

# 1 Discovering yourself

## Unit overview

Unit key features	Organizing suggestions
<p><b>Passage 1</b> Catching crabs</p> <p><b>Passage 2</b> We are all dying</p>	<p>Passage 1 is a memoir about a university student discussing his career ideas with his father and how his father encourages him to follow his passion. Passage 2 is an extract from <i>Everything That Happens to Me Is Good</i>, a book of thoughts, experiences and insights from the life of Geoff Thompson. It gives readers good advice about how to live one's life.</p>
<p><b>Reading skills</b></p> <p>(a) Using narrative devices (b) Predicting (c) Understanding writer's style</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Passage 1, compare the literary narrative with the conversational style of the dialogue. Explain any colloquial expressions to students (Ss).</li> <li>For Passage 2, inform Ss that this is another passage written in a conversational style. The teacher (T) may need to use more time to explain the background of these expressions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Speaking skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing Ss' descriptive and narrating skills</li> <li>Using different styles of conversations, eg dialogues; talking in a light-hearted, but effective way to express viewpoints</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use Passage 1 for skill (a), and use Passage 2 for skills (b) and (c).</li> <li>For Passage 1, notice that the writing styles change from description to narration and dialogue.</li> <li>Teach Ss to learn different ways of giving opinions by comparing and contrasting the ways used by each passage.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Writing skills and tasks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guided writing: Planning an essay</li> <li>Unit task: Carrying out a survey on Ss' fears and ambitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage Ss to discover themselves by discussing philosophical questions.</li> <li>Ask them to include the expressions highlighted in the Language in use section in their oral tasks.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cognitive skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using imagination to appreciate colloquial expressions</li> <li>Learning to be creative in making up imaginary expressions</li> <li>Learning to think philosophically about life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach Ss to revise narrative writing skills.</li> <li>Learn to write an essay.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reading across cultures</b> Rites of passage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage Ss to make up appropriate expressions.</li> <li>Ask them to give reasons and explanations for their invented expressions.</li> </ul>
<p>This is a descriptive passage showing different rites of passage in different cultures.</p>	<p>Make Ss familiar with some rites of passage in different cultures, and encourage Ss to think about rites of passage in their own culture.</p>

# Teaching suggestions and answer keys

## Active reading (1)

- 1 A: I think the main worries of a final-year student in the US would be passing their final exams, and thinking about a job for the future.
- B: Yes, I think final-year college students all over the world have similar worries. I also think the US student would be sad to say goodbye to all their college friends. The US is a very mobile society, and people travel right across the country to find work after they graduate.
- A: True. What about finding a partner to spend the rest of their life with?
- B: I think it's too early to worry about something like that! Surely you need to establish a career first.
- A: Yes, I agree.
- 2 1 The last year will be different from earlier years because it is our make-or-break year. It is also the year that marks our transition to the adult world. Most of us will stop being students and will seek work after our final undergraduate year.
- 2 I'm not very sure at all, to be honest. But it's too late now, isn't it?
- 3 My family is likely to be concerned about my future.
- 4 I will turn to my father for advice. I have a good relationship with him and I treasure his advice.

## Catching crabs

### Culture points

The **Charles River** flows past several well-known universities (Brandeis, Harvard, Boston, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) into Boston Harbour, and has featured in a number of films, songs and novels. The river used to be known for high levels of pollution, but it is cleaner now, and it is much used for rowing and sailing.

The United States **Congress** is the legislative branch of the US federal government. Its main function is to make laws. The **Senate** is the "upper house"; it has 100 elected members, two representatives from each state, who serve for six years. The "lower house" is the **House of Representatives**, which has 435 elected congressmen. The number representing each state depends on the size of the population. Each state has at least one, and California has 53.

### Language points

- 1 **The relaxed atmosphere of the preceding summer semester, the impromptu ball games, the boating on the Charles River, the late-night parties had disappeared, and we all started to get our heads down, studying late, and attendance at classes rose steeply again. (Para 1)**

**Meaning:** The final year of college life usually means a busy time for students. They have to prepare for their final exams, and they may have to write their graduation papers. That's why the writer said they had cancelled all their recreation and went back to classes and libraries.

**get one's head down:** to concentrate and focus on studying. Also note that to *keep one's head down* means to continue to do something quietly, especially when there is trouble happening around you.

**2 Most important of course were the final exams in April and May in the following year. (Para 1)**

**Note:** This sentence uses rhetoric inversion (修辞倒装). When the subject of a sentence is too long, we can use inversion to keep the balance of the sentence. One more example: *Very popular is the notion that intelligence is measured by your ability to solve complex problems.* 智力是通过人们解决复杂问题的能力来衡量的, 这一观点十分流行。

**3 No one wanted the humiliation of finishing last in class, so the peer group pressure to work hard was strong. (Para 1)**

**peer group pressure:** (also **peer pressure**) the strong feeling that you must do the same things as other people of your age if you want them to like you 同辈之间的压力

**4 Libraries ... were standing room only until the early hours of the morning, and guys wore the bags under their eyes and their pale, sleepy faces with pride, like medals proving their diligence. (Para 1)**

**Note:** The sentence is a vivid description of the students who studied deep into the night. They had bags under their eyes, and their faces were pale and sleepy. The bags under their eyes and their sleepy pale faces showed that they were working hard. These features were like medals proving their diligence.

The expression *standing room only* means there are no more seats available because the place is crowded. There is only room for you to stand. This expression is often used in public performances, for sports events, and on public transport to mean that you have to stand because the venue is packed with people.

**5 It wasn't always the high-flyers with the top grades who knew what they were going to do. (Para 2)**

**high-flyer:** someone who has achieved a lot and has the ability and determination to continue to be successful in their studies or job. At university, a *high-flyer* is a top student.

**6 Quite often it was the quieter, less impressive students who had the next stages of their life mapped out. (Para 2)**

**map out:** to plan in detail how something will happen 详细计划

*The company has already mapped out a two-week promotion tour.* 这家公司已经仔细地计划好了一次为期两周的巡回促销活动。

**7 One had landed a job in his brother's advertising firm in Madison Avenue, another had got a script under provisional acceptance in Hollywood. (Para 2)**

**land a job:** to get a job that you wanted 找到工作

**provisional acceptance:** an acceptance which is arranged, but is not yet definite. It is temporary and may change.

- 8 The most ambitious student among us was going to work as a **party activist** at a local level. (Para 2)

**party activist:** someone who takes part in activities that are intended to achieve political change, especially someone who is a member of a political organization

- 9 We all saw him **ending up** in Congress one day. (Para 2)

**Meaning:** The writer means that they could imagine that the party activist might end up in Congress, as a result of making career progress.

**end up somewhere:** to be in a particular place or state after doing something or because of doing it 最终到达; 最终达到

*If he keeps doing it, he may end up in prison one day.* 如果他继续这么做, 将来有一天会进监狱的。

- 10 But most people **were either looking to** continue their studies ... (Para 2)

**be looking to do sth:** to be planning to do something 计划做某事

*They're not just looking to make money.* 他们不仅仅是打算挣钱。

- 11 I **braced myself for** some resistance to the idea. (Para 10)

**brace oneself for sth:** to get oneself ready for something unpleasant (使) 自己做好准备

*I braced myself for the result of my interview.* 我做好准备接受面试结果。

- 12 Several times the crab tried to **defy his fellow captives, without luck.** (Para 25)

**Meaning:** The crab tried several times to free itself from the other crabs' efforts to hinder its escape, but in vain.

- 13 Spend some time **figuring out** who you are and what you want in life. (Para 28)

**figure out:** to be able to understand something or solve a problem 理解; 明白; 想出

*We had to figure out the connection between the two events.* 我们必须弄清楚这两件事之间的联系。

## Reading and understanding

3 3

4 1 (b) 2 (c) 3 (c) 4 (d) 5 (c) 6 (a)

## Dealing with unfamiliar words

5 (1) attendance (2) ambitious (3) productive  
(4) resistance (5) script (6) acceptance

6 1 mortgage 2 deck 3 surf 4 coastal; defy  
5 clamped 6 criticized 7 hauled 8 preceding

7 1 (b) 2 (a) 3 (b) 4 (b) 5 (b) 6 (b) 7 (a) 8 (b) 9 (b)

## Reading and interpreting

- 8** 1 The use of the time expression, together with the past tense, is a signal that this is a narrative containing a sequence of events. The word *our* indicates that this is a story of personal experience.
- 2 This indicates that studying for the final exams was not the only concern that students had. It indicates a transition from studying for final exams to the next topic – getting a job after graduation.
- 3 Because this changes the focus onto the writer as an individual. The *we* paragraphs are general background to the main narrative about the individual, which is coming.
- 4 This change to direct speech opens a moment-by-moment dialogue. This slows down the narrative of events, but gives a good impression of how the writer found it difficult to say what he wanted to do and how the father made few comments.
- 5 The topic shifts to crabs. The sentence also arouses the readers' interest – we expect some fascinating new information about crabs here. Later, we realize how the topic of crabs is connected with the son finding a job, and the crabs' behaviour leads the father to give memorable advice.
- 6 Yes, we don't know what happens next, but the implication is fairly clear that the father would support the son's desire to travel and to become a writer. It makes a better conclusion not to say it explicitly, as it leaves a lot of room for personal interpretation.
- 9** 1 The son seems afraid of being criticized for his ideas about a career and expects resistance from his father. However, the father actually supports what his son wants, and he makes him think about it by watching the crabs. So at the beginning we feel their relationship may not be good, but later it becomes clear that they have a good relationship and, in fact, their relationship has improved by catching crabs together.
- 2 The son does respect his father, and the crab-catching episode adds to this respect because the father finds a good way of showing support for his son and making him think more about his plans.
- 3 Yes, because he says, "I kind of wish I'd done that when I was your age." Also, his way of teaching his son – through observing crabs – shows that he understands his son well.
- 4 He is teaching his son not to follow conventional expectations and not to be affected by peer pressure. He tells his son not to be dragged down by other people, and to find out more about himself – what he enjoys, where his interests and skills are, and how he wants to work, because if he doesn't figure these things out, he will never be happy.
- 5 It successfully demonstrates the idea that people, collectively, will seek to enforce conformity and mediocrity, and that a difficult struggle is required from anyone who wishes to do anything unconventional.
- 6 He doesn't say so, but it seems he wanted to travel or write when he was young himself. His use of the words "Interesting idea" and "Interesting choice" could be ambiguous, or may show support. The way he says "We've never had a writer in the family" does seem to be positive. So he's pleased, but he doesn't want to say so directly.

## Developing critical thinking

### 10 Teaching tips

- Encourage Ss to extend their answers beyond mere statements. Here are four ways to encourage more elaborate answers:
  - 1 Each student thinks of more than one angle to the question and explores different views with their partner.
  - 2 Ss ask each other reasons for their opinions.
  - 3 Ss try to summarize their discussion by putting each other's contribution together.
  - 4 Ss try to present two opposite views, and then balance them with a clear conclusion.
- After discussion, T chooses three pairs, each for one question, to present a summary and a conclusion to the class. Ask the class to listen carefully and check whether more than one angle is considered, and whether there is a conclusion.

The examples below show summaries made by following these steps.

- 1 It is a complicated question. On the one hand, it seems good to be ambitious, because most people want to be successful, and ambition will spur you to work harder to achieve your goals. On the other hand, we feel some reservations. Some people are ambitious to be extremely rich, famous or powerful. We really wonder whether these are the most important things in life. Some ambitious people seem to work only for themselves, so that they work against other people rather than for or with others. On balance, we suppose it is important to be ambitious, but it depends on what your ambition is directed towards.
- 2 Well, if you don't spend any time planning your future, you may never have one. Obviously however planning alone is not sufficient. You must take the correct actions and implement your plan. We think the father in *Catching crabs* is right: You need to spend some time thinking about what you enjoy, what interests you and where your skills lie, and then to try some jobs in those areas in order to discover what you are good at and what makes you happy. We think that planning and doing go together.
- 3 Universities are supposed to teach students advanced knowledge and skills within different disciplines, and to help them develop their thinking, their creativity and their sense of social responsibility. Of course, helping students choose a career is not the same as getting them work. It is more a matter of helping them identify what they are good at and how their majors may prepare them for different professions. We think universities can help us choose a career by providing information about different professions and jobs, and by inviting professionals and employers in different fields to universities to talk to students. So, to conclude, yes, we think this is part of a university's role.

## Talking point

- 1 1 My earliest memory is of sitting on the porch in the sun, watching some ants crawling on the railing.

- 2 My happiest moment was blitzing my university entrance exams. Yes!
- 3 The famous person I most admire is Vladimir Putin.
- 4 I have to say that getting up in the morning during the week makes me depressed.
- 5 Loud talkers in restaurants.
- 6 Having too quiet a voice.
- 7 As I have only an average appearance, I very much hope my character is more worthy of respect!
- 8 My favourite word is "niveous", meaning "snowy".
- 9 P. G. Wodehouse, Oscar Wilde and of course Vladimir Putin.
- 10 My greatest achievement is getting into my preferred faculty at university.
- 11 I don't remember. I don't think comments from my parents count, do they?
- 12 Slow to anger, quick to forgive.

- 2** A: Yes, the answers will reveal something. There are many questions, and it's hard for someone to give consistently deceptive answers. Some of your personality will show through in the answers you give.
- B: I don't agree. I gave joke answers to all the questions. Anyone who believed my answers would have completely the wrong impression about my personality.

## Active reading (2)

**1** 7

- 1 (I wish I could do this but you have to plan your studies, don't you?)
- 2 (I sometimes do have this tendency, but you just have to get on with studying.)
- 3 (Yes, I do have a few. Surely everyone does, don't they?)
- 4 (No, I have some ideas for the future and some goals, but not such a fixed plan.)
- 5 (I'm not scared. We will all do what we can to make the world better.)
- 6 (Well, this is true for some things; but with other things you can't just sit and wait, you have to make them happen.)
- 7 (Yes, this is generally true of me. I'm always busy doing something or other.)
- 8 (I disagree; I expect – or hope – that my family and friends will remember me.)
- 9 (Not really. Some things that happen to me really do seem to be bad. Perhaps later some of them seem not so bad in retrospect, but at the time they are just bad.)

**2** 1 (c)    2 (d)    3 (b)

## We are all dying

### Language points

- 1 I have some good news and some bad news for you (as the joke goes). The bad news – and I'm very sorry to be the bearer – is that we are all dying. It's true. I've checked it out. (Para 1)

**Note:** *Good news* and *bad news* are often paired together in jokes and in comment on new information or recent events where there is a mixture of positive and negative aspects. The humorous language the writer uses is a notable feature of the passage.

**check sth out:** to examine something in order to be certain that everything is correct, true, or satisfactory 检查; 调查; 查看

*I've been taking loads of photographs, just to check out the camera.* 我拍了一堆相片, 只是为了检查照相机是否好用。

- 2 ... we are all going to be either coffin dwellers or trampled ash in the rose garden of some local cemetery. (Para 1)

**Note:** The expression *coffin dwellers* is a humorous way to refer to dead people. The expression *trampled ash in the rose garden of some local cemetery* refers jokingly to the scattered ashes of a person who has been cremated.

- 3 After all, we never quite know when the hooded, scythe-carrying, bringer-of-the-last-breath might come a-calling. (Para 1)

**Note:** The expression *the hooded, scythe-carrying, bringer-of-the-last-breath* refers to the Grim Reaper, a Western personification of death that dates from medieval times. The Reaper is personified as a tall skeletal figure dressed in a black hooded cloak and carrying a scythe (a tool for cutting or reaping grain). The Reaper brings death, or *brings your last breath*. The expression *when the Reaper comes* means when death comes to you.

The expression *might come a-calling* can also be expressed as *might call*. *Come a-calling* means *visit* here. The *a-* prefix is archaic and adds to the humour of the piece.

- 4 ... and nothing underlines the uncertainty and absolute frailty of humanity like the untimely exit of a friend. (Para 1)

**untimely:** happening at a time that is not suitable. An *untimely death* is too soon or occurs when a person is young.

**exit:** Here it means the exit from this world, ie death.

- 5 Knowing that we are all budding crypt-kickers takes away all the uncertainty of life. (Para 3)

**Note:** *We are all budding crypt-kickers* is a humorous way of saying that we are all potentially soon to be buried, ie dead.

- 6 The prologue and epilogue are already typed in. All that's left is the middle bit and that's down to us. We get to choose the meat of the story. (Para 3)

**Meaning:** A *prologue* is a piece of writing at the start of a book, or the beginning of a play, film or TV programme as an introduction. An *epilogue* is a piece of writing at the end of a novel or play which carries an extra comment or extra information about what happens after the main story. Here *prologue* stands for "birth" and *epilogue* for "end of life" or

“death”. What the writer is trying to say is that the prologue and the epilogue of your life have been written, ie your birth has occurred and your death is inevitable. What you can do is to write *the middle part – the meat of the story* (live the rest of your life in a manner of your choosing).

