

# Brain power

1 Discuss the following questions in pairs:

- Can you think of any people who are/were famous for their 'brain power'?
- What words would you use to describe these people?

2 Check the meaning of the words in the box and match them to the definitions (a–l) below. Use a dictionary to help you.

intelligent	clever	bright
intellectual	knowledgeable	brainy
erudite	academic	educated
astute	bookish	wise

- someone who makes good decisions and gives good advice because they have a lot of experience of life is \_\_\_\_\_.
- someone who is able to understand situations or behaviour very well, possibly because they can get an advantage is \_\_\_\_\_.
- someone who is good at studying and gets good results at school or university is \_\_\_\_\_.
- someone who is very good at academic subjects is \_\_\_\_\_. (can be negative)
- someone who is more interested in reading and studying than in sports or other activities is \_\_\_\_\_.
- someone who is naturally intelligent and can think quickly is \_\_\_\_\_.
- someone who shows a lot of knowledge based on careful study is \_\_\_\_\_.
- someone who is intelligent because they have received a good education is \_\_\_\_\_.
- someone who knows a lot about many different subjects is \_\_\_\_\_.
- someone who has a high level of mental ability and is good at understanding ideas and thinking quickly and clearly is \_\_\_\_\_.
- someone who is intelligent and well-educated and spends a lot of time thinking about complicated ideas and discussing them is \_\_\_\_\_.
- someone who is able to learn and understand a task or an issue quickly is \_\_\_\_\_.

3 Read the extract below from a book called *Brain Power* and decide if the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

- Reading is the best way of expanding your intellect. ☐
- You shouldn't believe things for which you have no evidence. ☐
- You should rely on others for opinions. ☐
- You should rely on others for information. ☐
- If most people believe something, you should also do so. ☐

How much of what you've read has been of value to you? How much of what you've watched on television has been of value to you? How much of what you've heard on the radio has been of value to you?

Reading is the best way to stand on the intellectual shoulders of others. Just as you don't have to reinvent the light bulb to make use of it, you needn't recreate the works of the great thinkers to enjoy them and profit with them. George Orwell has already gone to the trouble of writing 1984. All you have to do is read it.

Perhaps the greatest value of 'standing on another's shoulders' is this: How do you know whether you should believe things for which you have no evidence? There's not enough time in your life for you to gather and sift through the evidence relating to everything you believe. No matter how intelligent or even intellectual you are, you will be forced to rely on others for some information. And there's the critical point of the matter: are you relying upon information, or are you relying on opinion?

You *should* believe the earth is round. The evidence is ample, including photographs taken from space. But even if you could personally examine every scrap of evidence, you haven't the expertise to interpret it. There aren't enough hours in a lifetime to become expert in everything.

But be aware that just because a belief is widespread does not mean it is true. Look at how many conflicting religions there are: can all of them be true? Obviously not. Moreover, there are many, many things that almost nobody disputes that are dead wrong. Galileo was arrested by the Inquisition for supporting the Copernican theory of astronomy that said the earth moved around the sun and the sun was the centre of a solar system. In the 1600s, almost everybody believed that the earth, the home of Man, was the centre of the universe. Almost everybody was wrong.

And maybe Einstein was wrong about time slowing down at high speeds, and maybe the astronauts of the future, returning from decades-long trips to the outward edges of our galaxy, will be just as old as the people they left behind.

When you begin to learn the difference between information and opinion, you are on your way to expanding your intellect.



# Listening and speaking

What life skills should you learn at school?

1 Discuss these questions in groups.

a) Were you taught many practical skills at school, or was the focus mainly on academic subjects?

b) How many of the things below did you learn? Which do you think would have been most useful?

- Citizenship
- Cookery
- DIY and woodwork
- Drama
- Drug and alcohol awareness
- Economics
- First aid
- Foreign languages
- How to work in a team
- Managing your finances
- Note-taking and study skills
- Personal organisation
- Racism awareness
- Sex education

## Education

Explain these words and find the odd one out in each group.

