Tekst 2

Brain Teasers

1 A while ago, the science writer Steven Johnson was looking at an old IQ test known as the "Raven Progressive Matrices". Developed in the 1930s, it shows you a set of geometric shapes and challenges you to figure out the next one in the series. It's supposed to determine your ability to do abstract reasoning, but as Johnson looked at the little cubic Raven figures, he was struck by something: They looked like the video game*Tetris*.

2 A light bulb went off. If *Tetris* looked precisely like an IQ test, then maybe playing *Tetris* would help you do better at intelligence tests. Johnson spun this concept into his brilliant book of last year, *Everything Bad Is Good For You*, in which he argued that video games actually make gamers smarter. With their intricate key commands, obscure rule-sets and dynamic simulations of everything from water physics to social networks, Johnson argued, video games require so much cognitive activity that they turn us into Baby Einsteins - not dull robots.

3 I loved the book, but it made me wonder: If games can inadvertently train your brain, why doesn't someone make a game that does so intentionally? I should have patented the idea right then; Nintendo has since released *Brain Age*, a game that offers you nine different tests, some of which seem incredibly basic - like answering flash-card math questions - and others which are fiendishly tricky. After you've played a few rounds, the game calculates your "brain age": How mentally nimble you are, compared to the statistical averages of other people. Age 20 is the best you can do - the top of your mental powers, apparently - and by playing *Brain Age* every day, you can become mentally younger and younger.

4 Now, the science here is a little dubious. The idea of a separate or distinct brain age is about as suspect as the increasingly disputed concept of IQ itself. Not all neuro-scientists agree that this type of activity means you're thinking more intelligently. I'm quibbling, though. The truth is, scientists have long known that you can get smarter and stay smarter by engaging in daily, brain-teasing activity - and *Brain Age* certainly qualifies.

5 **6**, for something that doesn't even seem like a normal "game", it's weirdly addictive. The math questions made me so exhausted that I emotionally regressed to about age ten. *Brain Age* also includes a Stroop test, which flashes the names of colors on screen in mismatched ink ─ for example, the word "blue" printed in red ─ and challenges you to name the color of the ink. As any psychologist will tell you, you can keep a lid on things for the first dozen words, but then your brain turns to jelly. It was more taxing than the first time I faced ‘The Flood’ in *Halo*.

6 Plus, when a game actually judges your intellect? Man, that hits home. After my first round, *Brain Age* claimed I possessed the mind of a 68-year-old, and I nearly **8**. So, I frantically plinked away at math tests for two hours until I got my score down to 33.

7 It would be pretty hilarious if games took seriously their role as cognitive food, and, like boxes of cereal, began proclaiming their nutritional value. But of course, the very fact that we still ruminate on whether games make you smarter or dumber is a symptom of how games are still coming of age in our media sphere. Nobody sits around debating whether the act of reading stimulates your mind, after all. But if you'll excuse me now, I've got to get back to some mental exercise. By this time tomorrow, I should be 24 years old.

http://www.wired.com

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1p **4** How does the author of the article introduce the topic in the first two paragraphs?

A By claiming that an old video game cannot be successfully updated.
B By explaining why video games may also dumb down people's ability to calculate.
C By illustrating how people looked upon gamers before Johnson published a book on video games.
D By presenting Johnson's theory on the practical value of video games.

1p **5** What is the author's opinion on the game *Brain Age*?

A He fears it will not be attractive for people to buy.
B He seriously doubts if it does what it promises to do.
C He thinks producing it was a brilliant move by the game company.
D He wonders whether it has been specifically designed for older players.

1p **6** Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 5?

A Consequently
B Indeed
C Instead
D Similarly

1p **7** Which of the following effects did playing *Brain Age* have on the author according to paragraph 5?
Playing the game made him feel

A careless.
B stupid.
C triumphant.
D worn-out.
E young.

1p **8** Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 6?

A cheered
B cried
C quit
D yawned

"It would be pretty hilarious if games took seriously their role as cognitive food" (paragraph 7)

1p **9** Welke zin uit alinea 7 sluit met een grapje aan bij deze opmerking?
Citeer de eerste twee woorden van deze zin.

1p **10** What is the main purpose of this article?

A To criticise theories behind recent developments in the gaming business.
B To explain the author's preference for a specific kind of video game.
C To inform readers about the mind-stimulating effects that playing certain video games can have.
D To warn people against the possibly damaging effects of playing video games.