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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## Take Away English 随身英语

### Sleepless in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

#### 人类在 21 世纪的无眠夜



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#### Vocabulary: Sleep 睡眠

It's early in the morning and I've hardly **caught any shuteye**. My breakfast of scrambled eggs and strong coffee will keep me **alert** before lunch. After lunch, I'll **brace myself** for an afternoon of **yawning** and feeling **cranky** in the office.

But I'm not alone. We all seem to be yawning more often. Are we turning into a generation of **insomniacs**? How is modern life affecting our **sleep patterns**?



*Have you tried counting sheep?*

We can start by blaming the light bulb and other forms of artificial illumination. Experts say that on average people go to bed and wake up two hours later than the previous generation. Then, there are the computers. Research led by Professor Charles Czeisler of Harvard Medical School has shown that people who read electronic books before going to bed take longer to **nod off**. They have lower levels of **melatonin** - the hormone that regulates our body's internal clock. And they're less alert in the morning.

Professor Czeisler said: "In the past 50 years, there's been a decline in average sleep duration and quality. Since more people are choosing **electronic devices** for reading, communication and entertainment, particularly children and adolescents who already experience significant sleep loss, epidemiological research evaluating the long-term consequences of these devices on health and safety is urgently needed."

So the first thing to do if you want to have a **restful** night is to leave computers out of the bedroom. Avoid alcohol, as it might reduce our cycles of **REM sleep** – this is the 'rapid eye movement' sleep, when our brains **process** the information we received during the day. It disrupts your brain activity. And don't eat nuts, bacon and cheese in the evening. They contain a substance which **triggers** the release of a brain **stimulant**.

After that, if you still can't sleep, start **counting sheep**. Maybe that's the best technique to avoid another afternoon of yawning in the office.

词汇表请参看答案与词汇部分

## Quiz 测验

阅读短文并回答问题。

1. What does the author do to make sure he doesn't fall asleep in the office?
2. What's been happening to people's sleeping habits in comparison to their parents'?
3. Which natural substance in the body makes people sleep better?
4. True or false? *Half a bottle of wine will make you sleep well.*
5. Which expression in the article means to prevent something?

## Exercise 练习

请你在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。从每个表格中选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子的空格处。

1. This meeting is so boring that I might \_\_\_\_\_.

count sheep	nod off	process the information	keep alert
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2. Harold called me at 2am! He is \_\_\_\_\_ but I'm not!

an insomniac	insomnia	very stimulant	yawning
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3. The doctor considered Mary's \_\_\_\_\_ before recommending a sedative.

electronic books	brain stimulant	yawn	sleeping patterns
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4. My son is growing up quickly and turning \_\_\_\_\_ a very mature young man.

to	over	at	into
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5. The ceremony ended with the \_\_\_\_\_ of a dove as a symbol of peace and hope.

departure	release	spread	distribution
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## Answers and Glossary 答案与词汇

### Quiz 小测验

1. What does the author do to make sure he doesn't fall asleep in the office?  
**He eats scrambled eggs and strong coffee for breakfast.**
2. What's been happening to people's sleeping habits in comparison to their parents'?  
**Experts say we go to bed and wake up two hours later than them.**
3. Which natural substance in the body makes people sleep better? **Melatonin, a hormone which controls our internal clock.**
4. True or false? *Half a bottle of wine will make you sleep well.* **False. According to the article, alcohol may reduce our cycles of REM sleep.**
5. Which expression in the article means to prevent something? **To disrupt.**

### Exercise 练习

1. This meeting is so boring that I might **nod off**.
2. Harold called me at 2am! He is **an insomniac** but I'm not!
3. The doctor considered Mary's **sleeping patterns** before recommending a sedative.
4. My son is growing up quickly and turning **into** a very mature young man.
5. The ceremony ended with the **release** of a dove as a symbol of peace and hope.

## Glossary 词汇表

<b>to catch some shuteye</b>	合眼，睡觉
<b>alert</b>	思维敏捷的，精神的
<b>to brace (myself)</b>	做好准备
<b>to yawn</b>	打呵欠
<b>cranky</b>	容易生气的，脾气暴躁的
<b>insomniac</b>	失眠症患者
<b>sleep pattern</b>	睡眠习惯，睡眠形式
<b>to nod off</b>	打盹
<b>melatonin</b>	褪黑激素
<b>electronic devices</b>	电子设备
<b>restful</b>	得到休息的
<b>REM sleep (rapid eye movement sleep)</b>	异相睡眠，快速眼球运动睡眠
<b>to process</b>	处理
<b>to trigger</b>	引起，促使
<b>stimulant</b>	兴奋剂，刺激物
<b>to count sheep</b>	数绵羊（指靠心里计数以求入睡）