

What is SLA & why does it matter?

(An easy-to-use worksheet about Second Language Acquisition)



Part 1: Multiple Choice

Choose the best answer from the options provided.

1. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is a subfield of _____.
 - a. anthropology
 - b. linguistics
 - c. child language acquisition
 - d. psychology
2. Second Language Acquisition really started to take off as a field in the _____.
 - a. 1890s
 - b. 1950s
 - c. 1980s
 - d. 2000s
3. What are you learning when you learn a new language?
 - a. Hundreds of thousands of words
 - b. Grammatical rules
 - c. Idiomatic expressions
 - d. Cultural competence
 - e. A and B only
 - f. All of the above
4. Julia learned Spanish from her parents, started learning English in Kindergarten, studied French in High School, and then learned Mandarin while teaching English in China. Which of her languages would **NOT** fall under the umbrella of SLA?
 - a. Spanish
 - b. English
 - c. French
 - d. Mandarin
 - e. None of the above
5. What is the primary focus of the “applied” strand of SLA?
 - a. understanding how language learning works
 - b. explaining why second languages are so hard to learn
 - c. making connections between SLA and other scientific disciplines
 - d. making language learning and teaching more effective



Part 2: Multiple Choice

Match the Second Language Acquisition situation with the real-world area it relates to.



Education

Public Policy

National Security & Diplomacy

The Economy

1. A local government needs to understand how and when immigrants should be educated in the local language while maintaining their home languages.
2. A manufacturing company with overseas offices needs to find a way to help familiarize their employees with the local language and culture.
3. A school administrator has to choose a language textbook that will best help the students in her district meet world language standards.
4. The military needs to decide which service members should be selected to negotiate peace talks in a foreign language.

Part 3: What's so cool about SLA?

Below are some questions addressed by Second Language Acquisition research. Choose the one that you find the most interesting, and briefly explain why you think so. If there's an SLA question that you find particularly interesting but that's not on this list, you can choose to discuss that one!

- Does age affect language learning?
- Are some languages harder to learn than others?
- Why is it so hard to lose your foreign accent?
- How does speaking a second language affect your identity?
- How does the brain process second languages?
- Does learning a second language improve your tolerance of other cultures?



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