**7 So, all those plans that you have on the back burner, you know, the great things you're going to do with your life “when the time is right”? (Para 4)**

**Note:** This is an incomplete sentence. The complete one is: So what about all those plans ...?

**back burner:** A *back burner* is literally one of the back parts of a cooker which is used for heating or cooking food. Metaphorically, if you *put something on the back burner*, it means you have decided not to do it until later. The expression *this back-burner stuff* (Para 10) thus refers to things which have low priority and get little attention.

**8 We're dying, see. It's official. (Para 4)**

**Meaning:** *It's official* means it's something that has been decided. This is another reference to the inevitability of death, and hence the urgent need to implement your plans while you are alive. If you have a plan, or if you have great things you want to do, do them right away. Do not hesitate or put things off till later.

**9 We owe it to ourselves to go out and do them now before it's too late. (Para 5)**

**Meaning:** The sentence means that if we have plans to perform or things to do, we should do it right now before it's too late.

**owe it to oneself to do sth:** The phrase means you should do something or treat someone in a particular way.

**10 There's only a promissory note that we are often not in a position to cash. (Para 5)**

**Meaning:** A *promissory note* is a document giving details of a promise to pay someone a particular amount of money by a particular date. The writer means that tomorrow, or the future, is like a promissory note for which you never get the cash.

**11 Your time ... will be gone and you'll have nothing to show for it but regret and a rear-view mirror full of “could haves”, “should haves” and “would haves”. (Para 5)**

**Meaning:** A *rear-view mirror* is a mirror fixed to the front window of a car that lets the driver see what is happening behind. Here, the mirror refers to the past. What the writer is saying is that when we look back at the past, we may be full of regrets for the many things that we could have done, we should have done, or we would have done, but in fact we did not do.

**12 ... like they're filling a skip – and then cramming it so high that they have to hire a forklift truck to get it back to the table. (Para 6)**

**Meaning:** A *skip* is a large metal container used in the building industry for waste; it is carried away by a truck when it is full. A *forklift truck* is a vehicle that uses two long metal bars at the front for lifting and moving heavy objects. Here the writer is using the images of a forklift and a truck to emphasize how people use the opportunity to serve themselves, because they *only have one shot* – they only have one chance or attempt. They can't return for more salad in this type of buffet, so they make the most of this opportunity.

13 So what I'm thinking is (and this is not molecular science) ... (Para 10)

**Meaning:** It means this is not specialized knowledge. It's not molecular science; it's simple and everyone can understand. Compare with the common expression *It's not rocket science*.

14 The right time is the cheque that's permanently in the post, it never arrives. (Para 10)

**Meaning:** *The cheque in the post* means money has been sent; it's on its way. This is often said as an excuse for late payment. So if *the cheque's permanently in the post*, it means the money never comes.

15 It's the girl who keeps us standing at the corner of the Co-op looking like a spanner. ... She's stood us up. (Para 10)

**looking like a spanner on the street corner:** The expression means he looks awkward and out of place, waiting for a girl who is late or never arrives.

**stand sb up:** to not come to meet someone you have arranged to meet, especially someone you are having or starting a romantic relationship with 与某人 (尤指异性) 失约 *I can't believe he stood me up.* 我无法相信他竟让我空等一场。

**Note:** The word *us* is an informal and personal way to include others who will recognize that this is a typical experience.

16 ... you'll have achieved so much, crammed your time so full that he'll fall asleep waiting for your life to flash before your eyes. (Para 12)

**flash:** If *someone's life flashes before their eyes*, they suddenly remember many events from their life because they are in great danger and might die.

17 Act now or your time will elapse and you'll end up as a sepia-coloured relative that no one can put a name to in a dusty photo album. (Para 13)

**Meaning:** The expression *you'll end up as a sepia-coloured relative* means that in the end you will be only an old half-forgotten photograph in a photo album. *I can't put a name to someone* is said when you half-recognize a person but you can't quite remember their name.

18 Better to leave a biography as thick as a whale omelette than an epitaph ... (Para 14)

**Meaning:** An *omelette* is flat round food made by mixing eggs together and cooking them. The expression *as thick as a whale omelette* means extremely thick. What the writer means is that it is better to leave a very large biography, or, in other words, live a full life which is worth writing about.

## Text analysis

### Writing style

Genre type

Argumentative

–

Formality

Informal

–

Style

Enthusiastic,  
irreverent

–

Average sentence length

15 words (fairly short)

This passage is an extract from the book *Everything That Happens to Me Is Good* by Geoff Thompson, which describes the writer's philosophy on life, suffering and happiness. As a personal

philosophy text, it is very subjective, being based on opinion and personal experience. The text type features include a section or chapter heading (“We are all dying”), informal language (“pronto”) and direct address to the reader (“If you don’t want to be a postman ...”).

The purpose of the passage is to motivate and inspire readers. The passage is a persuasive piece, which seeks to make readers share the writer’s opinion that life is worthwhile even given the inevitability of death. Indeed, it is especially worthwhile, and we must not waste any of the time that is allotted to us. As the subject of the passage – death – is grim and even taboo, the writer has used humour to lighten the tone and make the passage more fun to read. The overall message of the text is that people should accept that they will die, and make the most of life while they can.

The text is likely to be aimed at a general audience of readers. The style is enthusiastic, as the writer attempts to convince readers to see a positive side to death. In places, the text is even passionate, as in Paragraph 10, where the writer forcefully makes his point with a series of rhetorical questions (“why the hell aren’t we doing the things we want to do NOW?”). The style is also irreverent, taking the subject of death lightly for the most part.

This light-hearted approach to death and dying is often shown in the use of black humour, which is a cynical form of joking that seeks to trivialize something negative or frightening. By provoking laughter at something unsettling, the writer can make the subject less threatening. In the passage, this is often done by means of terms like “coffin dwellers” and “crypt-kickers” – novel or alliterative phrases that make the serious subject more amusing.

The humour also relies upon the use of exaggeration and analogy. Paragraph 6 contains examples of both these techniques. The writer exaggerates by writing that the bowl in the buffet restaurant is the size of a saucer, and that the diner has to hire a forklift truck to carry the bowl once full. Analogy is used when stating that life is like the salad bowl and when describing people filling their bowls as though they were “filling a skip”. Life is also likened to a story (Para 3) and a holiday (Para 7).

The passage is informal and conversational, as shown by the use of contractions (“can’t”), direct address and abbreviated sentences (“Scary.”). The conversational style assumes knowledge of the reader and creates a sense of unity with the writer by the use of the first person plural (“We already know how the story ends”).

Despite a fairly short average sentence length, this is a fairly difficult passage to understand due to some difficult vocabulary and the heavy use of analogy. The passage also contains some cultural concepts that may be unfamiliar to those not from the West, such as the Grim Reaper and the Co-op supermarkets.

## Reading and understanding

3 3

## Dealing with unfamiliar words

- 4 1 elapsed; cemetery    2 rear; crammed    3 triple    4 budding; biography  
5 finite    6 dwellers    7 invest    8 skip    9 inevitable

5 1 (a) 2 (b) 3 (a) 4 (a) 5 (a) 6 (b) 7 (a) 8 (a)

6 1 (a) 2 (b) 3 (b) 4 (a) 5 (a) 6 (b) 7 (b) 8 (b) 9 (a)

## Reading and interpreting

7 The message the first two sentences give: "life is short". The message the last two sentences give: "act now".

**Now look at the rest of the passage and underline more expressions and sentences which convey the message.**

- The novel ... the trip ... your mind's-eye dream job ... the West End play ... – you have to do them now.
  - Tomorrow is just another version of now, an empty field that will remain so unless we start planting some seeds.
  - Fill your bowl. We come this way but once so let's make the best of the short stay.
  - Fit as much into the short time there as you can.
  - And now is the time, not tomorrow. There is no time like the present.
  - ... if we are dying and our allotted time is finite, why the hell aren't we doing all the things we want to do NOW?
  - So I say stop waiting and meet providence halfway. Start filling your life with the riches on offer ...
  - Act now or your time will elapse and you'll end up as a sepia-coloured relative ...
- 8
- 1 This refers to the Grim Reaper, a personification of death. The Reaper wears a black hood and carries a scythe to harvest the living grain; he is said to bring us our last breath.
  - 2 This refers to the main body of the story, and the main part of our life, like the meat in a sandwich. The meat is between two pieces of bread; the main content of the story is between the prologue and epilogue.
  - 3 This means plans which you have postponed or kept waiting as a low priority, as if they are simmering gently but not really cooking on the back part of the cooker.
  - 4 This means tomorrow is like a note which has promised a payment of money but which we can't actually cash. In other words, tomorrow is an illusion, or, as the common saying has it, "Tomorrow never comes."
  - 5 The image is of someone driving a car and looking in the rear-view mirror. They are looking at their past with lots of regrets about what they could have, should have, or would have done, but did not in fact do.
  - 6 The bowl represents your life. To fill the bowl is to take all the opportunities that are available to you and refuse to waste time.
  - 7 This image refers to the right time to perform an action, which, like a girl who has stood you up, will never arrive.

**Now discuss which are the best images, and why.**

- To me, the most powerful negative image is the Reaper. This is a scary image, like one in

a horror film: a terrifying figure cloaked and hooded in black, whose face you can't really see but he's grim, serious, unfriendly, unpleasant, ugly and depressing. He comes and cuts you down like a stalk of corn, and you're dead.

- From my perspective, the positive image which is the easiest to remember is to "fill your bowl". This is a homely picture, where life is a buffet and you have only one chance to get some salad. However large or small your bowl is, you can still make the effort to fill your own bowl while you have the chance.

## Developing critical thinking

### 9 Teaching tips

Ss may want to give short and simple answers, but T should try to encourage them to consider different aspects of the questions, or different points of view, so that they get a broader view and present a richer understanding of the questions.

- A: To some extent, I agree, because we can't predict what will happen to our life in the future, so we should do as much as we can now, to use our time and opportunities. Where I disagree is that the writer seems to be saying that we should live for the present and disregard the future. If he's saying that, then I disagree, because I think we should balance "living now" with "thinking for the future".

B: But the writer doesn't really say "disregard the future", does he? He's just emphasizing the present. When he says "there isn't a tomorrow", he's talking about the kind of tomorrow which people dream about but never act upon, so of course it never comes. I agree with that point of view and with what the writer says: "Act now" and "make tomorrow happen".
- A: Well, it might do so, if everyone only does whatever they want. But I don't think the writer means that we should be selfish – "filling up our bowl" doesn't mean we wouldn't help other people to fill theirs, does it? It means using opportunities wisely, and we can do that together, surely.

B: I agree with that. He's not talking about being selfish, and of course you can "act now" without being selfish.
- A: First, people could establish a scholarship fund for clever students from the countryside to come to university, and ask lots of wealthy people to contribute. Then they could develop a fantastic, low-cost public transport system so that people wouldn't need to think about cars and traffic. Thirdly, they could plant trees everywhere to help with the problem of climate change and create a greener world.

B: As for me, well, I'd help to establish worldwide equality for women, because some countries have not advanced much in this respect. Then I would ban smoking in any public place at all, streets, restaurants, offices etc. Some people would certainly complain about this, but it really would be better for everyone's health and smokers would get used to the idea. Finally, I would encourage everyone else to think of three things that they can do for people around them, small, practical things in most cases. And I would ask everyone to do these three things on Friday. On Monday, each person should ask everyone else if it made a difference to their life that day. I am sure that it would raise awareness of small positive changes!

## Talking point

- 1 They all express regret over a past choice that was not taken. They all express the idea of not doing something then but wishing it had been done now.

Now make similar reflections about yourself using *could have*, *would have* and *should have*.

- I could have learned to play the guitar when my friend was learning, but I didn't. Now I really wish I had taken the opportunity.
  - I would have been a much better table tennis player, if I'd only listened to my coach.
  - I should have learned thousands of words in English, but unfortunately I just can't remember every word I hear or read.
- 2 I should have taken more trouble to talk to my grandmother when she was alive. Now it's too late and I regret it very much. If I have grandchildren – or even my own child – I will try to talk to them when they are young, before I get too old myself.

## Language in use

### Word formation: compound words

- 1
- I've double- and triple-checked it. (compound verb)
  - budding crypt-kickers (compound noun)
  - a rear-view mirror (compound adjective)
  - the once-a-year holiday to Florida or Spain (compound adjective)
  - back-burner stuff (compound adjective)
  - standing at the corner of the Co-op (compound noun)
  - a sepia-coloured relative that no one can put a name to (compound adjective)
- 2
- 1 a late-night party
  - 2 a well-stocked library
  - 3 a world-famous professor
  - 4 some well-timed advice
  - 5 a rapidly-growing population
  - 6 a free-market economy
  - 7 a half-hour boat trip

### *It's what / how ... that ...*

- 3
- 1 It's how we behave that determines what other people think of us.
  - 2 It's what our character is that usually determines what sort of job we are going to end up doing.

- 3 It isn't always what marks we get at university that determines what we do as a career.
- 4 It is often what we experienced in our childhood that determines how we react to life's problems.
- 5 It's what our genetic clock is and what changes we make to it that determine when we die.

### ***It is / was not just that ... but ...***

- 4 1 It wasn't just that the shops were all closed for Thanksgiving, but there was no one in the streets.
- 2 It wasn't just that she spent all her time at college going to parties, but she managed to gain a first-class degree.
- 3 It wasn't just that they weren't listening to what he said, but it seemed as if they weren't at all interested.
- 4 It wasn't just that I was upset, but I felt as if I was going to burst out crying.
- 5 It wasn't just that the Grim Reaper was intended to frighten people, but it was also a figure of fun.

### **Collocations**

- 5 1 (a) On the surfaces that aren't used very often or aren't cleaned.  
(b) Yes, it is, because the disagreement is solved and each party is satisfied with the outcome.  
(c) Nothing, because we have paid everything that is owed.  
(d) We relax in a comfortable chair and enjoy it.
- 2 (a) No, because the sea is calm. We will feel seasick if it is rough.  
(b) No, because the changeover has gone well, without difficulties.  
(c) Not necessarily, because some people who talk confidently like that do so to trick you, like a confidence trickster or conman.
- 3 (a) We say "no", because we are refusing it.  
(b) We should say "I apologize" or "I'm sorry".  
(c) In a shop, because a shop is likely to offer a special price or reduction for something.  
(d) They are intelligent, talented, gifted or creative and they will bring these kinds of qualities to their work.
- 4 (a) No, we will remember it and consider it for a particular occasion in future.  
(b) We look similar in certain physical features.  
(c) I can't bear to think too much about some of the problems in the world, such as famine, war and poverty. With all the powers of the modern world at our disposal, why can't we just solve them?
- 5 (a) No, not easily. They refuse to accept the idea, maybe because it's just a bad idea, or they may change their mind if they understand it better.  
(b) The soldiers met opposition from those they were fighting against.  
(c) Yes, we can keep ourselves as healthy as possible with a good diet and enough exercise so that we are less likely to catch a cold, or if we do get one, we won't suffer so badly.

## Translation

- 6 美国国家教育统计中心的数据表明，大约80%的美国大学生至少要换一次专业。有些学生上大学时就读父母或亲戚为他们选择的专业。在大多数情况下，这些学生难以做出决定，因为他们不知道在决定变换被规划好的职业的时候该如何面对自己的亲人。有些学生决定转专业是因为他们无法应付所学专业的基础课，而另一些学生则是因为他们实在厌恶所学的专业，必须换一个自己真正喜欢的专业。专家认为，意识到所学专业不适合自己的技能和天赋没什么错。实际上，能意识到这一点是成熟的标志。重要的是找到一个真正适合你的专业。在转专业之前，你需要见学业导师，跟教授或专业人员谈谈，做一些调查，问自己几个严肃的问题，看看你的选择是否正确。
- 7 As the Chinese saying goes, it is important to know oneself. The first person to put forward this notion was Laozi, who wrote in his book *Dao De Jing*: "A person who knows others is intelligent, but a person who knows himself is insightful." To know oneself is to have a correct understanding of oneself, including one's strengths and limitations, and to be clear-minded about what one can do. We cherish this virtue so much precisely because it is really hard for people to know themselves. Knowing oneself is both part of a philosophy of life and a virtue that can facilitate self-improvement and attainment of a higher life goal.

