



lingoda

Synaesthesia

READING

LEVEL
Advanced

NUMBER
C1_3065R_EN

LANGUAGE
English

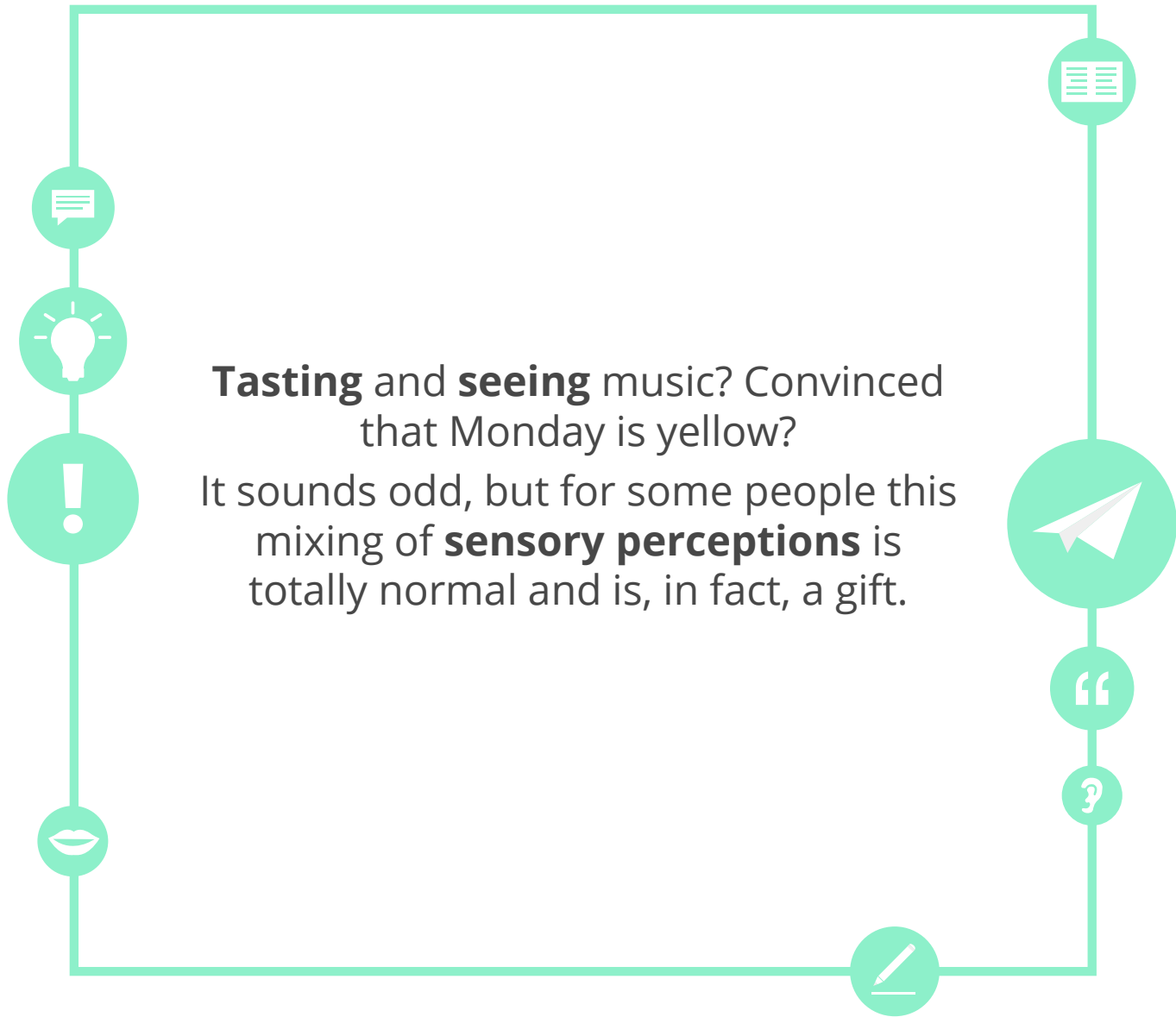




Goals

- Can read and understand a complex, lengthy text on the topic of synaesthesia.
- Can maintain a complex discussion about senses, perception and the mixing of senses.







