence from the passage. Copying from text above may affect the evaluation.** **3 × 10 = 30**

**\*\* নির্দেশনা :** প্রতিটি ভুল বানানের জন্য ০.২৫ নম্বর কাটা যাবে।

i. Passage থেকে হুবহু কপি করা যাবে না। এ বিষয়টি প্রথম থেকেই খেয়াল রাখবেন। কপি করলে কেটে দিবেন এবং লিখে দিবেন প্লিজ। এক্ষেত্রে নম্বর যোগ হবে না।

ii. Spelling mistakes দেখবেন

iii. Subject-verb agreement দেখবেন

iv. সর্বোচ্চ নম্বর ২.৫-৩ দিতে পারেন (প্রতিটি প্রশ্নে), এভারেজ ১.৫-২, সর্বনিম্ন ০.৫-১

(a) What central paradox about freedom does the author highlight?

Answer : The author emphasizes that modern people feel more independent because of digital tools, yet that freedom is largely an illusion. While technology allows individuals to speak, share, and learn instantly, their actions are quietly shaped by hidden systems of control. What seems like personal choice is often the result of algorithmic design. This contradiction shows that freedom today exists within invisible boundaries. The more people depend on technology, the less control they truly possess over their decisions.

(b) How do algorithms manipulate user behavior in the digital world?

Answer : Algorithms function by observing user habits—what they search, view, or purchase—and then predicting what will hold their attention next. They don't just respond to behavior; they shape it by suggesting content that triggers curiosity or emotion. Over time, this constant guidance makes users act in predictable ways that benefit corporations. By deciding what appears on the screen, algorithms limit people's exposure to different ideas. Thus, manipulation happens subtly under the mask of personalization.

(c) What is meant by the term “surveillance capitalism”?

Answer : Surveillance capitalism describes an economic order in which personal data becomes a valuable raw material. Companies track and store digital activities to build detailed profiles of users. These profiles are sold or used to predict and influence future choices, turning privacy into profit. Unlike traditional industries that rely on labor or materials, this system depends on information extracted from daily life. It transforms human experience itself into a product for commercial gain.

(d) Why does the author describe attention as a modern form of currency?

Answer : The author views attention as the new foundation of wealth and power. Instead of owning land or goods, modern corporations compete to capture human focus. Every moment a user spends online produces data that generates income for digital platforms. Attention, therefore, has measurable economic value. This shift has changed entertainment and communication into business models based on distraction. In the modern economy, whoever controls attention controls influence.

(e) How has the idea of the Panopticon become relevant in the digital age?

Answer : The Panopticon—a design where prisoners are always visible to unseen watchers—has become a fitting image for the online world. In the digital age, people's actions are constantly recorded through phones, apps, and websites. Even though they cannot see who is watching, they behave differently, knowing surveillance may exist. This creates a society of self-censorship and performance. The modern Panopticon does not need walls; it exists within the screens people use every day.

(f) In what ways do social media platforms affect human psychology?

Answer : Social media changes how people think about themselves and others. It encourages constant comparison, where individuals measure happiness by likes and followers. Over time, this builds emotional dependence and insecurity. Users begin to value appearance over authenticity and approval over self-respect. As a result, anxiety, loneliness, and dissatisfaction grow. Instead of connecting hearts, digital platforms often feed mental

exhaustion and false confidence.

(g) What does the author mean by “the illusion of control”?

Answer : The illusion of control refers to the false belief that people guide their own choices online. In truth, every click and decision is quietly shaped by system design meant to influence behavior. Digital interfaces are built to reward certain actions and discourage others, steering users without their awareness. People feel empowered because they can choose among options, but those options are already narrowed by technology. This creates comfort without genuine autonomy.

(h) How can technology both enslave and liberate humanity?

Answer : Technology acts as a double-edged force. It enslaves when people use it blindly, allowing addiction, misinformation, and manipulation to rule their lives. Yet it liberates when used thoughtfully—to share knowledge, expose injustice, or connect across cultures. The same tool that limits thinking can also expand it. The key difference lies in human intention and discipline. True progress comes not from rejecting technology, but from mastering its influence with awareness.

(i) What role does self-awareness play in achieving true digital freedom?

Answer : Self-awareness is the foundation of independence in the online world. When individuals understand how digital systems affect them, they can choose more responsibly. Awareness breaks the cycle of distraction and dependency. It helps users question why they engage, what they consume, and who benefits from it. This understanding gives people the ability to protect their time, attention, and privacy. Without it, freedom becomes a comfortable illusion maintained by convenience.

