

TAKE  
A SIDE

# Debate

**Directions:** Read the article.  
Then complete the chart on the next page.



## Is It Good to Be BORED Sometimes?

Some experts say that just sitting around with nothing to do is important for you—and the world **BY LAUREN TARSHIS**

**"I**'ve never been so bored in my life," remembers Justin, a 10-year-old from Florida.

It was last summer. Justin's parents had dragged him to his sister's swim meet. He had an iPad with him. It was filled with games and movies. Then disaster struck. "The iPad died," he says sadly.

Justin had no *Minecraft* to play. He had no videos to watch. And he had to sit there for hours. "It was torture," he says.

### Watching the Cat

When your parents were kids, boredom was just part of life. There were no iPads or smartphones. There was no YouTube. On long car rides, kids stared out the window. Sometimes they (*gasp*) played

family games. On rainy Sundays, they hung around the house. They watched the cat twitch its ears.

Being bored isn't fun. Boredom can make people grumpy. It can even lead to unhealthy actions, like eating too much junk food. Brothers and sisters are more likely to fight when bored. And a house full of bored kids



DARYLL COLLINS

can be tough on parents who have work to do.

Today, boredom is not much of an issue for most kids. The average 10-year-old spends six hours a day in front of a screen. Rainy days fly by in a blur of Netflix and FIFA soccer. Car trips are a chance to watch *High School Musical 3*—again. “Kids today are surrounded by electronic distractions,” says psychologist Michael Bishop. “They rarely experience boredom.”



### Boredom = Creativity

This might sound like great news. But experts say that boredom can be good for us—and the world. Being bored gives our brains a rest. It’s like when an athlete takes time off from

running. One study showed that people who were bored for a while were better able to solve problems afterward. It is often when we are bored that we come up with our best ideas. And when we’re not staring at screens, we might be more likely to talk with friends and family.

“Boredom is an opportunity to learn new skills, be social, and show some creativity,” says therapist Michael Ungar. Justin admits that not every second of the swim meet was torture. His mom taught him how to draw a cartoon dog. He and his dad talked about baseball. And he got the idea to be a zombie for Halloween.

Being bored wasn’t so boring after all. ■



## Should you let yourself be bored?

Go back to the article and find information to support each side. Write the information on the lines below.

**YES** Boredom sounds more exciting than I thought.

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**NO** I’d rather watch YouTube videos.

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Study the points on both sides of the argument—and think about your own opinion. State your opinion in one sentence below. It can become the thesis statement for an opinion essay on this topic.

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