The senses



Can you name the **five senses**?
Are any of your **senses**
stronger than the others?



Losing your senses

Which of your senses would you least like to lose? Why?





Sensing autumn

Make notes on what comes to mind when you think of autumn.
Categorise each item depending on what sense you associate it with.



crisp leaves



toffee apples

sight

hearing

touch

taste

smell



Synaesthesia

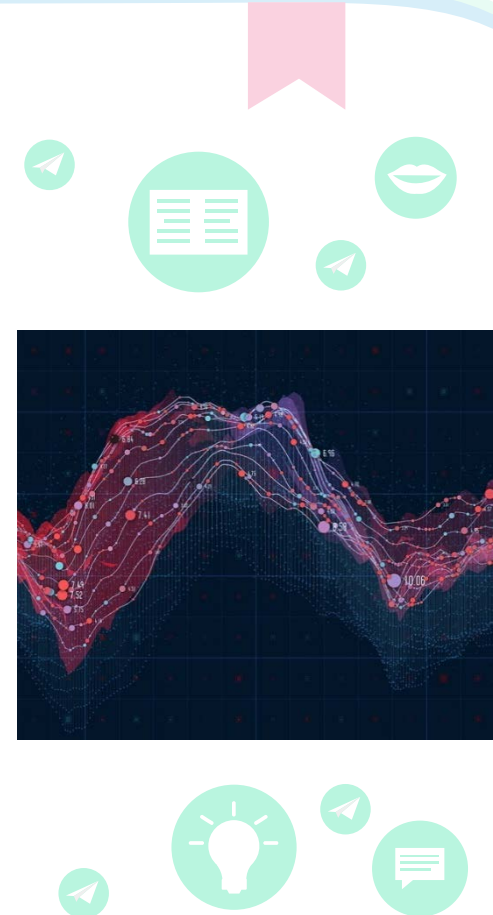
What colour is Monday? You might automatically say black, as many of us associate both the colour black and Mondays with doom. However, this is simply a connotation, not a vision. Imagine if days, numbers and a whole host of other things actually did have colours, if you could taste music or see smells.

This is a condition called synaesthesia, a **neurological condition** in which using one sense automatically **triggers** a response in another. This is why **synaesthetes** might tell you that Monday is black, the number 3 is yellow, jazz tastes like ice cream and pop tastes like chocolate. There are a lot of different **manifestations** of synaesthesia, with a combination of different **sensory perceptions**. While one person might associate music with taste, another would associate it with colour. Even when synaesthetes have the same **cognitive connections**, the responses they have are not the same. While one person might see number 3 as red, another could see it as blue.



