

THREE DAYS



Three Days — Full Lesson Plan

A Fantastic Tales short story and
lesson plan, courtesy of ManWrites.

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Introductory Questions

1. Look at the title “Three Days.” What do you think the story might be about?
2. How do you usually start your morning — is it calm, or rushed?
3. How dependent do you think modern life is on electricity?
4. Have you ever experienced a power cut? What was it like?
5. Do you think most people spend enough time with their families? Why or why not?

Three Days

Mornings were always a rush.

Elijah slurped at his coffee and took a bite from his toast, one shoe already half on his foot. He glanced at the clock in the lower right hand corner of the TV screen, then back down to tie his lace, then up again — the hosts on breakfast TV babbling on about some nonsense.

His phone buzzed against the table.

A message from his boss, already, before nine.

Can we move the 11 to 10:30?

Then, before he'd even locked the screen, it buzzed again — a calendar notification stacking on top of the last one, then an email preview flashing up underneath that.

Three things wanting him at once, and it wasn't even eight.

I should call Mum tonight, he thought, grabbing his bag. He'd been saying that for a week.

The only time he ever used the TV was in the morning. And that was because they always showed the correct time on the screen.

Other than that, why watch these fools?

He sat on the sofa and pulled his other shoe in front of him, phone propped against his knee. First meeting was at nine. He had maybe twenty minutes if the subway behaved itself.

His mind raced through the things he had to do at work today.

Of course there were meetings. There were always meetings.

It drove him mad.

Then he had to get on with his own work. And the company expected him to find the time outside of all the meetings to meet the deadlines imposed upon him.

He shook the thoughts from his mind.

His hand tapped the right hand pocket of his trousers. His ear buds were in there. On the way to work he liked to listen to an audiobook on the subway — find a spot on the train where he could park himself undisturbed, and lose himself in whatever the app was narrating to him that week.

The woman on the screen was whittering on about something. Something about the use of electricity in the home.

Elijah wasn't really paying attention. Half his focus was on his shoelace, half on the time.

Then the screen changed and there was a news anchor.

Behind him producers hurried between desks, phones pressed to their ears.

The newsreader looked unusually serious.

Said something about an apology for interrupting the usual broadcasts and so on.

Elijah took another long gulp of coffee.

‘...Three-day blackout...’

What was that?

‘... lack of resources...’

Elijah put his cup down and leaned in to the screen.

The news guy didn't look like his expression was just for the camera. He actually looked genuinely concerned.

‘... seems to be no choice in the matter. The government has assured the public that they will do all they can to ensure

that the power is back on after three days. But for now, we all have to survive as best we can.'

Elijah stared at the screen.

What did he just hear?

The screen changed back to the breakfast hosts. The man and the woman. The people that everyone knew.

Cosy smiles and sweaters.

They represented normality and safety in the country.

The sort of people you trusted.

The man looked to be chatting with someone off camera.

'... but what do I say? What can I tell people?...'

The woman just sat there with her jaw open.

Then the man turned back to the camera.

'Um, yes, hello everyone. You're probably just as shocked as we are. But it does seem that the whole country will be without power for the next three days...'

Then the screen popped and went to black. Just the hiss of static as it turned off.

Elijah sat very still.

For a second his mind just... stopped. Not thinking anything. Just the static hiss and his own heartbeat.

He reached for the remote and tried to flick it on again. Nothing.

He tried again anyway, thumb jabbing the button three, four times, as if the problem was the remote and not the world.

That was weird.

He picked up his phone. Tapped at it but nothing. Each app he clicked came up with a static screen but he could not scroll through anything.

It was like the phone was frozen.

Outside Elijah heard one of his neighbours. Some yelling and cursing.

Surely they couldn't just switch the electricity off like that?

Elijah's stomach dropped.

His mum. Her nebuliser, the machine she needed twice a day for her chest.

Did it run on batteries? He genuinely didn't know.

He'd have to go round there —

Then he stopped himself. No. His sister was two streets from Mum's. She'd go. She always went.

He breathed out.

There would be economic costs, he thought instead. The country can't just grind to a halt.

Elijah jumped to his feet and clicked the living room light on.

Nothing.

More shouting outside. This time a woman's voice.

