



The benefits of a bilingual brain - Mia Nacamulli

Target language & lesson focus B2+

Listening for detail and understanding; language for discussion.

Aims & Objectives:

You will watch a video about the being bilingual and listen for detail and understanding.

You will answer questions about the video and discuss the content of the film.

You will discuss, develop and present strategies for improving language acquisition.

Students will be able to use language for discussion.

1. Starter Questions:

- When did you start learning English and why?
- Do you know any other languages? What level? Which was the hardest to learn?
- Do you think learning a language when you are a child is easier than when you are an adult?
- What are the benefits of learning a second language?
- Do you think that being able to speak more than one language makes you smarter than being monolingual?

2. Video listening exercise:

Give students the exercise sheet and tell them to read questions 1-10. The questions are in chronological order so students should be aware of what they are listening out for.

Play video: [The Benefits of a Bilingual Brain](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMmOLN5zBLY)

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3. Review answers:

Go through the answers the students give, eliciting the reasons for giving those answers. Do not give the students the answers at this stage.

4. Second listening:

Play the video a second time and instruct the students to review their answers. Next, give the answers to the questions. Ask students if there is any vocabulary they don't know.

5. Task 1: Discussion and task

- Ask students if they remember when they first became comfortable with English, how it felt and what they think brought about this breakthrough.
- What are the greatest difficulties in learning a new language? (note down responses)
- Group/pair students: Based on personal experiences, discuss and develop strategies for overcoming these difficulties? (note down responses)
- Students present their outcomes.

7. Lesson review – what have you learnt?

Review the lesson aims and objectives.

Exercise 1: Watch and listen to the video and answer the questions below.

These questions are in linear order. Read the questions first so that when you hear the audio you know what to listen for.

1) Which one of the following statements is true?

- A) Most people in the world know more than one language.
- B) Most people in the world don't know more than one language.
- C) Multilingual people are in the minority.

2) What are the active and passive parts of language?

Listening and reading are _____.

Speaking and writing are _____.

3) Which of these definitions most accurately describe a compound bilingual?

- A) They are forced to learn a second language at an early age, but only use one of them.
- B) They learn two languages at the same time and pick up both sets of grammar rules and meanings of words naturally.
- C) A compound bilingual learns a second language by translating words from their first language when they are very young.

4) Which of these definitions most accurately describe a coordinate bilingual?

- A) They learn a second language through education, but don't use it in their personal life.
- B) They learn a second language in school and practice regularly with friends.
- C) They learn a second language for working purposes and only use that language for their job.

- 5) **Which of these definitions most accurately describe a subordinate bilingual?**
- A) *They only learn a second language at school or college.*
 - B) *They learn a second language, but rarely use it.*
 - C) *They learn a second language mainly by translating it from their first language.*
- 6) **TRUE or FALSE: The left side of the brain is only used for analytical and logical processes.**
- 7) **What is the critical period hypothesis?**
- A) *Children learn languages more easily because their brains accept new information quicker.*
 - B) *Children pick up languages easier because they can use both sides of their brains to acquire a language.*
 - C) *Children's brains are quicker and more flexible so they manage information better.*
- 8) **It was once believed that being bilingual...**
- A) *...restricted a child's ability to tell the difference between languages.*
 - B) *...was a mental handicap that made children waste energy and think slower.*
 - C) *...was a mutation that made children mentally handicapped.*
- 9) **What is the dorsal lateral pre-frontal cortex?**
- A) *The part of the brain the helps you balance in the water when swimming.*
 - B) *The part of the brain that helps you multitask and ignore distractions.*
 - C) *The part of the brain that helps you make executive decisions.*
- 10) **TRUE or FALSE: It has been proven that being multilingual makes you smarter?**

Exercise 1 answers:

- 1) **Which one of the following statements is true?**
A) Most people in the world know more than one language.
- 2) **What are the active and passive parts of language?**
Listening and reading are **PASSIVE**.
Speaking and writing are **ACTIVE**.
- 3) **Which of these definitions most accurately describe a compound bilingual?**
B) They learn two languages at the same time and pick up both sets of grammar rules and meanings of words naturally.
- 4) **Which of these definitions most accurately describe a coordinate bilingual?**
A) They learn a second language through education, but they don't use it in their personal life.
- 5) **Which of these definitions most accurately describe a subordinate bilingual?**
C) They learn a second language mainly by translating it from their first language.
- 6) **FALSE: The left side of the brain is mainly used for analytical and logical processes, not only.**
- 7) **What is the critical period hypothesis?**
B) Children pick up languages easier because they can use both sides of their brains to acquire a language.
- 8) **It was once believed that being bilingual...**
B) ...was a mental handicap that made children waste energy and think slower..
- 9) **What is the dorsal lateral pre-frontal cortex?**
B) The part of the brain that helps you multitask and ignore distractions.
- 10) **FALSE: It has been proven that being multilingual makes you smarter?**