



UNIT 1

Live and learn

Introduction

Ways of thinking and learning are of obvious importance to students of all subjects. It will be of benefit to the students to start the year off reflecting on the ways they think and learn, and asking themselves how they can improve in these areas. Even if they do not come up with any very clear answers, awareness of the issue will be useful to them as the year goes by and they have a number of new learning experiences in their studies.

One area of modern education strongly emphasized as essential is the ability to think critically and creatively. This is the topic of the first passage which recounts an interesting story of a teacher who had a rather harsh method of making her point about the need to think for yourself. Talking point then concerns the different styles of thinking and mental strengths different people have. The students will enjoy identifying themselves with one or other of the groups.

The second passage says more on this topic as well as offering practical advice on such matters as note-taking, research and essay writing.

The passage in Reading across cultures explains a theory that people from different cultures organize their thoughts in rather different ways. The idea has attracted plenty of controversy as well as research and will offer another opportunity for the learners to reflect on their own approaches.

Activities to start the unit

- Greet the class and introduce yourself.
- Tell Ss that, very suitably, the first unit is about learning and thinking.
- Ask Ss in turn to tell the class what aspects of their learning they found hardest last year and how they would like to improve the way they learn and think.
- Ask the class to brainstorm verbs and expressions of thinking, learning, knowing and understanding (eg *accept, analyze, believe, catch, conceive, comprehend, conclude, consider, deduce, discover, estimate, evaluate, find out, follow, get, grasp, guess, identify, imagine, judge, learn, meditate, note, perceive, presume, realize, reason, recall, reflect on, reckon, recognize, remember, see, study, suppose, understand* etc).
- Then move on to Starting point.

Starting point

①

TEACHING STEPS

教学步骤

- Ask Ss to introduce themselves to their partners and then to read through the list of tips in Starting point. Predict which ones will be different from the recording and in what ways.
- After collecting the opinions of a few pairs, play the recording.

Scripts:

Think about it!

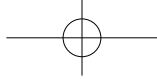
Here are some tips for students who want to increase their thinking power.

- The more carefully you think about something, the more interesting it becomes.
- A university student can learn a lot from other students as well as from teachers.
- If you take a break when you get stuck on a difficult passage in a book, it may be easier to understand when you come back to it.
- Don't believe everything your teacher says. Be prepared to check the facts.
- Read your lecture notes again within 24 hours. Otherwise they may not make sense to you anymore.
- If you have any good ideas while you are in bed, get out and write them down. Otherwise you will forget them.
- It's important to believe in your own ideas more than anybody else's.

Language for teachers and students

Reacting to people's opinions

- Sounds good.
- Definitely true.
- That agrees / accords with my experience.
- Seems sensible.
- Well, I think it has a certain truth.
- That's true sometimes, but not all the time.
- That depends on a lot of factors.
- I'm not so sure about that.
- I doubt that.
- I can't say I agree with that.
- What a strange idea!
- That's rather silly.
- No way!
- That's nonsense.

**2****TEACHING TIPS**

教学建议

T may show the class this dialogue on the first three points of the tips as an example of the sort of thing they should be producing.

A: *The first seems true to me. If you just look at an ant for a moment, it is of little interest, but if you start thinking about how they live, what they do and so on, it gets fascinating, and it's like that with most things.*

B: *Yes, but I am glad you added "most things". Surely if someone bores you with a dull story, the more you think about it, the stupider it will get. Not everything in the world is interesting.*

A: *Point taken.*

B: *I have found the second tip to be true. I have learnt so much from the people I have met here.*

A: *Yes, definitely – though perhaps there is a difference. You are more likely to learn subject knowledge from your teacher and other types of knowledge from friends who have had different experiences of life.*

B: *Yes, we spend more time with our friends than our teachers, so that also makes a difference.*

A: *I agree totally with the third.*

B: *Yes, there is no point in just reading and rereading, hoping you will understand. You need to go and give your mind a break, and then try again when you feel fresh.*

A: *Then it is often very clear and you can understand what the problem is.*

B: *Yes, tired brains don't work well.*

Shorter points on the rest tips:

- 4th one: *I think that depends on the sort of thing the teacher says. If a teacher gives you facts about the subject, they are not likely to be wrong; but you can question opinions.*
- 5th one: *This is very good advice. I wish I took it more often. Some of my notes are like a strange foreign language!*
- 6th one: *Even better keep a notebook with you all the time. You can put it by the bath as long as you are careful not to get it wet, as well as beside your bed. It is better than getting up and looking around for pen and paper.*
- 7th one: *Maybe, but there have been plenty of wiser and cleverer people than me so probably I should listen to their opinions first.*

Active reading

Thinking for yourself

1

- 1 The main meaning is not simply adopting the opinions of others, but taking the time and effort to form your own opinion, to be an independent thinker.

- 2 It is of great importance to think for yourself; you couldn't just simply accept the views of others. But we should also listen to the wiser people, as they tend to advise us according to their deeper experience.
- 3 One way is, on any question, to try to think about different points of view. This means you do not just accept an idea but test it against others and only adopt it if it seems the best one to you.
- 4 Yes, it is possible but not easy. It has to be a process. I think it comes slowly when students, with the encouragement of teachers, learn to challenge themselves in a stimulating environment. One day they will find themselves actually thinking for themselves. If the teacher praises them for this, it will strengthen the habit.

Background information

The passage *Thinking for yourself* is an extract from the book *Time to Think* (1999) written by Nancy Kline, an American consultant and coach on leadership development. The expression “thinking for yourself” means considering facts and making decisions for yourself, instead of depending on someone else’s judgment or simply following others. This is in Western cultures associated with the highly-regarded values of being independent, creative and original. Other cultures may emphasize the value of wise people and the need for harmony in a group.