## Reading across cultures

### Rites of passage

#### Culture points

A **rite of passage** is a ceremony or ritual, a culturally prescribed action, to signify an event in a person's life which shows a transition from one stage of life to another, typically adolescence, marriage or death. A *rite* is a traditional ceremony; a *passage* here means movement past, over or through a place.

**Elbert Hubbard** (1856–1915), an American writer, was a soap salesman until the age of 36, and then a prolific writer and publisher. He also said, "Don't take life too seriously. You'll never get out of it alive."

***As You Like It*** is a comedy by Shakespeare, written and performed about 1598–1600. In the play, a young gentleman, Orlando, is persecuted by his brother Oliver, and forced to flee the country after he has annoyed the new Duke who has usurped the place of his older brother, the rightful Duke. Celia (daughter of the new Duke) and Rosalind (daughter of the rightful Duke) also leave to look for Rosalind's father, who is hiding in a forest. Rosalind is disguised as a man, which leads to comic misunderstandings. Orlando loves Rosalind but does not recognize her. Oliver, cast out by the new Duke, loves Celia and is reconciled with Orlando. In the end, the usurper relents, and the rightful Duke returns to his dukedom. Oliver gets his inheritance and Orlando and Rosalind marry. Jacques, a melancholy figure, delivers one of Shakespeare's most famous monologues: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players (actors); they have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages ... the infant ... the schoolboy ... the lover ... a soldier ... the justice (full of wisdom) ... the sixth age ... with spectacles on his nose ...

last scene of all ... is second childishness ... sans (without) teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything."

The **bar mitzvah** is the ceremony in which a Jewish boy, aged 13, takes on the responsibilities of an adult under Jewish religious law. From that age boys have moral and religious responsibilities for their own actions. A ceremony is common (but not actually necessary for the religious rights and obligations) during which the participant is treated for the first time as an adult, reading or reciting from the Jewish scriptures and making a speech in a synagogue, a Jewish meeting place for worship and instruction. Bar mitzvah in Hebrew means "son of the commandments". (There is a similar ceremony called the *bat mitzvah* for girls.) The ceremony may be followed by a reception or celebratory meal and gifts may be given, such as money, often in multiples of 18, which is a number that symbolizes life.

The **prom** is an end-of-year dinner dance for senior (final-year) high school students in the US. The prom originated in the 1920s, following the 19th-century European tradition of "a promenade ball" at which young people and debutantes could dance and display their fashionable clothing. American parents thought the prom would be a good formal social occasion to teach school leavers about etiquette. On prom night, most students go with a dance partner, a "date", who may or may not be a romantic partner. Many arrive in groups in a limousine. The boys generally wear black tuxedos and the girls wear formal gowns or long dresses. There is the crowning of the Prom Queen and King, who are chosen by fellow students. Other countries have similar events: the "leaver's party" in the UK; the "fiesta de graduaciòn" ("graduation party") in Latin America; the "gala" in France; and the "Abifeier" in Germany. Finland, Malaysia, South Africa and Canada also have similar events.

The **walkabout** is a rite of passage undertaken by adolescent Australian aboriginal males, who set off alone into the outback (the bush) for several months. On walkabout, they come to appreciate the spiritual interconnectedness of the land, the natural world, the wildlife and their ancestors. Aboriginal people see the land as a living being which sustains them, and they live in reciprocal relationships with nature through songlines. The 1971 film, *Walkabout*, tells of two white children who get lost in the outback, but survive thanks to the skills of an aboriginal boy, who discovers them while he is on walkabout.

**Songlines** are an ancient spiritual concept among Australian aboriginal communities. Songlines, also called dreaming tracks or footprints of the ancestors, are invisible paths which criss-cross Australia, connecting landmarks and sources of food and water. For aborigines, the world was created when their ancestors sang the names of everything, giving life by singing. In aboriginal belief, the world continues because it is maintained by people who sing these ancient songs in the right way when they are on walkabout. Songlines also have a practical purpose in that they allow people to find their way across long distances, or to locate water and food. Songlines feature in the 2008 film, *Australia*; the aboriginal actor, David Gulpilil, leads his grandson into the outback to learn the ancestors' ways. Gulpilil was also the aboriginal star of the 1971 film *Walkabout*, mentioned above.

## Language points

### 1 Is life just "one damned thing after another" ...? (Para 1)

**Meaning:** Today the word *damned* is a relatively mild swear word, which indicates annoyance, frustration or anger. Hubbard's saying essentially means that life is one problem after another.

### 2 Or is it an obstacle race ...? (Para 1)

**Meaning:** An *obstacle* is a thing which obstructs progress. An *obstacle race* is a type of race in which you have to get over, under, or through a series of objects or structures. In the metaphor, "life is an obstacle race"; the crucial stages in life are obstacles that must be surmounted or overcome.

- 1 He said it was "one damned thing after another".
- 2 Seven ages.
- 3 It is a formal recognition of change, a move from one stage of life to another.
- 4 It is a rite of passage which means that they become responsible for their own actions.
- 5 They wear formal clothes.
- 6 They penetrate the heart of aboriginal culture and also discover themselves.
- 7 They spend about six months walking alone through the wilderness and follow the paths of their ancestors along the "songlines".
- 8 It is the oldest continuous culture in the world.

### 2 Teaching tips

If Ss find it difficult to think of detailed examples in pairs, T could first give a demonstration to help Ss think about the topic and then ask them to discuss the questions in groups. Later, representatives from different groups can give a brief summary to the class.

- 1 One of them takes place a full year after a baby has been born. There is a banquet when people give gifts and celebrate the birthday. People used to place some objects in front of the baby and would tell the baby's fortune according to which object the baby picked up.
- 2 The origins are generally a mixture of traditional folk customs and religion. Some traditional rites of passage may be regarded as superstitions now but others are still common practice.
- 3 For example:
  - In traditional marriages in some areas of China, after a decision to get married, the groom's family was expected to give gifts of food and money to the bride's family.
  - On the wedding day, the bride performed ceremonies for her ancestors and was supposed to cry to show her appreciation for her parents' care and to show that she did not want to leave her parents' home. She wore red and, accompanied by a procession of musicians, was carried in a sedan chair to the groom's house, bringing her dowry, bedding, and clothes. The groom would welcome her and lift the red veil covering her head with an arm of a steelyard. He might give money to the bridesmaids

to release the bride. The groom's family started the ceremony by showing respect to the bride's family and their ancestors. Later, there was a banquet held by the groom's family.

- Some days after the wedding, the bride would visit her parents, dressed in red to show her new status; the groom would send gifts to his parents-in-law.
- 4 When it is time to leave school or university in China, there are normally parties to celebrate the successful conclusion of studies and to say goodbye to classmates. Graduation ceremonies, when students wear special caps and gowns, are also common.
  - 5 The parties are usually informal and organized by students themselves. Graduation ceremonies, by contrast, are very formal occasions.
  - 6 Some traditional customs for marriages and funerals continue and are an important part of Chinese culture. Some others are obsolete or greatly modified, eg the traditional rites in the examination halls of ancient times have disappeared.

## Guided writing

### Planning an essay

- 1
  - 1 *Catching crabs* is a (b) narrative which is written (iii) to entertain.
  - 2 *We are all dying* is an (c) opinion piece which is written (i) to persuade.
  - 3 *Rites of passage* is an (a) essay which is written (ii) to inform.
  
- 2
  - 1 I wrote an article about science which was designed to be read by teenagers to encourage them to study more science.
  - 2 It was only about a page long, but it was in English!
  - 3 Well, I worked with a partner and we met a couple of times for about 15 minutes each time. Then we worked separately for about two hours finding the information that we needed.
  - 4 We consulted a couple of books and also used the Internet.
  - 5 I was happy with the result because it was in English and our teacher praised it.

#### Now tell your partner how you could have improved your work.

If we had had more time, we could have looked for more information, especially science information that would interest teenagers. Also we could have illustrated the article with photos, perhaps, and certainly with charts. We could have looked for good publications written for teenagers to get a clearer idea of what a good style for this audience might be. These would have helped make our planning for the writing more effective, I think.

- 3 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

#### Now discuss the advantages and disadvantages of these resources with your partner.

- 1 We use these because they are on hand, but the disadvantage is that they don't have all the information we need.

- 2 We use the Internet when we can get access to it. The disadvantage is that you need a networked computer or mobile phone and you can't always find useful information.
  - 3 We can go to the library easily and it has good resources for us to use. But sometimes it is closed and it takes time to find what we need.
  - 4 Newspapers and some magazines can be helpful, but TV programmes or films do not usually help. The disadvantage is that we have to get hold of the right newspapers and magazines.
  - 5 This depends on the topic. For some topics, friends and family can give us ideas and information.
  - 6 We sometimes buy books from a bookshop. Because of the cost, we only do this if we are very interested and can't find the books in the library.
- 4 The bar mitzvah is a Jewish religious ceremony and a family feast which is held when boys become responsible for their actions at the age of 13.

**Now write similar notes about the American prom and the Australian aboriginal walkabout.**

- American prom: end of high school / dance / formal clothes / limousine / behave like adults
  - Australian adolescent aboriginal walkabout: six months in wilderness / follow ancestral songlines / heart of culture / discover themselves
- 5
- 1 The writer uses a quotation and asks two questions about life to introduce the topic of rites of passage. The idea of life stages is introduced in the second paragraph by quoting famous lines from a play by Shakespeare.
  - 2 It takes two out of five paragraphs.
  - 3 It's defined in the third paragraph, after the reference to Shakespeare's idea of seven stages.
  - 4 There are three examples: bar mitzvahs, American proms, and walkabouts of Australian aborigines.
  - 5 Three out of five paragraphs. This might seem a lot, but without the examples the definition doesn't mean very much to most people.
  - 6 It concludes with a final thought from the third example. This thought about "discovering yourself through a rite of passage" applies to all of the examples and makes a good conclusion.

**6 Example:**

**A rite of passage: the "thorny gates" of exams**

From the Sui and Tang dynasties until the end of the Qing period, examinations in China were rites of passage that could lead to success in the form of civil service employment, status, wealth and power. Because of the arduous nature of the exams, they were often known as the "thorny gates". With variations at different times, exams marked the transition from study to work, or stage-by-stage progression from local to provincial to metropolitan and national levels.

There were rituals for candidates to prepare for these important exams. With their teachers, students had read, recited, and memorized the classics, and learned to write particular kinds of poems and essays by strictly using a particular script, writing special texts and counting the exact number of lines and characters. Depending on the level, this could take many years.

At the examination halls there were special rituals to take the exams. Guarded by soldiers, candidates waited in line at dawn for their names to be called. They bowed to the examiners and were searched to make sure they had only brushes and ink with them. They were given a place to sit in a small hut where they read the questions and wrote their answers for perhaps three days, talking to no one. None of them was allowed to leave until the exam was over. The examiners had to go through similar hardships to mark the papers.

There were further rituals to announce the results. Candidates would gather outside the exam halls, perhaps wearing special robes, bow to the examiners, and to the sound of bells hear the announcements and receive their results, written on large sheets of paper. Later, successful scholars would have a feast to celebrate with officials and past degree holders. They put banners outside their homes and could use special titles according to their local, provincial, metropolitan or imperial exam success, and would be accepted for ever in society, with rank, status and employment.

In modern China, the last such exams were held in 1905. But we still have our “thorny gates” in the form of university entrance and graduation exams. Even English tests can be thorny for some of us! Though the content is quite different and exams are on printed paper and marked electronically, we still have our rituals to prepare for exams, take them and celebrate when they are over. And the results can still set the template for success in the rest of our lives.

## Unit task

### Carrying out a survey on students' fears and ambitions

#### 4 Example:

**The future is now:**

#### **A brief survey of students' ideas and attitudes to the future**

As final-year students at our university prepare for their future profession and employment, they are also very much concerned about the present, studying hard to get a good degree result. We asked 50 students about their plans and ambitions, and here we summarize our analysis of their responses.

As you might expect in a group of this size, they had a range of ambitions. Most wanted to be successful in particular professions or fields of employment (some spoke of this as personal success, but many thought of it as contributing to society and to the country). A few said, quite openly, that they wanted to be rich. Many said they wanted to be happy with their family. Of course, for many students these kinds of ambitions overlap – you can, after all, have more than one ambition.

Students generally seemed confident about the future. But when we asked specifically about their fears, quite a few simply mentioned a “fear of failure”. However, a similar number were afraid of not finding the right romantic partner. A few said they were afraid of the future and others couldn’t think of an answer or said they were afraid of nothing. Still, the vast majority thought that it is important to plan for the future, most saying that this was “very important”.

We asked students what they expected to be doing in ten years’ time. Our analysis shows that most spoke about progressing on a career ladder, eg they mentioned promotion, management, being the boss etc. Many others spoke about their family life, having a spouse, a child, home etc.

We also asked the difficult question of whether life is too short. Many students said yes, with a slightly larger number saying no. Eleven students considered the question more carefully, with eight responding “It depends”, giving examples and reasons for their cautious reply. Three specifically stated that this is a difficult question and gave reasons why they thought it was difficult, eg “too short for whom?”, meaning there would be different answers for people in different circumstances.

Finally, we asked if students believed in “seizing the moment”. Here, most students said “sometimes” (often thinking of different situations), while fewer gave a simple “yes” (11) or “no” (8) response.

In conclusion, this survey is quite brief, but the outcomes are clear. Students’ ideas and attitudes about the future generally centred on their likely profession or work, and on their future family and a happy home life. This future seems to be planned with quite clear expectations, but we give the final comment to three students in a small group who said, “The future is now. We do think about it now and make plans, but you can’t be sure about what will happen. Things may go wrong or other opportunities may come up which you should seize. But to make your dream come true you have to act now, otherwise nothing will happen. The future is now.”

<b>A brief survey of students’ ideas and attitudes to the future</b> <b>(N = 50 final-year students)</b>	
1 What ambitions do you have for the future?	Success in a profession or work 42; to be happy 28; to be rich 8.
2 What are you afraid of, if anything?	Failure 18; not finding a good partner 17; the future 12; nothing or no answer 10.
3 How important is it to plan for the future?	Very important 32; important 10; not sure 5; not so important 3.
4 What do you expect to be doing ten years from now?	Progressing on a career ladder 32; have a family 21; travelling 3; no idea 4.
5 Do you think life is too short?	Yes 18; no 21; it depends 8; a difficult question: who for? 3
6 Do you believe in “seizing the moment”?	Yes 11; no 8; sometimes 31

## Translation of the passages

### Active reading (1)

#### 抓螃蟹

大学最后一年的秋天，我们的心情变了。刚刚过去的夏季学期的轻松氛围、即兴球赛、查尔斯河上的泛舟以及深夜晚会都不见了踪影，我们开始埋头学习，苦读到深夜，课堂出勤率再次急剧上升。我们都觉得在校时间不多了，以后再也不会有这样的学习机会了，所以都下定决心不再虚度光阴。当然，下一年四五月份的期末考试最为重要。我们谁都不想考全班倒数第一，那也太丢人了，因此同学们之间的竞争压力特别大。以前每天下午五点以后，图书馆就空无一人了，现在却要等到天快亮时才会有空座，大家熬夜熬出了眼袋，脸色苍白，睡眼惺忪，却很自豪，好像这些都是表彰他们勤奋好学的奖章。

还有别的事情让大家心情焦虑。每个人都在心里盘算着过几个月毕业离校之后该找份什么样的工作。并不总是那些心怀抱负、成绩拔尖的高材生才清楚自己将来要做什么，常常是那些平日里默默无闻的同学早早为自己人生的下几个阶段做好了规划。有位同学在位于麦迪逊大道他哥哥的广告公司得到了一份工作，另一位同学写的电影脚本已经与好莱坞草签了合约。我们当中野心最大的一位同学准备到地方上当一个政党活动家，我们都预料他最终会当上国会议员。但大多数同学不是准备继续深造，就是想在银行、地方政府或其他单位当个白领，薪水足够多，让他们得以在二十出头的时候过上舒适的生活，然后就娶妻生子，贷款买房，期望升职，过安稳日子。

感恩节的时候我回了一趟家，兄弟姐妹们免不了不停地问我毕业后有什么打算，我不知道该说什么。实际上，我知道该说什么，但我怕他们批评我，所以只对他们说了别人都准备干什么。

父亲看着我，什么也没说。夜深时，他叫我去他的书房。我们坐了下来，他给我们俩各倒了杯饮料。

“怎么样？”他问。

“啊，什么怎么样？”

“你毕业后到底想做什么？”他问道。

父亲是一名律师，我一直都认为他想让我去法学院深造，追随他的人生足迹，所以我有点儿犹豫。

过了会儿我回答说：“我想旅行，我想当个作家。”

