

# Internet addiction and Hikikomori syndrome

READING

LEVEL  
Advanced

NUMBER  
C1\_4065R\_EN

LANGUAGE  
English



lingoda

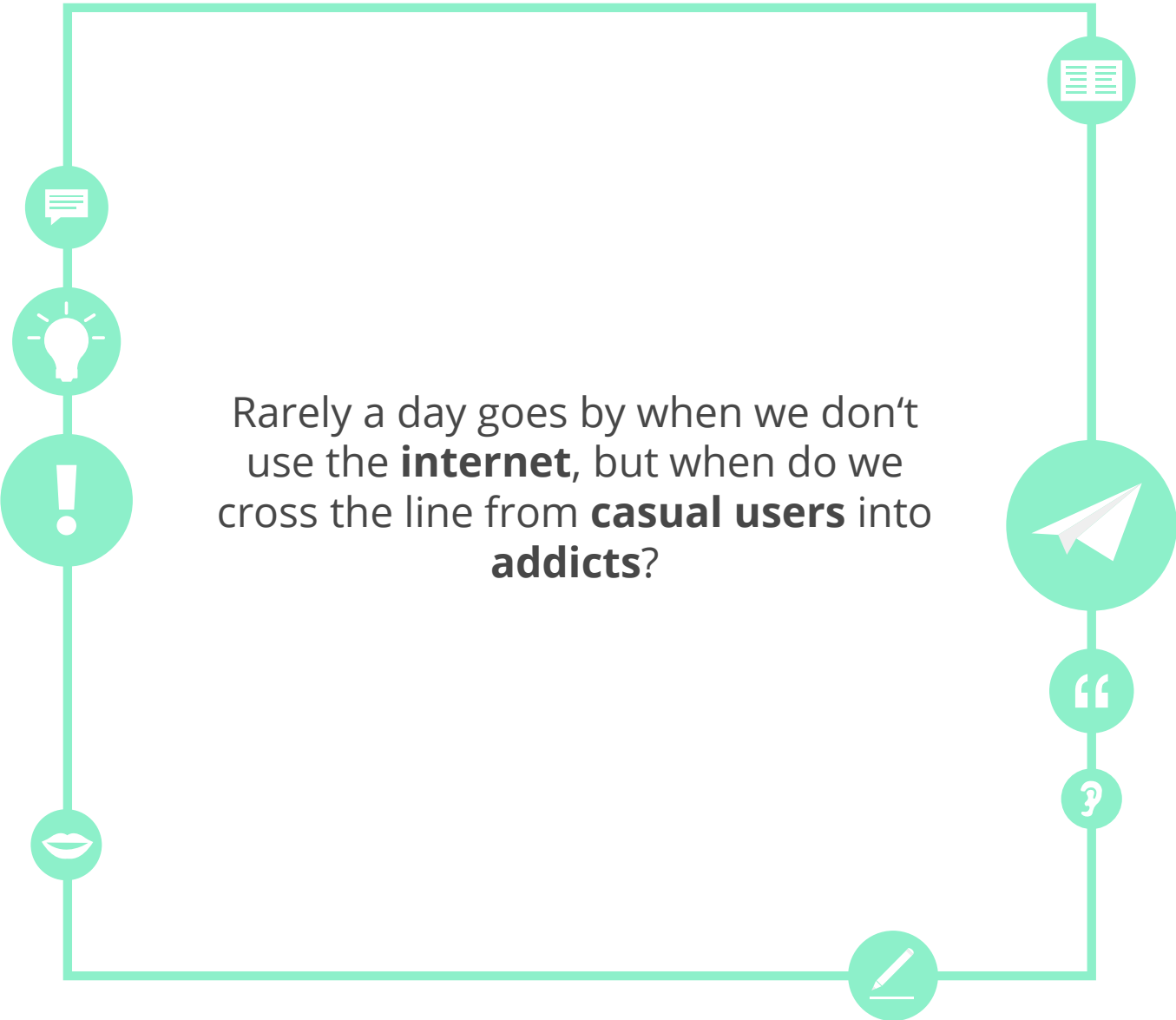




## Goals

- Can read a more challenging text about internet addiction and Hikikomori syndrome.
- Can evaluate the impact the internet has had on society and maintain an in-depth discussion on gaming and social media addiction.