Elijah made his way from the living room to the kitchen. Clicking lights on and off as he went. But nothing happening.

No electricity.

The thought came to him.

How would he get to work?

The Underground was electric. Even if the trains somehow ran, the ticket gates wouldn't.

And even if he did get to work, then what?

His office was on the 22nd floor. What was he supposed to do? Walk all the way up?

This was assuming he could actually get to his office.

He thought of his mum again. Should he go round? It wasn't far — fifteen minutes on foot, maybe less if he cut through the park.

But then what? Knock on the door, stand there uselessly if something actually was wrong? He wasn't a nurse.

His sister would go. That was just how it worked between them.

More voices came from outside.

Elijah went to the front door and marched outside.

Both his neighbours either side of his house were on the pavement. The man next door — someone who usually appeared to be so breezy about life — was clearly worried about the situation.

‘How are we supposed to deal with this? What are we supposed to do?’

The woman on the other side looked exasperated.

‘I got to get my kids to school. But if there's no electric, what can they even do at school?’

Elijah got their attention.

‘Why not call someone?’ he asked.

The man shook his head.

‘Everything runs on electricity,’ he said.

Elijah felt the words sink in.

No calling his sister, then. No calling anyone.

Whatever was happening at his mum's house right now, it was happening without him, and there was no way to find out, and no way to help even if he did.

He stared out into his street. It was actually quiet apart from the sound of the neighbours talking.

Usually there was something in the air. A kind of hum.

But that was gone.

It actually felt good — and that surprised him. Was it wrong, feeling something close to relief, when he didn't even know if Mum was all right?

He pushed the thought down, but it didn't quite go.

Elijah took a deep breath in. The air smelt different. It felt fresher and cleaner.

He pulled at his tie and loosened it.

No electricity meant he would not be able to go to work.

No meetings. No deadlines.

And no way of knowing about his mum until he saw her for himself.

He looked down the road, in the direction of the park. Fifteen minutes on foot, maybe less if he cut through.

He could go and see her. Actually see her, sit with her for an hour, something he hadn't done in — he tried to think how long, and couldn't.

He nodded at his neighbours and went back into his house, just to grab his key.

A beautiful day off, and somewhere to be after all.

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. What is Elijah doing when the story begins?
2. What does his boss ask him to do in the text message?
3. What happens on his phone right after the message from his boss?
4. How does Elijah feel about the number of things demanding his attention before eight o'clock?
5. What does Elijah remind himself to do that evening?
6. Why does Elijah only ever use the television in the mornings?
7. What does Elijah usually listen to on his commute, and why?
8. Why is Elijah only half paying attention to the television at this point?
9. What does the news anchor apologise for at the start of the broadcast?
10. How long does the government say the power cut will last?
11. What reason does the government give for the power cut?
12. How does the news anchor's expression suggest he means what he's saying?
13. How do the breakfast TV hosts usually make people feel, according to the story?

14. How do the breakfast hosts react to the news themselves?
15. What happens to the screen at the end of this section?
16. What is Elijah's first reaction when the screen goes black?
17. What does Elijah try first when the television stops working?
18. What happens when Elijah tries to use his phone?
19. What worry does Elijah begin to have about his mother?
20. Why does Elijah decide not to go to his mother's house himself, at first?
21. What does Elijah think about instead of his mother's safety?
22. What does Elijah discover when he tries the lights?
23. What two problems would Elijah face even if he tried to get to work?
24. Why does Elijah decide against going to check on his mother in this section?
25. What do Elijah's neighbours say about their own problems?
26. Why can't anyone use their phones to call each other?
27. How does Elijah feel about the quiet street, and why does this surprise him?
28. What does Elijah decide to do at the end of the story?

Three Days — Story and Reading Comprehension Questions

This is the story divided into clear sections with reading comprehension questions below each section. This format might be easier for certain classes. You can find the model answers for the questions at the end of the lesson plan.

Section 1

Mornings were always a rush.

Elijah slurped at his coffee and took a bite from his toast, one shoe already half on his foot. He glanced at the clock in the lower right hand corner of the TV screen, then back down to tie his lace, then up again — the hosts on breakfast TV babbling on about some nonsense.