我想这不是他所期待的答案。旅行？去哪儿旅行？当作家？写什么呀？我做好了遭到他反对的心理准备。

接着是一段长长的沉默。

“这想法有点意思，”他最后说。

接着又是一段长长的沉默。

“我有点希望自己在你这个年纪时能做这些事儿。”

我在等他把话说完。

“你还有很多时间，不必急于进入一个暂时报酬高的行业。你现在要搞清楚自己真正喜欢什么，如果你弄不清楚，以后就不可能成功。”

“那我该怎么办？”

他想了一会儿。然后他说道：“瞧，现在太晚了。我们明天早晨乘船出海去，就我们两个。也许我们能抓点螃蟹当晚餐，我们还可以再谈谈。”

那是一艘小小的机动船，停泊在离我们家约十分钟路程的地方，是好些年前父亲买的。次日清晨，我们沿着港湾出发，一路上没说多少话，只是默默地欣赏着海鸥的叫声，还有港湾沿岸和远处大海的景色。

在这个时候沿海水域没什么风浪，船平稳地航行了半个小时之后父亲把船停了下来。他说：“咱们在这儿试试运气吧，”然后抓起一个系上绳子的生了锈的网状篓子抛到海里。

我们等了一会儿，父亲站起来对我说：“来帮我一把。”于是我们一起将蟹篓子拽上了甲板。

螃蟹吸引了我，它们太容易抓了。不仅仅是因为它们顺着篓盖上的小孔爬进一个再明显不过的陷阱，更因为即便盖子打开了，它们似乎也懒得从里面爬出来，只会趴在那儿冲你挥动着蟹钳。

篓子里挤满了几十只软壳螃蟹，一只压着一只，堆得老高。“它们为什么不逃走啊？”我满腹狐疑地问父亲。

“你先观察一下，看那只螃蟹，那儿！它想爬出去，但每次都被同伴拽了回去，”父亲说。

我们接着观察。那只螃蟹顺着网眼向顶盖攀援，每当它爬到顶盖时，果然就会有另一只螃蟹举起蟹钳夹住它能够着的腿把这只螃蟹拽下来。这只螃蟹尝试了好几次想挣脱它的狱中同伴，但都没能成功。

“快看！”父亲说。“它开始对这种游戏感到不耐烦了。”

这只螃蟹不仅放弃了漫长的逃亡之战，而且还帮着把其他想逃跑的螃蟹拽下来。它最终选择了一种轻松的活法。

我忽然明白了父亲为什么提议早上来抓螃蟹。他看着我说：“你可别被别人拽下来。花点时间想想你是哪一类人，你这一生希望得到什么，回顾一下你在大学修的课程，想想有哪些课对你个人来说最有益。然后再想想什么对你最重要，什么最使你感兴趣，你有什么技能。琢磨一下你想在哪里生活，你想去哪里，想挣多少钱，想做什么样的工作。如果你现在不能回答这些问题，你就得花点时间去找出答案。你不这样做的话，永远都不会幸福的。”

他停顿了一下。

“你想去旅行？”他接着问我。

“对，”我回答说。

“那就去申请护照吧。你想当作家？”

“对。”

“有趣的选择，我们家还没出过作家呢，”他说。

父亲发动了马达，我们返航回家。

## Active reading (2)

### 我们都在走向死亡

我给你带来一条好消息，还有一条坏消息（正如笑话所说的）。坏消息是：我们都在走向死亡——很抱歉是我带来了这条坏消息。这可是真的，我已经核实过了，事实上我已经三番五次地核实过了。我也找到了证据，可是要说出这个事实实在是困难，不过我们的确都在走向死亡。这件事我过去多少知道一点，但不愿过多地去想它。但事实是，再过70年或80年——这要取决于你现在的年龄有多大，寿命有多长——我们都会躺到棺材里，或者变成某个地方公墓玫瑰园里任人踩踏的骨灰。我们甚至活不到这么老。毕竟，我们从来就不清楚那位戴着头巾、手持长柄镰刀、命人吐出最后一口气的死神什么时候会来拜访我们，有可能会比我们希望的要早。其实我最近就曾经从局外人的角度观察过死亡，没有什么比朋友的早逝更能表明人生的无常和生命的脆弱了。

真可怕。

我已经让你够沮丧的了，现在告诉你那条好消息吧：知道了我们都在走向坟墓，我们就不再有人生无常的感觉了。我们已经知道故事的结局，开场白和尾声都确定了，剩下的就是介于两者之间的那些事儿了，这些事是我们做得了主的。我们必须挑选故事情节。

所以，那些被你搁置在一边的计划，即那些“当时机成熟时”你会用生命来完成的伟大事业怎么办呢？可我发现时机永远不会有成熟的时候。时间必须提前，必须马上行动，就在这一刻，不能拖延，必须赶紧，而且越快越好，只要你的小腿能够承受。不管是你想写的小说，还是你一直在筹划的去大峡谷的旅行，你心仪的工作，你想导演的伦敦西区话剧，你都必须现在就去。知道吗？我们都在走向死亡。这是已经定了的。

因此，把自己的梦想搁置起来，等到时机成熟之后才开始实现它，这就意味着梦想可能永远都不会实现。人生的遗憾莫过于还有事情没有做，我们有必要现在就去。明天行吗？明天只是个谎言；根本就没有什么明天，只有一张我们常常无法兑现的期票。明天甚至压根儿就不存在。你早上醒来时又是另一个今天了，同样的规则又可以全部套用。明天只是现在的另一种说法，是一块空地，除非我们开始在那里播种，否则它永远都是空地。你的时间会流逝（时间就在我们说话的当下嘀嗒嘀嗒地走着，每分钟顺时针走60秒，如果你不能很好地利用它，它会走得更快些），而你却没有取得任何成就来证明它的存在，唯独留下遗憾，留下一面后视镜，上面写满了“本可以做”、“本应该做”、“本来会做”的事情。

你是否注意过，自助餐馆里服务员会给你一个茶杯碟大小的碗，并告诉你：“你想盛多少沙拉都可以，但只能盛一次”？生活就像那只盛沙拉的碗，我们可以和那些饥肠辘辘等着主菜的人一样在那只小碗里装上尽可能多的沙拉。我喜欢看人们巧妙地把黄瓜片插在沙拉碗的四周——就像往废料桶里堆东西那样——把沙拉堆得老高老高，最后不得不雇个叉车把沙拉拉回餐桌。他们不是贪婪，而是明白自己只有一次机会。

把你的碗盛满吧，我们在这个世上只走一遭，既然来了就好好利用这短暂的一生，就像我们牢牢抓住一年一度去佛罗里达或西班牙度假的机会那样。在短暂的人生中填入尽可能多的内容吧。确保每天回家后你都会因为干了很多事而感到精疲力尽。

如果你不想当邮递员就别当邮递员，放弃这份工作去当个画家、作家、滑雪运动员，干什么都行。千万不要干自己明明就不喜欢的事情。

现在就开始行动吧，不要等到明天。没有比现在更好的时间了。如果在这一刻你不能得到你想要的东西，你至少可以趁灵感还在的时候马上开始你的旅程，即刻起程。我们有同样多的时间，我们和布兰森以及盖茨一样，每天都有24个小时。决定我们这一生成败的是我们把时间花在什么事情上，是我们如何来分配时间。

因此，我正在琢磨的是（这可不是分子科学）：如果我们正在走向死亡，而且分配给我们的时间是有限的，那么我们到底有什么理由不现在就去。做所有想做的事情呢？这些被暂时搁置的事情到底又是什么呢？为什么明明知道成熟的时机永远不会到来，而我们却都还在等待呢？成熟的时机是一张支票，它永远都在邮寄的路上，永远都不会到来。它就是那位让我们在Co-op超市旁边像桥墩那样站着傻等的女孩，我们再怎么看表也无济于事，她失约了。

我们傻等着，而成熟的时机却永远不会到来。

所以我要说，别再等待了，走到路上去迎接天意。开始给你的生活增添所有你能得到的财富，这样当死神到来时，你已经完成了那么多事，你的一生是那么的充实。当生命在你眼前回放时，死神等着等着就睡着了。

现在就行动吧，不然你的时间会流逝的，而你最终将成为尘封的相册里一位谁都叫不上名字的亲戚，你的相片也因为古旧而呈红褐色。

还是给人间留下一本厚厚的传记吧，那可比仅仅留下这样一块碑铭强：

“乔·史密斯……嘿嘿，他没干过什么，对吧？”

## Reading across cultures

### 通过仪式

生活是否如同对生活持宿命论看法的美国作家艾伯特·哈伯德在一百年前所描述的那样，是“该死的事情一桩接着一桩”？抑或是一场障碍赛跑，其间每个参赛者，即世界各地的人们，不得不在生命的各个重要阶段展现自己的价值？

莎士比亚的戏剧《皆大欢喜》中那个悲伤的小丑雅克认为，人的一生要经历“七个年龄段”，几乎每个社会都有的通过仪式也证明，我们往往是把生命分为这几个阶段来看待的，比如童年、中年和老年。

通过仪式是社会对个人从一个阶段走向另一阶段的正式的认可，其中被广泛认同的是由少年步入成年时举行的成年礼。成年礼有多种形式。例如，在犹太传统中，人生最重要的时刻之一就是“犹太男孩成人仪式”，人们为年满13岁的男孩举办宗教仪式和家宴，这标志着从此以后这个孩子要对自己的行为负责了。13岁也差不多是许多国家规定开始承担法律责任的年龄。

美国中学生活结束前的毕业舞会是另一种截然不同的通过仪式。这次舞会非同寻常，学生们不仅穿着正式（许多学生平生第一次这么穿），他们通常还乘坐着一辆租来的豪华轿车到达舞会现场。就在那一天晚上，他们似乎要表现得和年龄是他们两倍的成年人一样，至少是看上去要比自己的实际年龄成熟。

世界上最有趣的通过仪式之一或许就是澳大利亚原住民的“徒步旅行”了。还处于青春期的少年必须在野外独自行走六个月，沿着划定国土疆域的“歌之版图”追寻祖先的足迹。通过这样的仪式，他们深入到土著文化这一世界上最古老而持久的文化的精髓之中，并在这一过程中发现自我。

# Further teacher development

## Using metaphors

The passage *We are all dying* has a number of key metaphors. First, the image of *the Reaper* to represent death has been common in a number of European cultures since the Middle Ages; this is a grim figure (ie unpleasant, unfriendly, a cause of worry) who wears a hood (a medieval form of headwear) and carries a scythe to *cut people down* like corn. The image carries ideas of the inevitability of death.

Other metaphors in this passage relate to cooking and food. *Fill your bowl* is used to follow the idea that “life is like a salad bowl” and that you should fill it as much as you can (*cram it full*) so that you make the most of the opportunities in life while you can; life is short and there may not be other chances. This goes with the agricultural image of *planting seeds* in the *empty field* of life, to use time now and to act now as well as possible, otherwise there is no future.

Another major cooking metaphor is putting something (like plans or dreams) *on the back burner*. A gas cooker has burners for cooking things in pans: The front burners are used to heat up things quickly or to cook things which need to be stirred frequently, while the back burners are used to heat things which take a long time to cook (they are simmering or cooking slowly) or which do not need to be stirred so often. Things *on the front burner* are therefore priorities or the main focus of attention, while those on the back burner do not need your concentration now; they can be postponed or dealt with later. The metaphors therefore relate to prioritization and postponement.

Further food metaphors use *recipes* and *ingredients* for success or failure, ie to draw attention to things that cause a particular situation or result (either positive or negative). The recipe metaphor draws attention to a set of instructions or procedures which lead to the result (like cooking a dish), while the ingredients metaphor refers to necessary elements which are needed for the recipe, or things which cause a particular result. Thus a *recipe for success* in music may be “to have talent, to have a good teacher, to work hard and practise daily”, while a *recipe for disaster* in marriage might be “only to think of yourself and your career and not pay much attention to your partner”. *Ingredients for success* for writing a best-selling novel might be “to have a good plot, to write in a style which is easy to read, to have short chapters and always make the reader want to turn to the next page”. The *ingredients* in the metaphor are often modified; typically people speak of *basic, necessary, key, or essential* ingredients.

Ways of cooking are often used as metaphors. *To cook up* as a metaphor goes beyond simply preparing food by heating it; the metaphor emphasizes dishonest behaviour or how people change something to make it appear different from how it really is. Thus if someone *cooks up a scheme* the implication is that the scheme is dishonest or strange. *To stew* as a metaphor also goes beyond simply cooking meat or fruit slowly in liquid; rather, *letting someone stew* means leaving them to worry about something for a while instead of helping them or telling them something that would make them feel better, especially when the speaker feels that what the person is worrying about is their fault, “He could have solved the problem long ago, but just wouldn’t listen, so I’ll let him stew in his own juice for a while – then I’ll tell him what to do.” If something is *a stew*, it is disorganized or has been put together without care: “This new management policy is just a stew: They’ve just put together

different ideas without any real strategy." If someone is *in a stew*, though, they are worried or upset about something: "The manager is in a real stew about this morning's news – I guess a crisis is on the way; just wait until the next meeting!" *To boil* is used metaphorically to talk about strong negative emotions: "She is boiling with rage and frustration"; "I'm sorry I lost my patience – I just boiled over with anger"; "You know how teenagers are – their emotions just boil over sometimes." *To boil down* a liquid means that you leave it to boil for a long time so that a large part evaporates and there is not much liquid left; metaphorically, *to boil down to something* means that you get rid of non-essential parts so that only the most important part is left: "All this talk of yours, all these reasons for not doing anything ... it just boils down to the fact that you are lazy." *To grill* means to use strong direct heat to cook something directly from above or below, but as a metaphor it means to ask detailed and persistent questions in an unpleasant or frightening way, as in an interrogation: "One of my childhood memories is of when my father found that I had some money: He grilled me about it for hours and after a morning of constant grilling I had to tell him that my grandmother had given it to me to buy him a surprise birthday present ... Then he felt ashamed of how he had questioned me." If something like a plan or idea is *half-baked*, it means that it is incomplete or has not been thought about properly; it may be unrealistic or childish.

Metaphors of flavour and taste are used to talk about the qualities that something has. If some information is *dry*, it is uninteresting; if it is *juicy*, it is interesting and exciting and perhaps sensational. Language which is *acid* is cruel, negative and often deliberately unpleasant: "Be careful, she has an acid tongue – you don't want to argue with her in public." If language is *salty*, it is honest and interesting, but it might include swearing or other offensive terms. If someone – especially an older person – is described as *peppery*, they are grumpy or irritated easily, perhaps in a bad mood. If a person or something is *unsavoury*, they are unpleasant or engage in morally unacceptable behaviour. A *sweet* person is pleasant, good-tempered and kind; someone who is *bitter* is unhappy or has negative feelings about something, and has probably felt like this for a long time: "He is still bitter about how he was treated, even after all these years." *Bitter* is a modifier which connotes strong negative feelings: "a bitter quarrel", "a bitter controversy", "a bitter fight", "a bitter struggle", "a bitter experience". If a relationship or a situation *goes or turns sour*, it is less happy, enjoyable or pleasant than it once was because something has gone wrong, "Their marriage once seemed ideal, but after his infidelity it turned sour and later they divorced."

#### Reference:

Deignan, A. (1995). *Collins Cobuild English Guides 7: Metaphor*. London: Harper Collins.

# Photocopiable worksheet:

## Using metaphors for cooking, food and taste

Developing your vocabulary in English is not just a matter of learning new words but also a question of learning to use words you already know in different ways to express ideas and think creatively. Metaphors often use relatively easy vocabulary in new and interesting ways. For example, words for cooking, food and taste are used to talk about ideas, plans, experiences or qualities.

**Work in pairs and read the explanations. Discuss the following questions and then summarize your discussion with another pair.**

**Putting something on the back / front burner:** this metaphor uses parts of a gas cooker which heat up food (the burners) to talk about things which have low priority or high priority.

- 1 To be a successful student, which of the following should be put on the back burner? Which should be put on the front burner? Why?  
listening to music; reading textbooks; reading for pleasure; doing sports; playing computer games; revising for exams; romantic relationships; going out with friends; developing self-discipline; developing your creativity etc

**A recipe for / an ingredient of:** If we say that something is a *recipe* for something else, then the first thing makes the second thing much more likely to happen: *Going to parties every night instead of studying is a recipe for disaster*. Similarly, if something is an *ingredient* of something else, then the first thing is important in making the second thing effective: *Communication is an essential ingredient of any relationship*.

- 2 Which of the following are part of a recipe for success in sport? Why?  
talent; self-discipline; the will to win; teamwork; daily practice etc
- 3 Which of the following are ingredients for success in a new business? Why?  
knowing the market; having sales expertise; having financial support; invention, innovation and imagination; having a good business plan; luck etc

You can also *cook up* (invent) a plan, idea or story, especially if it is dishonest, strange, or implausible (not believable), and your motivation for doing so may *boil down to* something or be reduced to the most important or basic aspect. A dishonest or immoral plan can be described as *unsavoury*.