(j) Why does the author call technology a mirror of human intention?

Answer : Technology, according to the author, reflects the moral and creative nature of humanity. It has no built-in goodness or evil; its effects depend on how people design and use it. When driven by greed, it becomes a weapon of control, but when guided by conscience, it becomes a source of empowerment. The mirror metaphor suggests that every invention exposes human values. Technology reveals not only our progress, but also our ethical responsibility.

2. **Write the contextual meaning of the following words in English (the words are underlined in the text):** **1 × 5 = 5**

**\*\* নির্দেশনা :** (২নং থেকে ৬নং পর্যন্ত)

i. প্রতি ভুল বানান বা punctuation mark এর ভুলের জন্য ০.২৫ নম্বর কাটা যাবে।

ii. সঠিক লিখলে full mark পাবে।

iii. Grammatical ভুল / উত্তর ভুল করলে ওই প্রশ্নে শূন্য পাবে।

iv. Passage থেকে ছবছ কপি করা যাবে না।

(a) Commodified

Meaning : Turned into a product that can be bought, sold, or traded for profit.

Synonyms : commercialized, monetized, exploited.

(b) Beneath

Meaning : Hidden or lying below the surface; not easily seen or noticed.

Synonyms : underneath, under, below.

(c) Metaphor

Meaning : A comparison that represents one thing as another to express a deeper idea.

Synonyms : symbol, analogy, representation.

(d) Alienation

Meaning : The state of feeling isolated or separated from others or from one's true self.

Synonyms : isolation, estrangement, detachment.

(e) Mindfulness

Meaning : The quality of being fully aware and attentive to the present moment.

Synonyms : awareness, attentiveness, consciousness.

3. **Give an antonym for each of the following words and make sentences with the antonyms:** **2 × 5 = 10**

(a) Proclaim

Antonyms : deny, conceal, hide, suppress, disavow

Sentences :

The witness denied making any statement to the press.

The leader chose to conceal the truth from his followers.

She tried to hide her emotions during the meeting.

(b) Autonomy

Antonyms : dependence, control, subjection, restriction, slavery

Sentences :

His complete dependence on others made him feel helpless.

The colony was under strict control of the empire.

Students felt frustrated by the school's constant restriction on their choices.

(c) Surveillance

Antonyms : neglect, ignorance, disregard, carelessness, freedom

Sentences :

Due to neglect, the guards failed to notice the intruder.

His ignorance of the rules caused major security risks.

The manager's disregard for safety allowed mistakes to go unnoticed.

(d) Genuine

Antonyms : fake, false, artificial, dishonest, insincere

Sentences :

The shopkeeper sold fake jewelry to the tourists.

His false promises made people lose trust in him.

The flowers looked beautiful but were actually artificial.

(e) Oppression

Antonyms : freedom, liberty, justice, equality, fairness

Sentences :

The people fought bravely to gain their freedom.

After years of struggle, the nation finally achieved liberty.

The court ensured justice for the victims of discrimination.

4. **Mark the following sentences as true or false according to the text.**

1×5 = 5

(a) Digital technology has made all people entirely free. (False)

(b) Algorithms collect data to influence user behavior. (True)

(c) Digital dependency can lead to loss of authenticity. (True)

(d) Corporations profit from human attention. (True)

(e) The author believes technology is inherently evil. (False)

5. **Change the following words as directed and make sentences with the changed words.**

1×5 = 5

(a) Manipulate

Noun → Manipulation

Sentence: The manipulation of online information can easily mislead users.

(b) Observation

Verb → Observe

Sentence: Scientists observe the behavior of animals to understand their habits.

(c) Dependence

Adjective → Dependent

Sentence: Many people have become dependent on social media for daily communication.

(d) Visible

Noun → Visibility

Sentence: The fog reduced the visibility of the road, making driving difficult.

(e) Anxiety

Adverb → Anxiously

Sentence: She waited anxiously for the results of her online interview.

6. **Make sentences of your own with each of the following words as directed: Copying, vagueness and ambiguity must be avoided.**

1×5 = 5

(a) Connectivity

Comparative : Modern connectivity is better than ever before due to advanced technology.

(b) Isolation

Simple : In spite of using social media, people often face isolation.

(c) Engagement

Compound : Too much online engagement harms mental health, and it also reduces real-life interaction.

(d) Civilization

Interrogative : Does modern civilization depend heavily on digital technology?

