

Answers



RD Classroom February 2016 Beginner

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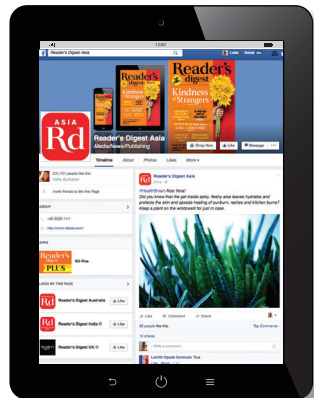
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ANSWERS FOR 'KNOW BETTER' (PAGE 66)

1. Dr Cyrus Raji states (page 68) that humans became smarter when they settled close to rivers. What reasons are suggested for this? Do these reasons make sense to you?

Your answer should include a majority of the following points. Research suggests that eating fish can have a positive impact on the brain. If humans were living near rivers they were likely to be catching and eating fish on a more regular basis than when they were settled further away from rivers. The research mentioned in the article suggests eating fish can actually enhance the physical size of the brain and the brain's performance.

Whether or not you agree with this view is up to you. If you agree, your reasons will probably echo those of the article. Give yourself five extra points if you did original research to show that many ancient civilisations in addition to those in the story were settled around rivers and the ocean.

If you disagree, your reasoning may include the fact that rivers were centres of early civilisations for reasons aside from fish, and that other factors, including fertile soils, easy irrigation, a constant source of drinking water and being at the centre of trade routes made humans smarter. You could argue that the link with river locations is coincidental and that other things, such as better agriculture or cities, were the cause of humans becoming smarter. Give yourself five extra points if you did extra research to show that there were other ancient civilisations such as the Yucutan Mayans who did not live near rivers or the ocean and yet made great strides in development.

2. Why might writing notes and letters using pen and paper instead of a computer be better for people? Which do you prefer?

Your answer should be based on the story and include facts such as writing by hand can be more effective when it comes to absorbing new information. According to findings the physical act of writing – not typing – activates both our brain's sensorimotor and language centres. That element of motor memory is involved in recognising the words on a page by sight – possibly meaning that the note you're making will leave a lasting

visual impression in your brain, more so than when you type. Your preference is up to you, but give yourself extra points if you gave reasons for why it makes sense to you.

3. Smoking is bad for you for many reasons but the article suggests it may also be bad for your brain. Why is this? Can a person change this if they stop smoking?

It was discovered that smokers had a thinner brain cortex than those who didn't smoke. As the cortex is involved in everything that requires higher-order thinking – attention, mathematical reasoning, logical reasoning, our capacity to juggle a lot of concepts at once – smokers end up with a lower level of cognitive abilities than non-smokers. If a person stops smoking this can be changed, as the cortex can begin to repair itself once a person quits. Your answer should cover these main points.

4. Is physical exercise helpful for the brain and why? What useful exercise tips does the article give the reader?

Exercise is very helpful for the brain. Aerobic exercise stimulates the burst of new brain cells and allows more neurons to survive. It can also improve imagination, creativity and attention. Useful tips to incorporate exercise into daily life include going for a walk, dancing to your favourite song and doing speed housework. Give yourself a point for every one of these facts you mentioned.

ACTIVITY The writer tells us why coffee may be good for your long-term memory. Create a poster explaining to people how coffee may be good for them. Use the positive points in the article to help you convince people to drink a cup of coffee.

Give yourself five points if you made a poster, and another five points if you showed it to someone else.

Posters are a very good way to explain an idea, as they require you to use short sentences that can be understood quickly and simply. If you can understand something well enough to explain it simply, this usually means you understand it very well. Try the poster trick the next time you need to make your point clear to someone else. You don't need to show them the poster, but the act of making it

will help you understand your topic better and make it easier for you to help others understand your point of view.