The style of the passage is very forthright and straightforward. The writer is on the attack and very critical of other views on the matter. The paragraphs are short and the style is conversational. In fact, the passage resembles the presentation at the beginning of one of the training sessions Nancy Kline holds for various organizations.

Main idea of the passage

There is not enough encouragement of independent thinking. Too much education merely tells us what to think instead of thinking for ourselves. A story then follows to show this point. It illustrates how one teacher rather cruelly showed her class they were not thinking for themselves by making them look stupid.

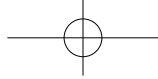
Language points

1 Thinking for yourself is still a radical act. (Para 1)

The word “still” shows the writer’s impatience – after all this time we are *still* thinking like sheep (盲目从众、没有主见的人) and following what everyone else does or thinks.

2 ... particularly in places that shape our lives – families, schools and most workplaces – thinking for yourself is regarded with suspicion. (Line 4, Para 2)

The idea behind this sentence is that our lives are significantly influenced by places or social institutions like the family, school or workplace. For example, parents tend to make life choices for their children, schools make students wear uniform and obey the teacher, and most companies want their workers to follow regular procedures and not to express their opinions.



3 I later found out that he is the fourth-generation president of one of the largest oil companies. (Line 7, Para 3)

The writer was shocked that a person in such a senior position should have such an opinion and prefer obedient employees to thoughtful ones.

4 When was the last organizational vision statement you saw that included the words ... ? (Line 1, Para 4)

The answer expected is that it is very rare for vision statements to say such things, even though the writer thinks it is what every organization should be aiming at.

5 (We may have learned to revere thinkers like Socrates, but we also learned that the state poisoned him for thinking for himself: not unmitigated encouragement.) (Line 5, Para 5)

This is an example of irony: The expression is far too mild; clearly killing someone, ie Socrates, is very powerful discouragement to others who intend to follow him.
not unmitigated encouragement: not a completely good encouragement

6 The entire class of 35 pubescent people just stared at her. (Line 1, Para 7)

The rather strange alliterative (头韵的) expression “pubescent people” instead of the more normal “teenagers” adds a touch of humour.

7 After the agony among us had become tactile, ... (Line 1, Para 12)

The teacher drew out the event, creating suspense, and at that moment the tension in the classroom could even be touched. This is an exaggeration as agony cannot actually be touched, though sometimes physical symptoms are visible, eg sweating when strained.

8 I knew that. (Para 13)

Note the absence of quotation marks. This dialogue is not between the child and teacher but in the child's head.

9 I was too scared around that teacher for the rest of my young life to think very well in her presence. (Line 1, Para 19)

Unfortunately, the teacher's lesson did not really work at the time because her approach made the students so afraid of her that their brains would not work properly in her presence.

for the rest of my young life: It refers to the time the writer spent at that school.

10 She certainly did not create a Thinking Environment for us. (Line 6, Para 19)

a Thinking Environment: It is an important concept in Nancy Kline's book; it refers to an organizational atmosphere which makes people feel comfortable about thinking about their work and goals.

11 ... had she not fanned our fear of her ... (Line 9, Para 19)

It is a metaphor derived from *fanning a fire / flame*. The teacher did give them a valuable lesson but its impact was lessened by her also increasing students' fear of her.

Reading and understanding

2

- 1 (b)
- 2 (c) (“Never” is a little too strong, but the writer is certainly pessimistic about the situation.)
- 3 (c)
- 4 (d) (The writer says she knew there was no such thing as the sum of a number, but as everyone else had written an answer, she felt the need to follow them.)
- 5 (a) (She wrote down what Sarah whispered to her.)
- 6 (c) (The maths teacher introduced her to the idea of thinking for herself, but had faults as she was too tough on the class.)

Additional activity

Ask a few Ss to prepare stories which show the advantages of thinking for oneself and others to show the dangers. They can tell these stories at the beginning of the next class or record them for the teacher. Gradually through the course every student can be assigned some small extra tasks.

Dealing with unfamiliar words

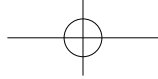
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TEACHING STEPS

教学步骤

- Ask a student to find each word in the passage and then work out its rough meaning. For example, *Had she affirmed our intelligence first ...*, *affirm* means something like showing support, expressing one’s belief in something, or speaking positively about something.
- Then let Ss do the exercise individually and later compare their answers with their partners.
- After the answers have been checked, ask Ss for further examples of the words in use, eg some expressions or sentences involving the target words.

- 1 I leant / leaned forward so that I could get a glimpse of what was written in the book.
- 2 affirmed
- 3 Waiting for the results of the exams was not pleasant – it was an agony.
- 4 peered
- 5 pacing
- 6 I could hear the dog scratching at the door, trying to get out.
- 7 institutions
- 8 poisoned
- 9 rubbed

**4**

- 1 concept
- 2 particularly
- 3 presence
- 4 powerful
- 5 advanced
- 6 radical
- 7 suspicion

Tell Ss to use their dictionaries to find words related to the boxed words and then produce sentences using them. For example, *advance*, *Can I have an advance of my salary?* (n.) *The soldiers advanced across the field.* (v.)

Related words:

- conceive / conception / conceptual / inconceivable
- particular (n., a.)
- power (v., n.) / powerless / empower
- present (n., v., a.) / presently / presentable
- radical (n.) / radicalism / radicalize
- suspect (v., n.) / suspicious

Additional
activity**5**

- 1 (b) 2 (b) 3 (b) 4 (a) 5 (a) 6 (a)

Lead Ss to notice the word “malign”. The prefix “mal-” indicates bad or badly. Ask Ss to look up in a dictionary and find other words starting with “mal-”, eg *malfunction* (故障, 失灵), *malnutrition* (营养不良), *malpractice* (玩忽职守), *maltreatment* (虐待) etc.