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A message from his boss, already, before nine.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

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2. What does his boss ask him to do in the text message?
3. What happens on his phone right after the message from his boss?
4. How does Elijah feel about the number of things demanding his attention before eight o'clock?

Section 2

I should call Mum tonight, he thought, grabbing his bag. He'd been saying that for a week.

The only time he ever used the TV was in the morning. And that was because they always showed the correct time on the screen.

Other than that, why watch these fools?

He sat on the sofa and pulled his other shoe in front of him, phone propped against his knee. First meeting was at nine. He had maybe twenty minutes if the subway behaved itself.

His mind raced through the things he had to do at work today.

Of course there were meetings. There were always meetings. It drove him mad.

Then he had to get on with his own work. And the company expected him to find the time outside of all the meetings to meet the deadlines imposed upon him.

He shook the thoughts from his mind.

His hand tapped the right hand pocket of his trousers. His earbuds were in there. On the way to work he liked to listen to an audiobook on the subway — find a spot on the train where he could park himself undisturbed, and lose himself in whatever the app was narrating to him that week.

The woman on the screen was whittering on about something. Something about the use of electricity in the home.

Elijah wasn't really paying attention. Half his focus was on his shoelace, half on the time.

Reading Comprehension Questions

5. What does Elijah remind himself to do that evening?
6. Why does Elijah only ever use the television in the mornings?
7. What does Elijah usually listen to on his commute, and why?
8. Why is Elijah only half paying attention to the television at this point?

Section 3

Then the screen changed and there was a news anchor.

Behind him producers hurried between desks, phones pressed to their ears.

The newsreader looked unusually serious.

Said something about an apology for interrupting the usual broadcasts and so on.

Elijah took another long gulp of coffee.

‘...Three-day blackout...’

What was that?

‘... lack of resources...’

Elijah put his cup down and leaned in to the screen.

The news guy didn't look like his expression was just for the camera. He actually looked genuinely concerned.

‘... seems to be no choice in the matter. The government has assured the public that they will do all they can to ensure that the power is back on after three days. But for now, we all have to survive as best we can.’

Elijah stared at the screen.

What did he just hear?

Reading Comprehension Questions

9. What does the news anchor apologise for at the start of the broadcast?

10. How long does the government say the power cut will last?

11. What reason does the government give for the power cut?

12. How does the news anchor's expression suggest he means what he's saying?

Section 4

The screen changed back to the breakfast hosts. The man and the woman. The people that everyone knew.

Cosy smiles and sweaters.

They represented normality and safety in the country.

The sort of people you trusted.

The man looked to be chatting with someone off camera.

‘... but what do I say? What can I tell people?...’

The woman just sat there with her jaw open.

Then the man turned back to the camera.

‘Um, yes, hello everyone. You’re probably just as shocked as we are. But it does seem that the whole country will be without power for the next three days...’

Then the screen popped and went to black. Just the hiss of static as it turned off.

Reading Comprehension Questions

13. How do the breakfast TV hosts usually make people feel, according to the story?

14. How do the breakfast hosts react to the news themselves?

15. What happens to the screen at the end of this section?

Section 5

Elijah sat very still.

For a second his mind just... stopped. Not thinking anything. Just the static hiss and his own heartbeat.

He reached for the remote and tried to flick it on again.

Nothing.

He tried again anyway, thumb jabbing the button three, four times, as if the problem was the remote and not the world.

That was weird.

He picked up his phone. Tapped at it but nothing. Each app he clicked came up with a static screen but he could not scroll through anything.

It was like the phone was frozen.

Outside Elijah heard one of his neighbours. Some yelling and cursing.

Surely they couldn't just switch the electricity off like that?

Elijah's stomach dropped.

His mum. Her nebuliser, the machine she needed twice a day for her chest.

Did it run on batteries? He genuinely didn't know.

He'd have to go round there —

Reading Comprehension Questions

16. What is Elijah's first reaction when the screen goes black?

17. What does Elijah try first when the television stops working?

18. What happens when Elijah tries to use his phone?

19. What worry does Elijah begin to have about his mother?

Section 6

Then he stopped himself. No. His sister was two streets from Mum's. She'd go. She always went.

He breathed out.

There would be economic costs, he thought instead. The country can't just grind to a halt.

