

Bilingual Education: Embracing Multiple Languages in School

COMPREHENSION • VOCABULARY • DISCUSSION

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Reading Passage

Read the passage carefully. Each paragraph is labelled with a letter for easy reference.

- A** In today's globalized world, bilingual education has gained significant attention and importance. Schools across various countries are increasingly adopting bilingual programs, recognizing the numerous benefits of teaching students in two languages. For instance, in Toronto, the French Immersion program has become quite popular among parents and educators alike. Students not only learn French as a second language but also study essential subjects like math, science, and social studies in French. This immersion helps them become fluent in both languages while simultaneously grasping complex concepts across different disciplines. Moreover, research indicates that bilingual students often perform better academically compared to their monolingual peers, as they develop enhanced cognitive skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity.
- B** However, implementing bilingual education is not without its challenges. Teachers must be adequately trained to deliver lessons effectively in both languages, which requires ongoing professional development and support. Additionally, parents may have concerns about their children mastering the primary language while learning a second one. For example, in a recent survey conducted in Chicago, some parents expressed worries that their children might struggle with English if they spent too much time learning Spanish. Nevertheless, educators emphasize that bilingualism can lead to greater cultural awareness, improved communication skills, and enhanced career opportunities in an increasingly interconnected world. As schools continue to embrace multiple languages and diverse curricula, the hope is that students will become more adaptable and open-minded individuals, ready to thrive in a diverse and multicultural environment.

Vocabulary Glossary

Key words and phrases from the passage. Study them before attempting the exercise below.

WORD / PHRASE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
globalized	when different parts of the world become connected through business and culture	<i>In a globalized world, people can easily communicate with others from different countries.</i>
immersion	a way of learning a language by using it all the time	<i>Language immersion helps students become fluent by surrounding them with the language.</i>
cognitive	related to thinking and understanding	<i>Playing chess can improve your cognitive skills, like problem-solving and planning.</i>
monolingual	speaking only one language	<i>Most people in the small town were monolingual and spoke only Italian.</i>
fluency	the ability to speak or write a language easily and well	<i>Her fluency in Spanish impressed everyone at the conference.</i>
curricula	the subjects that are taught in a school or program	<i>The school's curricula include science, math, and art.</i>
interconnected	when things are connected and depend on each other	<i>The global economy is interconnected, so problems in one country can affect others.</i>
adaptable	able to change or adjust to new conditions	<i>Being adaptable is important when moving to a new city or starting a new job.</i>

Vocabulary Exercise — Fill in the Blank

Use one word or phrase from the glossary above to complete each sentence. Each item is used only once. Answers are on the final page.

1. Many schools offer programs in language _____ to help students learn a second language effectively.
2. Studying two languages can improve a student's _____ skills, like memory and attention.
3. The world is becoming more _____, with people traveling and working across countries.
4. She achieved _____ in French after living in Paris for a year.
5. In an _____ world, countries rely on each other for trade and information.
6. Schools need to update their _____ regularly to include new and relevant subjects.

Comprehension Questions

These questions are different from the online practice test. Choose the best answer (A, B, C, or D). Answers and explanations are on the final page.

Question 1

What is a key reason some parents are concerned about bilingual education?

- A. Their children might not learn the primary language well.
- B. Bilingual education is too expensive.
- C. It takes too much time away from other activities.
- D. There are not enough trained teachers.

Question 2

Why is teacher training important for bilingual education?

- A. Teachers need to be able to teach effectively in both languages.
- B. It helps teachers manage large classes.
- C. It reduces the cost of education.
- D. It allows for more creative teaching methods.

Question 3

What is one benefit of bilingual education according to the research mentioned?

- A. Improved academic performance.
- B. Faster language learning.
- C. Better social skills.
- D. Higher physical fitness.

Question 4

What is the author's main purpose in writing this passage?