Rarely a day goes by when we don't use the **internet**, but when do we cross the line from **casual users** into **addicts**?



## Using the internet

How much time do you spend on  
the **internet** per day?

How many hours of internet usage  
do you think **constitutes** someone  
as being an **addict**?

What do you usually use the  
internet for?



## Your favourite website

Do you have a favourite website? Why do you like it and how often do you access the page?





## Internet gaming

**Do you play any games on the internet or on your phone?  
Where do you tend to play these?  
Which ones do you like?**



# Internet addiction and Hikikomori syndrome

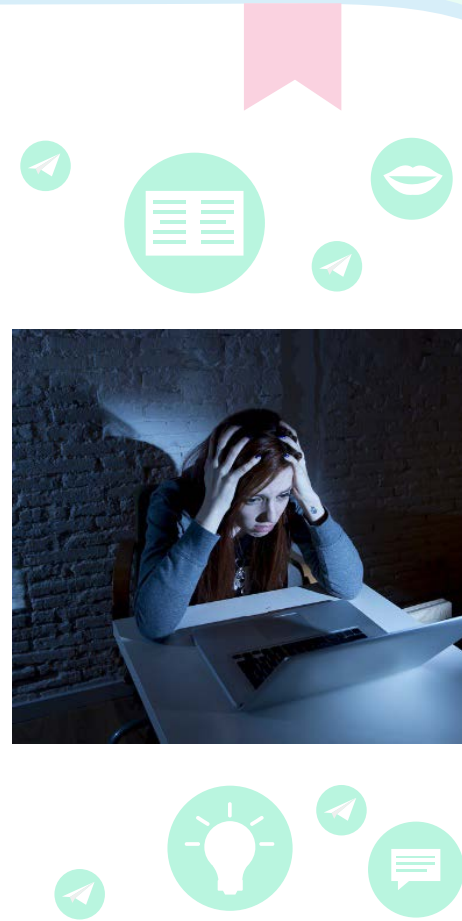
Hardly a day goes by when we don't hear how our addiction to all things technological is going to **doom** us. But just how serious is this phenomenon?





## Internet addiction and Hikikomori syndrome

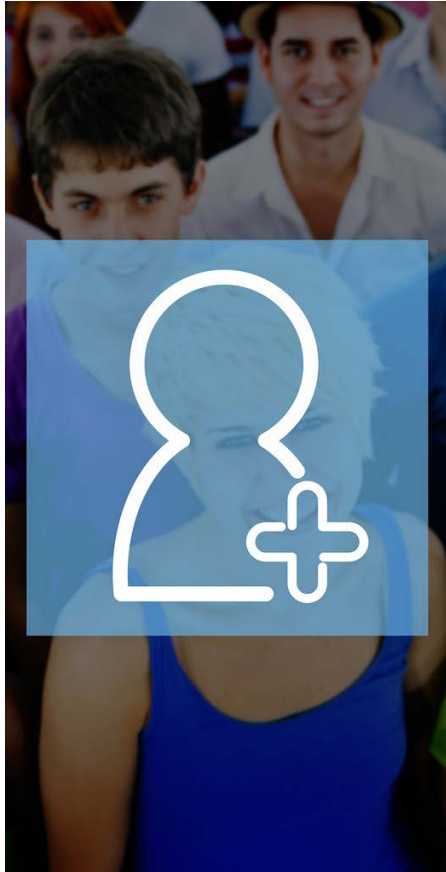
Internet addiction is now a recognised illness, an impulse control disorder; people suffering from this find it easier to connect with people in the virtual world than in real life. They **substitute** human connections for virtual ones. There are many symptoms and effects of internet addiction, including **jeopardising** social and work relationships in order to spend time on the internet, using the internet for increasing amounts of time, and feelings of **restlessness** and **moodiness** when not online. These all sound like the symptoms of someone who we might consider a real addict, for example those who are addicted to drugs or alcohol.