Elijah jumped to his feet and clicked the living room light on.

Nothing.

More shouting outside. This time a woman's voice.

Elijah made his way from the living room to the kitchen.
Clicking lights on and off as he went. But nothing happening.

No electricity.

The thought came to him.

How would he get to work?

Reading Comprehension Questions

20. Why does Elijah decide not to go to his mother's house himself, at first?

21. What does Elijah think about instead of his mother's safety?

22. What does Elijah discover when he tries the lights?

Section 7

The Underground was electric. Even if the trains somehow ran, the ticket gates wouldn't.

And even if he did get to work, then what?

His office was on the 22nd floor. What was he supposed to do? Walk all the way up?

This was assuming he could actually get to his office.

He thought of his mum again. Should he go round? It wasn't far — fifteen minutes on foot, maybe less if he cut through the park.

But then what? Knock on the door, stand there uselessly if something actually was wrong? He wasn't a nurse.

His sister would go. That was just how it worked between them.

More voices came from outside.

Elijah went to the front door and marched outside.

Both his neighbours either side of his house were on the pavement. The man next door — someone who usually appeared to be so breezy about life — was clearly worried about the situation.

‘How are we supposed to deal with this? What are we supposed to do?’

The woman on the other side looked exasperated.

‘I got to get my kids to school. But if there's no electric, what can they even do at school?’

Elijah got their attention.

‘Why not call someone?’ he asked.

The man shook his head.

‘Everything runs on electricity,’ he said.

Reading Comprehension Questions

23. What two problems would Elijah face even if he tried to get to work?

24. Why does Elijah decide against going to check on his mother in this section?

25. What do Elijah's neighbours say about their own problems?

26. Why can't anyone use their phones to call each other?

Section 8

Elijah felt the words sink in.

No calling his sister, then. No calling anyone.

Whatever was happening at his mum's house right now, it was happening without him, and there was no way to find out, and no way to help even if he did.

He stared out into his street. It was actually quiet apart from the sound of the neighbours talking.

Usually there was something in the air. A kind of hum.

But that was gone.

It actually felt good — and that surprised him. Was it wrong, feeling something close to relief, when he didn't even know if Mum was all right?

He pushed the thought down, but it didn't quite go.

Elijah took a deep breath in. The air smelt different. It felt fresher and cleaner.

He pulled at his tie and loosened it.

No electricity meant he would not be able to go to work.

No meetings. No deadlines.

And no way of knowing about his mum until he saw her for himself.

He looked down the road, in the direction of the park. Fifteen minutes on foot, maybe less if he cut through.

He could go and see her. Actually see her, sit with her for an hour, something he hadn't done in — he tried to think how long, and couldn't.

He nodded at his neighbours and went back into his house, just to grab his key.

A beautiful day off, and somewhere to be after all.

Reading Comprehension Questions

27. How does Elijah feel about the quiet street, and why does this surprise him?

28. What does Elijah decide to do at the end of the story?

Essential Vocabulary

rush	slurp	glance
buzz	notification	stack
whitter	behave	undisturbed
narrate	genuinely	concerned
apology	resources	static
hiss	remote	jab
frozen	curse	stomach drop
nebuliser	grind to a halt	vexed
exasperated	ticket gates	uselessly
sink in	hum	relief
surprise	push down	loosen
fresh	cosy	sweater
breezy	pavement	march
shout	deadline	calendar
boss	prop	worried

Vocabulary Practice Exercise

Follow the steps below to help you learn and remember new words and phrases more effectively:

1. Write each new word or phrase in your vocabulary notebook.

2. Look up the meaning of each word in your dictionary. Write a clear and simple definition next to the word.
3. Create your own sentence using the word or phrase correctly. Try to make the sentence meaningful and connected to your own life or experiences.

Examples

Rush – a situation in which you need to hurry or move quickly.

Example sentence: I was in such a rush this morning that I forgot to bring my lunch.

Slurp – to drink something noisily.

Example sentence: My little brother always slurps his soup, and it drives me crazy at the dinner table.

Why do this?

Doing this regularly will help you improve all areas of your English — reading, writing, speaking, and listening. By writing definitions and making your own examples, you are actively using the language, which helps it stick in your memory.

