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## Essay: Books build nations, screens distract them.

### Outline:

#### A. Introduction:

• Thesis Statement: While books build nations by making us think, encouraging dialogue and bringing our focus to the world around us, Screens distract us through addictive algorithms, instant gratification and desensitizing us to the news.

#### B. How do books build nations?

##### 1. Books encourage thinking:

- Books provoke thinking which is essential to nation building.

Eg: "Reconstruction of Religious Thought" by Iqbal inspired Muslims to imagine separate land.

##### 2. Building discipline through 'book reading':

- Perseverence, consistency and patience are required to sit and finish an entire book. These are essential traits for nation building.

Eg: Nations with strong reading cultures like Japan and Finland show high civic participation and collective discipline.



### 3. Books promote dialogue

- Books influence dialogue, debates and narratives which are catalyst for National progress and development.

Eg: UNESCO reports reading literacy correlates with civic engagement, as it promotes dialogue

### 4. Books reset your baseline dopamine

- On neurochemical levels, books help in resetting your base line dopamine which encourages better focus, greater attention-span and lessens anxiety.
- A healthy brain is essential for the growth of a nation.

Eg: Neuroscience studies (Stanford, 2013) show that reading activate focus, attention and comprehension

### 5. Books advance libraries which nurtures change:

- Libraries act as platform for like-minded individuals who want to see change around them.

Eg: Library of Alexandria in Egypt, Carnegie libraries in the US became intellect houses.

### 6. Books enlighten us to outside world

- Books force us to question, observe and challenge the world around us.

Eg: UNESCO Report on Reading and Literacy states, reading demands "global competence."

## C. How do screens distract them?

### 1. Addictive Algorithms

Eg: Center for Humane Technology (2018) study revealed major Tech companies intentionally engineer "persuasive tech" to



## 2. Instant Gratification:

- When people chase instant gratification through screens, they lose important nation building qualities like patience, grit and discipline.

Eg: Harvard Business Review (2019) analysts noted 'swipe culture' rewires brain for instant gratification.

## 3. Over exposure causes desensitization:

- over exposure to different news and stories causes overwhelm and desensitization in people, that reflects poorly on national progress.

Eg: American Psychology Association 2017 states overexposure to ~~on~~ <sup>on TV</sup> violence, increases apathy.

## 4. Screens exploit dopamine levels:

- Screens and their designs cause dopamine levels to increase significantly and crash.
- This hampers motivation, focus and productivity in youth which are skills required for growth of a nation.

Eg: Tech ethicist Tristan Harris explains apps and TV news are designed to prioritize engagement.

## 5. Social Media major distraction:

- Even if screens have some utility it is severely hampered by social media apps as they distract people from quality content consumption.

Eg: Pew Research Center (2023) states social media are designed around endless scrolling that



## 6. Screens influence self-centric approach.

- Everyone is less concerned about the world they are in, more focused on their image and social persona
- Self-centric approach is misaligned with nation building spirit.

## D. Conclusion.

**Essay:** Books build nations,  
Screens distract them.

Sarah was shaking her leg due to agitation, it was so difficult to sit and read this book. She tried pacing and reading, but that did not work either. "I know I promised my professor I'd read this book but it would be so much easier to ask ChatGPT for a summary", She thought to herself. She gave it another few minutes and that was it, she pulls her laptop up and orders ChatGPT to provide a summary then asks it to read it out for her. "See? Wasn't hard at all, I don't know why professor is still stuck in his old ways," she mutters to herself. Sarah is not the only one, rather she is a true reflection of ~~our~~ the increasingly anxious, instantly gratified and 'hardly working' society of today. A dilemma that is only being exaggerated and exploited by the use of screens in our everyday life. While we have replaced physical



books with pdfs and zip files, we have not been able to mimic the effect books had on the nurture, growth and development of individuals that leads to national progress. Books are hailed for their ability to make you stop and think for awhile. They develop consistency and patience that allows you to follow along the story page after page. Books are essential tools for dialogue and narrative-building that shape the nations discourse. On the contrary, screens have yet to replicate this essence. Instead of making reading easy and accessible, screens have only contributed in a more confused and distracted youth. Screens, due to their addictive algorithms and designs cause people to stay hooked beyond reasonable limits. They increase desensitivity and the need for instant gratifications. These behaviors have a direct effect on individual's behaviors and attitudes, and they end up more concerned with themselves than the world around them. These elements are not a positive influence and certainly not the influence a book can achieve for nation building, in comparison. Hence, this essay supports the argument that while books build nations by making us think, encouraging dialogue and bringing our focus to the world around us, screens distract us through addictive algorithms, instant gratif-



ication and de-sensitizing us to the news.

One of the significant ways books enhance nation building skills in people is by encouraging them to think. They possess quality content that is consumed by the reader gradually, making them reflect after every few moments. A great example of this is in Allama Iqbal's 'Reconstruction of Religious Thought' as it influenced Muslims of sub-continent to envision a separate nation. Therefore books create reflective thinking which is imperative for nation-building.

An imperative skill for a nation's growth is also the collective discipline of its people that is fostered through book reading. Book reading in grains <sup>traits</sup> ~~habits~~ like perseverance, consistency and patience which are essential traits for people to have. Nations like Finland and Japan have strong reading cultures which is why ~~that~~ they have high civic participation and collective discipline. Thus, nation building is supported by traits rooted in discipline which can be ~~be~~ developed through reading books.