**Student’s Worksheet 1**

**Brain training – text cohesion**

**Complete the gaps in the paragraphs using the words from the box.**

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| --- |
| so these others it this ones |

Have you ever thought about why some of us excel in sports, whereas \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are better at playing the guitar or performing mathematical calculations? For many years, scientists have tried to find out which parts of our talents and abilities are determined by our genes and which parts are influenced by the environment.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Many of us look for ways to harness the full potential of our brains, and the internet is full of tips encouraging us to do \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Advice includes sleeping well, eating healthy food, and exercising. But there is also a technique called brain training. After doing just a few minutes of daily brain exercises, users report impressive changes, ranging from improved concentration to getting higher scores on computer games.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

We know that doing everyday tasks like these helps shape your brain, and we also know that the potential to train your brain exists. Unfortunately, researchers are still trying to understand how to achieve \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Would you take the risk and potentially waste your time ‘brain training’, or would you rather spend your time doing something fun, like playing basketball with your friends?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In addition to this, by remembering new words and information, connections are built in the brain and existing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are strengthened. So, the more knowledge you have, the easier it becomes to concentrate. Have you ever noticed how the rest of the world seems to disappear when you are absorbed in reading a story? This is possible because your brain is actually hard at work.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Without the use of either of these capabilities, you would not understand the words that are used nor could you create a full story in your mind. Research has shown that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are skills which can be improved upon by simply enjoying stories. For example, trying to understand and remember what’s happening in a story is ‘brain training’ in itself.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Even though developing brains are flexible, and it should be possible to make yourself smarter, the evidence that ‘brain training’ will help you do so is mixed at best. If you want your brain to function at its optimal level, put \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to work and keep on learning new things.

**Student’s Worksheet 2**

**Choose the correct paragraph** **(A–F) for each gap. You do not need to use one of the paragraphs.**

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**A** However, few of us realise the complexity of the task. When you engage with a book, you need to keep track of different characters, their goals, and details about their personalities and behaviour. Moreover, you frequently need to read between the lines to understand what the writer means. To accomplish this, you apply both your general knowledge and your executive functions.

**B** In contrast, some people noted a difference and were keen to incorporate these tasks into their routines. Although few of them were able to quantify or clearly articulate how their lives had changed as a result of ‘brain training’, they believed their actions would help them in the long run.

**C** You’d probably choose the latter, and research shows that physical activity is not only good for your body, but also for your brain. Done regularly, it’s proven to be beneficial for school performance. Similarly, reading books appears to have a significant influence on your thinking skills. Studies suggest that regular reading helps make you smarter by building your vocabulary and increasing your general knowledge.

**D** It turns out there is no simple answer to the question, because these two factors always work together. Although the traits we inherit may influence our capacity to learn, our surroundings determine the rate of development. Thus, there is some built-in flexibility in the way the brain develops which helps us adjust to the circumstances that we grow up in.

**E** Besides increasing your memory and comprehension abilities, reading might also encourage readers to take the perspective of and sympathise with different characters. These are important skills for real life, but it seems highly unlikely that they could be acquired or even practised using the kinds of techniques used in ‘brain training’.

**F** Despite the claims, ‘brain training’ is just practising the brain’s executive functions by performing complex mental tasks. Although research has shown that this can result in changes in the brain, that is less impressive than it sounds. In fact, everything you do makes small changes in your brain, whether it is doing your homework, meeting friends, or reading this article.

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