Talking about language

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
INTERMEDIATE | B1-B2

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Tick the correct category for each language word.

Word | Skill | Feature | Learning process | Attitude

1 proficient [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
2 idiom [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
3 immersion [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
4 self-conscious [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
5 register [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
6 rote learning [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
7 comprehension [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
8 code-switching [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

2 Correct the mistake in each sentence.

1 She is proficient of three languages. _____
2 That's a common idiom of English. _____
3 He learned the language through immersion of it. _____
4 I feel self-conscious about of my accent. _____
5 She switched to more formal of register. _____
6 Rote learning of vocabulary doesn't always help. _____
7 My comprehension of listening has improved. _____
8 Bilinguals often code-switch of between languages. _____

3 Choose the more suitable description.

1 For someone who speaks a language very well: proficient / beginner.
2 For an expression whose meaning isn't literal: idiom / literal phrase.
3 For learning through constant exposure to a language: immersion / occasional study.
4 For feeling embarrassed about how you sound: self-conscious / confident.
5 For the level of formality used in speech: register / vocabulary size.
6 For memorising through repetition: rote learning / understanding meaning.

Talking about language

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4 Complete the profiles with words from the box.

code-switching | comprehension | idiom | immersion | proficient | register | rote learning | self-conscious

Profile A: She became 1 _____ in Spanish after a year of 2 _____, living entirely with a local family.
Profile B: He often feels 3 _____ about his accent when speaking in meetings, though his listening 4 _____ is excellent.
Profile C: She switches easily between formal and informal 5 _____ depending on the situation, a habit known as 6 _____ when it happens between languages.
Profile D: His teacher relied heavily on 7 _____ of vocabulary lists, which he found less effective than learning through a natural 8 _____ he heard often.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

How adults learn languages differently from children

Researchers studying language acquisition note that adults and children approach the task quite differently. Children typically acquire native-like pronunciation through years of natural immersion, absorbing patterns without conscious rule-learning. Adults, by contrast, often rely more heavily on explicit grammar instruction and rote learning, which can build strong comprehension relatively quickly but sometimes leaves learners self-conscious about imperfect pronunciation. Interestingly, adult learners frequently outperform children in the earliest stages of vocabulary acquisition, since they can draw on existing knowledge of grammar and language structure from their first language, even if achieving a native-like accent later proves considerably harder.

1 How do adults and children approach language learning differently? _____
2 How do children typically acquire native-like pronunciation? _____
3 What do adults often rely more heavily on? _____
4 What can this leave adult learners feeling? _____
5 In what area do adult learners frequently outperform children early on? _____
6 What proves considerably harder for adults later? _____

6 Rewrite each phrase using the word in capitals.

1 She speaks the language very well. PROFICIENT _____
2 He learned by living completely surrounded by the language. IMMERSION _____

Talking about language

3 She felt embarrassed about her pronunciation. SELF-CONSCIOUS _____

4 He switches between languages mid-sentence. CODE-SWITCHING _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 100-120 word account comparing how children and adults learn languages differently. Include specific examples.

[ ] Use at least ten target expressions. [ ] Include polite, precise wording. [ ] Organise the account clearly.

Talking about language

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INTERMEDIATE | B1-B2

ANSWER KEY

1 Categories

1 Skill 2 Feature 3 Learning process 4 Attitude 5 Feature 6 Learning process 7 Skill 8 Learning process

2 Corrections

1 proficient in three languages 2 a common English idiom 3 through immersion
4 self-conscious about my accent 5 switched to a more formal register
6 Rote learning of vocabulary 7 My listening comprehension 8 code-switch between languages

3 Suitable descriptions

1 proficient 2 idiom 3 immersion 4 self-conscious 5 register 6 rote learning

4 Profiles

1 proficient 2 immersion 3 self-conscious 4 comprehension 5 register 6 code-switching
7 rote learning 8 idiom

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Adults and children approach the task quite differently.
2 Through years of natural immersion, absorbing patterns without conscious rule-learning.
3 Explicit grammar instruction and rote learning.
4 Self-conscious about imperfect pronunciation.
5 Vocabulary acquisition.
6 Achieving a native-like accent.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 She is proficient in the language. 2 He learned through immersion.
3 She felt self-conscious. 4 He code-switches between languages.

Over to you

Answers will vary. Check range, respectful register and clear organisation.