**Practice doing a bilingual summary! You may work alone or with a peer who speaks the same first language.**

1. Read each paragraph and underline all unknown words.

2. Translate the unknown words into your first language (L1). Write the translations on the *right* margin, beside that paragraph.

3. Read the paragraph again. Now, write a 1- or 2-sentence summary in your first language (L1) in the *left* side of the paragraph.

4. Finally, read all your 1-sentence summaries and write a 5- to 10-sentence summary in English at the end of the paper.

**Excerpt from G. Ioup, E. Boustagui, M. El Tigi, & M. Moselle (1994): “Reexamining the critical period hypothesis: A case study of successful adult second language acquisition in a naturalistic environment”**

The present study examines the linguistic competence of an adult second language (L2) learner of Egyptian Arabic (EA) who was first exposed to the target language after the close of the critical period. Julie, the subject of this study, is unusual in that she appears to have acquired nativelike proficiency in an untutored learning context. To determine her level of achievement more precisely, her performance on various linguistic measures is compared to that of both a highly proficient tutored learner of EA and native speakers. The results allow for a reexamination of the critical period hypothesis (CPH) and its more recent formulation in the maturational state hypothesis (Long, 1990). In addition, they address the nature of exceptional language learning.

The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) was initially proposed by Penfield and Roberts (1959) and later refined by Lenneberg (1967) to account for the difficulty of acquiring first language (LI) after 9-12 years of age. Empirical evidence for the critical period was found through cases of feral children who failed to completely acquire LI after the onset of puberty and of aphasics who were unable to fully recover their language if the brain lesion was postpubertal.

Many researchers have examined the applicability of the CPH to L2 acquisition. The term sensitive period has been proposed as a means of indicating that the critical period is not an abrupt or absolute criterion after which L2 acquisition is impossible but rather a gradual process within which the ultimate level of L2 attainment becomes variable. Within this framework researchers have proposed the maturational state hypothesis (Long, 1990), which predicts that not only will there be differences between children and adults acquiring LI, but also children learning L2 will find their task easier than adults. By extension, adults will fail to reach a uniform native-speaker standard in different skill areas, including phonology, morphology, syntax, lexis, and pragmatic features. It may be true that adults initially out-perform children in their rate of L2 acquisition; however, children do better than adults in ultimate attainment. Thus, ultimate attainment becomes the main criterion for supporting or refuting the concept of a sensitive period for L2 acquisition.

In general, the idea of a sensitive period for L2 acquisition is supported through both experimental and case studies examining the bilingual performance of adults and revealing their failure to attain nativelike levels in the L2. Several large-scale experimental studies comparing younger and older learners with long-term residence report age effects favoring the younger learners in the domains of phonology, syntax, and semantics (Johnson & Newport, 1989; Oyama, 1976; Patkowski, 1980). Coppieters (1987) found that older arriving learners with near-native ability continue to exhibit problems in the domains of both syntax and discourse semantics, while Scarcella (1983) determined that fluent bilinguals who began L2 as older children still retain nonnative features in the domain of discourse pragmatics. The results of these and similar studies led Long (1990) to issue a challenge to researchers to find one successful learner who would refute the sensitive period hypothesis.

However, several researchers dispute the conclusions of the preceding studies (Flege, 1987; Genesee, 1988) or find counterevidence in research of their own (Birdsong, 1992; Flynn & Manuel, 1991; Neufeld, 1978, 1979), leading them to challenge the notion of a sensitive period for L2 acquisition. As a result of the conflicting data and the difficulty in determining when a learner has, in fact, achieved a native-speaker standard, the status of the CPH with respect to L2 acquisition remains in doubt.