## Internet addiction and Hikikomori syndrome



Addiction to social media itself is not a medically recognised illness, but we can see worrying trends **emerging**. Large amounts of time spent on social networks, the compulsion to **overshare** and then regret it, and using social media as an escape route from your real world problems are all habits characteristic of overuse. However, it is very difficult to define what **constitutes** overuse. Is it posting every meal you eat to Instagram, or spending hours reading strangers' tweets?



## Do you understand this vocabulary?

substitute

jeopardise

restless/restlessness

moody/moodiness

emerge

overshare



# Unscramble the questions and then answer them

A

Do you think

for people

with virtual  
ones?

human  
connections

it is common

now to  
substitute

B

our work life?

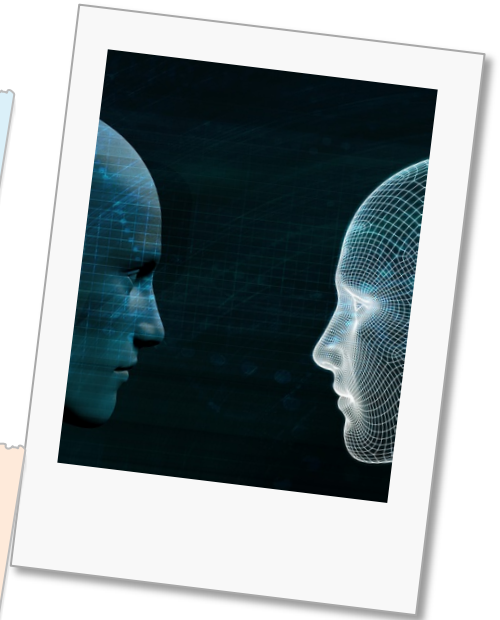
How

do you think

jeopardises

internet  
addiction

social  
relationships  
and





## Time to talk

Discuss these questions.



1

What do you think constitutes overuse of the internet?



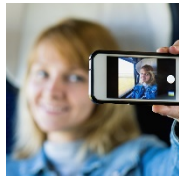
## Time to talk

Discuss these questions with your classmates.



1

What do you think constitutes overuse of the internet?



2

Do you think people overshare on social media?



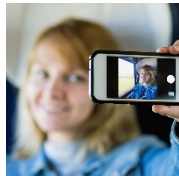
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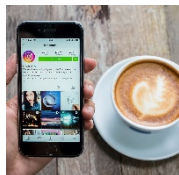
1

What do you think constitutes overuse of the internet?



2

Do you think people overshare on social media?



3

Do you use social networks? How often do you use them, and for what?



## Writing guidelines

**Write down some guidelines for using the internet and social media. Share your ideas. Do you have any similarities?  
Try to agree on 8 guidelines.**

- Try to spend no more than \_\_\_\_\_ per day on the internet.





## Internet addiction and Hikikomori syndrome



Japan is one country which has tried to classify the problem of people withdrawing from real life. The term **hikikomori**, which refers both to the phenomenon and the group, classifies the over half a million young people in Japan who are effectively **recluses**, having withdrawn from society.

To be defined as a hikikomori by the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare, you must live in **self-imposed** isolation for a period of six months or more, avoiding social and personal contact. A low estimate of the number of hikikomori is 575,000 people, showing the real scale of the problem.





## Internet addiction and Hikikomori syndrome

The average age of a hikikomori is 31, and they are **overwhelmingly** male. They tend to live with their parents and do not support themselves financially. The **trigger** for their withdrawal can be many; bullying or harassment at school or in the workplace, or even the shame of receiving bad grades can start the process, which happens gradually. Parents often do not help matters as they refuse to seek help because of a feeling of shame or of familial responsibility. Many hikikomori are thought to suffer from some kind of mental illness, which without treatment will not improve.

Hikikomori can cause further problems. Addiction to internet gaming has resulted in huge **debts** for more than one hikikomori, which of course have to be paid off by their parents. It is the internet in general which is held as partly to blame for the phenomenon of hikikomori; having enabled users to do everything from home. Being able to constantly entertain themselves from the safety of their own bedrooms is seen as a huge part of the problem.