Additional
activity

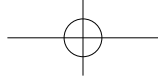
Reading and interpreting

6

- 1 It refers to the writer’s opinion.
- 2 The “sad fact” refers to the fact that thinking for yourself can be seen as suspicious or dangerous. It shows the writer is unhappy about this and thinks it is wrong.
- 3 The writer expects an answer like “I can’t remember”, “many years ago”, “it hardly ever happens” etc; in a word, a negative answer.
- 4 The writer was feeling tense, nervous and frightened.

Developing critical thinking

- ①
 - 1 There are many people with a desire to control us for their own benefit. For example, if we allow advertisers to tell us what to think, we may buy some very substandard (次等的) products; the Internet contains a lot of misinformation and we need to be able to assess it. It makes sense for us to make our own decisions about our lives. Modern people do not expect to be told who to marry or what jobs to follow. If we have come to a conclusion ourselves, we will have stronger belief in it and commitment to it. This can make us do it better. As change is constant now, we need to be adaptable and be able to accept new ideas and approaches without problems. However, people with very narrow outlooks usually find this very difficult.
 - 2 This depends on the cultures they belong to. In some cultures people are not encouraged to think for themselves. They are expected to follow leaders or famous people. This has both advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that people may be guided to things in an efficient way, not wasting time and energy, but getting on with the work. A disadvantage is that the work produced may be very dull and merely a copy of other people's. Also people may not know what to do when an unexpected problem occurs. Most people have to think for themselves on at least a few occasions in their lives and need preparation. Some sort of balance is necessary between total independence of thought and social harmony.
 - 3 Yes, it can be dangerous on some occasions, eg:
 - If you are not experienced, well-informed or intelligent enough, you might come up with some foolish ideas. Not many of us are geniuses, so completely following our own thoughts is likely to get us in trouble.
 - If there are too many opinions, movement forwards may become impossible. At the very least, a lot of discussion and debate will have to take place on almost everything. Chaos might arise.
 - It might be dangerous in the sense that in some regions, the religious or political authorities may take action against the views they disapprove of.
 - 4 The teacher had the right intellectual approach, but did not know how to handle young people. By humiliating the students and making them nervous of her she prevents them enjoying the subject and feeling secure in the lessons. Traditionally, teachers have been stern and harsh with their students, but educational psychologists believe a supportive learning environment is the best for learning. Despite the writer's criticism, she did learn a lot from the teacher. Perhaps she would never have had the career she has or written her book on thinking independently without the help of that teacher.



Talking point

1

TEACHING STEPS

教学步骤

Instruct Ss to read the chart in the following way:

- Work in pairs. Student A covers one statement in the chart and asks Student B what this smart type might mean, eg “What do you think ‘number smart’ means in the thinking styles? What is a person like if they are number-smart thinkers?”
- Student B next chooses another thinking style and asks Student A similar questions.
- Then they can read the written texts together to compare their answers.
- Ask some pairs to report back their discussions to the class.

TEACHING TIPS

教学建议

It is important to point out to Ss that most people have a combination of different thinking styles with some more obvious than others. Thus guide Ss to evaluate themselves in the right light, for example:

I believe I am a people-smart person. However, I am also quite good with numbers. I guess I am both number smart and people smart.

Background information

The text in Talking point presents in a user-friendly layout the concept of Multiple Intelligences (多元智能论) developed by the American psychologist Howard Gardner and his colleagues. The older idea of one type of intelligence shared by all to a greater or lesser degree gave way to the idea that different people are intelligent in different ways. This seems to agree with common experience as some very academically bright people are hopeless in other ways, and the highly literate may not always be very numerate, and vice versa. Intelligence can be thought of as a set of different kinds of thinking styles or skills, each of which is oriented to a different aspect of the mind and its relation to the world.

Language points

There are differences in the meaning of the word “smart” between British and American English. In British English, “smart” can refer either to intelligence or appearance, eg *you look smart* means you are dressed very nicely and your hair is stylish. In American English, the meaning is confined to mental abilities and quickness of mind.

Expressions such as “number smart” are slightly unusual “noun + adjective compounds”. Other examples are *beauty-conscious*, *self-conscious*, *streetwise* (善于在都市中生存的) etc.

2

TEACHING TIPS

教学建议

Give some examples of famous people to encourage Ss in discussion. T may also ask Ss to do this after class and then report back to the class on another day. Here are some examples:

- *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) was a music-smart person who was playing and composing even as a small child and eventually produced over 600 pieces of music, many masterpieces, in his short life.*
- *Albert Einstein (1879–1955) was a number-, body-, word- and picture-smart person who, as a German-born theoretical physicist, imagined the movements of things in space and won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1921 after changing our view of the universe with his ideas.*
- *Wang Wei (701–761) as a painter, poet and musician must have been picture, word and music smart, but his work also shows how nature smart he was.*
- *Yao Ming, the master basketball star, must, like any great sportsman or sportswoman, be body smart and able to imagine the effects of very rapid movements to shape a game.*

Language in use

①

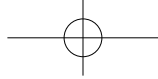
- 1 Asking too many questions is considered rude.
- 2 A relaxed attitude to learning is viewed with suspicion.
- 3 Our university is believed to date back to the tenth century.
- 4 This library is generally considered (to be) the oldest in the country.
- 5 Imperial College London is thought by many to be the best place to study sciences.
- 6 My old school is said to have the best teachers.

