Marilyn vos Savant is an American magazine columnist, author, lecturer, and playwright who rose to fame through her former listing in the Guinness Book of World Records under “Highest IQ.” Since 1986 she has written “Ask Marilyn,” a Parade magazine Sunday column where she solves puzzles and answers questions on various subjects. As I was reading the magazine in the Dallas Morning News, I found one of the questions posed to Ms. vos Savant in the figure below relevant to our course. While the question addresses an entire book, I feel it has applicability to our quizzes. Please see the second question and Ms. vos Savant’s response. –Dr. Von

We know that the right brain performs certain functions, and the left brain specializes in other tasks. But we also know that the right brain controls the left side of the body, and the left brain regulates the right side. So, what are our ears? Are they exactly the same? Or do they hear things differently? —A.K., Akron, Ohio

Scientists had long assumed that our ears were the same and that decoding sound took place entirely in the brain, with signals relayed to the appropriate side. But we now know that auditory processing starts at the ear. For example, the right ear is geared more toward speech, and the left ear is attuned more to music. (Children with right-ear hearing impairment have more trouble in school than those with left-ear loss.) So if you’re listening to music with a single earphone, you might want to put it in your left ear. But for learning a language, it might help to keep the earphone in your right ear.

Say you have two months to prepare for an exam covering a 600-page book. How would you study? —Dick Cosner, Ross-ville, Ga.

I’d read 30 pages every day straight through [not stopping to puzzle over anything], finishing in 20 days. Then I’d repeat the process twice. Like rewatching a movie, I’d grasp the material much better the second and third time around. Repetition does more than help us remember—it helps us understand.