## Match the words to their definition

1. recluse



money owed to someone

2. self-imposed



an event which causes something to start

3. overwhelmingly



a person who keeps away from others and avoids human contact

4. trigger



decided by yourself

5. debt



strongly



## The hikikomori

Have you heard about the phenomenon of the **hikikomori** in Japan?

Do you think this is a problem specific to Japan or does it happen in your own country?



## The hikikomori

**What triggers were mentioned as to why hikikomori withdraw from society?**

**What do you think can be done to reintegrate them?**





## Blaming the internet

Do you think the **internet** can be blamed for the **hikikomori** phenomenon?

Can you think of any other reasons?





## Internet addiction and Hikikomori syndrome

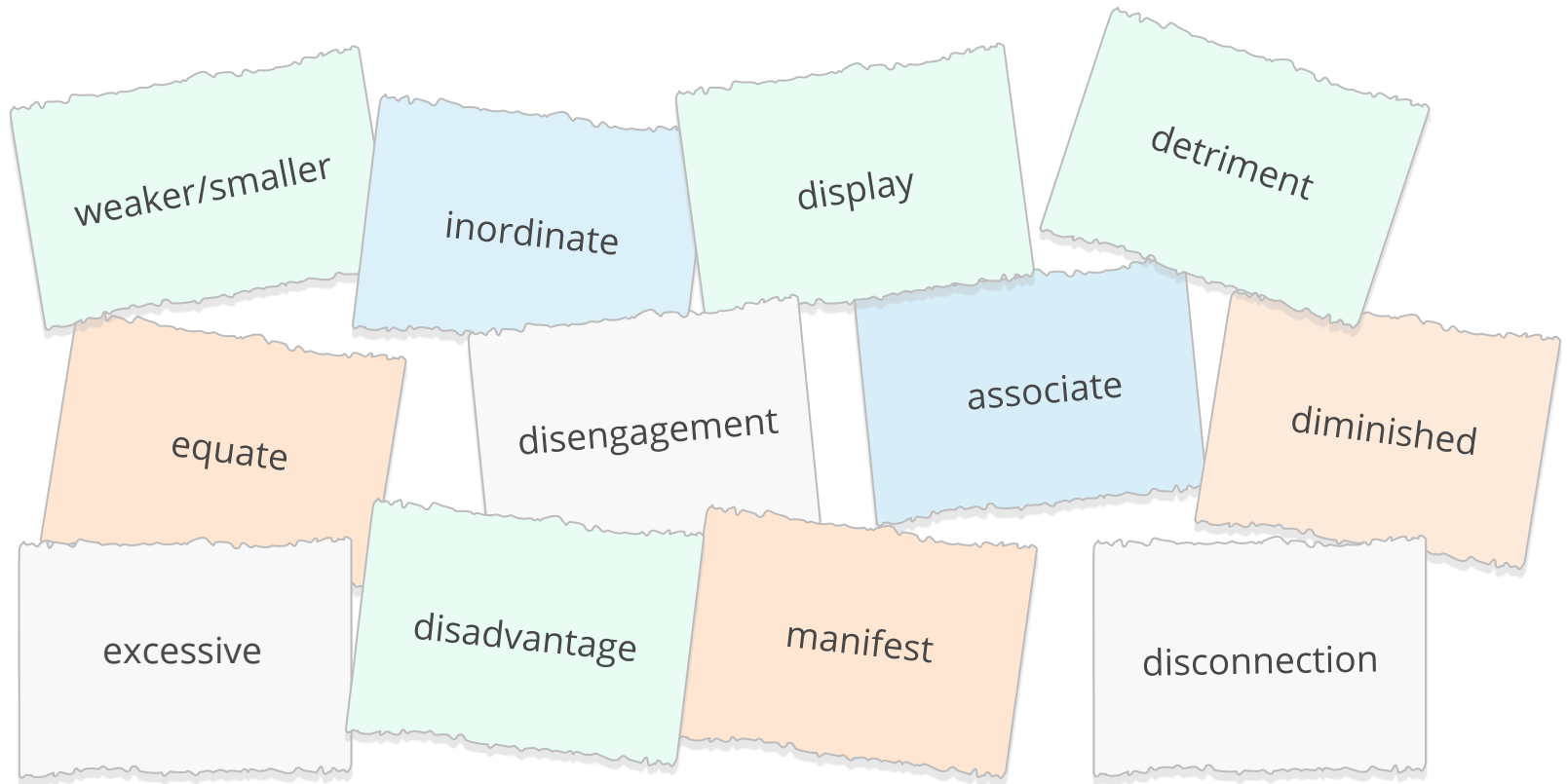
The hikikomori are not the only ones who spend **inordinate** amounts of time and money on internet gaming. Internet Gaming Disorder is a recognised psychological illness and **manifests** as an obsession with playing video or computer games to the **detriment** of other areas of life. In particular, a person who is addicted to video games **equates** their self-worth and sense of achievement to their in-game achievements, as well as exhibiting a **diminished** imagination.

