



KEEP PLAYING THAT

There used to be a general feeling that computer games were bad for you, and books were good. Now people are not so sure. Researchers have found that computer games, television and the Internet have become key factors in boosting children's IQs up to levels never reached by past generations.

The idea that intelligence can be measured was first suggested about a century ago, but at that time it was hard to find tests that gave useful results. Over the past two decades, however, tests have become more subtle and complex and researchers have found that IQ scores can give a good indication of what children's future exam results will be. Some experts have even claimed that IQ scores can accurately predict what level of income and status young people will achieve in adult life.

Why are today's youngsters doing so much better than their grandparents? Of course, better nutrition, higher standards of living and improved education all play their part in raising general levels of intelligence. But there seems to be more to it than that. Scientists are attributing the change in intelligence levels to the complexity of modern life.

In today's fast-moving world, young people are required to interact constantly with electronic gadgets and equipment. Research has shown that they are constantly exposed to an increasingly complex and visual world – a world far more stimulating than previous generations lived in. This is developing youngsters' brains in ways that older generations never experienced. Computers are one of the major sources of stimulation, and activities such as playing games and using the Internet seem to be particularly important.

There are still some things that remain unexplained, however. For example, the increase in children's IQ scores varies according to the type of intelligence being tested. It appears that nowadays people are better at abstract thinking than their ancestors were – but their verbal and mathematical abilities have

COMPUTER GAME?

35 remained the same as those of previous generations. No one knows why this is the case. Nevertheless, during the last few years there has certainly been a general upward trend, and it has been found that the present generation have IQs about 15 points above their parents.

40 Although this is clearly good news, the surging popularity of computer gaming and other activities has caused concern in some quarters, for two reasons. Firstly, there have been claims that the high levels of violence in the games could encourage children to be aggressive. There have also been fears that children could become
45 addicted to the games, and so be unable to stop playing them. But a recent study found no reliable evidence to prove that computer games contribute to long-term violence or anti-social behaviour.

50 Indeed, it has been claimed that, in moderation, computer gaming is positively good for youngsters. It requires positive qualities such as perseverance, fast thinking and rapid learning. However, it seems that improvements in IQ may not last very long without continuing stimulation. The brain seems to be like a
55 muscle and requires repeated and vigorous exercise to stay fit and healthy. When it comes to IQ, it's a case of 'Use it or lose it'.

Others argue that computers have only limited value. They fear that young people who spend too much time
60 playing computer games alone will never learn to think independently. They claim that the danger with a computer is that doing repetitive tasks can actually reduce intelligence. In the end, computer games are no substitute for real-life
65 experience and for imagination.



1 In the first paragraph, the writer says that computer games

- A** have got much better recently.
- B** are not as good for children as reading.
- C** can improve the intelligence of young people.
- D** are now used in many different ways by children.

2 According to the writer, in the last twenty years IQ tests have become

- A** a substitute for examinations.
- B** more difficult than they were in the past.
- C** a way of increasing young people's income.
- D** more reliable than they used to be.

3 'It' in line 17 refers to

- A** the use of tests.
- B** the effect of education.
- C** the increase in intelligence.
- D** the improvement in food standards.

4 What does the writer say about young people and electronic equipment nowadays?

- A** They sometimes find the equipment confusing.
- B** The equipment makes things too easy for them.
- C** The equipment is an important part of their daily lives.
- D** They depend on the equipment for their entertainment.

5 According to the writer, what remains unexplained about children's intelligence?

- A** why levels of some types of intelligence have remained unchanged
- B** why there has been such a rapid rise in general intelligence
- C** how children can develop their verbal and mathematical skills
- D** how the improvement in intelligence levels can be continued

6 Research indicates that violence in computer games

- A** can sometimes be addictive for children.
- B** may lead to aggressive behaviour in children.
- C** can make some children nervous or afraid.
- D** may have little effect on children.

7 What does 'Use it or lose it' mean in line 57?

- A** If you don't use your IQ, you'll become less healthy.
- B** If you don't use your computer, it may be taken away.
- C** If you don't use your brain, your intelligence will decrease.
- D** If you don't use your muscles, you'll get unfit.

8 Some people say that playing computer games may affect young people's ability to

- A** make decisions on their own.
- B** tell original stories.
- C** find work which satisfies them.
- D** develop physical skills.