

Reading Part 3

Read the four texts. Which text gives you the answer to each question? Choose the correct text (A-D) for each question.

A

In a study involving more than 8,000 males and females ranging in age from 2 to 90, researchers Stephen Camarata and Richard Woodcock discovered females have a significant advantage over males on timed tests and tasks, especially among preteens and teens. 'We found very minor differences in overall intelligence,' said Camarata. 'But if you look at the ability of someone to perform well in a timed situation, females have a big advantage.' It is very important for teachers to understand this difference in males and females when assigning work and structuring tests,' he added. The study focused on understanding differences in 'processing speed' between males and females - the ability to effectively, efficiently and accurately complete work that is of moderate difficulty. They found that, although males and females showed similar processing speed in kindergarten and pre-school, females became much more efficient than males in elementary, middle and high school.

B

Girls aren't better than boys. Boys aren't better than girls. We may each have genetic predispositions towards certain traits, which may be explainable through Evolutionary Theory. But the changes in performance we see today in education are largely related to the Women's Movement which resulted in changes in the curriculum, more positive female role models (hard working, career driven) and a reversal of potential-based stereotyping. Now girls are seen as hard working, organised and more likely to succeed in early education; boys are seen as lazy, disobedient and less likely to succeed. These stereotypes are internalised by the schoolchildren and teachers (everyone in fact), resulting in self-perpetuating beliefs and related performance. Education now is largely seen as a 'girly' thing by many adolescent boys, who have adopted an attitude that learning will damage their masculinity, so they generally focus on activities that are either gender equal or male dominated.

C

Boys' attitudes to reading and writing have been the focus of much Government and media attention. Girls started outperforming boys at GCSE when new exams were introduced in 1988. In 2000, girls scored better at A-levels than boys for the first time. In 2001 women achieved more first-class degrees than men. In 2007, 76% of 11-year-old boys reached the expected level 4 in English, compared with 85% of 11-year-old girls. In March 2005, the Department for Children, Schools and Families concluded that boys' performance was lower than girls' in all literacy-related tasks and tests in England. Three quarters of mothers read with their children but only half of fathers do so. Girls do better in every area of learning before they are five. The National Literacy Trust has attempted to pull together a range of viewpoints relating to this as well as girls' attitudes to reading, useful statistics, and resources.

D

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) affects between 1.5 and 3.5 million school-age children in the U.S., or an estimated 5% of all boys and 2% of all girls. Why ADHD affects more boys than girls is a mystery at this point. Up to 60% of these children will continue to have symptoms into adulthood. According to the National Institutes of Health, more than a million children take prescription medicines to control hyperactive behavior. The estimated cost to schools is about 3 billion dollars. If you had ADHD, you might have had trouble reading that first paragraph without getting distracted. You might have thought of other things to do. You might have looked around the room, focusing on things other than the computer screen. You might have even gotten up and wandered off. No wonder children with ADHD have trouble being in school and focusing on school work.

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In which text does the writer:

1. fail to explain why a condition affects more boys than girls?
2. review historical background to educational differences between girls and boys?
3. find that girls improve most after their early school years?

Which text is saying the following?

4. Girls haven't always outperformed boys in school.
5. If you believe something enough it becomes fact.
6. Girls perform better than boys simply because they don't lose concentration so quickly.
7. The differences relate to performance in tests rather than intelligence.