- 4 Some friends haven't done the out-of-class assignment set by the teacher. Which of their excuses seem to be cooked up (implausible)?
  - *Both of my grandparents died last week and I was too upset to work.*
  - *I had to meet my best friend at the airport because she was returning from her holiday and I haven't seen her for a long time.*
  - *I heard that all classes were cancelled because of a national emergency, but today it seems that there isn't one!*

Evaluate each of the excuses above. Is it half-baked?

# Photocopiable worksheet:

## Using metaphors for cooking, food and taste (Answer sheet)

- 1 Most students would say that reading textbooks, revising for exams and developing self-discipline for study should be on the front burner. If students understand that creativity is part of successful learning and thinking, then developing creativity would also be on the front burner. The other items might be put on the back burner, but many people would argue that study needs to be balanced with leisure activities, so these other activities could also be on the front burner as long as they are done in moderation! Some students have found that playing computer games, going out with friends or having romantic relationships interfere with their study because it distracts them or takes up most of their time; others say that these things help them, as long as they also keep studying.
- 2 All of them together can make a recipe for success: Talent for a sport is important but never enough on its own; self-discipline is an important ingredient because you need to train and practise regularly; the will to win is important in competitive sports, but without training and practice it is insufficient; teamwork is clearly important for team sports, but perhaps less necessary for those sports which are mainly individual events; daily practice or training is obviously important for athletes and sportspeople, but without coaching or guidance practice will not "make perfect".
- 3 Obviously, this depends partly on what kind of business you are thinking of, but in general all of these can be key ingredients in business success and they probably all work together to make a recipe for success. Knowing the market is important for setting competitive prices and knowing what competitors offer. Having sales expertise is vital for marketing and selling, but not everybody in a business needs this skill; perhaps only the sales force needs it. Having financial support is important to start a new business because without some investment it is usually impossible to break into the market. Invention, innovation and imagination seem essential ingredients to develop and market new products or services because it is often necessary to have a really good idea for a successful business. Having a good business plan is important because it shows that you know what you are doing and that you have thought through the future development of the business in a realistic way. Luck can make a big difference, but if a new business relies on luck instead of good ideas and hard work it will probably fail.
- 4
  - Both of my grandparents died last week and I was too upset to work.  
This is vaguely plausible (but both grandparents are stretching things a bit). It is rather an unsavoury excuse if it turns out to be a lie. Who would make such a comment about their grandparents just to avoid getting in trouble over an assignment?
  - I had to meet my best friend at the airport because she was returning from her holiday and I haven't seen her for a long time.  
This behaviour is quite sweet in itself; after all, one should care for one's friends. Nonetheless, it isn't much of an excuse when it comes to not doing homework, so we could say that the plan to thwart the teacher with such a weak excuse is half-baked, because it isn't at all likely to be accepted as a good reason for not doing the work.
  - I heard that all classes were cancelled because of a national emergency, but today it seems that there isn't one!  
This is a cooked-up story: If it were true we would all know about it, especially the teachers!

## 2

# Childhood memories

## Unit overview

Unit key features		Organizing suggestions
<p><b>Passage 1</b> <i>The Glass Castle</i></p> <p><b>Passage 2</b> Cultural childhoods</p>	<p>Passage 1 is a narrative about the writer's childhood experience of celebrating Christmas in an unusual way.</p> <p>Passage 2 is an expository piece of writing about childhood differences in different cultures and societies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Passage 1, emphasis can be given to the themes, events and people (characterization) that are the focus of the narrative, in lieu of a plot.</li> <li>For Passage 2, emphasis may be put on showing Ss how the writer presents her own arguments and the views of different researchers.</li> </ul>
<b>Reading skills</b>	<p>(a) Reading between the lines</p> <p>(b) Reading to identify main arguments and their supporting points</p> <p>(c) Reading to differentiate types of writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use Passage 1 for skill (a)</li> <li>Use Passage 2 for skill (b)</li> <li>Use both passages for skill (c)</li> </ul>
<b>Speaking skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving Ss' ability to construct a verbal narrative</li> <li>Teaching Ss how to tell stories interestingly</li> </ul>	<p>Using speaking activities for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>narratives of Ss' childhood</li> <li>presenting their own viewpoints and those of others</li> </ul>
<b>Writing skills and tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guided writing: Describing habitual actions in the past</li> <li>Unit task: Making a collection of childhood memories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highlight the use of examples to support the main argument.</li> <li>Make Ss aware of descriptions of habitual actions in their own writing.</li> </ul>
<b>Cognitive skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding the effect of giving different viewpoints, either in stories or expository writing</li> <li>Learning to reason with different viewpoints</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ss reflect on their thinking and understanding of different viewpoints.</li> <li>Ss use others' experiences and stories to relate to their own life.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reading across cultures</b> Childhood around the world</p>	<p>This includes personal narratives by people from different countries recalling their childhoods.</p>	<p>Ask Ss to evaluate their own childhoods with the help of the examples.</p>

# Teaching suggestions and answer keys

## Active reading (1)

- 1
  - The book is about the childhood of Jeannette Walls. It describes her family, their lifestyle, and Walls' career.
  - The book was very popular, and it became a best-seller.
  - Jeannette Walls is a successful editor, journalist, and writer.
  - The title refers to a promise that the writer's father made. He said he would build a glass castle for the family to live in.
  
- 2
  - 1 I think her father hasn't bought her a real present. Perhaps he can't afford one or he forgot to buy one.
  - 2 The daughter will probably be surprised. She may also be quite disappointed that she hasn't got a proper present for Christmas.

### **The Glass Castle**

#### **Background information**

Jeannette Walls was born on 21 April 1960 in Phoenix, Arizona, in the US. She has two sisters and a brother. Her early family life was highly unusual, as her parents moved the family around the country, and for brief periods they were homeless. The family was very poor and they often stayed in dirty and vermin-infested houses.

At the age of 17, Walls moved to New York City with her sister. Despite having very little money, she managed to complete high school and graduated from Barnard College in 1984. She worked as a reporter for a number of newspapers and magazines before becoming a full-time writer in 2007. Walls' books include *Dish: The Inside Story on the World of Gossip* (2000), *The Glass Castle* (2005), *Half Broke Horses: A True-Life Novel* (2009) and *The Silver Star* (2013).

The passage is an extract from *The Glass Castle*, a memoir by Jeannette Walls. *The Glass Castle* tells the early life story of Jeannette Walls and her family. The book recounts her and her siblings' unconventional, poverty-stricken upbringing at the hands of their deeply dysfunctional parents. Published in 2005, the book was on the best-seller list in the US for two years. The fascination of the book lies partly in the fact that despite the parents' doing almost everything most of us would say should not be done in bringing up children, the family remained happy and the children are now successful and well-balanced adults. The book suggests that the love of even rather socially incompetent parents can compensate for a lot.

The title of the book refers to an impossible dream the father has of finding a lot of gold and building a glass castle for them all to live in. In this extract we will see how the father dealt with Christmas, a festival they could not afford, although it is important in the lives of most American children. He strips it of some of its traditional wonder, but then replaces it with his own form of magic.

## Culture points

**Santa Claus** is the bearded, red-robed spirit of Christmas who lives at the North Pole, spends his year with elves making presents and then rushes round the world on Christmas Eve with his famous team of reindeer, going down chimneys and delivering gifts to good children. Children write letters to Father Christmas, as he is also called, detailing the presents they would like, and also visit "Santa Claus" in department stores, to sit on his lap and whisper their wishes to him. One of the main events of the festival is sitting round the family Christmas tree opening one's presents. It is hard to know how many children believe in Santa Claus or for how long. As the passage says, most presents are marked as coming from specific people, such as "Uncle John" or "Grandma Smith", and children know their parents go shopping and hide presents around the house. Houses rarely have chimneys anymore and the actual thought of a strange man climbing into one's house should normally cause panic. Probably children are capable of a sort of half-belief and are happy to enter into a delightful world of make-believe without examining it too closely.

**Christmas trees** are popular ornaments that are put up in homes and public places during the Christmas festival in the West. They are usually pine or fir trees. The trees are decorated with baubles (coloured glass balls), tinsel (a shiny plastic material) and electric lights. Gifts are often placed under the tree. The tradition of decorating a tree began in Germany and became popular throughout Europe in the 19th century.

A **constellation** is a group of stars, as seen from Earth. All of the stars in the night sky are located within one of 88 constellations. Constellations are sometimes named after the shapes they seem to form. For example, the constellation **Orion** is named after a hunter in Greek mythology.

**Christmas dinner** is a meal eaten on Christmas Eve in many countries around the world. It is typically a large meal shared by a family. In English-speaking countries, the main course is usually roast meat, often turkey or goose, followed by Christmas pudding or mince pies. Family members may play games or pull Christmas crackers during the meal.

## Language points

### 1 None of us kids did. Mom and Dad refused to let us. (Para 2)

**Meaning:** None of us kids believed in Santa Claus. Mom and Dad refused to let us believe in him.

**Note:** The second sentence uses ellipsis (省略). This kind of sentence is common when the meaning is clear from the context. Here is another example:  
*She did not come to see me, though she had promised to (see me).*

### 2 They couldn't afford expensive presents, and they didn't want us to think we weren't as good as other kids who, on Christmas morning, found all sorts of fancy toys under the tree that were supposedly left by Santa Claus. So they told us all about how other kids were deceived by their parents, how the toys the grown-ups claimed were made by little elves wearing bell caps in their workshop at the North Pole actually had labels on them saying MADE IN JAPAN. (Para 2)

**Meaning:** The parents tell their children that the stories other children believe about

Santa Claus are false, as can be seen by the fact that the gifts have not been made by elves at the North Pole, but manufactured in factories in places like Japan, as can be seen by looking at the labels on them.

3 “Try not to **look down on those other children**,” Mom said. (Para 3)

**Meaning:** The children’s mother didn’t want them to think they were better than children who received expensive presents.

**look down on sb / sth:** to think that you are better or more important than someone else, or think that something is not good enough for you 轻视；看不起

*Don’t look down on people who live in the suburbs.* 不要看不起住在郊区的人。

4 It’s not their fault that they’ve been **brainwashed into believing silly myths**. (Para 3)

**Note:** Similar expressions to *brainwash someone into doing something* include *persuade / talk / frighten / trick someone into doing something*. For example:

*He was frightened into telling the secret to them.* 他吓得告诉了他们那个秘密。

5 Mom and Dad would give us a bag of marbles or a doll or a slingshot that had been **marked way down** in an after-Christmas sale. (Para 4)

**Meaning:** The parents would give their children very cheap gifts, some of which had been bought after Christmas in sales to get rid of unsold goods.

**mark down:** to reduce the price of something 降低…的价格

*Some of the goods in that shop were marked down by 50% after Christmas.* 圣诞节后，那家店里的一些商品打五折。

**way:** *ad.* (~ **above / ahead / behind** etc) by a large amount or distance 远远地；大大地

*Michael was way ahead of the other runners.* 迈克尔遥遥领先于其他选手。

6 On Christmas Eve, Dad took each of us kids out into the desert one by one. (Para 5)

**Meaning:** *One by one* means dealing with multiple things separately and in order. In the passage, Jeannette’s father took each child outside separately, rather than all together.

7 Those shining stars, he liked to point out, were one of the special treats for people like us who lived out in the wilderness. (Para 5)

**Meaning:** Pollution makes it difficult to see stars in urban areas, whereas the night sky in the wilderness is brilliant. The father tells his children they are privileged to live in such remote places.

8 We’d have to **be out of our minds** to want to trade places with any of them. (Para 5)

**Meaning:** The father means living out in the wilderness has its advantages. Only mad people would prefer to live in a city.

**be / go out of one’s mind:** (*informal*) to be / become crazy or confused 发疯

*You must be out of your mind to want to see him again.* 你又想去见他，你一定是疯了。

9 He told me I could have it **for keeps**. (Para 6)

**Meaning:** The father tells the writer that the star will belong to her forever.

**for keeps:** (*informal*) forever or for always 永远地；持久地

*Once the army moves in, it will be there for keeps.* 一旦部队进驻，他们就将永远呆在那儿。

**10 You just have to claim it before anyone else does, like that dago fellow Columbus claimed America for Queen Isabella. (Para 6)**

**Meaning:** In earlier European legal practice, lands which belonged to no organized state could be claimed by their discoverers. Hence when Columbus, working for the Spanish queen, discovered America, he claimed it for her. In the same way, the girl can now claim the unoccupied star as her own.

**Note:** The word *dago* is a racist term for a Spaniard or an Italian, or more generally for anyone of Mediterranean descent or from Latin America. In earlier times, casual racist remarks were common, though this is much less acceptable in English now. The father's easy use of the word *dago* in front of his daughter indicates that the discussion took place some years ago, probably prior to the 1980s.

**11 "What the hell," Dad said. (Para 13)**

**what the hell:** (*spoken*) used for showing that something does not matter 没关系; 管它呢  
*Elaine poured herself a large glass of whisky – what the hell, it was Christmas.* 伊莱恩给自己倒了一大杯威士忌。管它呢，反正是圣诞节。

**12 I thought about it and realized Dad was right. He was always figuring out things like that. (Para 7)**

**Meaning:** The writer shows her deep love and respect for her father. She finds his unusual way of looking at things convincing.

**13 He explained to me that planets glowed because reflected light was constant, and stars twinkle because their light pulsed. (Para 11)**

**Meaning:** The father explained to the writer that planets merely give off a constant reflected light, while stars are balls of glowing gas whose heat and light come in waves thus shining in a different way (twinkling). Note that this explanation is not scientifically accurate.

**14 "Years from now, when all the junk they got is broken and long forgotten," Dad said, "you'll still have your stars." (Para 18)**

**Meaning:** Other children's worthless Christmas gifts only last a short time, but the stars the father has given the children will be there all their lives.

## Text analysis

### Writing style

<b>Genre type</b> Narrative	–	<b>Formality</b> Fairly informal	–	<b>Style</b> Anecdotal, straightforward	–	<b>Average sentence length</b> 16 words (medium)
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This passage is an excerpt from a memoir written by Jeannette Walls. It has the usual features of this text type, namely personal experiences from the writer's life, characters modelled on real people (her mother, father and siblings), and quotations taken from real life.

A memoir is a narrative, meaning that it tells a story. However, this story may not be immediately obvious to the reader, as it focuses on themes, events, and people rather than

a plot. The main events of the passage illustrate an aspect of the writer's childhood, namely Christmas and her father's inventiveness at that time, rather than presenting the conventional structure of a story with a beginning, middle and end.

This memoir is aimed at a general readership and its purpose is to entertain through its use of charming anecdotes, as well as to tell the reader about Walls' life.

The excerpt starts with the sentence "I never believed in Santa Claus". To Western readers, this is a surprising statement, perhaps implying that the writer had a tough childhood with no place for enjoyment. We soon learn that this isn't the case, but the sentence creates interest and draws the reader into the rest of the passage.

As befits the text type, the style is subjective as well as anecdotal. It gives some background to the family's usual Christmas celebrations and then focuses on one particular anecdote, or event. The anecdote is told in a straightforward manner, with little attempt at commentary or analysis.

Being a telling of a true story, the passage contains many examples of direct and reported speech. This documentary element adds authenticity to the text and gives the writer a chance to add personality to her characters. Her mother and father are opinionated and outspoken, with her mother talking about children having been "brainwashed into believing silly myths".

At several points in the passage, the writer creates lists of things by repeatedly using "and" or "or". Paragraph 4 contains a good example of this, with the writer listing things that are discarded or can be found cheaply after Christmas. The writer also writes of "light years and black holes and quasars" in Paragraph 15. As opposed to using commas, this childish way of constructing a list reflects the story's focus on childhood.

The passage uses fairly informal language, employing contractions (couldn't) and typical US idioms ("when all the junk they got is broken"). The informality and use of familiar terms of address ("Mom and Dad", "Rich city folks") ground this passage further in family and everyday life.

With the average sentence being of medium length and, aside from the technical references to stars and planets, the passage having a fairly simple vocabulary, this should be a fairly easy text to understand.

## Reading and understanding

- 3 1 The parents couldn't afford to give the children expensive presents, so they would buy presents after Christmas at a reduced price.
- 2 Other children's parents told them that their presents were left by Santa Claus and made in the North Pole. In fact, the presents were made in Japan and left by the parents.
- 3 They celebrated Christmas about a week later, because at that time they could get Christmas trees, wrapping paper, decorations, and presents more cheaply, or even for free.
- 4 One child went into the desert with the father each time.
- 5 They went to see the stars because the father wanted to "give" each child a star or planet. He said that these were their Christmas presents.

