Contents sheet

The following workpack includes activities and teaching notes for the ‘Brain training ...’ article. We’ve specified whether an activity was designed for higher or lower ability students in order to try and help you with your planning/differentiation.

Follow the links below to download the actual texts in the Edexcel sample assessment materials:
GCSE English: http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse10/english/English/Pages/documents.aspx
GCSE English Language: http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse10/english/language/Pages/documents.aspx

Activity 1 (Higher ability) - Testing intelligence

Activity to look at IQ tests, intelligence and memory in preparation for reading the ‘Brain training video games “boost children’s intelligence”’ article from The Telegraph.

Activity 2 (Higher and lower ability) - What’s missing?

Students answer comprehension questions, and then look for gaps in the information presented by the article.

Activity 3 (Higher ability) - Blinkered and biased

Activity highlighting the problems with bias and so-called specialists.

Activity 4 (Higher ability) - It's not what you say, it's the way that you say it ...

Exploring the language of the article in detail.

Activity 5 (Higher and lower ability) - Magazines vs newspapers

Comparing the presentation of The Telegraph article with the magazine article ‘Punch-Out!!’.

Activity 6 (Lower ability) - Write all about it!

Helps students to explain their understanding of the different techniques using the PEE structure.

Extra teaching ideas/approaches

A range of additional/alternative ideas for introducing your students to the ‘Brain training ...’ article and getting them to focus on various aspects of content and language.
Activity 1 – Testing intelligence

How well trained is your brain? Check your intelligence by completing the following quiz:

**Intelligence quiz**

1. Some months have 31 days; some months have 30 days. How many months have 28 days?

2. What is the next word in the following sequence: apple, banana, carrot, _________ eagle (choose one from the list):
   - a) grape
   - b) cucumber
   - c) antelope
   - d) chicken
   - e) dog

3. Insert one letter in the box to form two words: S L O [ ] I D E

4. Which figure continues the series?

   ![Figure Options]
   - a)
   - b)
   - c)

5. If today is Wednesday, what will the fourth from yesterday be?
   - a) Monday
   - b) Tuesday
   - c) Thursday
   - d) Friday
   - e) Saturday

6. Which student is the shortest?
   - Hayley and Callum are the same height.
   - Byron is shorter than Sophie.
   - Sophie is taller than Callum.
   - Hayley is shorter than Byron.

7. Which shape should come next in the following series?

   ![Shape Options]
   - a)
   - b)
   - c)
   - d)

8. Is the following statement true or false?
   My grandfather’s son is my brother’s son’s grandfather.

9. If one apple costs 25p and three oranges cost 90p, how much do three apples and one orange cost?

10. Which number comes next in this sequence? 3, 5, 8, 12, 17, ...
‘Brain training video games ...’ – *The Telegraph* article

**Answers**

1. All of them!
2. Dog – the words are in alphabetical order
3. W – the new words are ‘slow’ and ‘wide’
4. Figure B
5. E – Saturday
6. None of them – Hayley and Callum are equally short
7. a
8. True
9. £1.05
10. 23 (3+2=5, 5+3=8, 8+4=12, 12+5=17, 17+6=23)

**How many did you get right?**

1-2 More studying needed for you! Get training that brain.
3-4 Not bad, but you could do with a few intelligence stretching exercises each week.
5-6 Pretty good, but you’ll need to work a bit harder to get your brain up to top of the class.
7-8 Fantastic! With just a little more concentration you’ll be right up there with the best!
9-10 Congratulations! You are the owner of a well-trained brain!

**Discussion**

After you have completed the intelligence quiz, discuss the following questions:

- How do you feel about the outcome of the intelligence quiz?
- Is the quiz an accurate measure of intelligence, do you think?
- What other factors should be considered when measuring intelligence?
- Do you think that you are born with a certain level of intelligence, or can you train your brain?
- What exercises or activities might improve brain performance?
- Are memory and intelligence the same thing?
- Do you think there are different types of intelligence? If so, what might they be?
- Is it important to be intelligent?
- Why does society value intelligence so highly?
- Can computers make you more intelligent?
Activity 2 – Missing out

Read the article from The Telegraph newspaper ‘Brain training video games “boost children’s intelligence”’ and answer the following questions:

1. What do scientists claim can be improved using brain training computer games?
2. How many children were involved in the study?
3. By how much have their IQ scores jumped following the course?
4. Complete the sentence:
   Many students using the games have jumped from the bottom 10 per cent of the class to ...
5. How many children who have been through the programme have shown improvement?
6. Who is Dr Alloway?
7. What is ‘working memory’?
8. What is the name of the computer learning game used in this study?
9. What award has Dr Alloway won?
10. What does Dr Alloway believe will help improve ‘working memory’?
11. What, according to Dr Alloway, is likely to weaken ‘working memory’?
12. What is linked with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)?