ANSWERS FOR 'POWERFUL WAYS TO USE BODY LANGUAGE' (PAGE 81)

1. What do you think the term 'body language' means?

Body language is a term used to describe all the communication done by the posture of the body and the expressions of the face. The other term for body language is 'non-verbal communication', meaning the message is conveyed without using words. It can be as simple as poking your tongue out to be cheeky and as complicated as professional dancing or sign language.

2. What did a University of Maryland study discover about different types of voice? How is this discovery useful when dealing with young children?

A slow voice has a soothing effect, while a loud, fast voice can stimulate anger or fear. Using a slow and soothing voice, you can design games that will calm children down and help them to settle down before bedtime or after playing at school. Give yourself extra points if you mentioned this could also help children who are anxious or upset.

3. How long does physical contact with another person need to last to create a human bond?

As little as 1/40th of a second is enough. So give that person you find difficult to get along with a high five or handshake and you may find you both start warming towards each other.

4. Why would a low-pitched voice make listeners think that you were feeling confident and unstressed?

When you are stressed, your vocal chords can be constricted (tightened), making your voice come out higher than usual. A low-pitched voice makes people think you are relaxed, and therefore that you are more likely to be confident.

5. How should you hold your chin to convince someone that you are making a sincere apology? Why?

You should hold it in a centred position, so you look as though you are sincere but are not being weak in apologising.

ACTIVITY Try using one or more of the powerful body language suggestions listed in the story. Did it change the way you felt? Did it change the way people reacted to you? Write a paragraph or two about your experience.

Give yourself three points for trying any of the body language suggestions and then three points each for giving answers to the remaining parts of the question.

Did your experiment have unexpected consequences? Write to us at rdaeditor@readersdigest.com to tell us your story and you could appear on the letters page of the magazine!

ANSWERS FOR 'UNDER PRESSURE' (PAGE 83)

1. What does the writer of the article say the internet provides? What do these two qualities facilitate?

According to the story, the internet provides anonymity and unlimited word count, which facilitates rants. Give yourself extra points if you noted that these two qualities can also bring about bad manners or even cruelty towards individuals in both the public and private parts of the internet.

2. 'Venting' can be good for a person but perhaps not online. Why is this? What is suggested as the alternative?

Though venting online can seem to initially help, research shows that releasing frustrations online can cause a person to become more aggravated and annoyed rather than helping them feel better. It may also teach people to become more aggressive with others. A better alternative is to write down your thoughts and feelings on paper as this has a more positive and calming effect and you cannot then decide to easily email the result. Give yourself full points if you included references to all these points.

3. Is exercise useful for helping people who are frustrated? Why?

Yes, exercise can help to relieve anger, stress and frustration. Moderate to vigorous activities such as jogging or cycling are particularly effective, as they have a calming effect compared to violent activity. They allow a person the opportunity to think in a more relaxed way and lift a person's mood. Give yourself two points for answering yes and three points for explaining why.

4. What do you understand the term 'self distancing' to mean? How does this help you deal with stress and anger? Is a thought such as *my friend is angry, but I think she is mostly angry that she is running late, not that I ordered a cold drink without her* an example of self distancing?

The article tells us that self distancing is the ability to reflect on yourself from an external perspective, like a fly on the wall. That thought is an example of self distancing, as the person's friend may have said something rude to them when they arrived at the café to find the person had already ordered a cold drink. But that comment was unlikely to mean they were genuinely upset with the person and more likely to mean they were upset with themselves for being late. By understanding this, the person is less likely to respond with anger, and so an argument is unlikely to erupt between them. Give yourself a point for each correct part of the answer and explanation.

ACTIVITY Everyone becomes stressed, angry and frustrated at times. Think of a time when you became frustrated and didn't act in the best way you could have. After reading the article, what could you have done instead to help or what might you try in the future to help yourself or someone else?

Your answers will depend on your own experience. Give yourself points for using the story to formulate ideas and then extra points for every practical suggestion you were able to implement.