

Is Being Bilingual Good For Your Brain?

Upper Intermediate (B2-C1)



WARM UP

Part 1. Discuss the following questions.

1. What languages do you speak, and when did you start learning them?
2. What's the hardest part of learning a new language for you?
3. Can you think of a moment where speaking a second language helped you think differently?

Part 2. Match each word/expression to its correct definition. Can you guess any before looking at the options?

Cognitive reserve

Bilingualism

Neural Networks

Dementia

Brain connectivity

Cognitive decline

1. The ability to speak two or more languages fluently.
2. The brain's ability to resist damage from ageing or disease.
3. A condition that affects memory and cognitive function.
4. The connections in the brain that help transmit and process information.
5. How well different parts of the brain communicate with each other.
6. The gradual loss of mental abilities, such as memory and problem-solving skills



Part 3. Complete the sentences with the correct words/expressions. Pay attention to how the words fit into the context!

Cognitive reserve

Bilingualism

Neural Networks

Dementia

Brain connectivity

Cognitive decline

1. Studies suggest that being bilingual can help protect the brain from ageing and delay diseases like _____.
2. When we learn a new language, we strengthen our _____, improving the way different parts of our brain communicate.
3. Scientists believe that speaking multiple languages improves _____, allowing people to compensate for brain damage or ageing.
4. One of the effects of ageing is _____, which can lead to difficulties with memory and problem-solving.
5. Many researchers argue that _____ plays a role in improving mental flexibility and decision-making skills.
6. Brain scans have shown that _____ is higher in people who have been exposed to more than one language from an early age.

VIDEO ACTIVITY

Part 1. Watch the video clip “Is Being Bilingual Good For Your Brain?”

Part 2. Answer the following questions based on the video.

1. What is cognitive reserve, and how does it relate to bilingualism?
2. How does bilingualism delay dementia and improve stroke recovery?
3. What differences exist between early and late bilinguals?
4. How might bilingualism affect emotional and decision-making processes?

Part 3. Decide if each statement is true (T) or false (F) based on the video. If false, can you correct it?

1. It used to be thought that being bilingual was a bad thing, that it would confuse or hold people back—especially children. (T/F)
2. When speaking one language, bilingual people completely deactivate the other language. (T/F)
3. In 2007, a study in Toronto found that bilingualism can delay dementia by four to four and a half years. (T/F)
4. Bilingual people tend to recover worse from strokes compared to monolingual people. (T/F)
5. People often react more emotionally in their second language rather than their first. (T/F)
6. Being bilingual can help people understand different perspectives better. (T/F)

Part 4. Complete the missing parts of the quotes from the video.

1. Research has shown that learning a new language is the mental equivalent of going to a ___ every day.
2. Regularly switching between languages helps improve _____, problem-solving, and creativity.
3. Studies suggest that people make more _____ decisions when using their second language.
4. Scientists now understand that learning languages strengthens the brain's _____, allowing for faster information processing.
5. Language learning not only helps individuals but also contributes to stronger _____ connections across cultures.

VIDEO FOLLOW-UP

Part 1. Share your thoughts on the video using the questions below.

1. Have you noticed any differences in focus or problem-solving when using a second language?
2. How does bilingualism influence your social interactions and emotional expression?

Part 2. Answer the following questions based on your own experiences with language learning. Share your answers with your teacher and expand on your ideas.

1. **Early Exposure:** At what age did you start learning English (or any other second language)? How do you think this affected your ability to learn it?
2. **Challenges & Strategies:** What is/was the most difficult part of learning a new language for you? How did you overcome it?
3. **Cognitive Benefits:** Have you noticed any ways in which learning a second language has improved your memory, concentration, or problem-solving skills?
4. **Emotional Connection:** Do you feel different when speaking in English vs. your first language? (For example, do you think differently or feel less emotional in one language?)
5. **Real-Life Impact:** Has knowing more than one language ever helped you in a surprising or useful way?



REVIEW ACTIVITY & FINAL THOUGHTS....

Part 1. Use each of the words in a sentence related to the benefits of being bilingual. Try to make your sentences as creative as possible!

Cognitive reserve

Bilingualism

Neural Networks

Dementia

Brain connectivity

Cognitive decline

Part 2. Discuss the questions below to reflect on what you've learnt during the lesson.

1. After learning about the benefits of bilingualism, do you feel more motivated to continue improving your language skills? Why or why not?
2. Do you think bilingualism is a skill that will always be valuable, or could future technology make it less important?
3. The lesson highlighted how bilingualism strengthens the brain. Can you think of other habits or activities that might have similar benefits?
4. If you had to explain the benefits of bilingualism to someone in one sentence, what would you say?
5. How does this lesson connect to your personal experiences with learning languages?
6. What's your biggest takeaway from this lesson?

