

Describing learners of English

Young learners	Teenagers	Adults
Younger children (from five upwards): • Enthusiastic about learning • Learn best through play • Use everything in the physical world for learning • Use language skills without analysing why or how they use them • Like to do well and enjoy being praised • Have lively imaginations • Cannot sometimes tell the difference between fact and fiction • Have a short attention span • Will talk a lot if engaged • Often do not understand the adult world, but just go along with it • Are very good at imitating people • Cannot decide what to learn • Self-centered • Comfortable with the idea that there are rules and routines Older children, from ten and above: • Are making sense of the adult world around them	• Synaptic pruning of the frontal cortex causes intense reactions that override the more rational pre-frontal cortex reasoning • Activities that last too long or are slow-paced become boring quickly; activities should be fast-paced and short • Huge reserves of energy, passionate attachments to interests • Humorous and creative • Emotions overwrite their reasoning abilities • May have problems with authority	• Are often embarrassed to go back to school • Likely to be more critical and demanding • Ready to complain to the teacher or the institution if they feel the teaching is unsatisfactory • Can engage with abstract thought • Have a whole range of life experiences to draw on • Have their own set patterns of learning • Tend to be more disciplined • More prepared to struggle on despite boredom • More likely to miss lessons for a variety of reasons

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can tell the difference between fact and fiction• Have views about what they like/don't like• Ask a lot of questions• Are able to work solely with the spoken word, without always needing the physical world to help• Can make some decisions about their own learning• Can understand abstract concepts and symbols• Have a strong sense of what is right and fair | | |
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