(e) Perception

Complex : Our perception of reality changes when we spend too much time on social media.

7. **Write briefly the main idea of the above text. Add your comments. Give a suitable title to it. (all within 100 words)** 10 + 7 + 3 = 20

\*\* নির্দেশনা : প্রতিটি ভুল বানানের জন্য ০.২৫ নম্বর কাটা যাবে।

i. সর্বোচ্চ ভালো লিখলে ১৪-১৫

ii. Average লিখলে ১১-১২

iii. মোটামুটি/ below average লিখলে ১০ বা তার কম দেওয়া যাবে।

iv. Passage থেকে ছবছ কপি করা যাবে না।

iv. সবকিছু মিলিয়ে (**main idea + comments + title**) ১০০ শব্দের মধ্যে লিখতে হবে। ১০০

শব্দের বেশি হলে লিখে দিবেন যে- Not over 100 words. সেক্ষেত্রে main idea বা comments যে কোন একটিতে নম্বর শূন্য দিবেন প্লিজ।

**Title :** The Paradox of Digital Freedom

**Main Idea :**

The passage discusses how digital technology, while appearing to promote freedom and connection, often leads to manipulation, surveillance, and emotional dependence. Algorithms control user behavior, turning human attention into profit, and social media fosters anxiety and false identity. Yet, technology itself is not evil—it depends on how humans use it. True empowerment lies in awareness and conscious use of digital tools.

**Comments :**

I think the author presents a very realistic picture of the modern digital world. People often fail to notice how their habits are shaped by invisible forces online. To protect real freedom, we must use technology wisely, question its influence, and balance virtual life with genuine human connection.

8. **Write a feature for the editorial page of an English daily highlighting the dangers of digital dependency and surveillance capitalism, and suggest strategies individuals and governments can adopt to maintain true digital freedom. Include a forwarding note to the editor.** 20

\*\* নির্দেশনা : প্রতিটি ভুল বানানের জন্য ০.২৫ নম্বর কাটা যাবে।

i. সর্বোচ্চ ভালো লিখলে ১৩-১৪

ii. Average লিখলে ১১-১২

iii. মোটামুটি/ below average লিখলে ১০ বা তার কম দেওয়া যাবে।

iv. Passage থেকে ছবছ কপি করা যাবে না।

v. ফিচার রাইটিংয়ে খাম না দিতে আমরা উৎসাহিত করবো।

vi. forwarding note থাকতে হবে।

To

The Editor,

The Daily Star,

Dhaka.

Subject : Feature article on the dangers of digital dependency and the need for true digital freedom.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find below a feature article titled “Trapped in the Web: The Hidden Dangers of Digital Dependency.” It highlights how excessive reliance on digital platforms and surveillance capitalism threatens our privacy, autonomy, and mental well-being, and offers strategies for individuals and governments to safeguard genuine freedom in the digital world. I request you to consider it for publication in your editorial section.

Sincerely,

‘A’

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Date: 8 October 2025

### **Trapped in the Web: The Hidden Dangers of Digital Dependency**

In today’s hyper-connected world, digital technology has become inseparable from daily life. From communication to commerce, every aspect of existence now flows through screens and servers. Yet, this dependency comes with invisible costs. The more we rely on technology, the more we surrender our autonomy to systems designed to observe, predict, and manipulate human behavior. This silent takeover, known as surveillance capitalism, turns personal data into profit and human attention into a commodity.

The danger lies not only in data collection but in the gradual erosion of free thought. Algorithms shape what we see, read, and even believe. They decide what trends, who gets visibility, and what opinions dominate. This manipulation, though subtle, limits our ability to think independently. Moreover, social media fosters addiction and emotional instability, replacing genuine connection with digital validation. In such an environment, the promise of freedom becomes an illusion controlled by unseen forces.

To preserve true digital freedom, both individuals and governments must act responsibly. Individuals should cultivate digital literacy, question online content, and limit screen time. Using privacy-focused browsers, encrypted messaging apps, and strong data-protection habits can reduce vulnerability. Governments, on the other hand, must implement strict data protection laws, ensure algorithmic transparency, and penalize misuse of personal data by corporations. Promoting open-source technologies and ethical AI development can also balance innovation with privacy.

The future of freedom depends not on machines but on human awareness. Technology should remain a tool for empowerment, not control. If users and policymakers act with mindfulness and integrity, the digital age can once again serve humanity—rather than enslave it.