Treatment for internet addiction is currently much the same as treatment for other addictions: a combination of **pharmacology**, **psychotherapy** and **twelve-step programmes**. Experts agree that complete **disengagement** from internet usage is not helpful, nor is it a practical solution. However, many do say that self-correction works for this type of addiction and that many sufferers do not need treatment. Some experts question the reality of this illness, claiming that it is a fad, which often corrects itself over time. Further research is evidently needed to better understand the phenomenon.



## Vocabulary matching

Match the words from the text with their synonyms below.





## Internet gaming

Do you know anyone who plays a lot of internet games? What problems does the text mention when people play too many video games? What other problems can you think of?



money

self-worth

achievement

imagination





## Treatment

**Discuss what treatment options for internet addicts are mentioned in the text. Do you think internet addiction should be treated the same as other addictions or do you think it is a fad?**





## Role play

Taking into consideration the information you have discovered in this class, we are going to create a role play. One of you is worried about the amount of time you're spending online and you have decided to ask for support from your friend who doesn't use their devices as much as you. What tips could you give your friend?



I always have to play my game before I get out of bed in the morning otherwise I can't stop thinking about it all day!



I only use my phone to check my text messages or make calls. I don't have social media, I don't see the point!



## The future



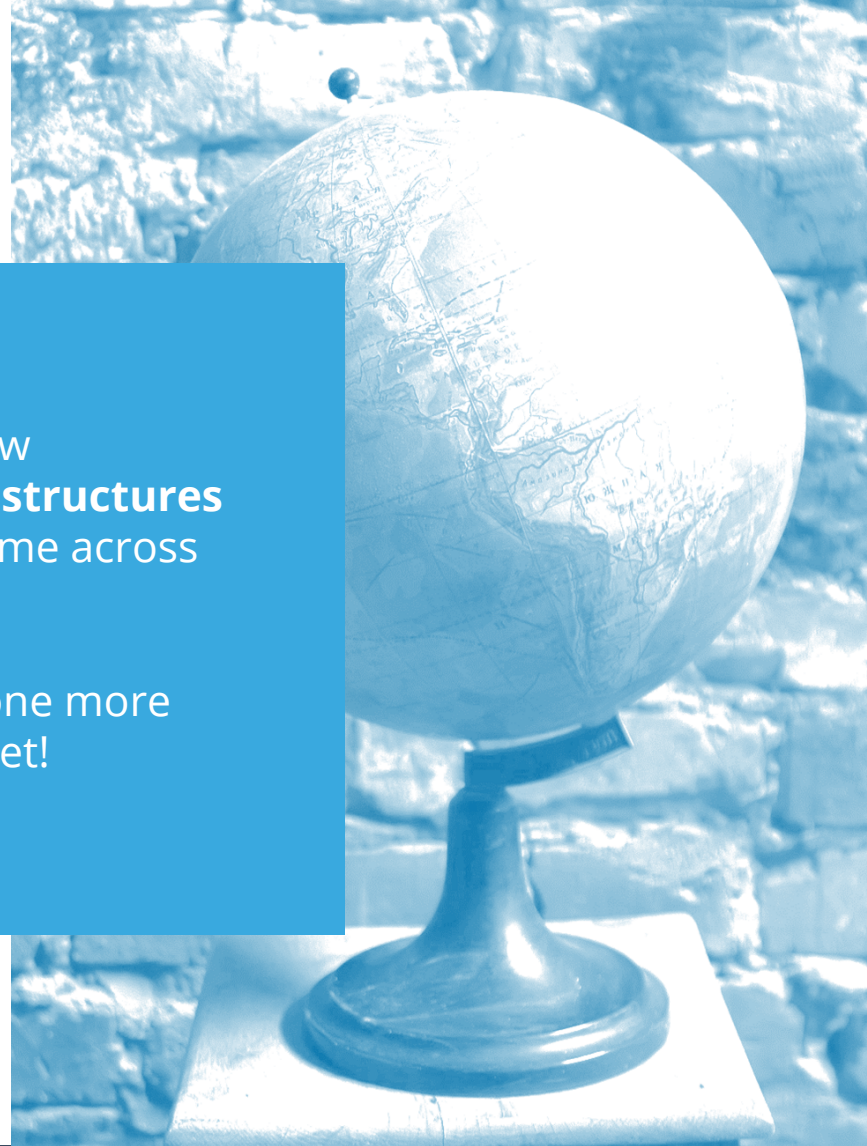
Do you think people will spend increasing amounts of time on the internet in the future?  
Discuss your reasons why or why not.



