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Hello this is 6 minutes English, I’m Neil and I’m Rob. What do you remember of your teenage years?

I was a nightmare. I was rude to my parents, always stayed out late, never did my homework, hung out with the wrong people, made lots of bad decisions. How about you Neil?

Well, must the same really. People always say that about teenagers, don’t they? That they go through a period out of control, behave badly. But apparently, it’s not their fault. At least, not directly.

So whose fault is it?

Our brains apparently. Teenager’s brains are still developing in area that control behavior which could mean it complain them for acting the way they do. Before we find out more let’s have our question there have always think teenagers but when was the word teenager first used to refer to the 13 to 19 age group. Was it:

A. the 1920s

B. the 1930s

Or C. 1950s

Any ideas Rob?

Well, I think it came along around the time of rock and rolls so that would have made it the 1950s. that’s my guess.

I’ll have the answer later in the program

Serigin Blakeoff from university college London specializes in the workings of brain particularly the teenage brain. Recently, she was a guest on the BBC radio program The life scientific. She explained that the understanding that the brain is still developing during the teenage years is quite new.

When does she say the first research came out?

The first study showing that the human brain undergoes this very substantial and significant development throughout adolescence and into the twenty the first papers were published in the late nineties. Before that, and for example when I was in university the dogma in the textbooks was that the vast majority brain development goes on in the first few years of life and nothing much changes after mid childhood. That dogma is completely false.

So when did the research in teenage’s brain come out?

Surprisingly, it wasn’t until the late 1990s. this was when she sent a first papers on the subject were published. Papers in this contexts mean the results of scientific research which are published and she didn’t actually talk about teenagers, did she?

No, that’s right. She talked about the period of other lessons this now as a lesson is the period when someone is developing from a child into an adult but it more less is the same as the teenage years. What I found interesting was that before the 1990s people believe something different about the way our brains develop. Yes professor Blackmore said that the dogma had been that our brains are mostly fully developed in early childhood long before as lessons.

Dogma is a word used to describe a strong believe that people are expected to accept is true. So our brains are still developing much later than we originally thought. What does this tell us about teenage behavior of particular interest is an important part of the brain called the prefrontal cortex. Here Professor Blake More again what excuse could she gave for teenagers who don’t get their homework done in time.

The prefrontal cortex is part of the brain right in front just behind the forehead. And it involve a whole range of very high level cognitive tasks such as decision making, planning. We know that this region is undergoing very large amount to do them during the adolescence years and so in terms of the expectation replace on teenagers. For example, plan their whole month might be too much given that we know that the region of the brain critically involve the planning is not developed yet.

So prefrontal cortex is important to cognitive tasks. What are those Rob?

A cognitive task is one that require conscious thinking and processing such as making decisions, planning. It doesn’t happen automatically. You have to think about it. So in the adolescence years, this part of the brain is not fully developed. Note the adjective form here of the noun we had earlier adolescent.

So this gives a good excuse for not doing your homework. I wish I know that. I used to say I left my homework on the bus or the dog has eaten it. Now I could say sorry Sir, my brain isn’t developed enough for the cognitive task of planning my homework.

Yes, I’m sure that would work. Before we wrap up, it’s time to get the answer for this week’s question. I ask when was the word teenager first used to refer to the thirteen to nineteen age groups? Was it

A) The 1920s

B) The 1930s or

C) The 1950s

Rob you said.

I guessed c) 1950s.

And the answer is actually b) the 1930s. Very well-done if you knew that. Now a quick review of today’s vocabulary.

Adolescence is the noun for the period of change from child to adult. An adjective is adolescent. This same word is also the noun for someone who is in the teenage period. So an adolescent might be responsible for adolescent behavior and his or her adolescence.

Exactly. Papers is the word for the public scientific research. Dogma is strongly health beliefs that is not challenge.

The prefrontal cortex is important part of the brain which deals with cognitive tasks. And cognitive tasks are mental processes that require active thoughts in consideration, such as planning and making decisions. Well our decision making skills tell me it’s time to finish.

Well your skills are working well Neil. We maybe going now but you don’t need to you could listen or watch us again and find lots more learning English materials on our social media platforms. You can also visit our website at bbclearningenglish.com.

See you soon. Bye. Bye.

Goodbye