

ANGLAIS

Durée : 1 heure

Coefficient : 1

## How to learn ? Early and often !

Ana, 23, a graduate student at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris, regularly impresses the people she meets with her ability to switch effortlessly among five languages: English, French Spanish, Portuguese, and Hungarian. The daughter of Venezuelan diplomats, Ana has lived in Caracas, Washington, Lisbon and Budapest, as well as Paris. She plays down her linguistic ability: *"If you had grown up in all the places where I've grown up, you'd be multilingual too"*, she says. *"It's really not that difficult"*. That modest attitude may have a scientific foundation. According to Fred Genesee, a professor of psycholinguistics at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, a child simply needs to be exposed to a different language for at least 30 per cent of his or her waking time to acquire it. That means up to three languages can be learned simultaneously, although the learning process will be more complex.

The most frequent learning systems are "one parent - one language", in which each parent speaks only his or her native language with his child, or else "minority language at home", in which the entire family speaks one language at home, and the community language with everyone else. Other systems, such as speaking an additional language with a nanny, or in a total immersion programme, will also work if used consistently. Recent studies show that learning several languages may even increase brain power. According to a study carried out by researchers at Dartmouth College, in Hanover, New Hampshire, comparing bilinguals with monolinguals, and using near-infrared spectrology, brain activity is similar in both groups when speaking a single language, but activity increases in both left and right brain hemispheres when both languages are being processed simultaneously.

Because their cultures tend to be monolingual, Americans and many Europeans are often amazed when they meet somebody with the ability to speak more than one language, let alone four or five. In reality, more than half the world's population is bilingual, due to ethnic diversity within communities, the legacy of a colonial past, tribal or religious subgroupings, or basic economic necessity.

Education systems across the developed world have begun implementing foreign language classes as early as kindergarten. But, to achieve perfect fluency, a language should be taught even earlier. Research shows that even in infancy, ability to detect different sounds and nuances in foreign languages diminishes after the first six months of age. McGill's advice to adults struggling to learn languages is to immerse themselves in an environment where the new language is vitally needed to communicate, rather than for social purposes.

(Adapted from International Herald-Tribune, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2007)

### I. Version (6 points)

Traduire à partir de "because their cultures" jusqu'à la fin du texte.





## QUESTIONNAIRE A CHOIX MULTIPLE

*Inscrivez la lettre qui convient (A B C D) dans la case correspondante*

N° de candidat :

NOTE

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