Caring for the elderly

Reading comprehension

Read the article and decide if these sentences are **true** or **false**

1. You can learn to write with the wrong hand._____
2. Learning makes new nerve cells grow. _____
3. As we get older, large numbers of brain cells die._____
4. If our brain is healthy, it continues to develop when we are old._____
5. Mental stimulation keeps your memory good._____

Old age and the brain

If you hold a pen in the 'wrong' hand, writing becomes uncomfortable and difficult. But keep doing it and you will get better at it – you learn. This is because connections between neurons in your brain get stronger, and your brain grows.

In our early years our brain grow faster as we learn language, writing, numbers, music, and how to coordinate movement. By the time we are teenagers, each neuron in our brain has connected to tens of thousands of other neurons, and every time we have a new thought or memory, our brain make new connections. Just as muscles get stronger by using them, the brain develops when it is stimulated. Without stimulation, it gradually dies.

A healthy brain does not lose huge numbers of brain cells as it ages. It continues to rewire itself and grow new neurons. However, degenerative brain diseases are very common in old age, and so we associate ageing with diseases such as Alzheimer's disease.

Even though these diseases are very common in the elderly, it is a mistake to think that old age automatically equals mental decline. When elderly people who do not have Alzheimer's disease suffer age-related losses of memory and motor skills, it is often not because of aeing, but because of inactivity and lack of mental stimulation.

Find the works in the text with these meanings

1. To make things happen at the same time . C_____
2. To change the electrical connections. R_____
3. Conditions that kill brain cells. D_____ B_____ D _____
4. Loss of the ability to use your brain well. M_____ D_____
5. Connected to getting old. A_____-r_____
6. The ability to control your body's movement. M_____ S_____

LIVEWORKSHEETS