②

- 1 had I gone with a group of friends
- 2 Had I known how cold it was going to be
- 3 had I known how easy the examination would be
- 4 Had I known about the pollution here

③

- 1 neither was I
- 2 neither do I
- 3 neither do we
- 4 neither will any of us
- 5 neither did the teacher
- 6 neither do my family



4

- 1 (b) 2 (c) 3 (a)

5

- 1 I didn't think much of that lesson.
- 2 None of us thinks much of the timetable we've been given for this term.
- 3 I'm afraid I don't think much of what he's written.
- 4 Our professor doesn't think much of this book.
- 5 I don't think much of the theme of this week's essay.

6

- 1 much prefer working in the library
- 2 much prefers to go with
- 3 much prefer shopping
- 4 much prefer to gossip in their dorm
- 5 much prefer; to speak to me personally

7

- 1 I can't even say two words of Chinese, much less speak the language.
- 2 Basic study skills are not taught here, much less practised.
- 3 Nobody has even started the essay, much less finished it.
- 4 Nobody even heard what the lecturer said, much less understood him.
- 5 I haven't even got a PC in my room, much less an Internet connection.

Classroom language for teachers

Moving on to the next activity

- Let's move on now.
- OK, enough of that. We must move on.
- Shall we start the next exercise now?
- I would like you all now to turn to Page 18.
- If that's clear, please begin / start / commence.
- Shall we get underway?
- Let's waste no more time, but get on with the activity.
- OK, ready, set, go!
- If you are all ready, let's begin.
- I want to do something different now.
- I think you will find this next activity interesting.

8

- 1 然而，在大多数圈子里，尤其是在我们生活中的重要场所——如家庭、学校以及大部分工作场所——独立思考受到人们的质疑。
- 2 很少有人受到鼓励进行独立思考，更别提接受相关的训练，就连他们的老师、父母和老板也是如此。
- 3 我看见跟我隔着过道的那个女同学向前探了一下身子，从前座男生的肩膀上方偷窥他正在草草写些什么。
- 4 在后来的青春岁月里，我一见到这位老师就害怕，只要她一出现，我就无法好好思考。
- 5 如果她能首先肯定我们的聪明才智，跟我们谈谈独立思考的乐趣，如果她没有激起我们对她的畏惧，我们就可以更深切地体会到独立思考的意义。

9

- 1 The ability to think for yourself is one of the qualities that college students must have.
- 2 Despite all the good comments the film received, I didn't think much of it.
- 3 In the presence of strangers or foreigners she is always reluctant to talk.
- 4 He was about to leave the bookshop when he found a book that he had been looking for.
- 5 How to improve students' reading skills was discussed at greater length at the meeting.

Further reading

Improve your study skills!

1

The problems the passage deals with are 1 and 4.

TEACHING TIPS

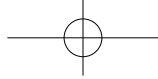
教学建议

This passage raises some issues many Ss have taken for granted over years of study and may help them improve their studies. T should guide them to read and understand the content following each subheading.

- Ask Ss to prepare a piece of paper before reading.
- Ask Ss to write down a list of study skills they know about.
- Tell Ss to check the items on their list while reading the passage if they find the skills they have written mentioned in the passage.

Alternatively:

- Prepare a list of study skills.
- Give Ss the list and ask them to check the items as they read.
- Ask Ss to note down any items they know but are not mentioned in the passage or on the list.



Language for teachers and students

Expressions of study skills

- keep track of work to be completed
- plan time
- create a work space
- know one's learning style
- read with a purpose
- vary reading speeds
- progress step by step from easier to harder material
- check on understanding while reading
- recognize the writer's point of view
- judge relevance of material to one's purpose
- use reference sources efficiently
- make use of all textual aids (eg diagrams, indexes etc)
- distinguish main ideas and less important points
- take effective notes
- summarize ideas
- reword material
- listen to lectures in an efficient way
- organize notes
- revise notes
- reflect on what one has learnt
- use mnemonic (助记句子; 助记短诗) devices
- use word maps and graphic information organization aids
- develop an outline for written tasks
- draft written tasks
- edit drafts
- check details
- prepare effectively for tests
- time oneself in tests
- participate actively in discussions

Background information

Students are often given introductory courses on how to study, but for most this is a more complex skill than they think, a skill which is developed gradually, so it should be re-examined at intervals right through to the post-graduate level. The passage emphasizes how there are many different styles of learning and studying, and different ways suit different people. The Honey and Mumford approach is one of a number of schemes to help students identify their own profiles of learning so that they can develop them more consciously for different purposes. Reading and writing are also more complex than most students imagine and systematic approaches to them are

needed to help identify and consider purposes, arguments and ideas. Being able to apply a critical approach is crucial for most university study sooner or later.

Main idea of the passage

Students must be responsible for their own learning. They need to make good use of lectures, understand the learning style which suits them best, have a methodical approach to research and follow a clear and organized process when writing.

Culture points

be critical: It doesn't necessarily mean being negative about something, but rather means considering something carefully, making careful judgments, examining the context and any built-in assumptions, ideas, beliefs or feelings about something which are behind what is said, but which may not have been expressed, perhaps because they are taken for granted or because there is no proof for them. Taking a critical approach to study therefore includes asking key questions about the topic and critically evaluating different ideas, approaches or arguments. A critical approach is more than a descriptive approach which is usually considered to be of a lower level. Many students find it difficult to be critical of their own writing until they see clear examples of a critical approach and get explicit feedback from teachers. For essay writing, students generally need to make a clear case and identify the main thrust of an argument, present any alternatives, outline positive or negative aspects, then weigh up these alternatives and come to a balanced conclusion, ie a conclusion which shows the writer has considered relevant arguments, opinions or aspects fairly and equally before making a final statement.