Now find the answers to the following three extension questions:

1. How much does it cost to use the Junglememory brain trainer?
2. How does the Junglememory increase mental agility?
3. What evidence is there to show that watching YouTube weakens working memory?

Are there any other questions about the text or its content that you would like answers to?
Activity 3 – Blinkered and biased

Read the following extract from a student’s annual school report:

An outstanding year from Tom. I think he has given his absolute best, achieving more than anyone could have expected. As well as working hard, he has been friendly, positive and at times, charming. Well done!

What do we find out about Tom? What sort of a student is he? How has he behaved in school this year?

Now read the rest of the extract:

Well done!
Parents’ assessment of year 10

How does this change your opinion of Tom? How does it change your reading of the extract?
Whilst the above extract might be true, we would tend to assume that Tom’s parents are biased. That is to say they have a special interest in Tom, as their son, and so can be expected to write good things about him.

Quick tasks:

- Use a dictionary to find a definition of the word bias.
- Find a term to describe the opposite of bias.
- Explain why it is important to be aware of bias, particularly when reading newspapers.
**Pair or group work task**

Look at the following examples and put them in rank order, with those who are most likely to be **biased** at the top, and those you would expect to be most **unbiased/objective** at the bottom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A quotation from an anonymous scientist in a newspaper article about health.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A front page headline about the prime minister written for a newspaper that supports the opposition.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A television weather report for regional news.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An eye-witness commenting on a car accident involving a neighbour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A named scientist writing a report on a colleague's research findings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A school report written by a teacher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A graph showing GCSE results for a year group.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A blog about fashion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government statistics showing the population of the country.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An email from a headteacher to all the staff in a school outlining the school term dates.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A map of the world.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A poster advertising an upcoming concert by a symphony orchestra.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study notes for a literary text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An historical timeline for the twentieth century.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An examiner marking an A-level paper.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A television news report on the war.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How can we spot bias and objectivity?**

Read the ‘Brain training ...’ article and highlight any evidence of bias and objectivity in different colours.

**Writing challenge:**
Rewrite the article from an entirely objective perspective.
Activity 4 – It’s not what you say, it’s the way that you say it ...

Read the ‘Brain training …’ article.
In one sentence sum up the purpose of the article:

............................................................................................................................... ....
............................................................................................................................... ....

The language in this article is used in a way that convinces us that children’s intelligence can be improved through the use of brain training video games.

Match the following language techniques with their definitions (one definition has been left blank for you to complete):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language techniques</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Rhetorical language</td>
<td>a) Writing that explains a photograph or image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Emotive language</td>
<td>b) Exaggeration for effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Captions</td>
<td>c) Numbers and figures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Quotations</td>
<td>d) Eloquent and convincing language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Facts and statistics</td>
<td>e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Hyperbole</td>
<td>f) Questions that do not require an answer, but are only put in the form of a question in order to produce an effect</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Repetition</td>
<td>g) A series of words with the same initial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Alliteration</td>
<td>h) Using ‘you’ or ‘we’ to include the audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Personal pronouns</td>
<td>i) Language used to generate an emotional response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Rhetorical questions</td>
<td>j) Using the same word or phrase again and again</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘Brain training video games ...’ – *The Telegraph* article

Now look at the article again and find examples of each of these. (Beware: *one* of these language devices is not found in the text!) Write your examples below along with an explanation of the effects of the device.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language technique</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>4.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

These are from a specialist, a doctor, so the reader is more inclined to trust and believe them.

Involves the reader directly and encourages them to apply the findings to themselves.
Activity 5 - Magazines vs newspapers

Read the magazine article ‘Punch-Out!!’ and the newspaper article ‘Brain-training …’. What differences and similarities can you find between the two? Consider purpose, audience, form, layout, presentation, language and content, ideas and perspectives.
‘Brain training video games ...’ – The Telegraph article

Now choose two items from each section of your Venn diagram and use these to write a short explanation comparing the two texts.

In your answer you should:

- make comparisons between two computer gaming texts
- select appropriate details from two computer gaming texts to support your ideas
- explore how writers use images, presentation and language to communicate their ideas and perspectives in two computer gaming texts.

In order to fulfil the assessment criteria, you must:

- explore how the writers communicate their ideas and perspectives
- comment on how the writers use presentation and language
- include examples to illustrate the points you make.

Read the following paragraphs and explain which answer best matches the above criteria. It may help you to highlight parts of the answers that match the success criteria above.

The newspaper article is more formal in tone than the magazine article, and appears at first to be more objective. As we read the article more closely, however, we become aware of the subtle bias. The point of view in the magazine article, on the other hand, is more obvious as it is a review, and we expect to find opinion here. The writer tells us about ‘the real joy of Punch-out!!’ which is clearly a biased opinion – the reader might not be a fan of computer games and might see no joy in them at all!