1. award-reward-prize-scholarship-grant
2. certificate-diploma-degree-licence-doctorate
3. thesis-dissertation-essay-article-composition
4. BA-MA-bachelor-master's-PhD
5. student-undergraduate-postgraduate-freshman-contestant
6. financial year-semester-term-academic year-half term
7. professor-teacher-instructor-lecturer-tutor-don-associate
8. evaluation-questionnaire-test-continuous assessment-exam
9. gymnasium-nursery school-secondary school-kindergarten-public school-state school
10. credits-grades-scores-marks-numbers

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## Reading and speaking

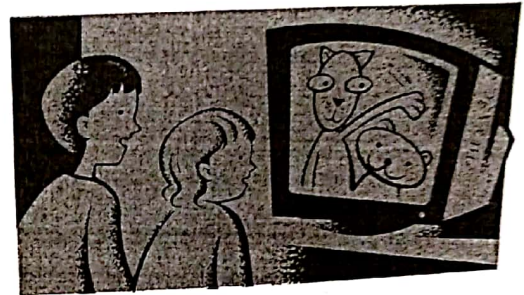
### Education: fact or myth?

- 1 Look at the headlines of the five articles. Without reading the articles, decide whether you think they are facts (F) or myths (M).
- 2 Read the articles and find out what the latest research suggests. Were you right? Are the headlines correct summaries of each article?
- 3 Tick (✓) the best summary of each article according to the information in the texts.
  - 1 Watching TV programmes
    - a) seems to benefit all children up to the age of 16.
    - b) is particularly beneficial for 2- and 3-year-olds.
    - c) is good for toddlers whatever the programme.
  - 2 According to Richard Roberts, 'evening types' do better in intelligence tests because
    - a) they sleep more.
    - b) of their genetic inheritance.
    - c) they did the tests in the evening.
  - 3 According to Matthew Melmed, the best way for parents to help their children would be
    - a) to enrol them in extra classes.
    - b) to spend more time with them.
    - c) to put less pressure on them.
  - 4 According to Dutch scientists, the children's stress disorders are probably mainly caused by
    - a) the inability to sleep.
    - b) problems at school.
    - c) being separated from their parents.
  - 5 It appears that the 'brain zapper'
    - a) has only been successful in some cases.
    - b) had a negative effect generally.
    - c) is useful for teaching young children.
- 4 Find the nine words and phrases in **bold** in the texts. Suggest an alternative word with the same meaning. Use the context to help you.  
 Example: a **head** start in life  
 better
- 5 Discuss these questions.
  - a) Which research did you find most surprising?
  - b) Do you think any of the findings might be dubious?
  - c) Are the trends described in articles 3 and 4 happening in your country too?

► Phrase builder

### ① Watching TV is bad for toddlers

To give your children a **head** start in life, sit them in front of the television. A study of 200 American preschoolers has revealed that toddlers who watch TV for two hours a day develop more quickly than those who do without. On average, the two- and three-year-olds who watched TV scored 10 per cent higher in reading, maths and vocabulary. However, the programmes have to be aimed at their age group – children **derive** no benefits from watching TV designed for adults. 'Television opens up the world to many young children and gives them a head start, which is sustained in improved academic achievement throughout their school lives,' said Aletha Huston of the University of Texas. But the positive impact of TV declines with age, reports *The Sunday Times*. Older children who watch more than 16 hours of TV a week perform worse than their peers.



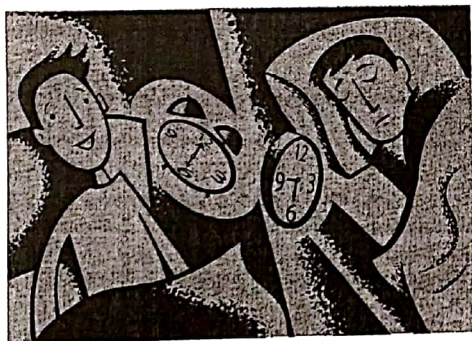
### ④ The happiest days of your life

One in five modern children suffers from anxieties so severe that they should be classified as psychiatric disorders, say scientists from the University of Maastricht. The researchers interviewed 290 Dutch primary school children aged between eight and thirteen; 20 per cent of them were **beset** with worries so serious that they limited their ability to lead normal lives, reports *The Daily Mail*. Many had trouble sleeping; some were afraid to leave their homes; others had problems interacting with their peers. 'Nobody is really sure exactly why this is, but these disorders are caused by children internalising their anxiety,' said child psychiatrist Peter Muris. 'This could be caused by parents being away from their children for long periods or by children being stressed at school. A parent who does not spend time with their child could miss out on the fact that the child has the problem, meaning it can go untreated and get worse.'