- 6 According to the father, the stars didn't belong to anyone, so they could be claimed by the children.
- 7 Betelgeuse and Rigel are stars, while Venus is a planet, not a star. Venus is smaller than a star and doesn't make its own light.
- 8 The stars last much longer than toys. The father says that when the toys are all broken and forgotten, the stars will still exist.

4 3

### Dealing with unfamiliar words

- 5 (1) twinkle            (2) horizon            (3) deceive  
 (4) layer                (5) descendants        (6) magnetic

- 6 1 marbles      2 junk      3 label      4 mythical      5 logical

- 7 1 (b)    2 (a)    3 (b)    4 (b)    5 (a)    6 (a)    7 (a)

### Reading and interpreting

- 8 1 Other kids might look down on the writer's family for being poor and not having expensive presents. The writer's parents protect their children by telling them they are luckier than other kids. For example, they have stars while other kids just have "junk".
- 2 This suggests that he was used to hardships and being cold, perhaps because he spent a lot of time outside. It also suggests that he had a strong personality.
- 3 City dwellers might see people who live in the wilderness as unlucky, uncultured or of a lower class. The father made living there a special treat by showing his children the natural wonders of the place. He also taught his children about the natural world and used reasoning to give them perspective.
- 4 The father says that no one currently owns the stars, so to own one you have to be the first person to claim it. The logic doesn't make sense to me, because the stars are too far away to visit or to be useful.
- 5 The father sees this as a negative quality of Venus. I think he would prefer his children to be stars rather than planets, being interesting themselves rather than reflecting other people's greatness.
- 6 It suggests that he has a strong sense of humour and a lack of respect for authority.
- 7 No, the writer doesn't sound surprised by the subject. Perhaps it's normal for her family to talk about such serious subjects. People would usually talk about Christmas-related subjects or family news over Christmas dinner.
- 8 The father hoped that his children would be happy in the future, and that they will continue to be inspired by the stars and other things that he taught them. He doesn't want them to have typical lives.

## Developing critical thinking

- 9 1
- The passage implies that we don't need to be rich to be happy or to lead full, interesting lives. I agree with this implication, as it is love, friends, and new experiences that are important.
  - It implies that wealth doesn't make us happy. That may be partly true, but I think wealth certainly makes it easier to be happy. You can't be happy if you're worried about money.
- 2
- The writer seems to say that stars are superior to planets because they make their own light, while planets only reflect the light of stars. We can infer that stars are more interesting and original than planets, much as some people have more interesting characters than other people.
- 3
- We should try to be logical and scientific in our thinking. It's fine for children to believe in myths, but as adults we have to live in the real world.
  - Myths and creative thinking are very important and we shouldn't ignore them. Almost all art and religion relies on myths and fantasy. If we block these from our minds, our lives will be less exciting.

## Talking Point

### Teaching tips

Encourage Ss to discuss the meanings of the quotations – what are the writers telling us about childhood? What do the quotations suggest about the nature of the memory? The examples below could be helpful. T may give the examples to certain Ss beforehand, and ask them to share with the class.

**Childhood is the sleep of reason.** Jean-Jacques Rousseau, French philosopher

This seems to be about school. Rousseau seems to be critical, saying that your reasoning, your ability to think, is not awake at school. It only wakes up when you leave childhood. Perhaps that's how he remembers his childhood.

**My whole career has been fulfilling my childhood fantasies, playing characters that are larger than life, getting to play a knight, an elf, a prince, and a soldier.** Orlando Bloom, British actor

This is about a childhood of fantasy and adventure in which Bloom imagined he was lots of different people, real or imaginary. He is fulfilling his childhood, completing it in a happy, satisfying and important way, through his job.

**My mother taught me to read when I was still quite young, and at least in my memory I passed the majority of my childhood reading.** Eric Allin Cornell, US physicist

This is about memories of books. Obviously, Cornell remembers that he was taught to read when he was young, presumably before going to school, and that he spent most of his time reading. However, he recognizes that this is only in his memory. So perhaps he actually spent a lot of time doing other things but only remembers reading books because that's what he liked to do.

**Nothing is more memorable than a smell. One scent can be unexpected, momentary and fleeting, yet conjure up a childhood summer beside a lake in the mountains.**

Diane Ackerman, US writer / poet

These memories focus on smells, which for Ackerman are the most outstanding memories. For her, a brief smell can cause her to remember a whole childhood summer. In other words, through smells she can access many other memories of sights and scenes. The smells seem to be triggers which start off her childhood memories.

**Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childhood days, recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth, and transport the traveller back to his own fireside and quiet home!** Charles Dickens, British writer

For Dickens, memories of festivals and holidays are important because they can take us through time or space, taking old people back to the pleasures of when they were young, or reminding travellers of their homes. However, this may well be delusions, ideas or beliefs that are not true. So he's suggesting that childhood memories may not be memories of what actually happened.

**I think childhood is to everyone a lost land.** Dennis Potter, British dramatist

Memories are presented here as possessions which are lost. Potter is suggesting that you can't go back to the land of childhood. Maybe adults are forever exiled from the country of their childhood. They can't go back to find out what it was really like. They only have memories of somewhere far away from where they are now.

**Now answer the questions.**

- (a) The quotations by Bloom, Cornell, Ackerman and Dickens seem to be about happy memories. Those by Rousseau and Potter could be said to contain negative elements.
- (b) • For me, the ones about books and a lost land remind me of my childhood, because I remember reading a lot and I agree that childhood is lost now.
- Oh, I have different ideas about this. Festivals remind me of happy times in childhood, but I don't think this is a *delusion* as Dickens says. To some extent I agree with Rousseau because as far as thinking is concerned, I was sleeping during childhood and I only woke up recently, realizing that I can think quite well and have my own way of looking at the world around me. I wish someone had woken me up earlier!

## Active reading (2)

- 1 The quote means that cultural practices and beliefs were different in the past, and that beliefs and practices concerned with childhood were different too.
- 2 1 • Yes, I do, because the social environment was so different in my grandparents' time. Life was generally so much more difficult then, and I suppose my grandparents didn't have much time for my parents. Maybe it was more or less a question of survival. But during the time my parents were bringing me up, living conditions were improving a lot. So my parents helped me a lot with things like studying and sports.

- Yes, certainly there are differences across these generations. My grandparents hardly went to school, though they were good parents, I am sure, in many ways, but not from the angle of supporting education. My parents have done all they can to help me in my education. But I think the ideas of discipline haven't changed from one generation to the next.
- 2 One factor is obviously how parents themselves were brought up and how this influenced their own childhood experiences. A second is the general economic situation of the family and how much time the parents spend working. This makes a difference because it means the parents may have more or less time to be with their children. Then there are other factors of the parents' beliefs and experiences of discipline, diet and nutrition, health, and their general ideas about child development. I suppose these might change from one generation to the next, and such ideas might well be different in different countries.
  - 3 Maybe the way I was treated when I was a child.
  - 4 Societies differ a great deal, so I think we can expect different societies and cultures to raise their children in different ways and to have different ideas about childhood.

## Cultural childhoods

### Background information

This is a brief essay written to introduce students of education and the social sciences to the study of childhood. The writer, Heather Montgomery, teaches childhood studies at the Open University in the UK. Her research focuses on children's rights and the representation of children in interdisciplinary and international perspectives. A key idea in the essay is that childhood is socially constructed, and that childhood can't just be accepted as a collection of obvious facts or taken-for-granted biological developments. How children are perceived and treated and how they behave varies in different cultures and changes in different periods in history, which means that childhood is interpreted and defined in social activity within a cultural community. Therefore, we can't understand childhood in another culture by imposing ideas from our own culture. We have to see it in terms of each community, and its ideas and beliefs about children.

### Culture points

**Social services** are a series of services provided by a national or local government for people with social problems. One of these services may intervene and become involved in a situation when social workers or other professionals detect a problem. In some cases where the law has clearly been broken, this may include prosecution, and a case will be taken to a civil or criminal court.

**Leslie Poles Hartley** (1895–1972) is a British writer of novels, short stories and critical essays, who studied history at Oxford and spent a lot of time in Venice. *The Go-Between* (1953), made into a 1971 film, adapted by Harold Pinter, has the theme of nostalgia. Leo Colston, now old, remembers a youthful summer spent at a luxurious country home where he felt out of place because he came from a poor family. He's an innocent go-between, exchanging secret messages between the upper-class daughter of the family and a nearby lower-class farmer, while she is about to be engaged to an upper-class noble. The dramatic outcome when the relationship is discovered has a deep impact on Leo.

**Barbara Ehrenreich** is an American feminist scholar and sociologist. She has a PhD in biology from Rockefeller University and writes columns and essays for newspapers and magazines. Her book, *For Her Own Good: Two Centuries of Experts' Advice to Women* (1978), co-authored with Deirdre English, is widely cited by social activists.

**Deirdre English** is an American feminist scholar who teaches at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California at Berkeley. She writes newspaper articles and TV documentaries. With Barbara Ehrenreich, she has written about women's health, gender politics in medicine and women healers.

**Jean Briggs**, a Canadian, is a Professor Emeritus at Memorial University, Newfoundland. She is well-known for her classic anthropological studies of the Inuit communities in Northern Canada, *Never in Anger* (1970) and *Inuit Morality Play* (1998). She researched personal relationships in families and small groups among the Inuit and has documented the language of the Central Arctic area.

**Helen Morton Lee** is an Australian anthropologist who teaches at La Trobe University, Melbourne. She is known as an expert on the South Pacific islands of Tonga and for her books, *Becoming Tongan* (1996) and *Tongans Overseas* (2003), which examine Tongan childhood and identity among youth.

**Alma Gottlieb**, an American, is a professor of anthropology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She specializes in African women's studies and links between religious beliefs and childhood, and has written books about the Beng people of Côte d'Ivoire, notably *The Afterlife Is Where We Come from*, and a dictionary of their language.

**Ben Okri** is a Nigerian poet and novelist living in London. His novels and short stories, set in Nigeria and London, have won many literary prizes. *The Famished Road* (1991) is part of a trilogy that includes *Songs of Enchantment* (1993) and *Infinite Riches* (1998).

**Michelle Johnson** is an American anthropologist teaching at Bucknell University, Pennsylvania. Her research specializes in West Africa rituals, life cycles and identities among the Mandinga people in Guinea-Bissau. She also writes about the Fulani people in Nigeria and nearby countries.

**Napoleon Chagnon**, an American, is a Professor Emeritus at the University of California at Santa Barbara. His fieldwork among the Yanomamö (1960s–1990s) led to a number of books, notably *Yanomamö*, which is one of the best-selling anthropology texts. He has also collaborated in making over 20 ethnographic films about them.

## Language points

- Today, children have few responsibilities, their lives are characterized by play not work, school not paid labour, family rather than public life and consumption instead of production. (Para 2)**

**Note:** Here the writer gives some examples of the vast differences between contemporary and historical childhoods. Note that in the four pairs of differences, the words *not*, *rather than*, *instead of* are used. The writer uses different ways to express the idea "not" for the purpose of variation, that is, to make the language diversified.

- 2 These changing ideas about children have led many social scientists to claim that childhood is a “social construction”. (Para 4)

**Meaning:** A *social construction* refers to the process or result of creating an idea or system of behaviour in social contexts. It is created and developed between people and is not something that happens naturally.

- 3 Because they can't be **reasoned with**, and don't understand, parents treat them with a great deal of tolerance and **leniency**. (Para 5)

**reason with:** to try to persuade someone to do something by explaining why you think it is sensible 跟...讲理

*I reasoned with him for hours about the danger, but he wouldn't change his mind.* 我劝了他好几个小时，说这很危险，可他就是不肯改变主意。

**leniency:** *n.* [U] a punishment that is not as severe as it could be 宽大；仁慈

*All practices of corruption and corrupt elements shall be found out through investigation, without tolerance or leniency.* 对任何腐败行为和腐败分子，都必须一查到底，决不姑息，决不手软。

- 4 They are seen as being closer to mad people than adults because they lack the highly prized quality of social competence ... (Para 6)

**Meaning:** If something is *highly prized*, it is considered to be very important or valuable. The examples in the passage emphasize how different cultural communities may give importance to different qualities which they expect from children, so the children are brought up very differently.

- 5 They are regularly **told off** for being clumsy and a child who falls over may be laughed at, shouted at, or beaten. (Para 6)

**tell sb off:** to criticize someone angrily for doing something wrong 批评；责备；斥责

*Parents should avoid telling their children off in public.* 父母应该避免在公众场合训斥孩子。

- 6 While Westerners might **take exception to** eight-year-old girls working ... (Para 10)

**take exception to sth:** to dislike something because you feel annoyed or offended by it 反感（或厌恶）某事物

*Jones took exception to a comment I made about his weight.* 由于我评论他的体重，琼斯十分生气。

- 7 Looking at it from a **cross-cultural perspective** shows the wide variety of childhoods that exist across the world ... (Para 11)

**cross-cultural perspective:** A *cross-cultural perspective* is a view which considers different cultures separately or independently and then makes comparisons.

## Reading and understanding

### 3 Teaching tips

- When Ss have completed the table on their own, divide the class into seven groups, each group being responsible for one row in the table. They have to summarize the characteristics of childhood in this ethnic group, and also include an example. Then they report to the class. Each group should also add related information they learned from the passage and the language and culture notes. The presentation of each group could be given from that exact role of parents from that exact cultural or ethnic group. If this is difficult, T may give each group a copy of the example below, and ask them to practise and present it to the class.
- As a way to follow this up, T can ask each group, one by one, to compare their results with that of another group, without looking at their books. An alternative follow-up is for the T, together with one or two Ss, to take the roles of TV reporters who meet each group and ask them “on camera” to compare themselves with another group, and talk about how they understand the other group from a cross-cultural perspective.

- 1 We are American colonial people. We lived in the 17th and 18th centuries on the east coast of America after our families settled there from Europe. In our time, children were expected to be good and industrious. That was the main characteristic of childhood. For example, when our girls were four they knitted stockings and mittens; when they were six they spun wool. We called them “Mrs” to show the girls our appreciation.
- 2 We are Inuit people from the Arctic regions. Some of us are from Canada and Greenland, others from Russia and Alaska. For us, children need to get *ihuma* – you would call this the process of acquiring thought, reason and understanding. That’s the main characteristic of childhood. For example, as parents we are tolerant and lenient with children until they are old enough to develop *ihuma*, then we can teach them and discipline them.
- 3 We are from Tonga, a kingdom of 169 islands in the south-west Pacific Ocean. As parents, we may regularly beat our children if they haven’t yet developed *poto*. You would think of *poto* as social competence. For us, it’s the main quality that our children need to develop. So we treat them with discipline and physical punishment when they are mischievous or wilful.
- 4 We are the Beng people. We live in different parts of West Africa. The main characteristic of childhood is that young children are thought to be in contact with the spirit world. They come to the world reluctantly because life in the spirit world is so pleasant. As parents, we have to look after our children properly, or they may return to the spirit world. We have to treat them with care and reverence. They can know and understand everything we tell them, whatever languages we use.
- 5 We are parents from the Western world today. Some of us are from Europe, others from North America, Australia and other places. The main characteristic of childhood in our countries is that children are incompetent and dependent, so they should play, be part of the family and go to school. Children should not work. For example, a child under 14 can’t look after a younger child unsupervised because they aren’t competent or responsible yet. If we found a child of 12 working in a factory or in a market, the social services could intervene and the family could be prosecuted.

- 6 We are the Fulani people. Most of us live in West Africa. For us, the main characteristic of childhood is that children are competent and responsible. So by the age of four, our girls can care for their younger siblings; by six, they can pound grain or produce milk and butter, which they can sell in the market alongside us.
- 7 We are the Yanomamö people from the Amazonian rainforest. We live among the hills which you probably call the border between Brazil and Venezuela. The main characteristic of childhood is that children are responsible and competent. Our girls help their mothers from a young age, and by the age of ten they will be running the house. This is important because they will probably be married at 12 or 13. Our boys have fewer responsibilities. They can play because they don't get married until later.