Vocabulary Practice Exercise

Match each word (1–15) with its correct definition (a–o).

Word	Write letter here →
1. rush	
2. slurp	
3. buzz	
4. notification	
5. whitter	
6. narrate	
7. apology	
8. resources	
9. hiss	
10. remote	
11. curse	
12. sink in	
13. prop	
14. boss	
15. pavement	

Definitions:

a. to make a hissing, high-pitched vibrating sound

- b. to drink something noisily
- c. hurry
- d. an alert that appears on a phone or device
- e. (informal) to talk about unimportant things for a long time
- f. to tell a story aloud
- g. a statement saying that you are sorry
- h. supplies of money, materials, or energy
- i. a soft, sharp sound like static or steam escaping
- j. a handheld device used to control a TV from a distance
- k. to use rude or offensive language out of anger
- l. to be gradually and fully understood
- m. to support something by leaning it against another object
- n. a person's manager at work
- o. the paved path at the side of a road for walking

True or False

Read the statements below and decide if they are True or False. You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan.

1. Elijah eats his breakfast slowly and calmly.
2. Elijah's boss sends him a message before nine o'clock.
3. The government announces that the power cut will last for three days.
4. The news anchor seems relaxed and unbothered by the news.
5. After the power cut, Elijah's phone works normally.
6. Elijah decides straight away to walk to his mother's house.
7. Elijah's neighbours are calm about the situation.
8. Nobody can telephone anyone else, because the phone networks need electricity.
9. Elijah feels no doubt at all about enjoying the quiet morning.
10. By the end of the story, Elijah has decided to go and see his mother.

What is the Correct Synonym?

A synonym is a word of similar meaning. Match each word from the story with its synonym from the box below.

Word Box: hurry, peek, truly, worried, frustrated, annoyed, slacken, crisp, snug, stride

1. rush → _____
2. glance → _____
3. genuinely → _____
4. concerned → _____
5. exasperated → _____
6. vexed → _____
7. loosen → _____
8. fresh → _____
9. cosy → _____
10. march → _____

What is the Correct Antonym?

An antonym is a word of opposite meaning. Match each word from the story with its antonym from the box below.

Word Box: delay, tighten, stale, uncomfortable, indifferent, falsely, interrupted, working, anxiety, noisy

1. rush → _____
2. loosen → _____
3. fresh → _____
4. cosy → _____
5. concerned → _____
6. genuinely → _____
7. undisturbed → _____
8. frozen → _____
9. relief → _____
10. quiet → _____

Words and Meanings

Match each expression from the story (1–10) with its correct meaning (a–j).

1. grind to a halt
2. sink in
3. push a thought down
4. jaw open
5. stomach dropped
6. a kind of hum
7. cut through the park
8. behave itself
9. breezy about life
10. no way of knowing

Meanings:

- a. to be completely uncertain about something
- b. to try not to think about or feel something
- c. relaxed and carefree in one's attitude
- d. to stop completely, often referring to a system or process
- e. a continuous, low background sound
- f. to suddenly feel afraid or shocked
- g. (informal) to work correctly or as expected, used for machines or systems

- h. to look shocked or astonished
- i. to take a shorter route through a place
- j. to be fully understood or realised, often after a short delay

Gap Fill Exercise

Look at the word bank below. Complete each sentence with the correct word. Not all words will be used.

Word Box: rush, notification, undisturbed, genuinely, concerned, static, jabbing, exasperated, loosen, cosy, march, deadline

1. She was in such a _____ that she forgot her umbrella.
2. He received a _____ on his phone reminding him about the meeting.
3. I like to read the newspaper _____, without anyone interrupting me.
4. My grandmother was _____ worried when I didn't call her back.
5. The doctor looked _____ about the test results.
6. When the television lost signal, the screen filled with _____.
7. He kept _____ at the button, even though it clearly wasn't working.
8. After waiting an hour for the bus, she felt completely _____.
9. It's a good idea to _____ your tie after a long day at work.