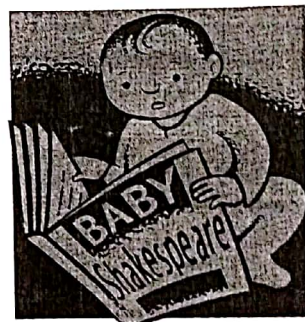
## ② The early bird catches the worm ...

The early bird may catch the worm – but people who lie around in bed in the morning and work into the evening are more intelligent, according to Richard Roberts of the University of Sydney. The scientists asked 400 volunteers to fill in questionnaires to work out if they considered themselves early-rising 'morning types' or late-working 'evening types'. Each was then subjected to mental agility and memory tests. The researchers discovered that the 'evening types' had significantly better mental speed and memory. 'The results indicate that, contrary to conventional folk wisdom, evening types are more likely to have higher intelligence scores,' Roberts told *The Sunday Telegraph*. He also suggested that the link between intelligence and working late may be a hang-over from prehistoric times, when those who were still alert after dark would be more likely to survive attacks by nocturnal predators.



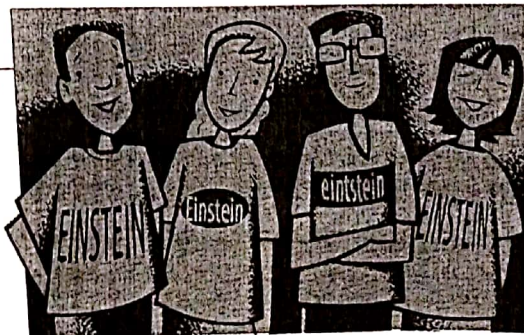
## ③ Pushy parents help children succeed

Pushy parents may be doing their children more harm than good, says Washington-based childcare expert Matthew Melmed. Professional parents frequently overstimulate babies and toddlers and buy them educational toys that are too old for them in the belief that they are improving their prospects. In fact, faced with such demands, the children may become frustrated and give up completely. Worse still, the children recognise that they are disappointing their parents and this sense of failure eats away at their self-esteem. The warning comes as an ever-increasing range of educational material is being produced for the very young. In the US, 'hyper-parenting' is rife, says Joanna Coles in *The Times*. Expectant mothers are pressured into buying CDs such as *Mozart for Mothers to Be* ('Build your baby's brain!') while no self-respecting newborn would be without educational videos including *Baby Einstein* and *Baby Shakespeare*. By the age of one, enrolment in a plethora of classes, from languages to arithmetic, is *de rigueur*.



## ⑤ We all have genius within us

For years, scientists have speculated that the talents possessed by so-called 'idiots savants' – as depicted by Dustin Hoffman in the film *Rain Man* – may be accessible to us all. According to Professor Allan Snyder of the University of Sydney, it is just a question of switching off the conscious part of the brain. 'I believe that each of us has non-conscious machinery to do extraordinary art, extraordinary memory, extraordinary mathematical calculations,' he told *The Daily Mail*. Now, Dr Robyn Young of Flinders University in Adelaide has tried to prove the theory by using an electronic brain zapper to release the artistic and mathematical skills of 17 volunteers. Using a technique known as transcranial magnetic stimulation, Dr Young switched off the conscious part of the volunteers' brains, then tested their skills in calculation



or drawing. The process did not turn them into geniuses, but five showed improved performance. Dr Young believes that the technique could eventually be used to help children learn to read, or adults to pick up a new language. In the meantime, however, the 'brain zapper' seems to do as much damage to the brain as it does good. 'We had a hard time recruiting volunteers to get their brain zapped,' admitted Young. 'One guy got lost on his way to work the day after the experiment.'

Discuss these questions with a partner. Be prepared to tell the class the most significant points in your discussion. You should also make some clear decisions about improving your learning strategies, as you will be expected to report to the class on your progress at a later lesson.

- What exactly do you do in order to learn?
- What do you see, hear and feel when you're learning?
- When you're trying to learn something, do you approach it positively, feeling confident you can do it, or do you wonder about your ability?
- What do you remember of what you learned last week / last term / last year / when you went to school?
- What have you learned since you left school?
- What have you learned about how you learn best?
- How do you learn best?
- Is there a difference between the way you learn English and the way you have tried to learn other subjects?
- What could you do to improve your learning effectiveness?



# Idiom

## Alliterative Expressions

1 'Alliteration' is the repeated use of the same letter or sound, usually the first letter of successive words. It is often used in poetic language ('borne on the swollen, swaying, swishing seas'), publicity ('Buy Brown's Best British Biscuits') and newspaper headlines ('Fighting Football Fans Face Fines'). It is also found in the following common colloquial expressions. Put each one in its correct place in the sentences below.