Culture / Ethnic group	Characteristics of childhood
American colonial	expected to be good and industrious
Inuit	developing a process of acquiring thought, reason and understanding
Tonga	regularly beaten and told off by parents and older siblings until they develop social competence, seen as being very naughty
Beng	treated with great care and reverence, believed that they are in contact with the spirit world
Western world today	seen as incompetent and irresponsible; playing not working, going to school not labouring, consumption instead of production
Fulani	competent and responsible; expected to work
Yanomamö	competent and responsible; girls expected to work from a young age, be married and have children at 12 or 13; boys have fewer responsibilities and get married later

- 4 1 (d) 2 (a) 3 (b) 4 (d) 5 (c) 6 (c)

## Dealing with unfamiliar words

- 5 1 contact 2 harsh 3 consumers 4 knitting 5 colonies  
6 take exception to 7 impose 8 perspective 9 intervene

- 6 (1) continual (2) dependent on (3) ethnic (4) largely  
(5) outsiders (6) reluctance (7) external

- 7 1 (a) 2 (a) 3 (a) 4 (b) 5 (a) 6 (b) 7 (b) 8 (a)

## Reading and interpreting

- 8 1 history 2 history 3 culture 4 culture 5 culture 6 culture

## Developing critical thinking

- 9 1 A: Well, the social and educational background of parents makes a difference, doesn't it? You know, parents tend to bring their children up the way they were brought up themselves.
- B: Yes, and perhaps the kind of work parents do, or whether they are unemployed. Right, and how about health? You know, in some countries children are affected by disease and illness, so they can't develop properly.
- A: Obviously, and then you could add social disasters, like war, or natural disasters, like famine. They could have a negative influence in many countries.
- B: Some people say that TV and the media have an influence, and electronic communications, the Internet, mobile phones ...
- A: OK, but I think the social and economic situation of the parents have more influence than the "e-influence".
- 2 A: They play so many computer games! I didn't have time for that. I wish I'd had the chance. I was supposed to study.
- B: Me too! But playing computer games doesn't mean they don't study, does it? Many children today do both, and they're successful at school.
- A: I suppose so. Well, how about travel? I've heard of children who travel with their parents and have school trips, and go on visits to all sorts of interesting places. I wish I'd had that opportunity!
- B: Right. Lucky them! I hope they make the most of it!
- 3 A: Well, we'd probably say that the family has the first responsibility for physical care and for bringing up children. Some people say the mother is the first teacher.
- B: And the father! Families and schools are responsible for children's academic development, and social and emotional learning. Do you think that schools come first with that?
- A: Not really, because children learn things at home. But a kindergarten and school can be much more systematic and professional to help children develop socially and culturally. Maybe the school is more important later, and modern schools work in partnership with families.
- A: How about society? Schools are part of the social system, so in that way society has a direct responsibility for children, but apart from that?
- B: Well, there are the social services, which have some responsibility for children when there are problems. Then the government, which has responsibility for policy about children and some financial aspects. I think they are all responsible, but in different ways.
- A: It's like a series of concentric circles, isn't it? The family is at the centre, then the school around that, with society next as the context for the family and then the government which has responsibility for policy, finance and security for the other circles inside.

## Talking point

- 1 1 the dark, because it was something unknown. And I was sometimes afraid of meeting strangers – at least I was quite shy
- 2 make rude faces at one of our teachers. He was very short-sighted so he couldn't see what I was doing. But when a friend said it wasn't funny anymore, I was just being rude, well, then I stopped
- 3 visit my uncle's house because he had a large dog and I was scared of it. Later, I realized I had grown up and actually the dog was quite small
- 4 late and I tried all sorts of tricks with my parents to stay up
- 5 ghosts because someone told me scary stories about strange spirits
- 6 school uniform; really short
- 7 green vegetables, but then I realized they are good for me and tried them. Gradually I came to like them
- 8 swim at first because I was scared of the water. But then I had lessons and it was OK
- 9 promises sometimes, especially promises about being good, which I made to my mother
- 10 the countryside on a farm. It was relaxing and I could play in freedom

## Language in use

### Parts of speech: words which can be both noun and verb

- 1 1 The star of the play is a Hollywood actor.
- 2 I couldn't refuse his offer.
- 3 Columbus claimed America in the name of Queen Isabella.
- 4 He touched the hot dish and burned his fingers.
- 5 We laughed about all the kids who believed in Santa.
- 6 Our ideas about childhood have undergone changes over the years.
- 7 Our view about children is that they are incompetent and dependent.
- 8 Social anthropologists have questions about the role of childhood in the community.

### Word formation: *ir-*, *un-*, *in-*

- 2 They are all negative prefixes.

- 3 1 irreplaceable
- 2 irrational
- 3 unacceptable
- 4 inefficient (Claiming a star as your own is an inefficient way of starting an empire.)
- 5 inaccurate
- 6 unlikely

## ***rather than***

- 4** The clauses that usually follow *rather than* are main clauses, subordinate clauses and *-ing* form clauses.

**Note:** Nouns can also come after *rather than*.

- 5**
- 1 Rather than celebrating Christmas on December 25, they waited a week.
  - 2 Her father offered her the planet Venus, rather than a traditional Christmas present.
  - 3 Venus is a planet, rather than a star.
  - 4 Rather than broken junk, they would always have their stars.
  - 5 Rather than work, a child's life today is characterized by play.
  - 6 Parents treat their children with leniency, rather than reasoning with them.

## **Collocations**

- 6**
- 1 core competence
  - 2 imposes ... ban
  - 3 tight-knit
  - 4 knit ... brows
  - 5 knit ... jumper / hat
  - 6 energy consumption

## **Translation**

- 7** 在西方，做父母的非常了解受父母过度保护的孩子的弱点：这些孩子害怕冒险，缺乏决断力，缺少在现实生活中获得成功的手段；上大学时，许多人无法较好地适应大学生活的严苛，退学是常有的事。因此，父母非常注重培养孩子独立自主的能力。他们给孩子提供大量的学习独立思考技能的机会，让孩子认识到独立自主的能力可以提升他们在课堂内外的学习效率及表现。此外，他们还给孩子有限的选择，尊重孩子的偏好，帮助孩子出色地完成各项任务，以这种方式鼓励他们独立自主。他们还让孩子参与筹划和决策的过程，让他们提出自己的看法。尤其重要的是，他们鼓励孩子独立完成各项任务——包括日常家务活，并经常给予正面的鼓励，避免对他们的行为吹毛求疵。

- 8** Compared with the childhood of their parents, children now do enjoy a far better material life, but their emotional life seems less satisfying. They are less likely to play with their peers, for toys have replaced their playmates as their most loyal friends. Their parents can always afford to buy them all kinds of expensive toys. The good thing about this is that they no longer pester their parents to play with them all day long, because toys and video games have lessened their feelings of loneliness. But there are also negative effects: The addiction to toys and video games may cause a child's eyesight to deteriorate or result in reluctance to communicate with others. These phenomena should demand the attention of both parents and schools.

## Reading across cultures

### Childhood around the world

- 1** 1 Deborah used to help her grandmother cook for Jewish festivals. Myeong Ok Lee once tried his grandmother's rolled cigarettes. Olga played with stray cats and dogs. Mary visited a lot of famous places in Europe with her parents.
- 2 Because she felt that cooking was important.
- 3 Because he didn't know how to smoke properly and made a fool of himself.
- 4 Because Olga brought stray cats and dogs home again.
- 5 Because her parents wanted to see as much of Europe as possible. They only had snapshot memories of the sights they saw, but very little of the places themselves.
- 6 I enjoyed Myeong Ok Lee's and Olga's childhood memories the most, because I thought they were unusual and I could imagine how the events happened.
- 2** 1 Well, Mary's memory reminds me of the time when I travelled around with my parents at a very young age. My parents worked in a government organization that conducted international affairs, and they were often stationed abroad for a year or two, sometimes in different countries. I always travelled with them. It was a pretty good time, since I could see a lot of different things and the experiences have contributed to my ability to adapt to a new environment quickly.
- 2
- The Dragon Boat Festival is celebrated in early summer with *zongzi*, a kind of glutinous rice wrapped in bamboo or reed leaves and stuffed with different fillings. This festival is associated with the poet Qu Yuan (c 340 BC–278 BC) and it's on the fifth day of the fifth month of the Chinese lunar calendar.
  - The Mid-Autumn or Moon Festival is celebrated with mooncakes. This is on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month.
  - Spring Festival or Chinese New Year is celebrated with *jiaozi*, dumplings, in the north and *niangao*, New Year cakes, in the south.
- 3 No, I certainly wouldn't! It is because of hygiene reasons. Some stray animals may be dirty and carry disease, and some dogs may have rabies – if they bite people, the victims can die.
- 4 I had a small toy plane made of metal. I took it everywhere in my pocket and kept it by my bed at night.
- 5 The least likely event is to roll a cigarette in newspaper, as people would buy cigarettes, instead of rolling them themselves.

## Guided writing

### Describing habitual actions in the past

- 1** 1 a past state
- 2 a habitual action or routine in the past

- 3 a completed action in the past
- 4 a habitual action or routine in the past
- 5 a completed action in the past

- 2**
- 1 *used to or would*
  - 2 *used to or would*
  - 3 *used to or would*
  - 4 *used to or would*
  - 5 *only used to*
  - 6 *only used to*

**4 Example:**

Mr and Mrs Wang are a couple and both were my teachers when I was in secondary school. Mrs Wang taught me English and Mr Wang used to teach me maths. Because our school was an all-age school, both of them taught me for about seven years. When I heard about Mr Wang's death I was so sorry, I could only guess what that must mean to Mrs Wang.

I remember the stories Mr Wang would tell in the maths classes, not always about maths, actually, but about life, and these are the kinds of things all of us remember now. When I was struggling for one of the exams, Mr Wang took me for a walk round the playing fields. He told me I was good at maths. Me? I couldn't believe he was saying that. In those days I was getting such low marks and felt I was a certain failure. "Look," he said, "you've got ability but you don't really believe it. I'm telling you, not only can you pass maths, you can do very well." Well, I did do well. That comment really helped me to turn the corner and there was no problem after that. Sometimes apparently small comments are like gold, and Mr Wang had the art of making those golden comments. I also remember one year Mrs Wang told me that one of my pictures from the art class had been sent to the city museum for an exhibition. She was not the art teacher, but her way of telling me the news was like Mr Wang's comment, a complete turning point. A picture from our small school ... painted by me ... in the museum ... how could that be? They two made me believe in myself and gave me a picture of the wholeness of life and of how to be a better person, not just succeed at school subjects.

So I am really grateful to them. I am working hard here and seem to be getting on quite well at university. I think I will be a teacher or maybe a writer.

## Unit task

### Making a collection of childhood memories

**1 Example:**

This photo was taken when I was about three years old. I look quite cheeky and naughty in the photo, which certainly does not show any resemblance to me now. In fact, according to my mother and grandparents, I was. You can see my face was covered with flour and my mouth was stuffed with lots of food. That day, my grandma was making some special noodles,

what we call “longevity noodles”, specially prepared for my uncle because it was his 30th birthday. My grandma invited all her children grandchildren and in-laws to the dinner. I was the youngest among her grandchildren, and inevitably her favourite. She wouldn't let anyone touch her food when she was preparing it, except me. I often “stole” her food, grabbing it in my little hands, running around and showing off my “captures”. She pretended to be angry with me by chasing me around the flat from her kitchen to the dining room and then ... That was when one of my uncles took the photo.

- 2 1 I was very scared on my first day at school, because I did not know anyone in my class. Children in my neighbourhood are either older or younger than me. I think I nearly cried when I didn't know what to do and where to sit. At that moment, a very nicely smiling young lady came to hold my hand and helped me to sit at a desk. It turned out she was my class teacher. Since then, I felt much better whenever I saw her nearby. I knew I could always get help from her.
- 2 My first best friend was a boy who sat opposite me at mealtimes in kindergarten, because he knew I did not like fatty meat, and he would always give me his best lean meat and eggs when the teachers were not watching us. Unfortunately, I never saw him again when I left kindergarten.
- 3 I went to Beijing with my parents when I was two. We went sightseeing and visited lots of relatives.
- 4 I loved reading stories. I used to have collections of children's stories. I suppose I was good at reading. I bet everyone likes reading stories.
- 5 One of my most memorable teachers was my kindergarten teacher, Miss Li. She was kind, gentle and always encouraging. I remember she gave me a toy as a gift when she retired. Now I know it should have been me who gave her presents for looking after me.

## Translation of the passages

### Active reading (1)

#### 《玻璃城堡》

我从来不相信有圣诞老人。

我们家的小孩没一个人信，妈妈爸爸不让我们相信。他们买不起昂贵的礼物，也不想让我们觉得我们比不上别的孩子——在圣诞节的早上，别的孩子都能在圣诞树下找到据说是圣诞老人放在那儿的各种新奇玩具。所以，爸爸妈妈跟我们说那些孩子怎样被他们的父母骗了，说那些大人们所说的由戴着有铃铛的帽子的小精灵在他们的北极工厂里制作的玩具其实标签上都写着“日本制造”。

“尽量不要看不起那些小孩，”妈妈跟我们说，“他们之所以相信这些荒唐的神话是因为他们被洗脑了，这不是他们的错”。

我们也庆祝圣诞，但总是比12月25日要晚一个星期左右，因为到那时我们能找来被扔掉的完好无损的蝴蝶结和包装纸，以及被遗弃在路旁、针叶基本完好的圣诞树，树上有时甚至还悬挂着一些银色金属箔装饰物。爸爸妈妈会送给我们一袋弹珠、一个洋娃娃或一个弹弓，那是在圣诞节后商品大减价时买来的。

爸爸跟石膏矿的工头发生了争执，然后就丢了工作。当那年的圣诞节到来时，我们穷得身无分文。圣诞夜，爸爸把我们小孩子挨个带到荒野的夜幕中。我当时身上裹着一条毛毯，在轮到我时，我要把毯子分给爸爸一些，但他说不用，谢谢。他从来不怕冷。那年我五岁，我挨着爸爸坐下，我们一起抬头看天空。他喜欢聊星星，他向我们讲解星星是怎样在地球自转时在夜空中转动的，他教我们辨认星座，教我们如何根据北极星的方位来导航。他喜欢强调一点，那些闪烁的星星是对像我们这样住在荒野上的人的特别款待。他会说，有钱的城里人虽然住在高档公寓里，但因为那里空气污染严重，他们甚至看不到星星。如果我们想跟他们中的任何一个交换住处，那我们一定是疯了。

那天晚上，爸爸对我说：“选一个自己最喜欢的星星吧。”他说我可以一直拥有那颗星，那就是我的圣诞礼物。我说：“你不能给我一颗星星！没有人拥有星星。”父亲说：“对，别人没有拥有星星，你只要在别人之前说那颗星星属于你就行，就像拉丁佬哥伦布声称美洲属于伊莎贝拉女王那样。宣称一颗星星属于你的逻辑比起哥伦布的逻辑丝毫不差。”

我琢磨了一下爸爸的话，觉得他说的有道理。他总是以那种方法来思考问题。

爸爸说，我可以要我想要的任何一颗星星，除了参宿四和参宿七（猎户座的两颗星星），因为这两颗星星洛丽和布赖恩已经认领了。

我仰望夜空中的繁星，想找出最好的那一颗。在荒野的夜空中，有成百、成千甚至上万颗星星在闪烁。看的时间越久，你的眼睛就越适应黑夜，你就可以看见更多的星星。一层又一层的，渐渐地变得越来越清晰可见。其中有一颗很特别，它在山的西面，但处于低空，比任何一颗星星都耀眼。

“我要那颗，”我说。

爸爸笑了，“那是金星，”他说。金星只是一颗行星，他接着讲，与真正的恒星相比她非常小。她看上去更大、更亮是因为她比其他星星离我们近得多。爸爸说，可怜的金星甚至不能自己发光，她发出的光是反射光。他跟我解释说行星之所以发出稳定的光，是因为反射光是恒定光；恒星闪烁，是因为它们的光是脉冲光。

“无论如何，我就喜欢这颗星，”我说。早在那个圣诞节之前我就喜欢金星了。在傍晚时分，你就能看见它照耀在西方的地平线上，如果你起得早，你会看见，所有的星星都消失了，唯独她还在。

“没关系，”爸爸说，“这是圣诞节，如果你只想要一颗行星，你就要好了。”

于是，他把金星给了我。

那天晚上吃圣诞晚餐时，我们一起谈论了外太空。爸爸向我们讲解了光年、黑洞、类星体，并告诉了我们参宿四、参宿七以及金星的特征。参宿四是猎户座猎人肩上的一颗红色的星星。它是天空中肉眼能看到的最大的星星之一，比太阳还要大几百倍。它已经熊熊燃烧了几百万年，很快就要变成超新星，燃尽熄灭。我为洛丽挑了一颗破旧的老星而感到难过，但爸爸解释说，就星星而言，“很快”意味着几十万年之后。

