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Learn in your sleep, researchers say

27th June, 2012

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1206/120627-sleep.html>

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THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120627-sleep.html>

U.S. researchers suggest sleeping can help us remember things we have just learnt. A team from Northwestern University report that a 90-minute nap can help people learn a new skill. The article on their research is published in the June edition of the journal "Nature". The scientists say: "Information acquired during waking can be reactivated during sleep, promoting memory stabilization." Test volunteers practised musical tunes before and after a short sleep. During the nap, the researchers played one of the tunes the volunteers had practised, but not the other. The team found that the participants made fewer errors when playing the melody that had been played while they slept.

Study co-author Dr Paul J. Reuber points out the research might not work with learning a foreign language while you sleep. He said: "The critical difference is that our research shows that memory is strengthened for something you've already learned." He added: "Rather than learning something new in your sleep, we're talking about enhancing an existing memory by re-activating information recently acquired." However, Dr Reuber did say there were possibilities for language learners: "If you were learning how to speak in a foreign language during the day, for example, and then tried to reactivate those memories during sleep, perhaps you might enhance your learning," he said.

WARM-UPS

1. LEARNING IN YOUR SLEEP: Walk around the class and talk to other students about learning in your sleep. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

researchers / naps / new skills / articles / memory / volunteers / melodies / errors / foreign languages / critical differences / strengthened / existing memories / enhance

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. IN YOUR SLEEP: How can you improve things while asleep? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

	How?	Will you try this?
English listening		
health		
English vocabulary		
stress levels		
mood		
memory		

4. SLEEP: Students A **strongly** believe we shouldn't do other things while we sleep; Students B **strongly** believe sleep is a great opportunity to enhance our physical and mental skills. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. SKILLS: Rank these skills and share your rankings with your partner. Put the one you most want to improve at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- English
- listening (to friends and family)
- computer / IT
- numeracy
- sports
- musical
- speaking in front of people
- artistic

6. MEMORY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'memory'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120627-sleep.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A company has started selling remember-in-your-sleep software. | T / F |
| b. Researchers say a 90-minute sleep can help you learn new skills. | T / F |
| c. Volunteers replayed melodies they learnt before they had a nap. | T / F |
| d. Volunteers played what they heard while asleep with fewer mistakes. | T / F |
| e. An author said there would be the same results with language learning. | T / F |
| f. The author said it is easy to learn something new in your sleep. | T / F |
| g. A researcher said it was possible to learn a language in a day. | T / F |
| h. The researcher said we need to reactivate memories to learn better. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. suggest | a. forty winks |
| 2. nap | b. reinforced |
| 3. acquired | c. mistakes |
| 4. promoting | d. vital |
| 5. errors | e. argue |
| 6. critical | f. boosting |
| 7. strengthened | g. understanding |
| 8. during | h. obtained |
| 9. enhancing | i. encouraging |
| 10. learning | j. in the course of |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. help us remember things | a. during waking |
| 2. a 90-minute nap can help people | b. existing memory |
| 3. Information acquired | c. difference |
| 4. During the | d. memories |
| 5. participants made | e. learn a new skill |
| 6. the critical | f. your learning |
| 7. strengthened for something you've | g. nap |
| 8. we're talking about enhancing an | h. we have just learnt |
| 9. tried to reactivate those | i. already learned |
| 10. perhaps you might enhance | j. fewer errors |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120627-sleep.html>

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

U.S. researchers (1) _____ sleeping can help us remember things we have just learnt. A team from Northwestern University report that a 90-minute (2) _____ can help people learn a new skill. The article on their research is published in the June (3) _____ of the journal "Nature". The scientists say: "Information (4) _____ during waking can be reactivated during sleep, promoting memory stabilization." Test volunteers practised musical (5) _____ before and after a short sleep. During the nap, the researchers played one of the tunes the volunteers had practised, but not the other. The team found that the participants made (6) _____ errors when playing the (7) _____ that had been played (8) _____ they slept.

acquired

melody

nap

while

tunes

suggest

fewer

edition

Study co-author Dr Paul J. Reuber (9) _____ out the research might not work with learning a foreign language while you sleep. He said: "The (10) _____ difference is that our research shows that (11) _____ is strengthened for something you've already learned." He added: "Rather than learning something new in your sleep, we're talking about enhancing an (12) _____ memory by re-activating information (13) _____ acquired." However, Dr Reuber did say there were (14) _____ for language learners: "If you were learning how to speak in a foreign language during the day, for example, and then tried to (15) _____ those memories during sleep, perhaps you might (16) _____ your learning," he said.

existing

reactivate

critical

enhance

possibilities

points

memory

recently

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120627-sleep.html>

U.S. researchers _____ help us remember things we have just learnt. A team from Northwestern University report that a _____ help people learn a new skill. The article on their research is published in the June edition of the journal "Nature". The scientists say: "Information _____ can be reactivated during sleep, promoting memory stabilization." Test volunteers _____ before and after a short sleep. During the nap, the researchers played _____ the volunteers had practised, but not the other. The team found that the participants made fewer errors when _____ that had been played while they slept.

Study co-author Dr Paul J. Reuber _____ might not work with learning a foreign language while you sleep. He said: "The _____ that our research shows that memory is strengthened for something you've already learned." He added: "Rather than learning something new in your sleep, we're _____ an existing memory by re-activating _____." However, Dr Reuber did say there were possibilities for language learners: "If you were learning how to speak in a foreign language during the day, for example, and then _____ those memories during sleep, perhaps you might _____," he said.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120627-sleep.html>

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'learn' and 'sleep'.

learn	sleep
--------------	--------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• suggest• 90• waking• before• other• fewer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• points• critical• strengthened• enhancing• day• perhaps
--	--

LEARNING IN YOUR SLEEP SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120627-sleep.html>

Write five GOOD questions about learning in your sleep in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

LEARNING IN YOUR SLEEP DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'sleep'?
- c) Have you ever thought about learning in your sleep?
- d) What do you think about the idea of reinforcing things you've learnt while you sleep?
- e) What new skill would you like to learn while you sleep?
- f) Do you think sleep could be a whole new area in which to learn?
- g) Do you ever think sleep makes you remember things you've learnt?
- h) Should sleep be for sleep and not for "promoting memory stabilization"?
- i) Are you surprised that the volunteers produced fewer errors with the melody they heard while sleeping?

