

TeachingEnglish lesson

Benefits of being bilingual

May 2020

Benefits of being bilingual



- Do you know which languages these are?

Hola

Shalom

Merhaba

Selamat siang

Goddag

Anyoung haseyo

Konnichiwa

Nǐn hǎo

Zdravstvuyte

- How many languages can you speak?
- Do you consider yourself to be bilingual or multilingual? Why (not)?



Benefits of being bilingual



Before you read:

1. What percentage of the world's population is bilingual?
2. Why were parents discouraged from teaching their children to speak more than one language from birth in the past?

Benefits of being bilingual

Some facts about bilingualism that may surprise you

It is estimated that more than half the world's population is bilingual, and, in an increasingly globalised world, there are obvious benefits to speaking more than one language. However, for many years, parents were discouraged from teaching their children to speak more than one language from birth. Learning two or more languages simultaneously was believed to cause confusion and slow down academic development. While it is certainly true that children who are learning to speak more than one language as their mother tongue will often mix the languages up or speak a little later, these are temporary problems, and no reason to avoid teaching a child both their parents' languages.

The benefits of being bilingual



1. People estimate that more than half the world's population is bilingual.
2. People believed that learning two or more languages simultaneously caused confusion.

Benefits of being bilingual

Some facts about bilingualism that may surprise you

It is estimated that more than half the world's population is bilingual, and, in an increasingly globalised world, there are obvious benefits to speaking more than one language. However, for many years, parents were discouraged from teaching their children to speak more than one language from birth. Learning two or more languages simultaneously was believed to cause confusion and slow down academic development. While it is certainly true that children who are learning to speak more than one language as their mother tongue will often mix the languages up or speak a little later, these are temporary problems, and no reason to avoid teaching a child both their parents' languages.

Benefits of being bilingual

Impersonal report structures

When we want to report what people generally say or believe or what research has found, we can use an impersonal report structure. There are two ways of doing this:

A *It + passive*

e.g. *It is believed that English is one of the easier languages to learn.*

It is estimated that more than half the world's population is bilingual.

B *Subject + passive + infinitive*

e.g. *English is believed to be one of the easier languages to learn.*

Learning two or more languages simultaneously was believed to cause confusion.

The passive form can, of course, be in any appropriate tense.

Benefits of being bilingual



What are some of the benefits of being bilingual (or multilingual)?

Think about:

- Communication
- Academic / work achievements
- Health
- Other?

Benefits of being bilingual



In fact, there are plenty of reasons to encourage your child to become bilingual from birth. As well as the obvious benefits of being able to communicate with more people, and the possibility of earning more money, children who speak more than one language have been shown to score more highly in achievement tests at school. This is true for mathematics as well as tests of verbal skills. And in later life it has been found that bilinguals, on average, will tend to develop Alzheimer's disease five years later than monolingual speakers. Speaking three or more languages offers even more protection. It seems that the increased number of connections within the brain allows bilinguals to cope better with brain damage.

Benefits of being bilingual



Do you think it's possible to become truly bilingual as an adult? Why (not)?

What might be some of the differences of learning a language at a young age and learning a language as an adult?

Which language skills are harder to perfect as you get older?



Benefits of being bilingual



But is it too late if you haven't already learned a second language in childhood? It used to be thought that the adult brain was very fixed, but recent research has shown that we continue to develop new connections in the brain throughout our lives, meaning that it's perfectly possible to learn another language to a high standard. Older learners are less likely to have native-like pronunciation, but they are better at learning vocabulary as they are able to use far more skills and strategies than children. And learning a language is like using a muscle – the more you use it the stronger it gets, meaning that you will find your third language easier than your second, and so on.

Benefits of being bilingual



Complete the second sentence so that it has the same meaning as the first

1. People say that the best way to learn a foreign language is to live in the country.

Living in the country _____

Benefits of being bilingual



Complete the second sentence so that it has the same meaning as the first

1. People say that the best way to learn a foreign language is to live in the country.

Living in the country *is said to be the best way to learn a foreign language.*

Benefits of being bilingual



Complete the second sentence so that it has the same meaning as the first

2 People used to think that adults couldn't lose the accent from their first language.

It _____

Benefits of being bilingual



Complete the second sentence so that it has the same meaning as the first

2 People used to think that adults couldn't lose the accent from their first language.

It used to be thought that adults couldn't lose the accent from their first language.

Benefits of being bilingual



Complete the second sentence so that it has the same meaning as the first

3 People estimate that over 1,500 different languages are spoken in India.

It _____

Benefits of being bilingual



Complete the second sentence so that it has the same meaning as the first

3 People estimate that over 1,500 different languages are spoken in India.

It is estimated that over 1,500 different languages are spoken in India

Benefits of being bilingual



Complete the second sentence so that it has the same meaning as the first

4 People estimate that only 20 per cent of Americans speak a second language.

Only 20 per cent of Americans _____

Benefits of being bilingual



Complete the second sentence so that it has the same meaning as the first

4 People estimate that only 20 per cent of Americans speak a second language.

Only 20 per cent of Americans *are estimated to speak a second language.*

Benefits of being bilingual



Complete the second sentence so that it has the same meaning as the first

- 5 A hundred years ago, people considered that talking to a baby in two languages was a bad thing.

A hundred years ago, talking to a baby in two languages _____

Benefits of being bilingual



Complete the second sentence so that it has the same meaning as the first

- 5 A hundred years ago, people considered that talking to a baby in two languages was a bad thing.

A hundred years ago, talking to a baby in two languages *was considered to be a bad thing*.

Benefits of being bilingual



Write five sentences (about anything) using an impersonal report structure and one of the verbs below. They can be true or false. Read the sentences to your partner. Can they guess which sentences are true?

say

think

believe

consider

estimate

show

prove

find

TeachingEnglish lessons

Benefits of being bilingual

Thanks for attending the lesson