



BEGINNER'S MINDSET



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:
19XU-L1L8-3CR8



1

Warm up

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. What did you like learning when you were a child?
2. What did you find difficult to learn at that age?
3. When was the last time you learned something new? What was it? Why did you learn it?





2 Focus on vocabulary

Part A: Write the nouns in the box in the correct definition.

specification / grid / monk / chancellor / preconception / mindset

1. a _____ is a man who has dedicated his life to a religion.
2. a _____ is a system of pipes and wires supplying the energy needs of a particular area.
3. a _____ is an idea or opinion that is formed before having all the information or facts.
4. a _____ is a particular way of thinking that reflects how we approach life.
5. a _____ is the title given to the head of government in Germany and Austria.
6. a _____ is a description of how something should be done or made.

Part B: Match the vocabulary to the definitions.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. <u>conceal</u> (v) | a. in a very certain way |
| 2. <u>contrary</u> (adj.) | b. young and with little experience |
| 3. <u>pioneer</u> (v) | c. in a different or opposite way |
| 4. <u>reassess</u> (v) | d. do something for the first time |
| 5. <u>tender age</u> (idiom.) | e. think about something again while being open to changing your mind |
| 6. <u>undoubtedly</u> (adv.) | f. hide something |

Now scan the article on page 4 and write the words from Part B in gaps 1 – 6. You may need to change the form of the word.





In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. Have you ever had to **reassess** a decision? Why? What happened?
2. Have you ever needed to **conceal** something from someone? What was the situation?
3. Who was the first person to **pioneer** something that you find really useful or impressive?
4. Has a situation ever developed completely **contrary** to what you expected? What happened?



3

Reading for gist

Skim read the article on page four and match the following titles to Paragraphs A – D. You will not need all of them.

1. Embracing the inner child
2. Helping the poor
3. Staying humble
4. Questioning experience
5. The path to greater knowledge
6. Taking new path



Forget what you know

A beginner's mindset

- A. In his book, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, Shunryu Suzuki, a Zen Monk and teacher wrote: 'In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert's, there are few.' He taught that being present in the moment enables us to open up to progressive approaches which run _____¹ to traditional ways of doing things. This is not to discount the knowledge of experts. However, he pointed out that people who have great amounts of experience and knowledge in a particular subject, and this can include CEOs and leaders, are likely to repeat the same actions, as this is what has led to success previously. While this can _____² work in a great number of situations, it can prevent exploration of new ideas and approaches. It can also lead to a failure to notice change and adapt to it.
- B. Take for example Roman Kirsch, CEO of Lesara, a German fast fashion company. At the _____³ of 30, he _____⁴ a transformative approach to an ongoing problem within the industry. Traditionally, clothing was company-led: fashion was created by designers and consumers may, or may not, buy it. Kirsch, who does not come from a fashion background, turned the model on its head and instead got the company making clothes to customer specifications, allowing the consumers to set the trends and making what they wanted, when they wanted it. Nicole Poindexter, CEO of Blackstar Energy is another example of taking an innovative approach. Her desire to speed up the process of providing power to developing African countries and have it come from renewable sources led to her diverting from tradition.
- C. Previously, regions relied on the national grid for their power sources which often took decades as it required the slow installation of the infrastructure needed. She hit upon the idea of providing small solar-powered units that would serve small communities of around 100 people in rural areas. Customers buy scratch cards to pay for specific numbers of hours, much like previous models of phonecards. As a result, thousands of people in Ghana are able to watch television and charge their mobile phones due to her ground-breaking idea.
- D. A significant aspect of embracing the beginner's mindset is humility. Seeking criticism, even if it is negative, and admitting when you do not have the answers is an important part of innovation. This trait, in fact, requires a great deal of confidence. We've all met people whose apparent confidence actually _____⁵ serious self-doubt. Research shows that those who are intellectually humble are often more curious and willing to learn for the sake of it than those who see themselves as experts. Questioning yourself and your assumptions is a good way to find innovative approaches that lead to new discoveries. Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, and his ability to recognise his own limitations was noted in his time and felt to be directly linked to his ability to make wise decisions. Angela Merkel, the chancellor of Germany from 2005 - 2021 came into politics from a scientific career. This background no doubt helped her tendency to listen to others and question her own beliefs before forming an opinion - a practice which earned her much respect. Whether you are dedicating yourself to learning new skills, or _____⁶ your current ones, it's a good idea to put aside knowledge or preconceptions, even if it's only temporary. Re-engaging the childlike wonder we all had when we entered school and discovered ideas and concepts for the first time, will serve as well as adults too.

Sources: BBC, Deloitte



4

Scanning for vocabulary

Quickly read the article on page four and find vocabulary that has the following meanings.

1. _____ (adj., para. A): preferring new methods and ideas
2. _____ (n, para. A): an examination of a subject or ideas to understand it better
3. _____ (idiom, para. B): cause people to think about something differently
4. _____ (n, para. C): the systems needed for a country to run effectively, such as transport and power
5. _____ (n, para. D): the quality of showing that you don't consider yourself more important than others
6. _____ (n, para. D): a belief created without all of the required information
7. _____ (adj., para. D): approaching tasks with new ideas that haven't been done before

5

Reading comprehension

Read the following statements and decide if they are true (T), false (F) or not given (NG).

1. Shunryu taught that experts usually want to focus on one way of doing a task that was successful for them before leaving them less open to innovation. _____
2. Roman Kirsch had previously worked in the customer service industry. _____
3. African countries traditionally used renewable energy for their power. _____
4. Villagers in Ghana buy their energy in units of hours now. _____
5. According to the article, being honest about your limitations shows that you are not sure of yourself. _____
6. Abraham Lincoln's way of making decisions made him a very popular president. _____
7. Angela Merkel used skills from the field of science to help her in her political career. _____





6 Beginner's mindset - a questionnaire

Read the questions and make notes on your answers.

Questions	Notes
1. What subjects do you consider yourself to be knowledgeable in?	
2. What skills do you have?	
3. Where and when did you gain the knowledge of your subjects?	
4. What would you tell someone about your subjects who knew nothing about it at all?	
5. Do you regularly update what you know? Why/ Why not?	
6. What questions did you have about your subject when you first started?	
7. If you were starting your career again, would you do anything differently in terms of how you gained your knowledge?	
8. If you started in your career again, is there anything that you would try that you wouldn't try now? Why wouldn't you try it now?	
9. What subjects that you are not familiar with would you like to know more about?	
10. What questions do you have about it?	
11. What would you like to try in the next year that you have never done before? Why have you not done it before?	
12. What new skills would you like to learn? How would you go about learning them?	

In pairs, discuss your answers to the questions. Use the answers to make a plan for what you would like to do over the next year.

