

Changing Seasons

- 1 A 2019 survey showed that autumn was by far the most popular season. Eighty-two percent of respondents had a positive view of autumn, the highest positive response among the four seasons. Only three percent of respondents would get rid of autumn if they could, compared to almost half of respondents wanting to skip over winter. These results show that many agree: autumn is the best season.
- 2 First of all, autumn is marked by many unique sights, smells, and tastes. In much of the country, autumn is the time for pumpkins and pumpkin-flavored treats. It's also a time to go apple picking, savor hot cider, and feast on cider doughnuts. Cinnamon, ginger, and maple are a few spices and flavors that are hallmarks of this season. Plus, as the weather cools down, the leaves change into brilliant colors. These colors fill the landscape with red, orange, and yellow hues. Many people make special trips just to see the fall foliage. And once the leaves begin to fall, you can enjoy the smell, feel, and sound of leaves crunching on the ground.
- 3 Second, autumn is a perfectly placed break between seasons. The autumn months give us a welcome respite from the sometimes sweltering heat of summer. In many areas, autumn is cool enough that we can wear layers comfortably without having to bundle up against the cold. Autumn is also a season of anticipation. In many places, autumn is a sign that the season of snow is near. Waiting and wondering about that first snowfall is almost as much fun as watching it happen. And it's definitely more fun than the weeks and weeks of wintry weather that can follow.
- 4 Of course, while autumn is the best season, each season offers something special. Spring can bring warmer weather and flowers after a long winter. Summer gives us the chance to spend more time outside during the extra-long days. And people who love sports like skiing and snowboarding often look forward to winter. However, nothing beats the wonderful tastes, smells, and colors that autumn offers.

Optional reading #2:

A Fluent Advantage

- 1 When schools go through budget cuts, foreign language classes are often placed on the chopping block. School administrators often do not understand that foreign language study is important in order to make sure that students are ready to succeed in the real world. Rather than cutting language classes, schools should be providing them for all students. Studying a foreign language strengthens students' minds and helps prepare them for future careers. So these classes should be required in school.
- 2 Many studies have indicated that *multilingual* people—people who speak more than one language—are better at certain tasks. Specifically, multilingual people have better *executive functioning* skills than people who speak only one language. Executive functioning is the way the brain handles all the information it's given. When you juggle different tasks and decide which to focus on, you are using executive functioning skills. In brain scans, multilingual people show more blood flow in the areas of the brain that control executive functioning. Researchers have guessed that this advantage exists because multilingual people must constantly decide which words from which language to use. As a result, multilingual people get lots of practice with executive function. Their brains can then apply those skills to other tasks. This effect is especially strong for people who grow up speaking more

tasks. This effect is especially strong for people who grow up speaking more than one language. The earlier students start language classes, the more they may benefit from language study.

3 Language skills are also in high demand on the job market. Today, more and more businesses work in many countries across the world. As businesses become global, they need people who can communicate easily across national borders. To prepare for their careers, more students should be learning foreign languages. From 2010 to 2015, the demand in the United States for workers who speak a second language more than doubled. This trend included workers of all skill levels and backgrounds.

4 Of course, foreign language classes should not just make students memorize new words and sounds. They must also teach students about new cultures. Foreign language classes should be required to include lessons about history, literature, customs, and government along with the languages themselves. These subjects will help students become better global citizens and support their studies in other subjects.

5 Making students study a foreign language doesn't just sharpen their brains. It also helps students become productive members of today's global society.

1. What is the author's main claim or argument?
2. Where are two supporting claims for this main claim/argument?
 - a. What are two pieces of supporting evidence?