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LEARNING IN YOUR SLEEP DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think this research could be used to enhance the way we learn languages?
- c) Do you ever dream in English?
- d) Do you think playing a recording of newly learnt vocabulary while you are asleep could help you remember it better?
- e) Do you think it might be possible one day to learn a whole new skill while asleep?
- f) What other things could the researchers focus on regarding sleep and learning?
- g) How is your learning affected if you don't get enough sleep?
- h) What do you do to enhance your learning?
- i) What questions would you like to ask co-author Dr Paul J. Reuber?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1206/120627-sleep.html>

U.S. researchers suggest sleeping can help us remember things we have just learnt. A team from Northwestern University report that a 90-minute (1) _____ can help people learn a new skill. The (2) _____ on their research is published in the June edition of the journal "Nature". The scientists say: "Information acquired during waking can be reactivated during sleep, (3) _____ memory stabilization." Test volunteers practised musical tunes before and after a short sleep. (4) _____ the nap, the researchers played one of the tunes the volunteers had practised, but not the (5) _____. The team found that the participants made fewer errors (6) _____ playing the melody that had been played while they slept.

Study co-author Dr Paul J. Reuber points (7) _____ the research might not work (8) _____ learning a foreign language while you sleep. He said: "The critical difference is that our research shows that memory is strengthened for something you've already learned." He added: "Rather (9) _____ learning something new in your sleep, we're talking about (10) _____ an existing memory by re-activating information recently acquired." However, Dr Reuber (11) _____ say there were possibilities for language learners: "If you were learning how to speak in a foreign language during the day, for example, and then tried to reactivate those memories during sleep, perhaps you might enhance your (12) _____," he said.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. | (a) nip | (b) rap | (c) rip | (d) nap |
| 2. | (a) particle | (b) particular | (c) article | (d) articulate |
| 3. | (a) promotes | (b) promoting | (c) promotion | (d) promoter |
| 4. | (a) During | (b) While | (c) Between | (d) Among |
| 5. | (a) another | (b) others | (c) other | (d) the others |
| 6. | (a) whence | (b) whensoever | (c) whiled | (d) when |
| 7. | (a) down | (b) out | (c) up | (d) in |
| 8. | (a) with | (b) as | (c) by | (d) from |
| 9. | (a) that | (b) than | (c) then | (d) thing |
| 10. | (a) embracing | (b) enchanting | (c) enhancing | (d) entreating |
| 11. | (a) did | (b) had | (c) was | (d) done |
| 12. | (a) learn | (b) learned | (c) learners | (d) learning |

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about learning in your sleep. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. LEARNING IN YOUR SLEEP: Make a poster about learning in your sleep. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. NEW SKILLS: Write a magazine article about learning new skills while you sleep. Include imaginary interviews with people who really want to do this.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to a sleep expert. Ask him/her three questions about learning in your sleep. Give him/her three of your opinions on this. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F b. T c. T d. T e. F f. F g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. suggest | a. argue |
| 2. nap | b. forty winks |
| 3. acquired | c. obtained |
| 4. promoting | d. encouraging |
| 5. errors | e. mistakes |
| 6. critical | f. vital |
| 7. strengthened | g. reinforced |
| 8. during | h. in the course of |
| 9. enhancing | i. boosting |
| 10. learning | j. understanding |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. help us remember things | a. we have just learnt |
| 2. a 90-minute nap can help people | b. learn a new skill |
| 3. Information acquired | c. during waking |
| 4. During the | d. nap |
| 5. participants made | e. fewer errors |
| 6. the critical | f. difference |
| 7. strengthened for something you've | g. already learned |
| 8. we're talking about enhancing an | h. existing memory |
| 9. tried to reactivate those | i. memories |
| 10. perhaps you might enhance | j. your learning |

GAP FILL:

Learn in your sleep, researchers say

U.S. researchers (1) **suggest** sleeping can help us remember things we have just learnt. A team from Northwestern University report that a 90-minute (2) **nap** can help people learn a new skill. The article on their research is published in the June (3) **edition** of the journal "Nature". The scientists say: "Information (4) **acquired** during waking can be reactivated during sleep, promoting memory stabilization." Test volunteers practised musical (5) **tunes** before and after a short sleep. During the nap, the researchers played one of the tunes the volunteers had practised, but not the other. The team found that the participants made (6) **fewer** errors when playing the (7) **melody** that had been played (8) **while** they slept.

Study co-author Dr Paul J. Reuber (9) **points** out the research might not work with learning a foreign language while you sleep. He said: "The (10) **critical** difference is that our research shows that (11) **memory** is strengthened for something you've already learned." He added: "Rather than learning something new in your sleep, we're talking about enhancing an (12) **existing** memory by re-activating information (13) **recently** acquired." However, Dr Reuber did say there were (14) **possibilities** for language learners: "If you were learning how to speak in a foreign language during the day, for example, and then tried to (15) **reactivate** those memories during sleep, perhaps you might (16) **enhance** your learning," he said.

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d 2 - c 3 - b 4 - a 5 - c 6 - d 7 - b 8 - a 9 - b 10 - c 11 - a 12 - d