

## NEWS BREAK

Article: **Want to lower your dementia risk? Becoming a teacher is a good start**

Section: **JOBS, C16**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, May 19, 2024** 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 learn about a new study regarding mentally challenging occupations and the link to cognitive health and preventing dementia. Students will think about memory and thinking as we age. They'll discuss strategies to keep their mind stimulated and ways technology can impact brain health.

### Pre-Reading Discussion:



- What do you think the article will be about, using this picture?
- Are there any clues? What can you infer?

### 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.

The researchers noted, however, that more research is needed to pinpoint precisely which work tasks are most **advantageous** for promoting healthy cognitive function.

### **Advantageous Guess:**

### **Advantageous Definition:**

### Comprehension Questions:

1. From your \_\_\_\_\_ to well into your \_\_\_\_\_, a new study proposes working a mentally challenging job can pay off in more ways than one.
2. It can even help maintain your \_\_\_\_\_ while preventing dementia later in life.
3. Our results show the value of having an occupation that requires more complex thinking as a way to maintain what?
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ is really important in promoting cognitive health.
5. It was discovered that, throughout the entire 30-year age range, the Norwegians working jobs that provided little mental stimulation were at \_\_\_\_\_% higher risk of mild cognitive impairment and \_\_\_\_\_% higher risk of dementia after age 70.

6. Although the jobs considered mentally stimulating covered a wide range, one position stood out — which one and why? “
7. The researchers noted, however, that more research is needed to pinpoint precisely which work tasks are most advantageous for promoting healthy cognitive function. Although not involved in the study, the director of research at Florida’s Institute for Neurodegenerative Diseases said there is one basic rule of thumb older adults can follow. “As they say, if you don’t use it, you lose it. This is similarly true for cognitive engagement throughout the life span,” Dr. Richard Isaacson told CNN. “While I’d speculate that people at risk for Alzheimer’s would be well-served by taking advantage of professional advancement opportunities, learning new job tasks, and refining their skills at work over a period of time, further studies will help clarify which specific activities have the most brain healthy benefits.”

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

**Class Discussion 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?
- What jobs do you think have the most mental stimulation?
- What classes at school are more/less mentally engaging?
- Would you want a career that’s mentally challenging? Why or why not?

**Diving Deeper-Journal, Essay Prompts & Discussion Questions:**

- The study identifies teaching as a common mentally stimulating job. Can you think of other, less traditional professions that require similar levels of mental engagement? How might these jobs benefit cognitive health?
- While mental stimulation is beneficial, what happens if a job becomes overly stressful or demanding? How can we find a balance between challenge and feeling overwhelmed?
- The researchers suggest "use it or lose it." What are some strategies people of all ages can use to keep their minds active and engaged, even outside of work?
- This study focuses on work, but what about hobbies, social activities, or volunteer work? Can these activities contribute to cognitive health as well?
- Technology can be a powerful tool for learning, but it can also be a distraction. How can we leverage technology to keep our minds sharp without falling into mindless browsing?
- Think about your own daily activities (schoolwork, hobbies, chores). Which activities require the most mental effort? How could you add more mentally stimulating elements to your daily routine?

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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