How Learning Takes Shape

Trace the social, thinking, and brain processes behind a new skill.

PS.4.4 "Explain the social, cognitive and neurological factors in learning."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one social influence, circle two thinking strategies, and number two brain-related processes in the passage. Use your marks to explain how these factors affect Maya's learning.

A Better Question

1 At a community history club, Maya is learning to interview longtime residents about a neighborhood park. Her first question, "Was the park nice?" draws only a brief answer. During a practice interview, a classmate plays the resident and asks Maya to try a question that invites a story. Maya changes it to "What do you remember about the park when you were my age?" The classmate describes a summer concert. Seeing that longer answer helps Maya understand what makes an open question useful. The partner's response offers feedback that Maya could not get by silently reading a list of questions.

2 Before the real interview, Maya studies two sample questions and notices that one asks for a yes or no answer while the other asks for a memory. She then closes her notebook and tries to write three new questions from memory. When she cannot recall one, she checks her notes and tries again. This act of retrieving and correcting information helps her remember more than just rereading the page. She also keeps a short list of follow-up questions beside her. That list frees up some of her limited working memory, so she can listen closely instead of holding every planned question in mind.

3 On interview day, Maya feels nervous when several club members watch. Her attention shifts toward whether she sounds foolish, and she misses part of the resident's answer. A teacher moves the group farther away and lets Maya practice once more with her partner. With less pressure, she can focus on the conversation. Practice can change the strength of connections among brain cells involved in a skill; improvement does not come from a single special "interview center." That night, sleep supports the brain's processing of what she practiced. Social conditions, thinking strategies, and brain processes all affect what Maya learns.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the classmate's response help Maya learn something that silently reading a list would not?

2. Why might writing questions from memory and checking them help Maya more than rereading alone?

3. How do practice and sleep support Maya's learning in different ways?

4. How does being watched affect Maya's thinking, and why does moving the group help?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are learning to read a bus timetable so you can plan a trip. In four to six sentences, describe one social, one cognitive, and one neurological factor that could affect your learning, and explain how you would use each to improve it.

How Learning Takes Shape

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one social influence, circle two thinking strategies, and number two brain-related processes in the passage. Use your marks to explain how these factors affect Maya's learning. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the classmate's response help Maya learn something that silently reading a list would not?	**The classmate gives Maya feedback: her revised question draws a longer story, showing her why an open question is useful.**
2	Why might writing questions from memory and checking them help Maya more than rereading alone?	**Maya retrieves what she remembers, checks what she missed, and corrects her mistakes, which helps her remember the questions.**
3	How do practice and sleep support Maya's learning in different ways?	**Practice can change the strength of brain-cell connections involved in the skill. Sleep supports the brain's processing of what Maya practiced.**
4	How does being watched affect Maya's thinking, and why does moving the group help?	**Being watched makes Maya worry about sounding foolish, shifting her attention away from the answer. Moving the group reduces that pressure so she can focus.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would ask a friend to quiz me on which bus reaches the library, because their feedback could catch a route I misread. My friend could also ask me to find the last bus home. I would put the timetable away and recall a departure time, then check it to correct any mistake. After practicing, I would get enough sleep because sleep supports my brain's processing of what I learned.

Accept other passage-supported explanations that connect each factor to its effect on learning. For the open task, look for a distinct social influence, thinking strategy, and brain-related process, with a clear explanation of how each helps.