

Scan the passage for the information required by the questions (following):

- 1** People have always admired anybody who can speak more than one language. We take it for granted that children will learn their first language perfectly. Learning a first language just seems normal. But most people are surprised at anyone who speaks a second language very well. The reason for this cannot be the language itself: linguists agree that there are no ‘hard’ or ‘easy’ languages. All languages are about the same. The real explanation must be the learning process itself. Learning a second language seems to cause more difficulties than learning a first language.
- 2** Therefore, to understand why second-language learning may be more difficult, we need to think about differences in the learning process. Age is probably the most obvious difference between learning a first and a second language. First-language learners are usually babies and young children. Second-language learners are usually school children, teenagers or adults. But why should age make a difference?
- 3** There are two possible reasons. Perhaps younger learners’ brains are more flexible and more open to language learning. Maybe older learners are not as ready to learn a whole new language. Also, it could be that young children are more carefree: they are not afraid to try a new language and learn from their mistakes. Older learners, perhaps, are more nervous. If older learners are afraid of making mistakes, they may be slower to explore the language they want to learn.
- 4** Context might also be a factor. Usually we learn our first language at home, with our family and with other people we love and trust. Second-language learning usually happens in school. Most people feel less comfortable in a classroom than in their own home. And when they learn at home, children use language as a part of many different real-life activities. In school, learning is less exciting and realistic. So, language learning at school may be slower and more difficult.
- 5** Finally, there is learning style. First-language learners always learn by doing. For them language is a natural part of action. They do not think much about rules; they just seem to practice all the time. But second-language learners usually pay a lot more attention to rules. This might mean that language is more theoretical for them. There is much more to a language than the rules of grammar and vocabulary. Perhaps some second-language learners learn the rules but not the language!
- 6** These process differences seem to make learning a second language different from learning a first language. And they may make it harder, too. However, quite a few people still do learn to speak a second language very well. Probably, these good learners have a learning style that matches their age and their learning context. If so, their success comes from thinking about *themselves* as well as about the new language that they want to learn.

Questions for scanning –

Find each of the following details in the passage. Write down the paragraph number. Then, give the related information.

a) Where does it say that *young children are more carefree*? Par. _____

Why might that be important? _____

b) Where does it say that *all languages are about the same*? Par. _____

Why does this matter? _____

c) Where does it say that *language is a natural part of action*? Par. _____

What is the result of this? _____

d) Where does it say that *second-language learning usually happens in school*? Par. _____

State two reasons for mentioning this. _____