Synaesthesia

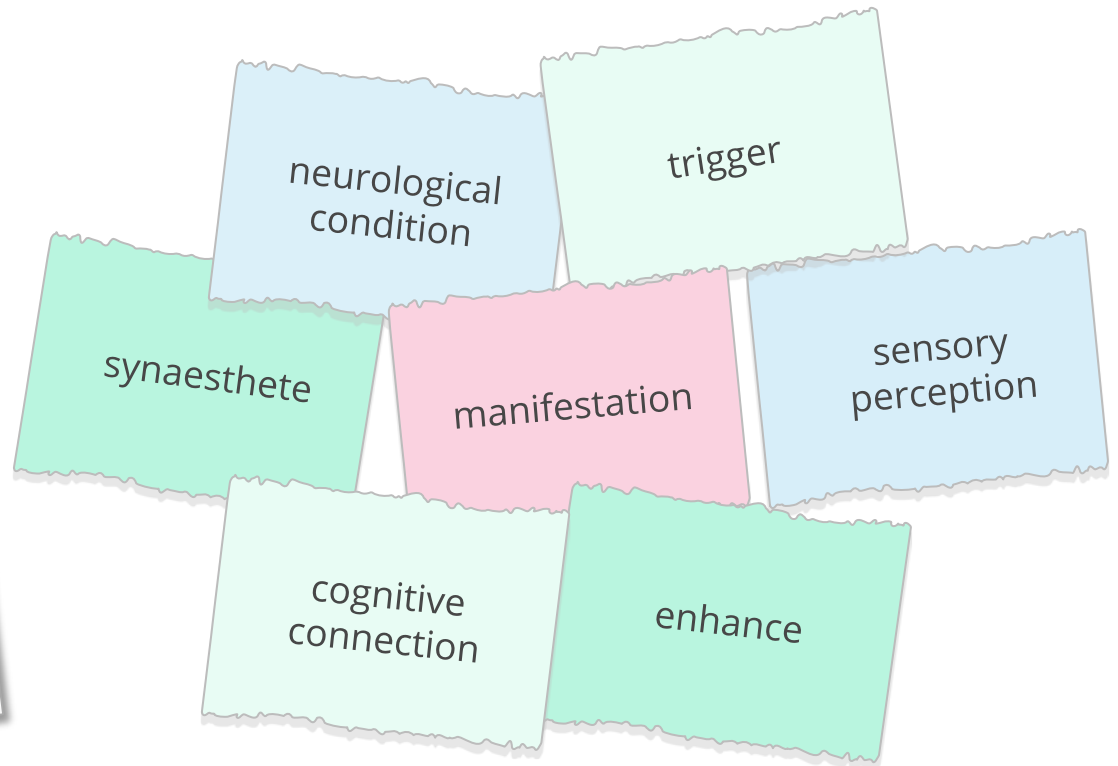
You may have heard synaesthesia being described as a medical condition. This is not really the case, and almost no synaesthetes see their synaesthesia as an illness; in fact, many see it as **enhancing** the world around them and even as making them better at certain things. Synaesthesia is also not connected to having any other illnesses, and neurological exams performed on people with synaesthesia come out normally. Furthermore, these people are known to have either average or above average intelligence.





Vocabulary

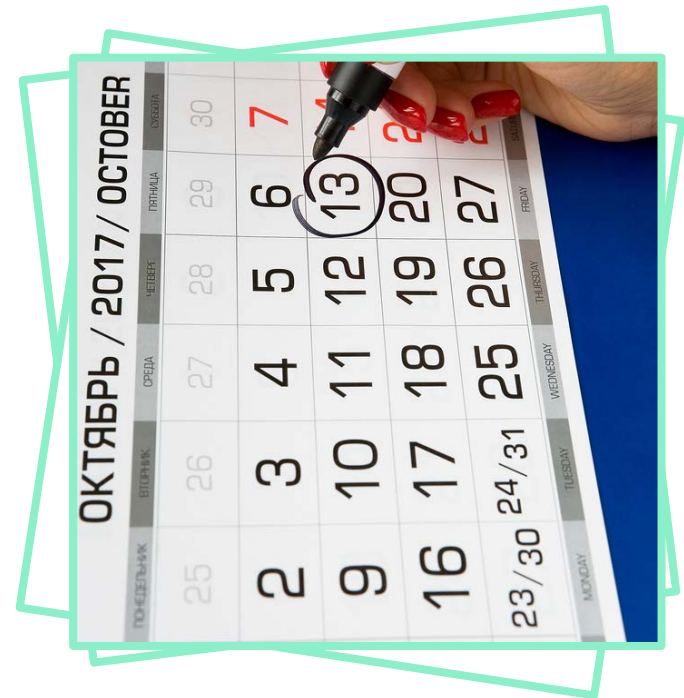
Look at these words from the text. Do you know what they mean?





Associations

Do you associate numbers or days of the week with colours? If you do, what kind of associations do you make?





Music

How do you think it would feel to **hear music** and simultaneously **see** it as colours or **taste** it?