## Reflect on this lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





## Answer key

### Activity p. 23

detriment – disadvantage, equate – associate, inordinate – excessive,  
disengagement – disconnection, manifest – display, diminished – weaker/smaller

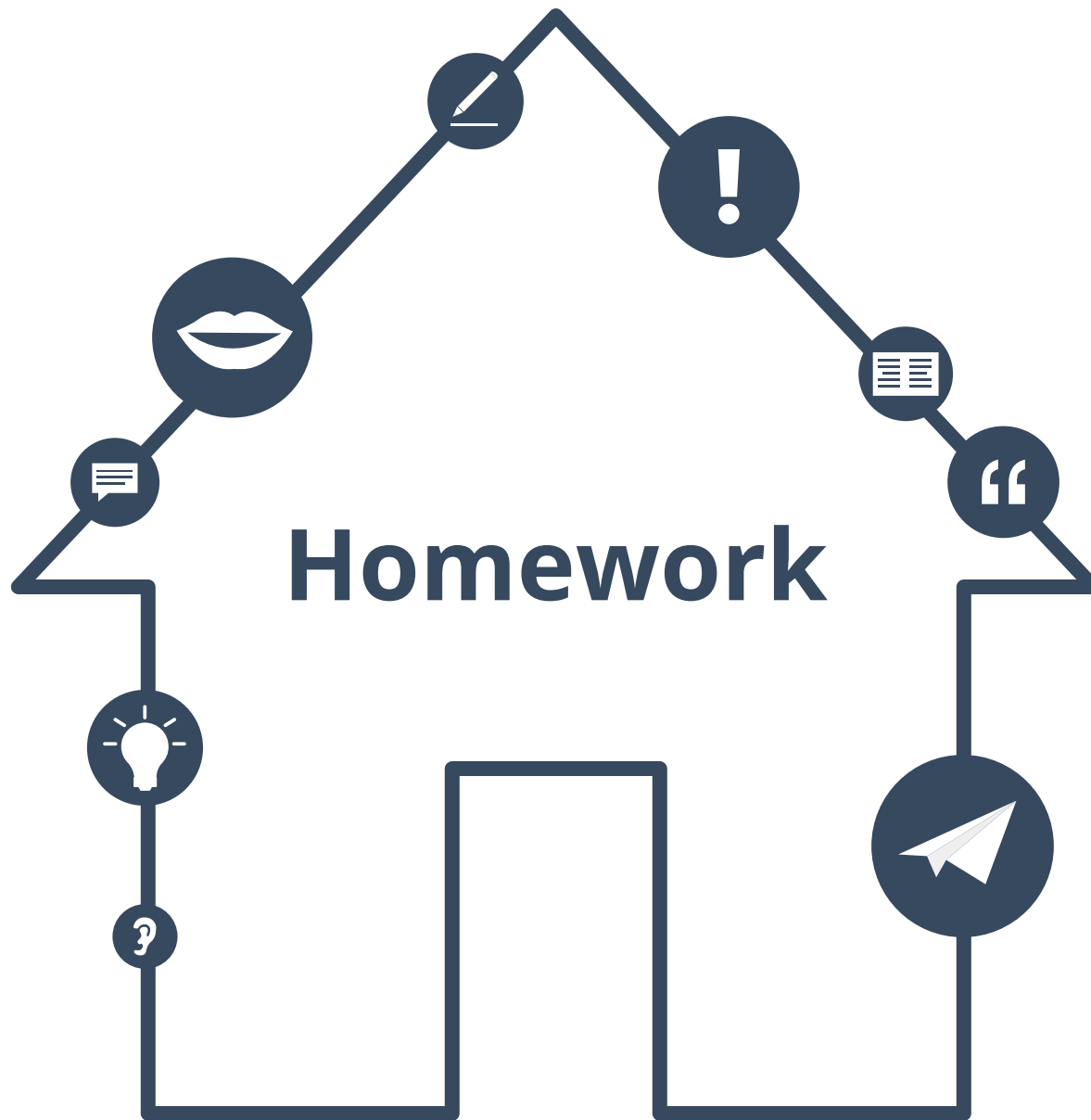
### Activity p. 18

recluse: A person who keeps away from others and avoids human contact, 2. self-  
imposed: decided by yourself, 3. overwhelmingly: strongly, 4. trigger: An event which  
causes something to start, 5. debt: money owed to someone

### Activity p. 11

A. Do you think it is common for people now to substitute human connections with  
virtual ones? B. How do you think internet addiction jeopardises social relationships  
and our work life?

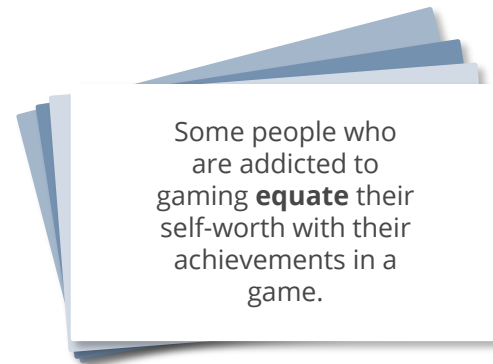