10. The little café had a _____ atmosphere, with soft lighting and warm blankets.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the government decided to cut the electricity for three days?
2. Why does Elijah's boss message him before nine o'clock in the morning?
3. Why doesn't Elijah call his mother as soon as he realises there's a power cut?
4. What do you think Elijah's neighbours are most worried about?
5. Why does Elijah decide to walk to his mother's house instead of going to work?
6. What does the story suggest about Elijah's relationship with his sister?
7. Why do you think the breakfast TV hosts seem so shocked by the news?
8. Do you think technology makes people more connected to their families, or less?
9. Is it acceptable for a government to switch off electricity to save resources, even if it puts some people at risk?
10. What does the story suggest about the pressures of modern working life?
11. Do busy schedules and constant notifications make it harder for people to notice what really matters?
12. Why might silence or quiet feel uncomfortable for someone used to a busy life?

13. Do you think Elijah's guilt about feeling relieved is a natural reaction? Why or why not?
14. What might the story be saying about the balance between work and family?
15. Do modern conveniences like phones and calendars help us, or control us?
16. Why might a crisis, like a power cut, help someone see their life more clearly?
17. If you were Elijah, what would you do in the moment you heard the announcement?
18. If your electricity was cut for three days, who would you want to check on first?
19. Have you ever assumed someone else would take care of a responsibility, the way Elijah assumes his sister will check on their mother?
20. Would you feel guilty about enjoying a sudden day off if you didn't know whether a family member was safe?

Role Play: Cooking Without Electricity

This is a role play activity.

There are two characters in the role play.

1. Elijah
2. The Mother

The Situation

Elijah has walked over to check on his mother during the power cut. There's no oven, no microwave, no kettle — nothing electric works. It's around lunchtime and they're both hungry. Elijah wants to help, but isn't sure what's actually possible without power. His mother has been coping fine on her own and has her own ideas — including food in the fridge that won't stay fresh much longer. Together, they need to work out what to eat and how to make it happen.

In pairs, create a conversation that you can present to the class.

Take some time to prepare your role play.

When you are ready, show the class.

Debate: Should Governments Be Allowed to Cut Power to Save Resources?

The Motion

“This house believes that governments should be allowed to switch off electricity to save resources.”

Option A — Full Two-Team Debate

Divide the class into two teams.

Team A — For the Motion

You must argue that planned power cuts are a responsible way to manage limited resources — that short-term inconvenience is worth it if it prevents worse shortages later, and that decisive government action is sometimes necessary for the public good.

Team B — Against the Motion

You must argue that cutting power puts vulnerable people at real risk, damages trust between citizens and government, and that the costs — to health, business, and daily life — outweigh the benefits.

Preparation (10 minutes)

Each team should prepare their arguments. Think about:

- Who is most at risk when the power goes off, and why?
- What long-term benefits could come from limiting electricity use?
- How much warning should people be given before a cut like this?
- Are there fairer ways to manage a resource shortage than switching everyone off at once?

The Debate

1. Team A gives an opening statement (2 minutes).
2. Team B gives an opening statement (2 minutes).
3. Rebuttal round — each team responds to the other's points (2 minutes each).
4. Closing statements — each team sums up their strongest argument (1 minute each).

The Vote

After the debate, the rest of the class votes on which side made the more convincing argument. The teacher can act as moderator and timekeeper throughout.

Option B — Simplified Class Discussion

If a full debate doesn't suit the class, the teacher can instead run this as an open discussion: pose the motion to the whole class, and go around asking individual students whether they agree or disagree and why. The teacher moderates,

encourages disagreement, and draws out different opinions rather than assigning fixed sides.

Writing

This is a creative writing exercise.

You are going to continue writing the next part of the story.

- What does Elijah find when he arrives at his mother's house?
- Is she managing all right, or does she need more help than she's letting on?
- What do they decide to eat, and how do they make it work without power?
- Does anything unexpected happen while they're together?
- How does the day end for both of them?

Think about all these questions to help you write the next part of the story.

Now write the story.

When you have finished, read it out loud in front of your classmates.

Or give it to your teacher for review.