The one text is from a computer magazine and is all about a game called Punch-Out!! which the writer likes. The other text is from a newspaper called The Telegraph, which is a broadsheet. It is about a computer game called ‘Junglememory’. The writer tells us that it will help to improve your memory. Dr Alloway is a scientist who made that game.

Both these texts are about computer gaming. I like the magazine text the best because it uses direct address like ‘if you’re more traditionalist’ which makes it easier to read. It is telling you more about a game whereas the other one is telling you about a way of improving your intelligence.
Activity 6 – Write all about it

When you are comparing texts, it is useful to make your ideas clear by using words or phrases that show exactly what you mean. In the box below you will see a selection of words.

- Some of them can be used to show similarities. Highlight these in … (your choice of colour!)
- Some of them can be used to show differences. Highlight these in …

Read the texts ‘Punch-Out!!’ and ‘Brain training …’. Then, using the same colour key, highlight the comparison words in these sentences and decide whether they are true or false.

1. Both texts are about computer gaming.  **TRUE / FALSE**
2. The ‘Punch-Out!!’ article is from a magazine, whereas the ‘Brain training …’ one is from a newspaper.  **TRUE / FALSE**
3. The newspaper headline is catchy and uses a pun, and the article headline is equally attention grabbing.  **TRUE / FALSE**
4. The ‘Punch-Out!!’ article is written in a formal tone. In comparison, the ‘Brain training’ article is friendly and informal.  **TRUE / FALSE**
5. A large picture is used to support the magazine article. Similarly the newspaper article uses an image, but in this case it is a much smaller picture.  **TRUE / FALSE**
Extra teaching ideas/approaches

1. **Alternative brain training:** As a research task, ask students to find out about other methods for training the brain. Ask them to write their own article describing how to improve intelligence without using Junglememory! (Brain gym, mindmapping, speedreading etc.)

2. **Dramatic approaches:** (A general, rather than unit specific task.) Ask groups of students to devise a piece of drama work based on the article. They could show youngsters becoming frighteningly more intelligent after using the Junglememory software; an interview with Dr Alloway; a journalist testing the software.

3. **‘Brainiac Britain alert!’** This article featured in *The Telegraph*. Ask students to re-write the article as if it were in *The Sun* or *The Daily Mail*. They should consider language and syntax carefully.

4. **Close examination:** On an initial reading of each of the articles ‘Punch-Out!!’ And ‘Brain Training …’ students should work in pairs. Each reads one of the articles and then prepares a set of five questions for their partner. They then swap articles and after reading, write out full answers to the questions.

5. **DIY:** Students choose a computer game or website of their choice to write a review of, using the same format as ‘Punch-Out!!’.
‘Brain training video games ...’ – *The Telegraph* article

### Supplementary teaching notes

#### Activity 1

The mock IQ test is designed to stimulate discussion about intelligence. The quiz could be used as a starter activity with the room set up as if for test conditions. Then use the discussion questions for paired or small group initially, then draw the whole class together and run a full group discussion.

#### Activity 2

A fun approach to the comprehension questions is to cut them out and hide them around the classroom. Stick one under a desk, another to a cupboard door, another on your shoe... then challenge students to race to find and answer all twelve questions.

Whilst the aim of this activity is on one level comprehension, the main purpose is to draw attention to what is *not* said in the article. For example, the Junglememory game costs uses around £30 for an eight week program, but this cost is not mentioned. In this extension task encourage students to consider how much of the article is supported with hard evidence.

#### Activity 3

Ask students to cut out the examples for the bias and objectivity task so they can move them around. Encourage discussion by circulating and asking students to justify their choices. Ask pairs to share their top-ranked example with the rest of the class and encourage discussion by challenging a few of their suggestions. For example, students may decide that a map of the world is mostly objective. Challenge this by explaining that world maps can be centred on particular countries; some feature larger versions of certain countries than others; borders change over time.

When looking at the article, draw attention to the fact that Dr Alloway has conducted a study on a program 'Junglememory' that she and a colleague have developed. It is worth noting that access to this website costs £30 a month. Encourage them to question who the ‘psychologists’ and ‘scientists’ mentioned in the article are ... close reading suggests that Dr Allloway is all of these people!

#### Activity 4

The matching activity would work well in pairs. Ask students to cut out the terms and definitions and move them around to match them up.

This activity can be adapted for Foundation students, either by providing examples, or dictionaries. The example and explanation activity could also be adapted for Foundation level students by providing more modelled examples.

#### Activity 5

This would work well on A3 sized paper. You might run the activity as a competition to find the most similarities and differences with students working in pairs or groups and to a time limit. Encourage discussion of the example answers as a whole class.

#### Activity 6

Use this in conjunction with Activity 5 to encourage students to write comparative responses.