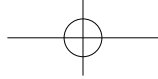
Language points

- 1 Like everyone else, students have their fair share of problems. (Line 1, Para 1)**

The idea of "fair share" here indicates that everyone has problems of some sort or other, in more or less equal shares. Thus students have problems just as other people do, for example, older people may have better finances but they lack the energy and health. Therefore, in one's lifetime, problems may change but not go away.
- 2 ... and surviving on limited financial resources ... (Line 4, Para 1)**

It means students have to live on a low income.
- 3 The standard joke is that it is a system for transferring notes from the lecturer's file to the student's notebook without passing through the mind of either. (Line 2, Para 2)**

The "joke" is intended to criticize the traditional lecturing style in which the lecturer in a fairly mindless way simply reads out lecture notes. Then students simply write the notes down without real thinking. The result is that the students' notes may be similar to those of the lecturer, but the meaning of the lecture hasn't passed through the mind of either students or the lecturer.



4 They will provide information, place the material of the course in context, ... (Line 2, Para 3)

If the material of the course, for example, is a book or theory, a good teacher will explain how it fits into its historical background, the philosophy which lies behind it and its relation to other works and ideas.

5 Try to strike a balance between listening and understanding the material which is being presented, and making notes. (Line 6, Para 4)

If you listen and think very carefully, you will not have time to take good notes, but if you write everything down, you will not take in the overall sense. You need to find a solution which produces both notes and understanding.

strike a balance: The metaphor is of a pair of scales. If something happens to *tip the balance*, one thing outweighs the other, and you may need to *redress / restore the balance*. Different circumstances may threaten to *disturb / upset the balance*, so you may need to constantly *adjust / maintain the balance*.

6 For example, “To what extent did Parliament increase its power in the 16th century?” almost invites you to agree with the assumption that Parliament did increase its power. (Line 5, Para 16)

The wording of the question, as opposed to “Did Parliament increase its power in the 16th century?”, might lead a student to think about “to what extent” rather than first evaluate if Parliament did increase its power at all.

Reading and understanding

TEACHING TECHNIQUES

教学策略

T may require Ss to scan the passage for Activity 2 and then read it intensively for Activity 3.

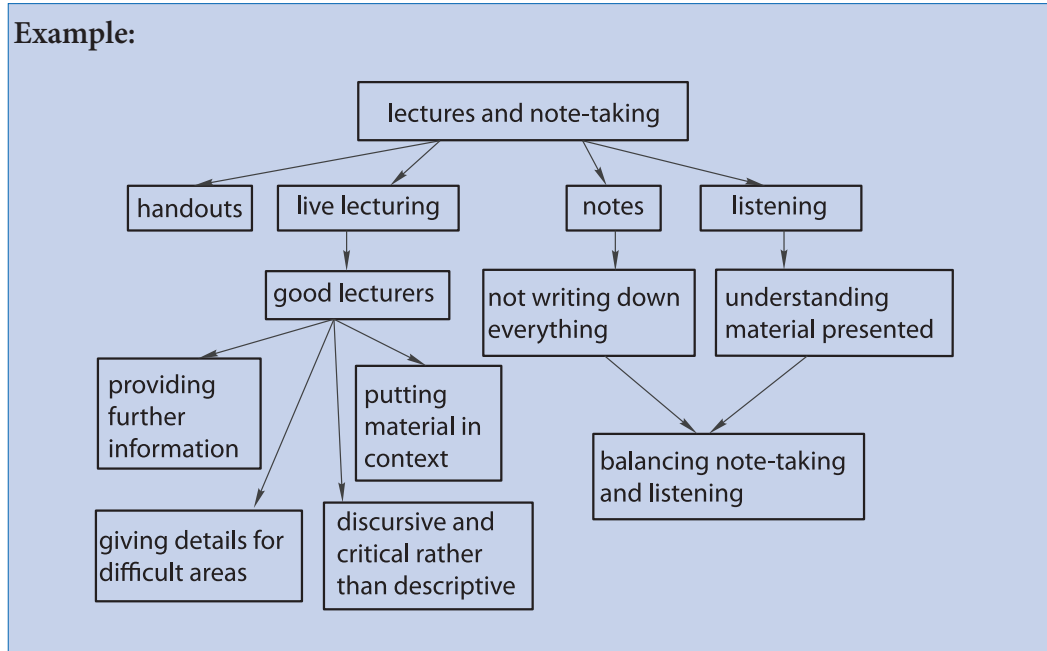
One way to help Ss understand the passage is to use diagrams. T can:

- choose a section with a subheading
- ask Ss to read it once carefully
- prepare a diagram (see example below)
- give Ss a structured diagram with some boxes filled in, and others left blank
- ask Ss to read the section again and fill in the blanks

A harder version of this is to:

- ask Ss to create their own diagram while reading a section
- ask Ss in pairs to share their diagrams
- request Ss to write a paragraph or two on the same topic using the diagram as a guide; this can be done after class and a few good examples can be studied later in class

Example:



2

- 1 Doing research
- 2 Learning styles
- 3 Writing essays
- 4 Lectures and note-taking

3

- 1 (c) 2 (c) 3 (a) 4 (b) 5 (d) 6 (a)

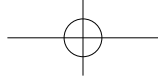
Dealing with unfamiliar words

4

- 1 debate
- 2 assumptions; rational
- 3 Of course, many topics are complex, and it may not be easy to come to a judgment.
- 4 interpret
- 5 observe
- 6 procedure
- 7 specialize

