

Examen écrit- session 1- Semestre 1 2022-2023

Langue : Anglais	Niveau : N4	Date : 7 janvier 2023	Durée : 1h30
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Covid Ruined Our Hangout Spots.

By Allie Volpe -- 6 avril 2021 – Bloomberg.org (edited)

1. For Reid Shaffer, hitting the gym is about more than just physical exercise — it’s an excuse to flex his social muscles too. By design, the gym presents plenty of opportunities to break the ice, the 25-year-old says; ask a stranger to spot you on a bench press or inquire about another gym-goer’s gear. These conversation starters have served him well: Shaffer, the general manager of a landscaping company in Farmington Hills, Michigan, has made several friends via gym small talk.
2. But when Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer ordered gyms, among many other non-essential businesses, to close their doors last March, Shaffer began to feel anxious and without an outlet to fulfil his social needs. “It’s a lot of missed connections and interactions that you could’ve possibly had,” Shaffer says.
3. As a critical component of social distancing measures, communal spaces like gyms, bars, restaurants, libraries, and places of worship were forced to shutter early in the pandemic (...). Sociologist Ray Oldenburg coined a term for these public and commercial gathering spaces — “third places,” locations that are not the home (known as the first place) or work (second place). Research shows access to these places enhances¹ one’s quality of life and strengthens ties to the community. (...)
4. Lead author Jessica Finlay, a research fellow at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research’s Survey Research Center, fears the pandemic will be the death knell for a large population of brick-and-mortar third places. “I am worried that, long-term, our neighborhoods and our communities will look completely different,” she says.
5. A central component of a third-place social ecosystem is familiarity but not intimacy, says Karen Christensen, an author working with Ray Oldenburg on a new edition of his seminal book “The Great Good Place.” While we may be familiar with the people we see in bars and barber shops, we aren’t privy to the details of their lives. Because a healthy social diet consists of both quality conversations and casual small talk, without these frequent surface-level interactions, we’re apt to feel lonely. “Third places are not necessarily places where you’re going to get into a really serious conversation, but there’s always the potential for finding people to talk to, or at least sensing a commonality,” Christensen says.
6. [L]iving without third places can have social consequences. Because strangers and acquaintances aren’t typically invited to the Zoom happy hours and Netflix watch parties that have dominated the pandemic social experiment, we lose the diversity of experience and point of view offered by informal interaction between people from

different backgrounds. Research shows when people confer only with those with the same ideological beliefs, their opinions stray² even farther away from other groups, creating an in-group versus out-group dynamic.

7. Plus, as millions of largely homebound³ people around the world have discovered, engaging with the same people every day gets dull fast. “We already know what their opinions are and what kind of things they like. We’re not surprised,” says Gillian Sandstrom, a social psychologist at the University of Essex. “It’s these kinds of more minimal interactions that broaden our perspective and bring something completely new and unexpected into our lives. I think we’re missing that novelty.” (...)
8. In the absence of physical meeting spaces, virtual ones (...) have aimed to replicate the third-place experience. Apps like QuarantineChat pair strangers for random phone calls, virtual bridge clubs create an online venue for acquaintances to reconnect, and digital social spaces like the University of Chicago’s online campus (...) hope users feel the same sense of serendipity running into an acquaintance online as in real life.
9. Perhaps the greatest, and most obvious, drawback to virtual third places is they aren’t places at all. In her current research on digital communities, Setha Low, an environmental psychology professor at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, is finding that the physical attributes of a space contribute to its social value. “The smell, touch, feel — there is more to going to your third place than talking to your friends,” Low says. “There’s a whole sense of being in a place that is reassuring and comfortable. I don’t know that the virtual provides that.”

Enhance¹ = improve ; **stray**² = move away from a group; go in a separate way ; **homebound**³ = unable to leave one’s home

WRITE ALL YOUR ANSWERS ON THE EXAM PAPER SHEET, THANK YOU

A/ COMPREHENSION (8 points)

According to this document, what makes the kind of interactions we have in third places essential? As new kinds of third places are developing, do they provide adequate substitutes for traditional third places? Why (not)?

Warning: The point is for you to show that you have understood the **key ideas** from the document by writing an **organized** answer, in around 160 words. You can quote key words but not extensive passages from the text. Do not add information and stay focused on **this specific document**.