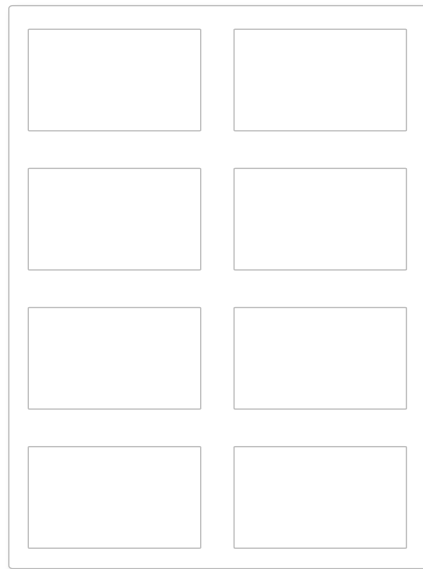






## Flashcards

Create flashcards with vocabulary from the lesson. Remember to write both the word and a sentence with the word in context to help you remember.





## Complete the sentences

**Complete the sentences in your own words using ideas from the text.**

1. Internet addiction manifests with symptoms such as...
2. To be classified as a hikikomori, you must...
3. The triggers for a hikikomori's withdrawal from society include...
4. Internet Gaming Disorder is...
5. The treatment for addiction to the internet consists of...





## Homework answer key

**Exercise p. 32**  
Your answers will vary – you can check your sentences with your teacher in the next lesson.



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