5

- 1 indispensable
- 2 available
- 3 consult
- 4 critical
- 5 relevant



- 6 interaction
- 7 logical
- 8 creative
- 9 establish

Classroom language for teachers

Giving instructions and advice

- Let's hold a debate on whether smoking should be banned in the streets.
- It is debatable if doing past test papers can improve your English.
- You need to make your sentences more complex. Use relative clauses more frequently.
- I don't think we can assume everyone attending the performance will have a high standard of English.
- Please observe silence during the test.
- We will proceed in the following manner.
- I think you are being irrational. You are letting your emotions affect your judgment.
- I think her specialism is 16th-century poetry.
- Please check on the availability of the hall for that day.
- There are language consultants in the Language Centre. They may be able to help.
- Please show creativity in your presentations. It is dull if everyone chooses the same topic and says the same things.
- You aren't thinking. Approach the question more critically.
- The establishment of good relations between teacher and students is very important.
- You can dispense with a long introduction and come straight to the point.
- We try to ensure our lessons are as interactive as possible.
- I think the third paragraph is rather irrelevant and spoils the flow.

Reading across cultures

Thinking across cultures

Background information

Speakers of different languages might think and see the world differently. This is known as “the linguistic relativity hypothesis” (语言相对性假说) or “the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis”. Edward Sapir (1884–1939) and Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897–1941) were American linguists who proposed the view that the language people speak determines

the way they perceive the world. A great deal of research done on the topic comes to some very different conclusions. Perhaps the common sense approach is that there are universal ideas and ways of thinking that are part of being human, but there are also different world views encoded in languages which make certain ideas seem natural to their speakers, but less so to outsiders.

Robert Kaplan, another American linguist, applied some of the hypothesis ideas to his 1966 study of writing from students from different countries. This gave rise to a new area of study, contrastive rhetoric (对比修辞学), which explores how a person's first language and culture influence their writing in a second language. In discussing the passage, one should remember that Kaplan did not claim these were the only patterns in those languages, or that students could not learn other patterns. Later research has not accepted the patterns he found in any detail, but has confirmed that writers in various languages make different moves in their work. The habit in many English texts of saying the opposite of what you think and then taking it apart to prove it wrong has been found to confuse native speakers of Arabic studying in English-speaking countries. There is also some evidence that Chinese writers (whether working in Chinese or English) do indeed present a lot of background to establish common ground before coming to their main point, and may use a because-therefore pattern. English writers tend to proceed in the opposite way, giving the main point first, followed by background, reasons and evidence, with a restatement of the main point to close.

In short, Kaplan's diagrams may be open to criticism, but his book started an interesting debate from which we have learnt a lot.

Language points

1 He found that writing styles varied systematically, according to the cultural origins of the students. (Line 5, Para 2)

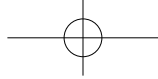
The word “systematically” indicates that writing skills were not chance but varied according to a clear pattern or system.

2 Speakers of Romance languages (such as French and Spanish) ... (Line 9, Para 3)

Romance languages: The term refers to languages derived from Latin, the language of the Roman Empire. There are no associations with love included in the term.

1

- 1 Robert Kaplan thought that people from different cultures have different thought patterns.
- 2 He was looking at the work of non-native students at his university in California.
- 3 Native speakers of English.
- 4 Non-native English speakers.
- 5 Because it was thought to be too simplistic, based on insufficient evidence and was biased in favour of Kaplan's own culture, assuming that it had the “most efficient” approach.
- 6 It reminds us that mastering English requires understanding of a higher level of organization than the sentence level, and that people from different cultural backgrounds have different ways of communicating their ideas.

**2**

- 1 • I think so. Speakers or writers with an Oriental thought pattern tend to put their key point last, and to give lots of background information and explanations at the beginning and middle parts of their writing.
 - I don't agree with the idea. It seems to me all the patterns mentioned in the passage could exist in one culture, although some people may prefer one pattern rather than another.
- 2 I think it might be true that there are other thought patterns because sometimes I can understand every word in an article or report, but I still find it hard to follow its logic and understand what it is trying to say.
- 3 I think so, especially when we were in primary and secondary schools.
- 4 • I do draw up a plan. I usually try to follow the pattern of the example the teacher has given us. Of course, when I am writing in English a lot of my time and attention has to be given to making sure I am not making too many grammatical errors.
 - I don't think I structure my writing any differently from when I am writing in Chinese, but I am sorry I don't plan very much. I know I ought to but I always seem to be in a rush. Poor time management, I guess.

Guided writing

1

6, 1, 4, 2, 3, 7, 5

2

7, 4, 6, 1, 5, 2, 3

3

What's the most difficult part of learning a foreign language?

Many students think writing is one of the most difficult aspects of learning English. This may be because they have to pay attention to many different things at once when writing and this makes it very hard work. For example, Chinese students have to learn vocabulary, grammar rules and different text patterns to write successfully in English. University students may have more ideas than they have the ability to express. This can be frustrating and producing a piece of written work can take a long time.

But you can make progress in writing by working on a short piece, such as a diary entry, every day. You can also pay attention to how native speakers express themselves by reading widely on different topics in a variety of texts such as short stories, magazine articles, science reports and news items.

Learning a foreign language is never easy, but if we are determined and well-motivated, and miss no opportunities to communicate with native speakers, we will successfully master the language.

Unit task

Making a plan to improve study techniques

TEACHING STEPS

教学步骤

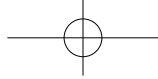
- Tell Ss to read the instructions for the task. Ask them if they have any questions and tell them when they will have to make their presentations.
- Suggest how many problems you expect to be covered to give the class an idea of the length you expect.
- If time is a problem, ask two or three pairs to prepare to present their work and treat the other pairs' work as a written assignment.
- After each presentation, invite questions and comments from the class. For example:
I think a study group would have to meet regularly. Will you all be available at the same time? Where will you meet?
I think the plan is too ambitious. You cannot just change your character.
I like the idea of personal rewards and punishment. The thought of having or not having an ice-cream could have a big effect on me.

