



LANGUAGE LEVEL: B1 INTERMEDIATE

The Bilingual Experience

Being bilingual is increasingly common in today's society, but what's it like to raise a bilingual child? One person who has experience of this is Margaret Bray. A native of Bristol in England, she is married to a German, Ingo, and lives in Munich with him and their two bilingual daughters, Helen, who is 16, and Laura, who is 12. We asked Margaret Bray what advice she had for parents who planned to raise their children bilingually:

Margaret Bray (Standard British accent): Well, my first tip would be: 'Stay with it, don't give up!' I know people who have given up, for whatever reason, they can't be bothered to keep speaking two languages, especially when they're in company. They feel, for whatever reason, it's rude to do so, or it's just too much work, and it's such a shame! because you're giving your child a gift! It doesn't have to be English, it can be Maltese, it can be Serbo-Croat, just do it because, you know, being able to speak more than one language always has advantages. And my second piece of advice would be: 'Make sure your children mix with other children who speak the language that you want them to speak, because it's not enough for them to be surrounded by adults. I really think they should have people that they can play with in that language: very important.'

And she had more to say on the subject:

Margaret Bray: I have some friends who live in the neighbourhood! These are two

men who are English-speaking, native speakers, and they're married to German women. And they have tried to raise their kids bilingually, and it is a little bit more difficult, for the simple reason the children spend more time with the mother, and, OK, in our case it was easy because I was the foreigner – or I am the foreigner – here, in Germany, but my kids are with me, they see me a lot more than they see their Dad, who's out working all day. So it was easy for them to sort of learn English with me. Now, my two friends, the fathers, don't see their children as often as the children see their mothers, so, consequently, the German is a lot stronger there and the English has suffered somewhat. I think it's easier if the mother is the one who is the foreign speaker. I think the child has a better chance of picking up the second language, perhaps more easily and more quickly, simply due to the fact that they spend more time with the mother, and they're more exposed to that second language than they are, maybe, if the father is the one who speaks the second language.

We then asked Margaret Bray whether her daughters were happy being bilingual:

Margaret Bray: Oh, yes, absolutely, I mean, especially with English, it's such a cool language to be able to speak, because so much is in English, certainly here in Germany, we're surrounded by English, you know, on advertising, films, pop music, of course, and, yeah, just the fact that my kids are able to help their classmates with homework!

EXERCISES

Listening Questions

- Write the word to complete the sentence. The first letter and a definition are given in parentheses to help you.
 - a) It's always an [a] _____ [benefit] to be bilingual.
 - b) If you want to be fit, you mustn't [g] _____ up [stop something because it's difficult] exercising.
 - c) The guidebook had several [l] _____ [pieces of advice] for eating out in Dublin.
 - d) My wife was my [c] _____ [school friend]. She used to help me with algebra.
 - e) I told him it was a [s] _____ [pity] that he'd married so young.
 - f) The woman in the restaurant was so [r] _____ [impolite] that I refused to leave a tip.
 - g) The [f] _____ [non-native visitor] spoke a more grammatically correct English than the Englishman.

- Decide which word doesn't belong in the group.
 - a) foreigner, language, advice
 - b) strange, common, typical
 - c) German, France, English
 - d) affair, subject, topic
 - e) fluent, accent, proficient
 - f) learn, pick up, teach

- Insert vowels to create words used in the article. Example: crrtlyly + e + a + i = certainly
 - a) rs _____ el energyly
 - b) scv _____ fl hrnwkr
 - c) gft _____ gl drvtrng
 - d) spnd _____ hl dsrtms

Answers

- a) advantage, b) give up, c) tips, d) classmate, e) shame, f) rude, g) foreigner
- a) advice, b) strange, c) France, d) affair, e) accent, f) teach
- a) raise, b) society, c) gift, d) spend, e) consequently, f) homework, g) advertising, h) classmates

MORE EXERCISES ON CD

Glossary

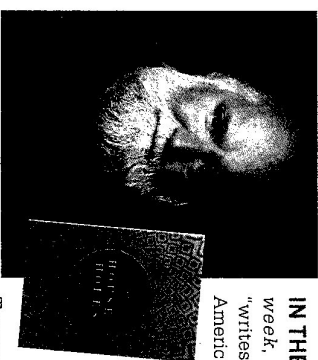
- 8 TO RAISE: educar
- 9 TO GIVE UP: darse por vencido
- 10 THEY CAN'T BE BOTHERED: les da pereza
- 11 IT'S SUCH A SHAME: es una pena
- 12 GIFT: regalo
- 13 PIECE OF ADVICE: consejo
- 14 NEIGHBOURHOOD: barrio
- 15 SOMEWHAT: un poco
- 16 TO PICK UP: aprender
- 17 CLASSMATE: compañero de clase
- 18 HOMEWORK: deberes



Collection of Paper Pieces

HOWARD JACOBSON may be Britain's most talented comic novelist. Known as 'The English Philip Roth', he prefers to call himself 'The Jewish Jane Austen'. He won last year's Man Booker Prize for *The Finkler Question*. Jacobson is also a popular newspaper columnist. *Whatever it is, I Don't Like It* (Bloomsbury) is a collection of his pieces: be they funny, sad or hard-hitting, they are all very well written in his trademark 'long, hilarious', 'heartbreaking' sentences.

Baker Sex Satire Set to Shock

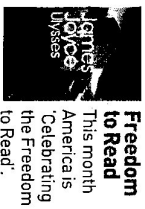


IN THE WORDS of *Newsweek*, Nicholson Baker "writes like no one else in America". Baker celebrates our daily lives in microscopic detail. His debut novel, *The Mezzanine* (1988), describes an office worker ascending one floor in a lift, while *Room Temperature* has a man feeding a baby for 20 minutes. Baker became a bestselling writer with his controversial erotic novels *Vox*, about sex chatlines, and *The Fermata*, in which an office worker used his ability to stop time to undress women. According to *The New York Times*, *House of Holes* (Simon & Schuster) is so controversial that it will provoke "fistfights" in your local public library. Baker's satirical answer to America's 'porn-saturated culture', the explicit but comical novel is set 'in a sex resort' with the motto 'Pleasure First'.

New releases



England's Thousand Best Churches and English's Thousand Best Houses, by Simon Jenkins, bestselling author of *England's Thousand Best Churches* and *English's Thousand Best Houses*, has turned to history. *A Short History of England* (Profile Books) covers all significant events, themes and individuals in English history from the sixth century on.



Freedom to Read This month the American Library Association and the Library of Congress, the 30-year-old anti-censorship campaign fights against critics determined to "ban" novels as varied as *Harry Potter* and *Ulysses*.



Rapping on Bullying Rapper 50 Cent, who once sang "Give me a knife, I'll get rid of your neighbourhood" bullies, has announced plans to write a book on bullying. The novel, *Playground*, inspired by his childhood experiences, will be published by Penguin in January 2012.

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