- A. To highlight the benefits and challenges of bilingual education.
- B. To criticize the lack of bilingual programs in schools.
- C. To provide statistics on language learning.
- D. To describe the history of bilingual education.

Question 5

What does the passage suggest about cultural awareness in bilingual education?

- A. It increases cultural awareness among students.
- B. It's not affected by language learning.
- C. It's less important than academic skills.
- D. It only applies to certain cultures.

Discussion & Writing Prompts

Each prompt references a specific detail from the passage above. Use for classroom discussion or a short written response (150–200 words).

1. The passage mentions that research shows bilingual students often perform better academically than their monolingual peers. Do you agree with this finding? Why or why not?

2. In paragraph two, a survey from Chicago shows some parents' concerns about bilingual education. What are some potential solutions to address these concerns?

3. The passage states that bilingual education can lead to improved communication skills and enhanced career opportunities. How do you think this could impact students in your country?

Answer Key

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Q1 A

Q2 A

Q3 A

Q4 A

Q5 A

VOCABULARY EXERCISE

FIB1 immersion

FIB2 cognitive

FIB3 globalized

FIB4 fluency

FIB5 interconnected

FIB6 curricula

Comprehension Question Explanations

Why the correct answer is right — and why each wrong option is incorrect.

1. What is a key reason some parents are concerned about bilingual education?

✓ A — Their children might not learn the primary language well.

Parents worry their children might struggle with English if they focus too much on a second language.

✗ B — Bilingual education is too expensive.

The passage does not mention the cost of bilingual education as a concern.

✗ C — It takes too much time away from other activities.

The passage does not discuss time taken away from other activities.

✗ D — There are not enough trained teachers.

Although teacher training is a challenge, it's not mentioned as a parental concern.

2. Why is teacher training important for bilingual education?

✓ A — Teachers need to be able to teach effectively in both languages.

The passage states that teachers must be trained to deliver lessons in both languages.

✗ B — It helps teachers manage large classes.

Class size management is not mentioned as a reason for teacher training.

✗ C — It reduces the cost of education.

The passage does not mention cost reduction as a reason for teacher training.

✗ D — It allows for more creative teaching methods.

While creative methods might be a benefit, it's not the main reason given.

3. What is one benefit of bilingual education according to the research mentioned?

✓ A — Improved academic performance.

Research indicates that bilingual students often perform better academically than monolingual peers.

✗ B — Faster language learning.

The passage does not state that language learning is faster.

✗ C — Better social skills.

Better social skills are not specifically mentioned as a benefit.

✗ D — Higher physical fitness.

Physical fitness is not discussed in the passage.

4. What is the author's main purpose in writing this passage?

✓ A — To highlight the benefits and challenges of bilingual education.

The passage discusses both benefits and challenges of bilingual education.

✗ B — To criticize the lack of bilingual programs in schools.

The passage does not criticize the lack of programs.

✗ C — To provide statistics on language learning.

The passage does not focus on statistics.

✗ D — To describe the history of bilingual education.

The passage does not discuss the history of bilingual education.

5. What does the passage suggest about cultural awareness in bilingual education?

✓ A — It increases cultural awareness among students.

The passage states that bilingualism can lead to greater cultural awareness.

✗ B — It's not affected by language learning.

The passage suggests that language learning does affect cultural awareness.

✗ C — It's less important than academic skills.

Cultural awareness is mentioned as a benefit, not less important.

✗ D — It only applies to certain cultures.

The passage does not limit cultural awareness to certain cultures.

MORE B2 LEVEL READING PRACTICE

Letters Refugee Camp Family Story Hope — <https://www.esl-tests.com/reading/b2/letters-refugee-camp-family-story-hope>

Global Health Preparedness Lessons Recent Pandemics — <https://www.esl-tests.com/reading/b2/global-health-preparedness-lessons-recent-pandemics>

Climate Migration Communities Move — <https://www.esl-tests.com/reading/b2/climate-migration-communities-move>