Reading and Use of English | Part 6

You are going to read four reviews of a psychology book. For questions **1–4**, choose from the reviews **A–D**. The reviews may be chosen more than once.

Smart Thinking

Four reviewers comment on psychology professor Art Markman's book called *Smart Thinking*.

A

For anyone needing to learn more about the mind and how it works, I'd recommend *Smart Thinking*. This book explains how we can ingest valuable information and then become more adept at retaining and recalling it, becoming better thinkers as a result. That's an appealing idea. Markman is clearly an expert in his field, but he doesn't flash data in a way that leaves the reader befuddled and confused. He writes in such a way that seemingly complex concepts are perceptively unravelled, and the workings of the human mind are laid bare. Although not every chapter is a winner, the whole book is filled with practical ideas anyone can use which are based on the principles of sound scientific research. It is an excellent read, and well worth perusing in detail for its insights.

B

Smart Thinking is a fascinating book for those whose goal is to retain more useful information. It combines common-sense advice with the author's experience in the field of cognitive psychology. While not every point is helpful, there is much to like. Markman wants us to understand that we use mental energy in much the same way as we consume physical energy. When we are in our comfort zones, working with familiar subjects, thinking comes easily. So, he posits, our goal should be to make more subjects familiar ones. For instance, are you able to move about a room in the dark? If so, that's because you have made it a habit to manuever around objects by making a connection between an action (your movement) and an environment (the room). When we make that connection in other learning situations such as a classroom or meeting room, it assists the brain with the retaining of information.

C

Smart Thinking by Art Markman is based on leading-edge science, but targeted at the lay reader. Its stated aim is to reach into the underlying ability to reason, make decisions, communicate, and take action. It strives to do this by presenting innate, intuitive human ability in a structured 'how to' layout, thus implying the things that make people different are a matter of learning a new skill. Markman consequently implies for instance, that with training anyone can invent an ingenious device. But the reader may have reservations about the information that Markman tries to instill in his narrative, principally because there is no overt acknowledgement that imagination, the motor of intelligence, can rarely be duplicated by training. All in all, this book does little to define motivation or imagination, yet its subject matter alone could well ensure its success.

D

Because *Smart Thinking* is marketed primarily as a self-help book, potential readers might overlook the fact that this is an excellent treatise on cognitive psychology. In fact, Markman is one of the best in the business at synthesizing what cognitive psychologists have learned about how the mind works. There is some innovative content and the reader cannot fail to appreciate with just what lucidity and intelligence Markman expounds on and applies various concepts. Many of his examples, and the logic with which he lays out various principles, are better executed than formal psychology lectures normally are. For those who aren't as versed in cognitive science literature, this will be a ground-breaking read full of useful practical tips, and for others who are already expert, there is still much of value in this carefully constructed tome.

Which reviewer

1 shares reviewer A's view that Markham has a gift for communicating clearly?

2 has a different opinion from the others on the immediate relevance of Markham's ideas to daily life?

3 makes a comparison similar to that of reviewer B of the effective and ineffective elements of Markham's discussion?

4 has a different view to reviewer C on the appeal of the book to professionals in the field?