

The Swaminarayan

Education is that which liberates

Dear Parents, Guardians, Pupils and Friends,

Welcome back for the final half-term of this academic year which is going to be extremely busy with the last series of GCSE and A Level examinations, the End of Year examinations for Seniors 1-3, reports for the end of year and preparation for the next academic year. The Year Plan with all the dates for next academic year is nearly complete. We will forward a full schedule of events before the end of this term.

Theme for the week

The theme for next week is, “**Foreign Language**”. Writer’s Corner explores the benefits of bilingualism.

GCSE & A Level Art Exhibition 20 June 2019

This year’s Art Exhibition will take place at 3.45pm in the Art Studio on Thursday, 20th June 2019. Parents, pupils and their guests are invited to view some outstanding pieces of work.

Internal Examinations for S1-3

The End of Year Examinations for Seniors 1-3 will be begin next week on Wednesday, 12th June 2019 and finish the following week on Tuesday, 18th June 2019. Due to the small number of pupils in S1-3, all the examinations will take place in a designated classroom.

GSCE & A Level Examinations

We are only half-way through all the GCSE and A Levels examinations. So, work is still continuing. I am sure you will continue to support your children during this stressful period.

Senior 4 Students

We have amended the timetable of all S4 pupils who have completed their GCSE in Gujarati and Religious Studies by adding extra lessons in French, Chemistry and Mathematics.

WRITER’S CORNER



Why learn a foreign language? The benefits of bilingualism

Anne Merritt is an EFL lecturer

Physiological studies have found that speaking two or more languages is a great asset to the cognitive process. The brains of bilingual people operate differently than single language speakers, and these differences offer several mental benefits.

Below are seven cognitive advantages to learning a foreign language. Many of these attributes are only apparent in people who speak multiple languages regularly – if you haven’t spoken a foreign tongue since your A levels, your brain might not be reaping these bilingual benefits. However, people who begin language study in their adult lives can still achieve the same levels of fluency as a young learner, and still reap the same mental benefits, too.

1. You become smarter

Speaking a foreign language improves the functionality of your brain by challenging it to recognise, negotiate meaning, and communicate in different language systems. This skill boosts your ability to negotiate meaning in other problem-solving tasks as well.

Students who study foreign languages tend to score better on standardised tests than their monolingual peers, particularly in the categories of maths, reading, and vocabulary.

2. You build multitasking skills

Multilingual people, especially children, are skilled at switching between two systems of speech, writing, and structure. According to a study from the Pennsylvania State University, this “juggling” skill makes them good multitaskers, because they can easily switch between different structures. In one study, participants used a driving simulator while doing separate, distracting tasks at the same time. The research found that people who spoke more than one language made fewer errors in their driving.

3. You stave off Alzheimer’s and dementia

Several studies have been conducted on this topic, and the results are consistent. For monolingual adults, the mean age for the first signs of dementia is 71.4. For adults who speak two or more languages, the mean age for those first signs is 75.5. Studies considered factors such as education level, income level, gender, and physical health, but the results were consistent.

4. Your memory improves

Educators often liken the brain to a muscle, because it functions better with exercise. Learning a language involves memorising rules and vocabulary, which helps strengthen that mental “muscle.” This exercise improves overall memory, which means that multiple language speakers are better at remembering lists or sequences. Studies show that bilinguals are better at retaining shopping lists, names, and directions.

5. You become more perceptive

A study from Spain’s University of Pompeu Fabra revealed that multilingual people are better at observing their surroundings. They are more adept at focusing on relevant information and editing out the irrelevant. They’re also better at spotting misleading information. Is it any surprise that Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot are skilled polyglots?

6. Your decision-making skills improve

According to a study from the University of Chicago, bilinguals tend to make more rational decisions. Any language contains nuance and subtle implications in its vocabulary, and these biases can subconsciously influence your judgment. Bilinguals are more confident with their choices after thinking it over in the second language and seeing whether their initial conclusions still stand up.

7. You improve your English

Learning a foreign language draws your focus to the mechanics of language: grammar, conjugations, and sentence structure. This makes you more aware of language, and the ways it can be structured and manipulated. These skills can make you a more effective communicator and a sharper editor and writer. Language speakers also develop a better ear for listening, since they’re skilled at distinguishing meaning from discreet sounds.

Yours sincerely,

Nilesh Manani