

Lesson 13: Midcourse Test

 IELTS TEST PREPARATION
IELTS CHẶP CHỦNG

TEST 1:

Bilingualism in Children

A. One misguided legacy of over a hundred years of writing on bilingualism is that children's intelligence will suffer if they are bilingual. Some of the earliest research into bilingualism examined whether bilingual children were ahead or behind monolingual children on IQ tests. From the 1920s through to the 1960s, the tendency was to find monolingual children ahead of bilinguals on IQ tests. The conclusion was that bilingual children were mentally confused. Having two languages in the brain, it was said, disrupted effective thinking. It was argued that having one well-developed language was superior to having two half-developed languages.

B. The idea that bilinguals may have a lower IQ still exists among many people, particularly monolinguals. However, we now know that this early research was misconceived and incorrect. First, such research often gave bilinguals an IQ test in their weaker language – usually English. Had bilinguals been tested in Welsh, Spanish or Hebrew, a different result may have been found. The testing of bilinguals was thus unfair. Second, like was not compared with like. Bilinguals tended to come from, for example, impoverished New York or rural Welsh backgrounds. The monolinguals tended to come from more middle-class, urban families. Working-class bilinguals were often compared with middle-class monolinguals. So the results were more likely to be due to social class differences than language differences. The comparison of monolinguals and bilinguals was unfair.

C. The most recent research from Canada, the United States, and Wales suggests that bilinguals are, at least, equal to monolinguals on IQ tests. When bilinguals have two well-developed languages (in the research literature called balanced bilinguals), bilinguals tend to show a slight superiority in IQ tests compared with monolinguals. This is the received psychological wisdom of the moment and is good news for raising bilingual children. Take, for example, a child who can operate in either language in the curriculum in the school. That child is likely to be ahead on IQ tests compared with similar (same gender, social class and age) monolinguals. Far from making people mentally confused, bilingualism is now associated with a mild degree of intellectual superiority.

D. One note of caution needs to be sounded. IQ tests probably do not measure intelligence. IQ tests measure a small sample of the broadest concept of intelligence. IQ tests are simply paper and pencil tests where only 'right and wrong' answers are allowed. Is all intelligence summed up in such right and wrong, pencil and paper tests? Isn't there a wider variety of intelligences that are important in everyday functioning and everyday life?

E. Many questions need answering. Do we only define an intelligent person as somebody who obtains a high score on an IQ test? Are the only intelligent people who belong to high IQ organizations such as MENSA? Is there social intelligence, musical intelligence, military intelligence, marketing intelligence, motoring intelligence, or political intelligence? Are all, or indeed any, of these forms of intelligence measured by a simple pencil and paper IQ test which demands a single, acceptable, correct solution to each question? Defining what constitutes intelligent behavior requires a personal value judgment as to what type of behavior, and what kind of person is of more worth.

F. The current state of psychological wisdom about bilingual children is that, where two languages are relatively well developed, bilinguals have thinking advantages over monolinguals. Take an example. A child is asked a simple question: How many uses can you think of offering a brick? Some children give two or three answers only. They can think of building walls, building a house, and perhaps that is all. Another child scribbles away, pouring out ideas one after the other: blocking up a rabbit hole, breaking a window, using as a bird bath, as a plumb line, as an abstract sculpture in an art exhibition.

G. Research across different continents of the world shows that bilinguals tend to be more fluent, flexible, original and elaborate in their answers to this type of open-ended question. The person who can think of a few answers tends to be termed a convergent thinker. They converge onto a few acceptable conventional answers. People who think of lots of different uses for unusual items (e.g. a brick, tin can, cardboard box) are called divergers. Divergers like a variety of answers to a question and are imaginative and fluent in their thinking.

H. There are other dimensions in thinking where approximately 'balanced' bilinguals may have temporary and occasionally permanent advantages over monolinguals: increased sensitivity to communication, a slightly speedier movement through the stages of cognitive development, and being less fixed on the sounds of words and more centered on the meaning of words. Such ability to move away from the sound of words and fix on the meaning of words tends to be a (temporary) advantage for bilinguals around the ages four to six. This advantage may mean an initial head start in learning to read and learning to think about language.

Questions 1-3: Complete the sentences. Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

1 For more than , books and articles were wrong about the intelligence of bilingual children.

2 For approximately 40 years, there was a mistaken belief that children who spoke two languages were

3 It was commonly thought that people with a single were more effective thinkers.

Questions 4-9: Reading Passage 1 has eight paragraphs, A-H. Choose the correct heading for paragraphs B-G from the list of headings below.

