

NEWS BREAK

Article: **New study finds 6 ways to slow memory decline**

Section: **NW, A16**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, January 29, 2023** of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

****Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for your students.***

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Objectives:

Students will discuss A new study of older adults that has identified six habits — from eating a variety of foods to regularly reading or playing cards — that are linked with a lower risk of dementia and a slower rate of memory decline. They will learn about the six main healthy lifestyles that make an impact on brain health and longevity. They will learn about dementia, the importance of living a healthy life and exercising your brain.

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

But for many, “memory loss can merely be **senescent** forgetfulness,” write the authors of the BMJ study — like forgetting the name of that TV program you used to love, or that pesky fact you wanted to look up.

Senescent Guess:

Senescent Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. A new study of more than _____ older adults has identified six habits — from eating a variety of foods to regularly reading or playing cards — that are linked with a lower risk of dementia and a slower rate of memory decline.
2. What six “healthy lifestyle factors” are associated with better cognitive outcomes in older adults?
3. While researchers have long known that there is a link between dementia and factors such as social isolation and obesity, the size and scope of the new study adds substantial evidence to a global body of research that suggests a _____ may help brains age better.
4. If you carry the APOE 4 gene, what does that mean?
5. What is dementia?
6. The BMJ study was conducted in China between 2009 and 2019. Researchers conducted tests on over 29,000 people ages 60 and older and then tracked their progress or decline over time — what’s known as what?
7. THE BMJ study sorted their participants into one of three groups. What were they and what were they based on?
8. The six modifiable lifestyle factors the researchers focused on included what things?
9. Over the course of the study, the researchers found what two groups to have a slower mental decline?
10. Why does this study stand out?

Discussion Questions (small/large groups), Journal Prompts or Essay Questions:

- *What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?*
- *At first, I thought _____, but now I think _____?*
- *What things did you already know from prior experience?*

People living favorable lifestyles that included at least four healthy habits were also less likely to progress to mild cognitive impairment and dementia. The results show that “more is better of these behaviors,” says Hogervorst — in other words, the more healthy lifestyle factors you can

combine, the better your chances of preserving your memory and staving off dementia.

- The more healthier lifestyle factors you can combine, the better...for memory health. What else is impacted by living a healthy lifestyle?

Notably, this held true even for people who carried the APOE gene associated with a higher risk of Alzheimer's disease. "These results provide an optimistic outlook, as they suggest that although genetic risk is not modifiable, a combination of more healthy lifestyle factors are associated with a slower rate of memory decline, regardless of the genetic risk," wrote the study authors.

- Did these results surprise you?

Still, its results align with the broad scientific consensus that there is a link between how we live and our cognitive function as we age — and perhaps more important, suggest that it may never be too late to improve your brain health.

"The overall message from the study is a positive one," Snorri B. Rafnsson, associate professor of aging and dementia at the University of West London, said in an email. "Namely, that cognitive function, and especially memory function, in later life maybe positively influenced by regularly and frequently engaging in different health related activities."

- What are you doing now to exercise your brain?

News Break is posted to the Web on Tuesday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please [register online](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.
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