After self-analysis and asking friends for opinions, I have identified the following study problems:

- I am disorganized.
- I am always rushing to do things at the last moment.
- I get bored and sleepy when studying.
- I do not pay enough attention in class or lectures.
- My notes are confused and hard to understand.
- I make poor presentations.

Clearly, the situation is not acceptable so I have developed an action plan for improvement. I hope the following steps will solve my problem:

- I will prepare a sensible work schedule and follow it closely.
- I will set daily, weekly, monthly and termly targets.
- I will have a system of personal rewards and punishments for doing things on time and according to the schedule. I will buy myself little presents when I am doing well, and not have favourite things when I am not.
- When I am studying I will switch off my mobile phone, vary the work I am doing and take regular breaks for some quick exercise.
- I will never stay up past midnight.
- I will try to organize friends into a study group. If we work as a team it will put pressure on us to do things on time. We can correct one another's errors before they become serious and make sure we all understand assignments properly and do not do the wrong thing.
- I will not look around all the time in lectures to see what people are doing. I will read a relevant text book in preparation. I will sit straight and treat my notes seriously.



- My notes will be in two columns: ideas and opinions, and facts. I will revise my notes every evening and type them up.
- I will practise any presentation I have to give three times before making it.

I hope this plan can achieve the following results:

- Teachers will notice I am more attentive and organized.
- I will not be rushing to meet deadlines.
- I will not make careless mistakes.
- I will have good notes ready for revision.
- I will be happier as I know I have improved.
- My grades will rise.

Thought for the day

It is important that students bring a certain ragamuffin, barefoot irreverence to their studies; they are not here to worship what is known, but to question it.

Jacob Bronowski (1908–1974), Polish-Jewish British mathematician and intellectual

ragamuffin (衣衫褴褛的穷孩子): a poor child, probably living on the street, rather rough and without polite manners

Questions for students

- 1 Do you agree with the quote?
- 2 Do you think this is more true of some subjects than others?
- 3 Is the urge to question and change good for society or harmful?
- 4 Are you too respectful in your studies?

Translation of the passages

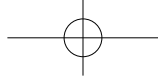
Active reading

独立思考

直到现在，独立思考仍然是一种激进的行为。

独立思考本应该是一种普遍的行为，但事实并非如此。我们社会的每一次重大进步都源于独立思考。然而，在大多数圈子里，尤其是在我们生活中的重要场所——如家庭、学校以及大部分工作场所——独立思考受到人们的质疑。有些机构甚至故意压制独立思考，把它视作危险行为。

在一次晚会上，有一位客人问起我酝酿中的一本书的主题，他让我想起了这个令人悲哀的事实。我告诉他这本书是关于人们如何相互帮助，培养独立思考能力的。“啊，天哪！”他说，“我觉得这个主题不怎么好，我更希望人们按指令行事。”后来我才发现他是一家大公司的第四代掌门人，而这家公司是世界上最大的石油公司之一。



“……要把我们公司发展成一个典范的工作环境，其中各层次的人都能够独立思考。”你最后一次看到包含上述字眼的机构愿景陈述是在什么时候？而且，最后一次有人问你：“你能说说真心话吗？真心话！”，然后等着你最终给出充分的答案，那又是在什么时候？

我们对于缺乏独立思考已习以为常了。很少有人受到鼓励进行独立思考，更别提接受相关的训练，就连他们的老师、父母和老板也是如此。而且他们的老师、父母和老板也是如此。（我们也许已经知道要尊敬像苏格拉底这样的思想家，但同时我们也知道，他正是因为独立思考而被雅典城判处死刑，服毒而亡——这绝非是对独立思考完完全全的鼓励。）

可是，偶尔我们确实能遇到一位真心想让我们发展独立思考能力的人。他们让我们对独立思考的重要性有了浅略的认识。我13岁时被安排学习一门高等代数课程。这门课的老师曾因迫使学生思考而遭到学生的中伤。上第一节课时，她站在黑板前说道：“在你们面前的纸上写出一个数字之和。”

全班35个少男少女都愣愣地看着她。她把要求又重复了一遍：“写出一个数字之和。”

我记得当时握铅笔的手都擦出了汗。有几个人把头低下，动笔写起来。我纳闷他们究竟在写些什么。我看见跟我隔着过道的那个女同学向前探了一下身子，从前座男生的肩膀上方偷窥他正在草草写些什么。然后她飞快地写了个数字，随即用手盖住了。

老师来回踱着步，手指搓弄着粉笔。我不知道她会在黑板上写出什么。我是唯一一个没有在写的。我把身子往后一靠，向左侧过脸，悄声问我的朋友：“答案是什么？”

“7，”她小声回答道。

于是我在纸上写了个“7”。我一直低着头，想让自己看起来正忙于做题，而且充满信心。

在觉察出我们的不安和煎熬后，老师问我们答案是什么。大部分人都回答说“7”。她缓缓地走到黑板前，写道：“根本就不存在一个数字之和。”

这我是知道的。

那你为什么没有这样写呢？

萨拉说是“7”。

那你为什么要问她？

因为——我不知道。

这就对了。从现在开始，要独立思考。

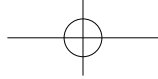
在后来的青春岁月里，我一见到这位老师就害怕，只要她一出现，我就无法好好思考。然而，我记住了她的教诲，而且渐渐地开始审视它、珍惜它。我并不认同像她那样以羞辱人的方式让大家独立思考。当然，她也没有为我们营造一个思考的环境。如果她能首先肯定我们的聪明才智，跟我们谈谈独立思考的乐趣，如果她没有激起我们对她的畏惧，我们就可以更深切地体会到独立思考的意义。而且有她在场时，我们也能好好思考。

