

## Tekst 1

# Dumbing up

We may not know who won the battle of 1066 – but we can tell you that if Gina is faster than Jane, and Jo is slower than Gina, then Jo is not necessarily faster than Jane. So what if we struggle to link Romeo with Juliet? We know something far more valuable: that it is possible to use three colours to paint the sides of a cube in such a way that two sides of the same colour never touch – so there.

In other words, we may know nothing about anything but our IQ is rising. That, at least, is the finding of a new study which suggests we are smarter now than ever before. Britons' average IQ has risen by 27 points since 1942, while Americans have seen their collective brainpower surge ahead by 24 points since 1918. The authors of the new research, published in America's Psychological Review, attribute the advance to the more stimulating environment that exists now compared to a century ago. TV programmes, the internet, even kitchen-table conversation, are all bubbling away with more information than was ever available in

the olden days. Whether it is Chris Tarrant stretching our brain cells on ITV, pub quizzes giving us a mental workout or the infernally difficult timer system on the home video, 21st-century life is a veritable gymnasium for the grey matter.

Yet how do we square this optimistic news with the anecdotal evidence of "dumbing down" all around us? Are we really so smart when the Guardian's recent survey found hardly any Britons can name four pre-war prime ministers and only a few can quote a single line of poetry? There are three possible explanations for this contradiction. 1) The anecdotal evidence of dumbing down could be wrong. 2) We could simultaneously be getting sharper and forgetting what used to be regarded as the foundations of western culture. Or 3) perhaps IQ is simply a useless indicator, measuring neither knowledge nor wisdom but rather a knack for doing silly puzzles. Remember: you can only choose one answer.

*'The Guardian'*

*Let op: beantwoord een open vraag altijd in het Nederlands, behalve als het anders is aangegeven.*

*Als je in het Engels antwoordt, levert dat 0 punten op.*

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1p 1  Welke tegenstrijdigheid vormt het onderwerp van de tekst "Dumbing up"?