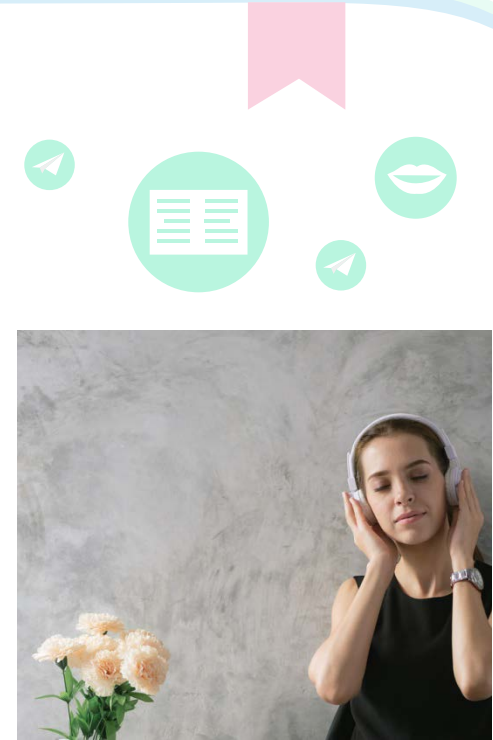
Can you imagine how some different **genres** might **look** or **taste**?





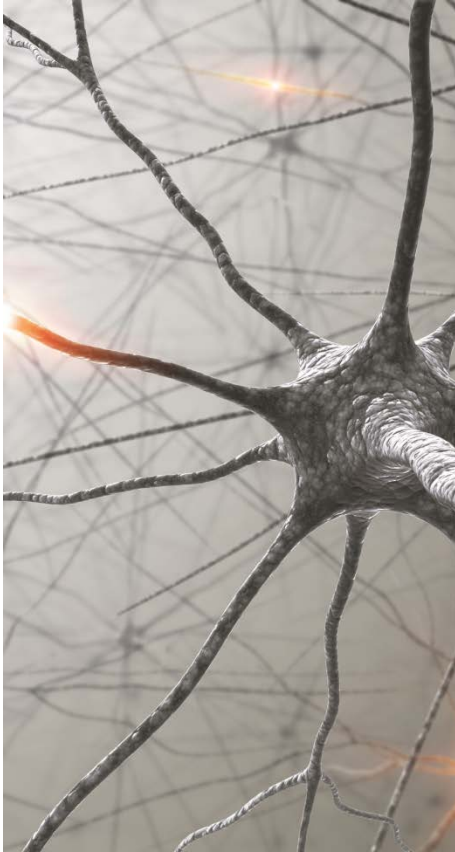
Synaesthesia

As mentioned above, many synaesthetes see synaesthesia as a **gift**. There are some famous examples of people who used their synaesthesia to their advantage. These include the artist Kandinsky, who combined the senses of colour, taste, touch and smell, and the musician Billy Joel, who sees colour in music. There are, however, rare cases of people saying that their condition has negative effects. Perhaps their senses are **overwhelmed** by their synaesthesia, or certain names have a bad taste for them, or seeing numbers in the wrong colour can cause **distress**.





Synaesthesia



So what causes synaesthesia? Recent research has shown that synaesthesia is **hereditary** and that it is often passed from one generation to the next. The cause of this seems to be in genes which control **cell migration**, a process that allows brain cells to connect to their correct partners. Some experts have even speculated that we might all be born with the neurological ability to have synaesthesia, but most of us lose it as we get older. Scientists have also noticed that, in synaesthetes, different parts of the brain are active when asked to say what colour a number is. In fact, more parts of a synaesthete's brain are active than in a non-synaesthete.



Match the vocabulary

Match the vocabulary on the left with the synonyms on the right. Use the text from the last two pages to help you.