不过，至少她把独立思考的理念引入了我的学习生活。

Further reading

提升你的学习技巧

和其他人一样，学生也有他们自己必须面对的问题。熟悉新环境、与其他同学相处、靠有限的经济来源维持生活，这些都是他们的典型问题。而你在大学里面临的最大挑战之一直接源于你刚刚获得的自由。早晨，没有人逼你起床，没有人强迫你去上课。学习完全



由你自己负责，你要安排好时间，寻找最佳的学习方法。以下的提示或许能帮你改善这些技巧。

上课与记笔记

上课的作用很容易被误解。有个经典的笑话，说上课就是把笔记从讲师的文件夹转移到学生的笔记本上的过程，讲师和学生谁也不会去思考。

然而，优秀的讲师会将一个主题栩栩如生地展现给学生。他们会提供信息，会把教学内容与相关背景联系起来，详细地讲解知识难点。他们运用讨论的方法，在适当的情况下对主题进行评论，而不仅仅是简单地描述它。

讲师经常分发讲义，让你了解他们要讲授的内容，但你需要把老师的讲课内容和你自己的笔记结合起来。不过，要注意，别把老师的每句话都记下来。要在听课、理解授课内容和记笔记之间找到一个平衡点。

学习风格

我们的学习方法各不相同。下课后或讨论课后，找几个朋友谈一谈，你就会发现他们记住的东西是不同的——但或多或少与老师的教学目的有关。与其问“什么学习方法最好”，也许还不如想想“哪种方法最适合我”。霍尼和芒福德于1992年设计了一份调查问卷，划分了四种主要的学习类型。你认为自己属于其中的哪一种或哪几种类型呢？

行动型

行动型学习者在体验新经历、提出新想法及在尝试新事物中进行学习时效果最佳。解决问题、课堂互动和讨论比那些“被动的”活动更适合他们。

反思型

对于反思型学习者来说，最好的活动是给他们留出空间，让他们倾听、观察、反思、搜集信息，然后按照自己的节奏在深思熟虑后作出判断。

理论型

理论型学习者喜欢有逻辑地、按部就班地做事情，喜欢把新信息消化吸收，然后创建合理的图式或模型。他们对于个人观点或创造性思维不那么适应。

务实型

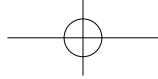
务实型学习者从有明确的实际价值的活动中学到最多，他们喜欢在实际环境中检验想法，不太喜欢开放式讨论。

从事研究

刚上大学时，你也许会对要做大量的研究感到有一点吃惊，并且这些研究通常要在很短的时间内完成。重要的是不要被这些研究弄得心烦意乱，也不要被大量的资料压垮。你可以把整个研究过程分成若干阶段，而且在研读资料时一直清楚自己的研究目的。

循序渐进的阅读方法是很有用的。首先从手头的一般性教材和综述文章入手，了解背景知识，以及对争议性问题的介绍。然后再去细细研读更专业的文章。

有效的阅读要求你根据阅读资料的类型和你的阅读目的调整阅读速度和阅读方式。



为消遣而读时你可以看得快一些，中间不必停顿，也不用为以后还要回忆细节而担心。相比之下，在查阅参考书时，你可能只看一两段，但是会看得非常仔细，以确保你理解每个细节。

撰写论文

论文需要周密的构思和组织。下笔之前，你应该拟定一个写作提纲。你要知道你的主要论点是什么，知道你的文章要如何开头、如何展开和结束。

当你完成初稿时，要读一遍并做些修改，以便让读者更容易理解你所陈述的观点。

然而，你的首要任务是弄清楚标题的确切含义。如果你误解了题意，这篇论文就会彻底失败。

多花些时间思考文章的题目；如果它晦涩难懂，不妨用你自己的话重新阐述一下。此外还要考虑它可能包含的任何假设。比如，“16世纪议会的权力扩大到什么程度？”这个题目基本上在诱导你认同一个假设：议会的权力确实扩大了。也许你并不赞同这一假设。记住，你可以不认同，或者批判地对待这一假设。但你一定要保证自己的论证论据充足，推理严密。

Reading across cultures

跨文化思维

我们有没有因我们所属的文化不同而以不同的方式来组织我们的思维呢？如果有，那么我们如何描述这些差异呢？

不同“文化思维模式”的概念最早是由美国应用语言学教授罗伯特·卡普兰在20世纪60年代提出的。他任教于加利福尼亚的一所大学，长期致力于研究那些母语不是英语的学生的写作风格。他发现，学生的写作风格由于其文化渊源的不同而呈现出系统性差异。

例如，（他认为）以英语为母语的學生写作时通常“直奔主题”，而其他学生却不是这样。母语为闪族语（如阿拉伯语、希伯来语等）的人不断地回指，然后再回到所谈的主题，而母语为东方语言（如汉语）的人通常以渐进的方式接近主题，好像是在围着主题绕圈子一样。罗曼语系（如法语、西班牙语等）的人容易偏离主题，使（以英语为母语的）读者难以理解他们的文章，而讲斯拉夫语（如俄语等）的人经常加入一些看似与文章发展无关的内容。

为了阐释这些写作模式，卡普兰用了一些简单图形来说明：



这一观点招来了许多非议。大家认为这一说法太简单化了，论据不充分，而且偏向英语（似乎只有英语才能“最有效地”阐述观点）。俄罗斯学生尤其不赞同卡普兰对于他们的看法。