**ship-shape  
mish-mash**

**rat race  
chit-chat**

**wishy-washy  
brickbats**

- (a) Tired of the ceaseless pressure of the competitive business world, he decided to leave the \_\_\_\_\_ and take over a small newsagent's shop in the country.
- (b) A politician must be strong enough to withstand the \_\_\_\_\_ which are constantly directed at him by the media.
- (c) He's a serious, rather cold man. He likes to get to the point straightaway in conversation and not waste time in idle \_\_\_\_\_.
- (d) I like to see everything neat and tidy, everything in its place. I like to keep everything \_\_\_\_\_.
- (e) Michael Wilson's latest play is a confusing mixture. It is neither a comedy, a serious work nor a musical, but a \_\_\_\_\_ of all three.
- (f) A company's annual report must be clearly written and contain only the necessary facts. A report which is vague and \_\_\_\_\_ is useless and makes a bad impression.

2 Instructions as above.

**zigzag  
flip-flops**

**sing-song  
sob-story**

**pitter-patter  
creepy-crawly**

- (a) I heard the \_\_\_\_\_ of rain on the window panes.
- (b) It's too steep to climb straight up the side of the hill. Most people \_\_\_\_\_ to make it easier.
- (c) He tried to get money from me by telling a \_\_\_\_\_ about losing his job and being ill, but I didn't believe him.
- (d) If little Louise sees a beetle or a spider, she screams, 'There's a \_\_\_\_\_!'.  
(e) To keep our spirits up on the long journey we had a \_\_\_\_\_.
- (f) \_\_\_\_\_ are cheap, open sandals, each consisting of a rubber sole and a strap between the toes.

### 'GHOTI'

The writer George Bernard Shaw thought English spelling was ridiculous. He demonstrated this by saying that the word 'fish' could be spelt 'ghoti', the '-gh' pronounced as in 'enough', the '-o' as in 'women' and the '-ti' as in 'station'.

## 48 Studies and exams

Choose the word or phrase which best completes each sentence. Give one answer only to each question:

1. Being quick on the ..... the students made rapid progress.  
a. intake      b. take-off      c. uptake      d. takeover
2. I was so absorbed in the book I was reading that I completely lost ..... of the time.  
a. count      b. touch      c. sight      d. track



3. You'll have to work hard to ..... the rest of the class as they started studying before you.  
a. hold on to      b. catch up with      c. keep on at      d. reach out with
4. .... you read the instructions carefully, you'll understand what to do.  
a. As far as      b. Provided      c. As much as      d. As well as
5. You'll just have to learn these expressions .....  
a. by word      b. to heart      c. by heart      d. with all your heart
6. As a result of all the hard work they put in, the students reached a high ..... of achievement.  
a. level      b. note      c. grade      d. mark
7. I don't seem to be making any progress and it's beginning to ..... me down.  
a. carry      b. get      c. pull      d. take
8. .... a week goes by without the teacher giving us a test.  
a. Infrequently      b. Hardly      c. Practically      d. No sooner

9. Your failure can be ..... to the fact that you didn't do any work.  
a. attributed      b. accused      c. blamed      d. explained
10. You'll have to be strict with that class of children as they quickly get .....  
a. on hand      b. in hand      c. out of hand      d. by hand
11. At this time of the year the number of students in the school tends to .....  
a. dwindle      b. deteriorate      c. reduce      d. lessen
12. Before the end of the course you'll be given a ..... exam to prepare you for the real thing.  
a. fake      b. mock      c. false      d. trial
13. She's ..... stupid — she's just lazy.  
a. by no means      b. by no degree      c. by no extent      d. by no way



14. How are you ..... your studies? Do you feel that you're making headway?  
a. getting down to      b. getting ahead of  
c. getting on with      d. getting up to
15. Do university students receive a(n) ..... from the State in your country?  
a. allowance      b. grant      c. pension      d. income
16. Unless you pull your socks up, you've got no ..... of passing the exam.  
a. chance      b. possibility      c. likelihood      d. probability
17. The candidate ..... nervously up and down waiting to be called for the interview.  
a. marched      b. paced      c. strutted      d. plodded
18. You should start revising for your exam as soon as possible. Any delay will result in ..... time being lost.  
a. conclusive      b. vital      c. priceless      d. invaluable