overwhelmed

present

hereditary

discomfort

distress

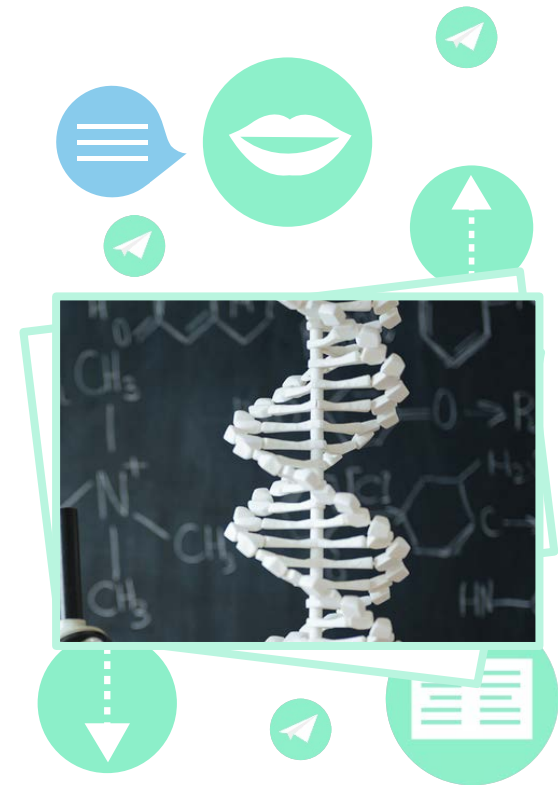
genetic

gift

movement

migration

overpowered





Synaesthesia: gift or curse?

**In what ways do you think synaesthesia could be a gift?
How would a mixing of the senses enhance your
experience of something?**

**What do you think the bad aspects of synaesthesia are?
Do you think synaesthesia could be a curse rather than a
gift?**





Synaesthesia

Think about what you have just discussed. Do you think that you would like to have the experience of synaesthesia? Write a paragraph explaining your point of view.

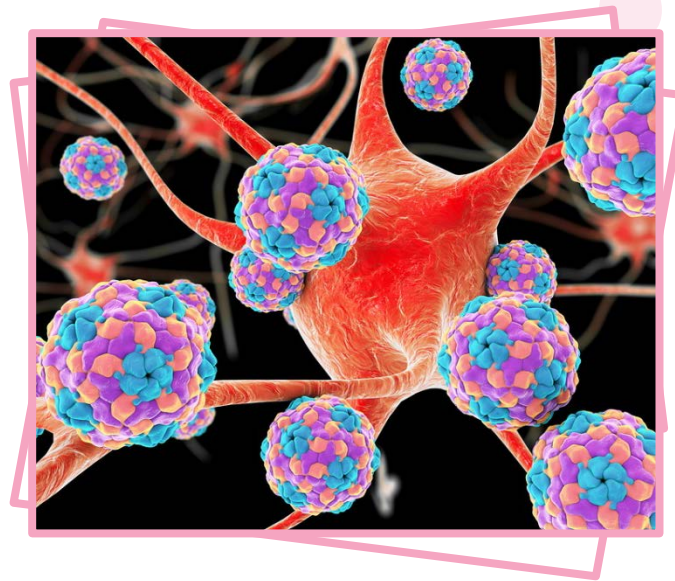
A sheet of white lined paper with a spiral binding on the left side. The paper has several horizontal lines for writing. There are faint, light-colored circular icons scattered across the page, including a pencil, a lightbulb, a speech bubble, and a smiley face.





Discuss with your teacher

Would you like to live in a world where everyone has synaesthesia? Explain your answer.

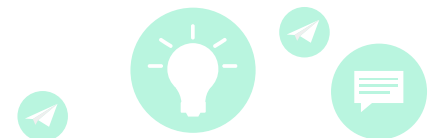




Synaesthesia

Synaesthesia can sometimes be compared with **metaphors** and metaphorical thinking, such as associating red with danger. However, metaphorical thinking involves learning connections, while one of the main **traits** of synaesthesia is that the connections are unlearned and automatic.

Another trait is that it appears to be much more **prevalent** in women than in men, though the exact ratio is still unconfirmed. Furthermore, left-handed people seem to be more affected than right-handed, but it also remains unclear why this is the case.





Synaesthesia



It is difficult to **diagnose** whether someone has synaesthesia. Scientists rely heavily on self-reporting, though they have created some basic tests, particularly for those who associate words or numbers with colours. Those who actually do have synaesthesia should be able to match a word or number to an exact **shade** of colour, and then be able to **replicate** the results of the test days, months or even years later.

Scientists believe that synaesthetes have an increased perception of our world and that further study of people with synaesthesia might be able to tell us about our own consciousness in the future.



Discuss these questions with your teacher

What is your most annoying trait?

Are you good at telling one shade of colour from another?

Think about the best exam result you ever received. Could you replicate that result right now?

Do you know how prevalent colour blindness is?