B/ GRAMMAR (4 points)

Conjugate the verbs in brackets in the **PRESENT PERFECT** (*I have done*) or the **PRETERIT** (*I did*).

You do not have to copy the whole sentences. Write down the question numbers and your answers on your exam paper.

- It is the most beautiful community garden I (ever-see) (1)
- When the pandemic (begin) (2), most people (not-know) (3) much about Covid-19.
- Since universities (start) (4) using Zoom in 2021, online classes (make) (5) it harder for teachers to know all their students well.
- (your life – change) (6) over the past two years?
- It seems that wearing masks (become) (7) rare.
- What (you – miss) (8) most during the lockdowns?

C/ WRITTEN EXPRESSION - 200 words (± 10%) - (8 points)

Choose ONE of the following topics and write a carefully written, well-organized essay (or letter for topic 2). Indicate which topic you have chosen.

1. The way we interact and socialize has been transformed not just by the pandemic but also by the growing privatization of public spaces, the digitalization of our lives and an increasingly risk-averse society. In that context, is Oldenburg's concept, coined in 1989, obsolete?

2. Write a letter to the mayor of your city to create and promote more third places in the current and future urban environment. You can take examples from other cities that you have seen or read about to explain why these places matter.

3. How easy is it to socialize or to engage in talk with complete strangers? How can it be encouraged? You can start by telling an anecdote about how you met a complete stranger before discussing socialization in our current society.

4. Many people feel lonely in cities. Why? How can inclusion and community be strengthened in cities? Propose a few ideas and illustrate them with relevant examples.

A/ COMPREHENSION (8 points)

Exemple de réponse organisée reprenant les idées-clés du texte :

First, third places are essential to people's social life and well-being/ at an individual level

> Small talk / surface-level conversations on a daily basis is as important as more in-depth conversations; it helps fight loneliness; familiar, casual, informal yet crucial

> being surprised / serendipity vs monotony

> making friends (Reid Schaffer), enjoying connections and interactions, flexing your social muscles (vs anxiety and loneliness)

=> improves quality of life

Indeed: essential to community-building

> improves community building; "sensing commonality" = feeling part of community, sense of belonging, part of social fabric

> diversity of experiences, getting to know people from various backgrounds/walks of life > help "broaden our perspective", breaks down social and ideological siloes, against polarization and bubble effect; against fracturing the social fabric

However, even if tools such as apps and virtual clubs, have been developed with the pandemic to create virtual third places/to compensate for the loss of traditional third places

> remain virtual and not physical places >> will not compensate for the loss of physical places in our neighbourhoods; unlikely to strengthen ties in our communities;

> more limited forms of interactions which do not involve all our senses; do not provide comfort or a sense of security in the same way as physical places do. We miss the physicality of social interactions / a loss that cannot be fully compensated / a vital physical aspect that cannot be experienced virtually

To conclude, Covid has proven that physical third places are crucial indeed, both for individuals and communities.

B/ GRAMMAR (4 points)

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You do not have to copy the whole sentences. Write down the question numbers and your answers on your exam paper.

- It is the most beautiful community garden I (ever-see) (1) HAVE EVER SEEN
- When the pandemic (begin) (2) BEGAN, most people (not-know) (3) DID NOT KNOW / DIDN'T KNOW much about Covid-19.
- Since universities (start) (4) STARTED using Zoom in 2021, online classes (make) (5) HAVE MADE it harder for teachers to know all their students well.
- (your life – change) (6) HAS YOUR LIFE CHANGED over the past two years?
- It seems that wearing masks (become) (7) HAS BECOME rare.
- What (you – miss) (8) DID YOU MISS most during the lockdowns?

>> Entraînez-vous sur EPIGRAM <https://cours.univ-paris1.fr/fixe/EPIGRAM>

C/ WRITTEN EXPRESSION - 200 words (± 10%) - (8 points)

Choose ONE of the following topics and write a carefully written, well-organized essay (or letter for topic 2). Indicate which topic you have chosen.

Rappel : B2 = « Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.»

>> Consulter le document “Rédiger un essai argumentatif” dans la rubrique “Methodology” de l’EPI de niveau 4 pour vous aider à structurer vos idées.