4

In today's competitive world, what responsible parent would not want to give their children the best possible start in life? For this reason, many parents want their children, often as young as ten months old, to become familiar with computers. They seem to think that if their children grow up with computers, they will be better equipped to face the challenges of the future.

No one has proved that computers make children more creative or more intelligent. The truth may even be the opposite. Educational psychologists claim that too much exposure to computers, especially for the very young, may negatively affect normal brain development. Children gain valuable experience of the world from their interaction with physical objects. Ten-month-old babies may benefit more from bumping their heads or putting various objects in their mouths than they will from staring at eye-catching cartoons. A four-year-old child can improve hand-eye coordination and understand cause and effect better by experimenting with a crayon than by moving a cursor around a computer screen. So, as educational psychologists suggest, instead of government funding going to more and more computer classes, it might be better to devote resources to music and art programs.

It is **ludicrous** to think that children will fall behind if they are not exposed to computers from an early age. Time is too precious to spend with a "mouse". Now is the time when they should be out there learning to ride a bike. There will be time later on for them to start banging away at keyboards.

1. Why do parents want their children to learn how to use a computer from an early age?
   A. Because they are afraid their children will become competitive.
   B. Because they want their children to be well prepared for their future.
   C. Because this is what all the other parents seem to do.
   D. Because they believe their children will have difficulty learning to use one if they don't start early.

2. Children who spend a lot of time on their computers _____
   A. do not necessarily make more progress than those who don't.
   B. tend to like music and art more than those who don't.
   C. will suffer from brain damage.
   D. tend to have more accidents than those who don't.

3. The author implies that children learn better _____
   A. after they have developed hand-eye coordination.
   B. when they use a computer.

C. as they get older.
D. when they hold and feel things around them.

4. What would be an appropriate title for this passage?
   A. Never too early to start
   B. Let kids be kids
   C. Computers in schools
   D. More computers mean brighter future

5. What is true according to the passage?
   A. It is better for children to take computer lessons than art lessons.
   B. Parents should not put off buying a computer for their children.
   C. Computers seriously harm children's eyesight.
   D. There is no evidence that children who use computers are more clever than those who do not.

6. What does the word "ludicrous" in the third paragraph (first sentence) mean?
   A. ridiculous B. humorous C. ironic D. sensible

5

A massage is relaxing, and makes you feel great, but did you know that it's also good for you? That's what doctors are now saying. Massage relieves pain and anxiety, eases depression and speeds up recovery from medical problems.

Research has shown that people of all ages benefit from touch. Premature infants who are held develop faster than those left alone, and healthy babies who get a lot of physical contact cry less and sleep better. Researchers are not sure why this occurs but they have also found out that touch can slow heart rate, lower blood pressure and increase levels of seratonin, the brain chemical that is linked to well-being. It also decreases levels of the stress hormone cortisol, and this in turn increases your resistance to illness.

Massage also speeds up healing. Bone-marrow transplant patients who were given massages had better neurological function than those who weren't. Furthermore, massage reduced pain by 37% in patients with chronic muscle aches.

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Giving someone a massage may be as good as getting one. A study conducted by the university of Miami found that mothers suffering from depression felt better after massaging their infants. In that same study, elderly volunteers who massaged infants reported feeling less anxious and depressed.

It even works when you do it yourself; 43% of headache sufferers reported getting relief after massaging their temples and neck and smokers who were taught self-massage while trying to quit felt less anxiety and smoked less.

1. What has recently been said about getting a massage?
   A. It relaxes you.
   B. It makes you feel good.
   C. It improves your physical condition.
   D. It requires a special technique.

2. Babies born before their time _____
   A. cry less and sleep better if they are massaged.
   B. grow faster if they are held.
   C. develop faster than healthy babies if they get a lot of physical contact.
   D. don't survive if they are not held.

3. The author suggests that touch _____
   A. increases levels of the stress hormone cortisol.
   B. makes your heart beat faster.
   C. increases the feeling of well-being.
   D. helps you deal with your feelings.

4. Patients who get massages _____
   A. don't experience muscle pain.
   B. avoid having surgery.
   C. make a quicker recovery.
   D. are not better off than those who do not.

5. According to the article _____
   A. massage has no effect on smokers.
   B. massage relieves headaches by 43%.
   C. smokers who gave others massages felt less anxious and smoked less.
   D. massaging yourself is as effective as being massaged.

6. What did the study conducted in Miami show?
   A. Elderly volunteers who got massages felt less anxious.
   B. Mothers were depressed after massaging their babies.
   C. Babies who got massages felt better.
   D. Giving a massage is as beneficial as getting one.

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7. What is NOT true according to the article?
   A. Mothers will suffer from depression if they don't massage their babies.
   B. People can learn to massage themselves.
   C. Massage is good for you regardless of whether you're giving or getting one.
   D. It helps smokers quit smoking.

6

If we took a look at how people in Europe communicated just one hundred years ago, we would be very surprised to find out that English was hardly used outside the United Kingdom. The language most commonly used between people of different nationalities, and particularly the aristocracy, was French. In fact, French was **the language of diplomacy**, culture and education. However, that is not the case nowadays. English has replaced French as the international language of communication. Today there are more people who speak English as a second language than people who speak it as a first language.

There are many reasons why English has become the language of international communication. Britain's colonization of many parts of the world had something to do with it, but it is mainly due to America's rise to the position of major world power. This helped spread popular American culture throughout the world bringing the language with it.

But is it good that English has spread to all parts of the world so quickly? Language specialists seem to be divided over this issue. There are those who claim that it is important to have a language that the people in our increasingly globalized world have in common. According to others, English is associated with a particular culture and therefore promotes that culture at the expense of others. Linguists have suggested "Esperanto", an artificially put-together language, as a solution to international communication problems but without success. So, English will continue being the world language until some other language, maybe Chinese, which is the most widely-spoken native language in the world, takes over as the world's international language instead of English.

1. According to the passage, a century ago _____
   A. educated people throughout Europe spoke English.
   B. foreign travelers to England spoke only French.
   C. French was much more popular than English.
   D. only the French aristocracy could speak English.

2. What is chiefly responsible for the growth in popularity of English?
   A. Britain's becoming an international power.
   B. The French losing many colonies.
   C. America's becoming powerful.
   D. The development of American culture.

3. What is meant by "the language of diplomacy" (lines 5-6)?
   A. The language used by ordinary people.
   B. The language used by the English and the French.
   C. The language used by the aristocracy.
   D. The language used by governments.

4. What is true according to the passage?
   A. The experts don't like Esperanto.
   B. Esperanto is difficult to learn.
   C. Esperanto is not a natural language
   D. Esperanto is becoming more and more popular.

5. The experts' opinion on the spread of English is _____.
   A. split B. positive C. negative D. undecided

6. The author believes that _____
   A. English is easier to learn than Chinese.
   B. English will probably be replaced as an international language.
   C. Chinese is going to be the next language of international communication.
   D. Chinese is growing in popularity among non-native speakers.

7. These days _____
   A. French is the language of diplomacy.
   B. more non-natives speak English than natives.
   C. more people speak French than English.
   D. French is a dying language.

8. What would be a good title for this passage?
   A. English: Past, Present and Future
   B. English as an International Language
   C. English language means English culture
   D. English: a difficult language to learn

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