

<オールインワン英文読解④⑧> 長文読解編 5

<問題10> (標準~やや難) [目標タイム: 10分]

Your English teacher has assigned this article to you. You need to prepare notes to give a short talk.

Belief Perseverance

There may be some out-of-date rules at your school. If you ask your teachers to update these rules, your ideas may be rejected. Of course, most of their objections will be reasonable, but some may be caused by belief perseverance, the psychological characteristic of maintaining an existing belief despite any new information. Although this tendency itself is neither good nor bad, it may cause conflicts ranging from personal problems to social phenomena.

A study published in 1980 by Craig A. Anderson and his colleagues describes this human tendency. In the first stage of their experiment, the participants were presented with evidence that led them to conclude that firefighters who were willing to take risks performed their jobs better. Surprisingly, even after the participants were told that the evidence was false, they were reluctant to change their conclusions. Why is it difficult to change our beliefs? This is partly because we have confirmation bias, a psychological tendency to look for information consistent with our existing beliefs.

Also, in some cases, the more others attempt to prove our beliefs wrong, the more firmly we stick to them, which is called the backfire effect.

The case of Ignaz Philip Semmelweis demonstrates belief perseverance in one group in society. He was a 19th-century physician who wondered why more women died from a fever after giving birth in one place than in another. His data apparently indicated that handwashing could reduce the number of occurrences of the deadly fever. However, at that time, handwashing was not common among doctors. His potentially life-saving idea was ignored by the medical community, and many doctors rejected it and even harassed him. Semmelweis' claim was eventually accepted long after his death. This episode demonstrates how a group of people with belief perseverance can become aggressive towards innovators and ground-breaking ideas. This social reaction was named the Semmelweis reflex after this incident.

Understanding belief perseverance can give us insights into the ways people behave. Imagine that you want to study abroad, and your family strongly opposes it because they believe that the city you plan to live in is dangerous. Even after showing them data on the city's crime rate, you may find out that your efforts end up only adding fuel to the fire.

If you encounter this backfire effect, an alternative approach might be needed. You could ask your teacher to speak with your family on your behalf, taking advantage of a related behavior that people tend to trust the opinions of an authority.

If someone presents you with hard-to-believe information, be careful not to reject it immediately. If your internal voice warns you not to act on that information, it is time to remind yourself of belief perseverance. To be stubborn may not be good for you. However, in many cases, the persistence of existing beliefs is desirable or even necessary these days. Remember that the Internet conveys not only accurate but also unreliable information. Belief perseverance can also protect you from potentially fake information. In other words, take time to find out more before accepting new information. After all, we humans have developed belief perseverance over time to ensure our survival. Understanding human nature is one of the keys to keeping your life balanced. (559 words)

Your notes:

Belief Perseverance (BP)

BP:

- is a tendency to maintain an existing belief despite any new information.
- can be 39.

Outline by paragraph

1. Introduction to BP
2. Experiment and explanation
3. 40
4. 41
5. Final remarks

Stories mentioned in the article

- The firefighters story shows us that 42.
- The Semmelweis story tells us that even a truly innovative idea with sufficient evidence can be initially rejected.

Practical lessons from the article

Learning about the nature of human psychology helps us to 43.

問1 Choose the best option for 39. (3点) []

- ① a barrier which stops people from expressing their opinions
- ② a cause of positive or negative outcomes for anyone
- ③ a major disadvantage for people who are easily convinced
- ④ an obstacle preventing us from keeping our beliefs strong

問2 Choose the best options for 40 and 41. (3点)

- ① A story of a doctor who rejected handwashing
- ② An example of the social consequences of BP
- ③ An example showing the difficulty of understanding others
- ④ Application of BP knowledge when convincing others
- ⑤ Strategies for effectively countering new information
- ⑥ Tendency to search for advice from specialists

40 : [] 41 : []

問3 Choose the best option for 42. (3点) []

- ① BP appears to have an influence on anyone, even in situations one wouldn't expect
- ② confirmation bias is found when people want to believe new information
- ③ the backfire effect often happens when a stubborn person's opinion is rejected
- ④ the Semmelweis reflex is often observed in occupations where risks are common

問4 Choose the best option for 43. (3点) []

- ① analyze historical discoveries from a scientific point of view
- ② make reasonable decisions when dealing with new information
- ③ recognize immediately whether given information is true or not
- ④ understand when it is appropriate or necessary to take risks

(2024年度 共通テスト英語(リーディング) 追試 第6問 A)

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