List of Headings

i No single definition of intelligence

Example

Paragraph A vii

ii Faulty testing, wrong conclusion

4 Paragraph B

iii Welsh research supports IQ testing

5 Paragraph C

iv Beware: inadequate for selling intelligence

6 Paragraph D

v International research supports bilingualism

7 Paragraph E

vi Current thought on the advantage bilinguals have

8 Paragraph F

vii Early beliefs regarding bilingualism

9 Paragraph G

viii Monolinguals ahead of their bilingual peers

ix Exemplifying the bilingual advantage

Questions 10-13 Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1? (TRUE/ FALSE/ NOT GIVEN)

10 Balanced bilinguals have more permanent than temporary advantages over monolinguals.

11 Often bilinguals concentrate more on the way a word sounds than on its meaning.

12 Monolinguals learn to speak at a younger age than bilinguals.

13 Bilinguals just starting school might pick up certain skills faster than monolinguals.

READING PASSAGE 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 14-26** which are based on Reading Passage 2 below.

COLLECTING AS A HOBBY

Collecting must be one of the most varied of human activities, and it's one that many of us psychologists find fascinating. Many forms of collecting have been dignified with a technical name: an archtophilist collects teddy bears, a philatelist collects postage stamps, and a deltiologist collects postcards. Amassing hundreds or even thousands of postcards, chocolate wrappers or whatever, takes time, energy and money that could surely be put to much more productive use. And yet there are millions of collectors around the world. Why do they do it?

There are the people who collect because they want to make money – this could be called an instrumental reason for collecting; that is, collecting as a means to an end. They'll look for, say, antiques that they can buy cheaply and expect to be able to sell at a profit. But there may well be a

psychological element, too – buying cheap and selling dear can give the collector a sense of triumph. And as selling online is so easy, more and more people are joining in.

Many collectors collect to develop their social life, attending meetings of a group of collectors and exchanging information on items. This is a variant on joining a bridge club or a gym, and similarly brings them into contact with like-minded people.

Another motive for collecting is the desire to find something special, or a particular example of the collected item, such as a rare early recording by a particular singer. Some may spend their whole lives in a hunt for this. Psychologically, this can give a purpose to a life that otherwise feels aimless. There is a danger, though, that if the individual is ever lucky enough to find what they're looking for, rather than celebrating their success, they may feel empty, now that the goal that drove them on has gone.

If you think about collecting postage stamps, another potential reason for it – or, perhaps, a result of collecting – is its educational value. Stamp collecting opens a window to other countries, and to the plants, animals, or famous people shown on their stamps. Similarly, in the 19th century, many collectors amassed fossils, animals and plants from around the globe, and their collections provided a vast amount of information about the natural world. Without those collections, our understanding would be greatly inferior to what it is.

In the past – and nowadays, too, though to a lesser extent – a popular form of collecting, particularly among boys and men, was trainspotting. This might involve trying to see every locomotive of a particular type, using published data that identifies each one, and ticking off each engine as it is seen. Trainspotters exchange information, these days often by mobile phone, so they can work out where to go to, to see a particular engine. As a by-product, many practitioners of the hobby become very knowledgeable about railway operations, or the technical specifications of different engine types.

Similarly, people who collect dolls may go beyond simply enlarging their collection, and develop an interest in the way that dolls are made, or the materials that are used. These have changed over the centuries from the wood that was standard in 16th century Europe, through the wax and porcelain of later centuries, to the plastics of today's dolls. Or collectors might be inspired to study how dolls reflect notions of what children like, or ought to like.

Not all collectors are interested in learning from their hobby, though, so what we might call a psychological reason for collecting is the need for a sense of control, perhaps as a way of dealing with insecurity. Stamps collectors, for instance, arrange their stamps in albums, usually very neatly, organising their collection according to certain commonplace principles – perhaps by country in alphabetical order, or grouping stamps by what they depict – people, birds, maps, and so on.

One reason, conscious or not, for *what* someone chooses to collect is to show the collector's individualism. Someone who decides to collect something as unexpected as dog collars, for instance, may be conveying their belief that they must be interesting themselves. And believe it or not, there is at least one dog collar museum in existence, and it grew out of a personal collection.

Of course, all hobbies give pleasure, but the common factor in collecting is usually passion: pleasure is putting it far too mildly. More than most other hobbies, collecting can be totally engrossing, and can give a strong sense of personal fulfilment. To non-collectors it may appear an eccentric, if harmless, way of spending time, but potentially, collecting has a lot going for it.

Questions 14-21

Complete the sentences below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes **14-21** on your answer sheet.

14 The writer mentions collecting as an example of collecting in order to make money.

15 Collectors may get a feeling of from buying and selling items.

16 Collectors' clubs provide opportunities to share.....

17 Collectors' clubs offer with people who have similar interests.

18 Collecting sometimes involves a life-long..... for a special item.

19 Searching for something particular may prevent people from feeling their life is completely.....

20 Stamp collecting may be because it provides facts about different countries.

21 tends to be mostly a male hobby.

Questions 22-26

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the passage on pages 20 and 21?

In boxes **22-26** on your answer sheet, write

TRUE if the statement agrees with the information

FALSE if the statement contradicts the information

NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this

22 The number of people buying dolls has grown over the centuries.

23 Sixteenth century European dolls were normally made of wax and porcelain.

24 Arranging a stamp collection by the size of the stamps is less common than other methods.

25 Someone who collects unusual objects may want others to think he or she is also unusual.

26 Collecting gives a feeling that other hobbies are unlikely to inspire.