Reading Comprehension Questions — Answers

1. He is rushing through his morning routine — eating toast, drinking coffee, and putting his shoes on while watching breakfast TV.
2. He asks Elijah if they can move the 11 o'clock meeting to 10:30.
3. A calendar notification stacks on top of the last message, followed by an email preview.
4. He feels overwhelmed — three things want his attention at once, and it isn't even eight o'clock.
5. He reminds himself that he should call his mum that evening.
6. Because the TV always shows the correct time on the screen, which is the only thing he actually uses it for.
7. He listens to an audiobook, so he can lose himself in the story while commuting undisturbed.
8. Because his attention is split between his shoelace and the clock, so he's only half paying attention to the TV.
9. He apologises for interrupting the normal broadcast.
10. Three days.
11. A lack of resources.
12. He looks genuinely concerned, not like his expression is just for the camera.

13. They represent normality and safety — people the audience trusts.
14. They are shocked and unprepared — the man doesn't know what to say, and the woman just sits with her jaw open.
15. It goes black, with only the hiss of static, and the power cuts off.
16. He sits very still — his mind stops for a moment, and he just hears the static hiss and his own heartbeat.
17. He tries the remote control, pressing the button several times even though it clearly isn't working.
18. His phone is frozen — the apps show a static screen and won't scroll.
19. He worries about her nebuliser, the machine she needs twice a day for her chest, and whether it runs on batteries.
20. He tells himself that his sister lives closer and always goes to check on their mother, so it isn't his job to go.
21. He thinks about the economic costs of the power cut instead.
22. He discovers the lights don't work — there is no electricity at all.
23. The Underground trains and ticket gates are electric, and his office is on the 22nd floor, so even reaching his desk would be difficult.
24. He tells himself that his sister would go, since that's just how it has always worked between them.

25. One neighbour doesn't know what to do about the situation in general; the other is worried about getting her children to school.

26. Because all telecoms systems, including phones, rely on electricity.

27. He feels a surprising sense of relief, which surprises him because he still doesn't know if his mother is all right.

28. He decides to walk to his mother's house to see her in person.

True or False — Answers

1. False. In fact, his morning is a rush — he's eating, dressing, and checking his phone all at once.
2. True.
3. True.
4. False. In fact, he looks genuinely concerned.
5. False. In fact, his phone freezes and won't respond.
6. False. In fact, he first tells himself his sister will go instead.
7. False. In fact, they are worried and unsure what to do.
8. True.
9. False. In fact, he wonders whether it's wrong to feel relief when he doesn't know if his mother is all right.
10. True.

What is the Correct Synonym? — Answers

1. rush = hurry
2. glance = peek
3. genuinely = truly
4. concerned = worried
5. exasperated = frustrated
6. vexed = annoyed
7. loosen = slacken
8. fresh = crisp
9. cosy = snug
10. march = stride

What is the Correct Antonym? — Answers

1. rush ↔ delay
2. loosen ↔ tighten
3. fresh ↔ stale
4. cosy ↔ uncomfortable
5. concerned ↔ indifferent
6. genuinely ↔ falsely
7. undisturbed ↔ interrupted
8. frozen ↔ working
9. relief ↔ anxiety
10. quiet ↔ noisy

Words and Meanings — Answers

1. grind to a halt = to stop completely, often referring to a system or process
2. sink in = to be fully understood or realised, often after a short delay
3. push a thought down = to try not to think about or feel something
4. jaw open = to look shocked or astonished
5. stomach dropped = to suddenly feel afraid or shocked
6. a kind of hum = a continuous, low background sound
7. cut through the park = to take a shorter route through a place
8. behave itself = (informal) to work correctly or as expected, used for machines or systems
9. breezy about life = relaxed and carefree in one's attitude
10. no way of knowing = to be completely uncertain about something

Gap Fill Exercise — Answers

1. rush
2. notification
3. undisturbed
4. genuinely
5. concerned
6. static
7. jabbing
8. exasperated
9. loosen
10. cosy

Vocabulary Practice Exercise — Answers

1. c (hurry)
2. b (drink noisily)
3. a (make a buzzing sound)
4. d (an alert on a phone)
5. e (talk about unimportant things)
6. f (tell a story aloud)
7. g (a statement saying sorry)
8. h (supplies of money, materials or energy)
9. i (a soft, sharp sound)
10. j (a device to control a TV)
11. k (use rude language out of anger)
12. l (to be fully understood)
13. m (support by leaning against something)
14. n (a person's manager at work)
15. o (the path beside a road)

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