Metaphor

The text mentions metaphor, such as associating red with danger. What do you associate these colours with in your country? Do you think the connections are universal?



purple

blue

yellow

green



Diagnosing synaesthesia

**What do you think
of the current test
used to diagnose
synaesthesia?**



**What other kinds
of tests could be
done?**



**Do you think we
should fund
further study
into
synaesthesia?
Justify your
answer.**

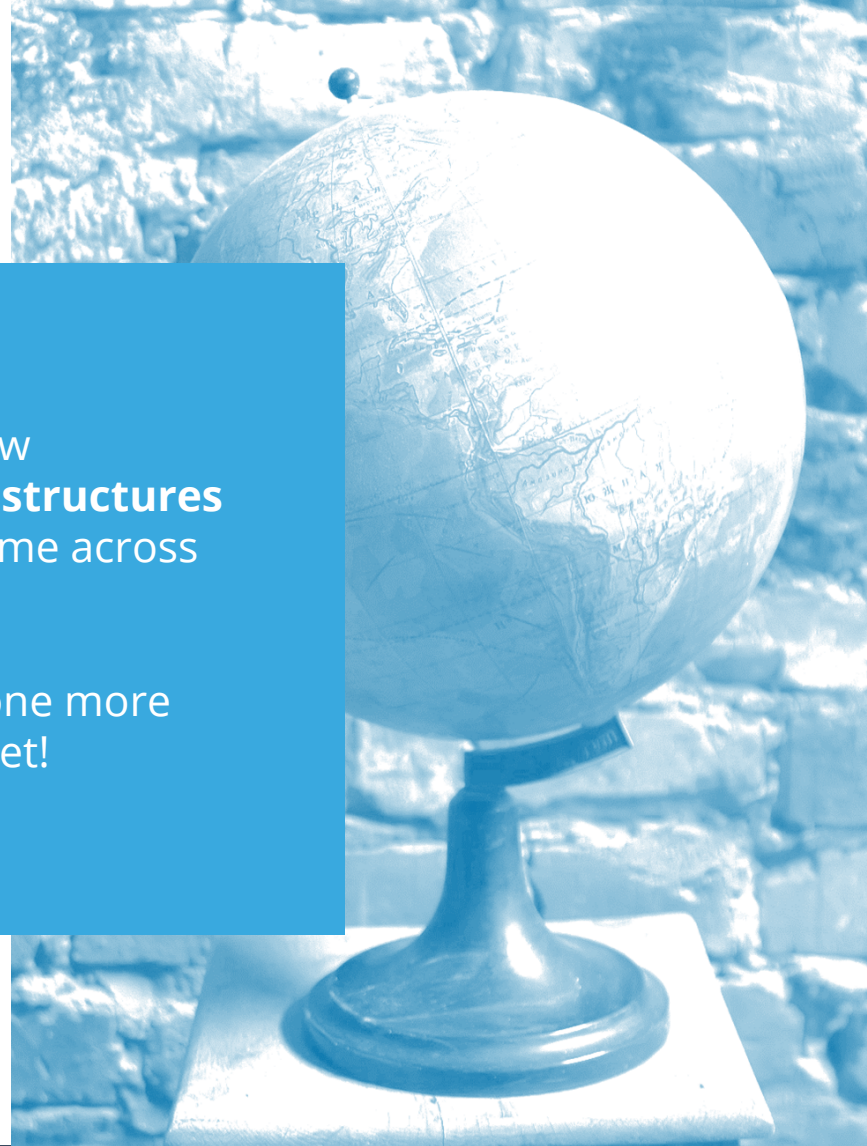




Reflect on this lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

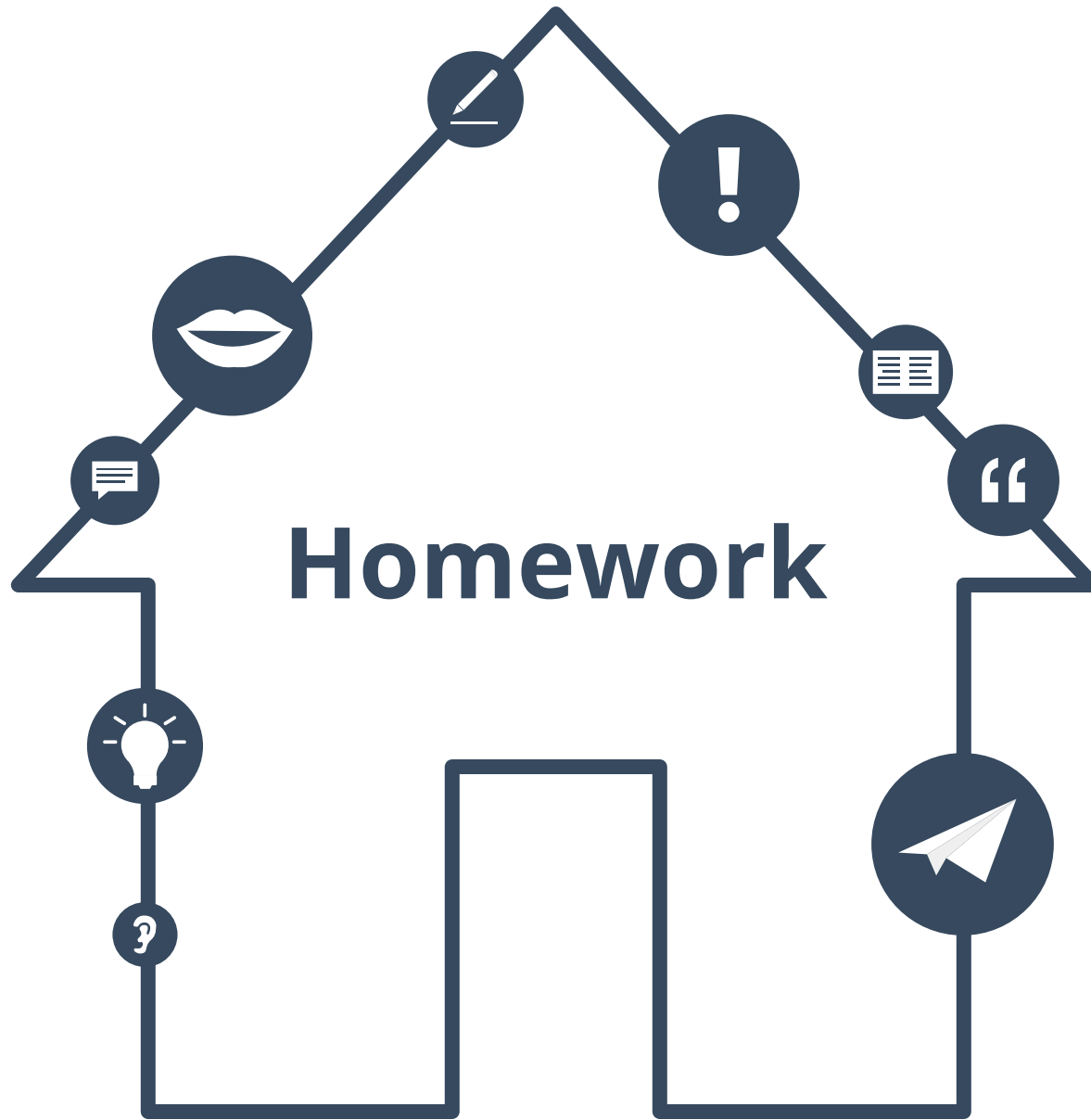
Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





Answer key

Exercise p. 14
overwhelmed – overpowered, hereditary – genetic, distress – discomfort,
gift – present, migration - movement





Fill in the gaps

1. Synaesthesia is described as a _____ condition.
2. Synaesthetes have a variety of different sensory _____.
3. Though many synaesthetes see synaesthesia as a _____, some say that it can be _____.
4. Synaesthesia is more _____ in women than in men.
5. In synaesthetes, using one sense automatically _____ a response in another.

gift

perceptions

triggers

prevalent

neurological

overwhelming



Complete the sentences

Complete the sentences with your own ideas.

1. It is difficult to diagnose synaesthesia because...
2. I think having synaesthesia must be...
3. The causes of synaesthesia are...
4. There are different manifestations of synaesthesia, such as...



Homework answer key

Exercise p. 27
1. neurological, 2. perceptions, 3. gift, overwelming, 4. prevalent, 5. trigger



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