

READING PASSAGE 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 1-13** which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.

The Connection Between Culture and Thought

A

The world's population has surpassed 7 billion and continues to grow. Across the globe, humans have many differences. These differences can be influenced by factors such as geography, climate, politics, nationality, and many more. Culture is one such aspect that can change the way people behave.

B

Your culture may influence your clothing, your language, and many aspects of your life. But is culture influential enough to change the way an individual thinks? It has long been believed that people from different cultures would think differently. For example, a young boy from a farm would talk about cows while a boy from New York will talk about cars. If two young children from different countries are asked about their thoughts about a painting, they would answer differently because of their cultural backgrounds.

C

In recent years, there has been new research that changed this long-held belief; However, this new research is not the first to explore the idea that culture can change the way we think. Earlier research has provided valuable insight to the question. One of the earliest research projects was carried out in the Soviet Union. This project was designed to find out whether culture would affect people's way of thought processing. The researchers focused on how living environment and nationality might influence how people think. The experiment led by Bessett aimed to question such awareness of cognitive psychology. Bessett conducted several versions of the experiment to test different cognitive processes.

D

One experiment led by Bessett and Masuku showed an animated video picturing a big fish swimming among smaller fish and other sea creatures. Subjects were asked to describe the scene. The Japanese participants tended to focus on the aquatic background, such as the plants

and colour of the water, as well as the relationship between the big and small fish. American participants tended to focus on individual fishes, mainly the larger, more unique looking fish. The experiment suggested that members of Eastern cultures focus more on the overall picture, while members of Western culture focus more on the individuals.

E

In another experiment performed by Bessett and Choi, the subjects were presented with some very convincing evidence for a position. Both the Korean and the American showed strong support. And after they were given some evidence opposing the position, the Korean started to modified or decreased their support. However, the American began to give more support to the former argument. This project suggested that in Korean culture, support for arguments is based on context. Ideas and conclusions are changeable and flexible, so an individual may be more willing to change his or her mind. For Americans, they were less willing to change their original conclusion.

F

Bessett and Ara devised an experiment to test the thought processing of both oriental and occidental worlds. Test subject was given an argument “All animals with furs hibernate. Rabbit has fur. Therefore, rabbit hibernate”. People from the eastern world questioned the argument as not being logical, because in their knowledge some furry animals just don’t hibernate. But the American think the statement is right. They assume the logic deduction is based on a correct argument, thus the conclusion is right since the logic is right.

G

From these early experiments in the Soviet Union, one might conclude that our original premise— that culture can impact the way we think—was still correct. However, recent research criticises this view, as well as Bessett’s early experiments. Though these experiments changed the original belief on thought processing, how much does it result from all factors needs further discussion. Fischer thinks Bessett’s experiments provide valuable information because his research only provides qualitative descriptions, not results from controlled environment. Chang partly agrees with him, because there are some social factors that might influence the results.

H

Another criticism of Bessett's experiments is that culture was studied as a sub-factor of nationality. The experiments assumed that culture would be the same among all members of a nationality. For example, every American that participated in the experiments could be assumed to have the same culture. In reality, culture is much more complicated than nationality. These early experiments did not control for other factors, such as socioeconomic status, education, ethnicity, and regional differences in culture. All of these factors could have a big effect on the individual's response.

I

A third criticism of Bessett's experiment is that the content itself should have been more abstract, such as a puzzle or an IQ test. With objective content, such as nature and animals, people from different countries of the world might have different pre-conceived ideas about these animals. Prior knowledge based on geographic location would further complicate the results. A test that is more abstract, or more quantitative, would provide a more controlled study of how cognitive processing works for different groups of people.

J

The research on culture's effect on cognitive processing still goes on today, and while some criticisms exist of Bessett's early studies, the projects still provide valuable insight. It is important for future research projects to control carefully for the variables, such as culture. Something like culture is complex and difficult to define. It can also be influenced by many other variables, such as geography or education styles. When studying a variable like culture, it is critical that the researcher create a clear definition for what is—and what is not—considered culture.

K

Another important aspect of modern research is the ethical impact of the research. A researcher must consider carefully whether the results of the research will negatively impact any of the groups involved. In an increasingly globalised job economy, generalisations made about nationalities can be harmful to prospective employees. This information could also impact the way tests and university admissions standards are designed, which would potentially favor one group or create a disadvantage for another. When conducting any research about culture and

nationality, researchers should consider all possible effects, positive or negative, that their conclusions may have when published for the world to see.

Questions 1-5

Reading Passage 1 has eleven paragraphs, **A-K**. Which paragraph contains the following information? Write the correct letter, **A-K**, in boxes **1-5** on your answer sheet. You may use any letter more than once.

- 1 All people have the same reaction to a certain point of view.
- 2 Qualitative descriptions are valuable in exploring thought processing.
- 3 Different cultures will affect the description of the same scene.
- 4 We thought of young people as widely different at different geographical locations.
- 5 Eastern people are less likely to stick to their argument.

Questions 6-9

Look at the following statements (Questions **6-9**) and the list of researchers below.

Match each statement with the correct researcher, **A-C**. Write the correct letter, **A-C**, in boxes **6-9** on your answer sheet. You may use any letter more than once.

List of Researchers

- A** Bessett & Masuku
- B** Bessett & Choi
- C** Bessett & Ara

- 6 Geographical location affects people's position on certain arguments.
- 7 Animated images reveal different process strategies.
- 8 Eastern people challenge a deduction because they knew it is not true.
- 9 Eastern people find more difficulty when asked to identify the same object.

Questions 10-13

Complete the sentences below. Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer. Write your answers in boxes **10-13** on your answer sheet.

- 10 Researchers in the Soviet Union wanted to find out how and nationality will control the way people think.

- 11 Bessett and Ara's experiment shows, for Americans, so long as the logic deduction is based on a correct argument, the should be right.
- 12 Fischer thinks Bessett's research is quite valuable because it is conducted in a way rather than in controlled environment.
- 13 Future researchers on culture's effect on cognitive processing should start with a of culture as a variable.