参宿七是一颗蓝色的星星，比参宿四小，爸爸说，但比它亮，同属猎户座，在猎人的左脚上。这颗星看起来很适合布赖恩，因为他跑得超快。

金星没有像月亮那样的卫星或其他卫星，甚至没有磁场，但它有类似于地球的大气层，但金星的大气层超级热，温度大约高达五百度或更高。“所以，”爸爸说，“当太阳即将燃尽，地球变冷的时候，地球上的每一个人可能都想搬到金星上取暖。这样的话，他们首先要获得你们子孙的同意才行。”

我们嘲笑那些相信童话故事的小孩，他们除了一堆廉价的塑料玩具外什么也没有得到。“再过些年，他们得到的那些垃圾玩具都坏了，早就被他们遗忘了，”爸爸说，“你们的星星却依旧在空中闪耀。”

## Active reading (2)

### 不同文化的童年

当我回顾20世纪七八十年代我的童年时光，并将它与现在孩子的童年相比较时，就会想起一句名言：“往昔是异国他乡，那里有不同的习俗”（见L. P. 哈特利的小说《传信人》）。甚至在相对短暂的一段时间内，我也能够察觉到儿童的生活以及人们对儿童的看法、对待儿童的方式上所经历的巨大变化。

回顾更久远的岁月，我可以看到现在和历史上童年生活的巨大差别。如今的儿童责任很少，他们生活的主要内容是玩耍而非工作，上学而非劳动，在家里呆着而不是和外界交往，消费而非生产。这种变化也是最近才显现出来的。一百年前，12岁的孩子在工厂打工是完全可以接受的事情，而现在，这会招来社会服务机构的介入，其父母和工厂主会被起诉。

有两位美国作家，芭芭拉·埃伦赖希和迪尔德丽·英格利希，她们简要地概括了过去和现在人们对儿童的期待的差异。在比较美国现在的儿童和殖民地时期（1600–1776）的儿童时，她们写道：“今天，如果一个四岁的孩子能自己系鞋带就很了不起了。而在殖民地时期，四岁的女孩会织长筒袜和连指手套，能做复杂的刺绣，六岁就能纺毛线了。一个善良勤快的女孩被称为‘夫人’而不是‘小姐’，这是为了表彰她对家庭经济的贡献，严格说来她不是一个孩子了。”

对儿童的看法不断变化着，这使得许多社会科学家宣称童年是一种“社会建构”。他们用这个术语来说明不同的地区对童年的理解是不一样的，虽然所有社会都承认儿童与成年人有区别，至于他们之间有何不同，人们对儿童又有何期待，不同的社会给出了不一样的答案。

社会人类学家在研究那些跟西方国家持有不同世界观的民族时也表明了这一点。琼·布里格斯研究过加拿大北极地区的伊努伊特人，她描述了在这些社群中成长是怎样大体上被看成是一个获得思想、理性和理解力（伊努伊特人称之为*ihuma*）的过程。小孩子不具备这些素质，所有才容易生气，常常会哭，无法理解群落所面临的诸如食物短缺之类的外在困难。由于无法跟他们讲理，即便讲了他们也不明白，父母对他们很宽容、很温和。一直要等到他们年龄大一点，并开始有自己的思想时，父母才会尝试着去管教他们，约束他们。

相反，根据海伦·莫顿的研究，太平洋岛国汤加的儿童经常挨父母和哥哥姐姐的打。人们认为儿童和成年人相比更像疯子，因为他们缺乏被大家看重的社会能力（汤加人称之为*poto*）。小孩子经常因为笨手笨脚而挨骂，他们连摔跤都会被嘲笑、呵斥，甚至被打。人们认为儿童很顽皮，都是因为淘气他们才哭闹，或者要东西吃。在成人看来，三至五岁的儿童尤其任性，因此他们打这个年龄段的孩子也打得最狠。父母们相信，只有靠训导和体罚才能使孩子获得社会能力，所以他们用一种在外人看来非常严厉的方式对待孩子。

在其他的例子中，有关儿童的观念则截然不同。例如，西非的一个叫孟加拉的很小的族群认为，不管说什么、用什么语言说，小孩子都能听明白，并且能理解。另一位人类学家阿尔玛·戈特利布对孟加拉族进行了广泛的研究，孟加拉族人认为小孩子出生前居住在灵界，在那里他们通晓人类所有的语言，能理解所有的文化。灵界的生活很惬意，小孩子在那里有很多朋友，他们通常极不愿意离开那儿，来到地球上的家庭中（本·奥克雷的小说《饥饿之路》就描述了一个小孩在灵界和人世之间往返的故事）。他们出生后仍然与那个世界保持长达数年的联系，如果没有得到良好的照顾，他们就可能要返回灵界。因此，父母们悉心照料孩子，以免他们受到诱惑，回归灵界，而且对他们也有几分敬畏，因为他们具备大人所不具备的通灵的本领。

在英国及其他西方国家，越来越多的人认为儿童缺乏能力，依赖性强。但也不是全世界的人都持这种看法。在很多社会里，孩子从小就开始工作，寻找各种机会为家里挣钱。看管孩子就是个很好的例子。在英国，14岁以下的儿童在没有成人监督的情况下照看其他孩子是非法的，因为人们认为他们缺少看孩子的能力和责任心。而在其他文化里，情况并非如此。米歇尔·约翰逊曾写过西非的富拉尼族女孩四岁就得照看年幼的弟弟妹妹，要打水、拾柴，六岁就得舂米、挤奶、做黄油，并

和妈妈一起到市场上去贩卖这些东西。

另一位人类学家拿破仑·沙尼翁证实了在世界的另一端，地处亚马孙雨林的雅诺马马族孩子的童年与西方孩子的童年有什么不同，以及那里的男孩儿女孩儿们跟世界上其他地方的男孩儿女孩儿的成长方式的差异。他写道，雅诺马马族女孩儿很小就得帮妈妈做家务，到十岁就开始管家。到十二三岁时可能就结婚生子了。男孩儿的责任则要少得多，他们比女孩儿晚结婚，可以玩到十八九岁。西方的童年观在这里根本不适用，因为这里的人们对儿童的能力和责任心有着完全不同的理解。

社会人类学家探寻的是在他们所研究的族群里人们是如何看待童年，以及儿童扮演的角色问题，而不是研究那些地区的童年观是否符合西方的观念。他们这么做是为了避免把外界的观念强加给那些持不同世界观的人身上，或者是为了避免对其他民族养育孩子的方式作价值观方面的判断。西方人可能会反对八岁的女孩儿打工，反对12岁的女孩儿结婚，但在他们自己的族群里，这些事情被视为童年生活的一个积极的常态。的确，在非西方人看来，许多“正常的”西方育儿方式极其怪异，可能对孩子是有害的。让孩子在自己的屋里呆着，想吃东西的时候不给他们吃，或者任由他们哭闹而不赶快去安抚他们，这些在很多社会里都是不对的事情，会让人觉得西方人根本不懂得如何照看孩子。

童年是一种处于变化之中的社会现象，具有持续的吸引力，并且不断受到关注。从跨文化角度来看这个问题能展示出世界上各种各样的童年生活，并警示我们不要随意干涉或指责那些生活方式及世界观跟我们不一样的人。所有的社会都承认儿童和成年人是不同的，他们有自己的品性和需求；人类学家和社会科学家感兴趣的是每个社会对儿童的天性都有什么样的看法，以及这些看法会如何影响儿童的生活。

## Reading across cultures

### 世界各地的童年

以前，我的犹太奶奶和我住得很近。她做得一手好菜，厨房里从来没有消停的时候。每逢节日临近，她都要忙上一整天，为家人准备丰盛的晚宴。小时候我经常和爷爷奶奶在一起，也就成了奶奶的帮厨。那时我对自己能到储藏室把鸡蛋完好无损地取回来感到非常自豪。储藏室里五味俱全，里面有面粉、香料、蜂蜜、食用油、柴禾。我总在观察奶奶的每一个动作，她会把手头的每一样活都细细地解释给我听，教我怎么做。她经常会说“把那东西递给我”，手指着一个炒菜锅或是一颗洋葱。每件事都很重要。

黛博拉 英国

我的童年是跟奶奶过的，说起她就让我想起一段有趣的往事。她经常用报纸卷烟抽。有一天她不在家，我想学她的样，就用报纸卷了一个烟卷，但里面没放烟丝。我点燃报纸卷，放到嘴里吸，报纸很快就烧到了我的鼻头上。我觉得很丢脸，至今家里人还时常提起这件糗事。

李明宇 韩国

我小时候常和附近的流浪猫、流浪狗玩。我训练它们，我们一起玩“老师和学生”、“医生和病人”、“售货员和顾客”、“抢劫犯和他们的头儿”等游戏。一天，我回家时后面跟了一帮“朋友”，妈妈吓坏了。她冲我直嚷嚷，我只好答应她以后再也不带它们回家了。可是后来有一次，她又发现我在自己屋里和好几只狗一起玩“合唱队与乐团”的游戏。

奥尔加 俄罗斯

在暑假期间，我父母带着我们在美国各地进行露营旅行，包括大峡谷、拉什穆尔山和黄石公园。拉什穆尔山上有美国历史上几任总统的巨型头像。但我记忆最深的旅行也许是欧洲之行。我的父亲在比利时工作。我记得当时听着周围人讲我听不懂的语言感觉很奇怪。我的父母想要尽量多地游览欧洲，所以我们去了很多地方，包括巴黎埃菲尔铁塔、伦敦塔桥、罗马竞技场以及其他许多著名的地方。但是我们从来不会在一个地方久待。我只能通过照片来回忆当时看到的景点，但是对于景点本身已经没什么印象了。

玛丽·贝丝 美国

# Further teacher development

## Making a summary

Making a summary of one sort or another is necessary for students when they write a review of a book or published paper or when they write a literature review as part of a dissertation. The skill of making summaries is commonplace in many professions, especially in journalism and in the media. Obviously, a summary will reduce the length of the original piece of writing, but it may also simplify the language and style. As an activity for students, writing a summary therefore uses both comprehension and production skills.

It is useful to distinguish different kinds of summaries. A **synopsis** is a greatly shortened version of a play, film or book, in one or two paragraphs, which gives the main ideas of the original.

An **abstract** – commonly used as an advance summary for academic articles – is similar, but has a defined number of words or a maximum length. Readers use abstracts to decide whether to read the full article, so the abstract must represent very briefly the main idea and encourage interested readers to read on. Because abstracts usually summarize research, they are presented in defined sections to report the research process and results, so there is a clear structure to present the purpose and method of the study, indicate the results and draw a conclusion about their significance, applications or implications.

A **précis** is a short summary of a speech or article. It should accurately present the main ideas and essential points of the original, but probably without details. It may reduce the original to about one third of the length.

A **paraphrase** usually alters the original language and / or style to make it easier to understand, so writers of a paraphrase restate the text or translate it into simple vocabulary and probably simpler sentence structures. Paraphrases are often used by students to avoid giving long quotations and to keep the language and style of their own writing consistent, but they should always cite the original author and source to avoid being accused of plagiarism.

It is often a difficult question whether to include details or just to write an overview of the main ideas without any details. This depends on the nature of the original text and the purpose of the summary. For example, journalists will often include some details and quotations in a news story, not because they add information (very often they don't) but because they are considered to add human interest to events in the report – these aspects are thought to be important for the readers or listeners. In cases of research summaries, details of situations, methods, cases or statistics are not usually necessary; what is needed is simply an indication of research methods or the scale and extent of the research and of the kind of results and their significance. In many texts, examples can be left out of a summary if the main ideas are clear, but in other texts (see *Rites of passage* below and *Changing childhoods* in the Photocopiable worksheet) showing the nature of the examples will be important, because the author's main point depends on these examples.

Using an impersonal reporting style will show explicitly that a piece of writing is a summary. This might involve some interpretation and metalanguage. For example a summary of the passage *Catching crabs* in Unit 1 could involve reporting the following points in the following

manner. The writer recalls the concerns felt by final-year students, not just for their exams but also for their career plans and efforts to find jobs; he tells the story of how he went home at Thanksgiving and faced questions about his plans; he was expected to follow his father's career in law; his father used the crabs as a metaphor for the writer to show that he should not be pulled back by other people, but that instead he should figure out his own goals in life – otherwise he would never be happy ...

Some questions which students might ask themselves before they write summaries are:

- who is the summary for? (specialist or general audiences)
- is there an expected length? (number of words or paragraphs)
- which parts can reasonably be left out?
- is there an expected structure? (eg the structure of an abstract or the same organization of the original)
- is there an expected style? (eg the original style or a reporting style)
- how much should the summary use the language of the original? (ie how much paraphrasing should be used?)
- will readers have access to the original? (ie does the summary need to stand alone instead of the original or is it an introduction or abstract?)

Some questions which students might ask themselves as they read the original text and draft a summary:

- have I read and re-read the original carefully to understand and identify the main ideas?
- have I made a skeleton outline or diagram of the original and cross-checked it?
- can I write a single sentence or two to express the theme and main idea of the original?
- have I given a fair representation of the ideas of the original, without bias?
- have I kept the original organization or restructured the summary so that it has its own clear organization?
- have I used strong, effective sentences?
- can a reader read the summary and understand the intention of the original author?
- can the summary be read in its own right and be understood without further details or other information?

**Example:** *Rites of passage* (Unit 1 Reading across cultures)

This text begins with questions and a reference to Shakespeare to introduce the topic of stages of life. The term *rites of passage* is defined in the beginning of the third paragraph, followed by the three examples of the bar mitzvah, the high school prom and the walkabout. Some indication of these examples would be necessary in a summary because they show different rites of passage at different stages in different cultures. A conclusion might be expected, but in this text there isn't one. Asking students to make a text diagram may help them to understand the main points and express them in their own words.

## Rites of passage

### Introduction

Ask questions to introduce *stages of life*; refer to Shakespeare and *rites of passage*.

### Definition of key term

Define *rites of passage*: a formal recognition of change, imposed by society, of a move from one stage of life to another; typically, the transition between childhood and adulthood.

### Three examples

- 1 Bar mitzvah: a religious ceremony and family festival in Jewish tradition; the stage when boys become responsible for their own actions.
- 2 The prom: students mark the end of high school in the US; they attend a dance wearing formal clothes and may arrive by limousine.
- 3 The walkabout: adolescents in Australian aboriginal culture; spend months walking along the *songlines* (ancient ancestral paths).

Students could take turns in pairs to talk through the diagram, adding phrases to organize a summary. They can then write the summary either as it stands (see Example A below) or as an impersonal report (see Example B below). Students can discuss differences between summaries for different audiences.

#### Example A:

Are the crucial stages of life accepted as fatalistic or as opportunities to show worth? Shakespeare suggested *seven stages of life*, and many societies have rites of passage, which can be defined as a formal recognition of change imposed by society, of a move from one stage to another, typically the transition from childhood to adulthood. Three examples show how these vary in different cultures. First, the bar mitzvah, which is a religious ceremony and family festival in Jewish tradition, marks the stage when boys become responsible for their own actions. Second, the prom, when students mark the end of high school in the US by attending a dance; they wear formal clothes and often arrive in a limousine. Third, the walkabout in Australian aboriginal culture, when adolescents spend months walking along ancient ancestral paths, or *songlines*.

#### Example B:

The writer uses rhetorical questions to introduce views of the stages of life. He quotes Shakespeare's seven stages and argues that the rites of passage (defined as a formal recognition of change imposed by society, of a move from one stage to another) in most societies confirm how people think of such stages. He gives three contrasting examples, of the Jewish bar mitzvah, the American high school prom and the Australian aboriginal walkabout, to show how changes from childhood to adulthood can take very different forms in different cultures.

# Photocopiable worksheet: Making a summary

Work in pairs, talk through the following diagram and then use it to write: 1) a synopsis of 45-100 words, and 2) a longer summary (150-300 words) written as an impersonal report (eg *The writer cites studies to show how childhood is interpreted differently ...*).

## Cultural childhoods (Heather Montgomery)

**Introduction:** contrasts in childhood, 1970s or 1980s and today; contemporary childhood has characteristics of play, school, family life and consumption; 100 years ago children worked and were part of public life and production

**Main concept:** childhood is a *social construction*; the understanding of childhood is different in different cultures; adults have different expectations of children

**Research evidence from anthropological studies:** childhood and children's roles are interpreted differently

Ehrenreich and English	US: 1600-1776	children were industrious in making clothes; they contributed to the family economy
Briggs	Canada: the Inuit in the Arctic	young children can't understand adult life - they need thought, reason and understanding - so adults treat them with tolerance and leniency; teaching and discipline come later
Morton	Tonga	parents regularly tell young children off, shout at them, beat them; children are viewed as mischievous, wilful and lack social competence
Gottlieb	West Africa: the Beng	adults treat children with reverence; children come from the spirit world and will return if they are not looked after properly
Johnson	West Africa: the Fulani	young children are expected to care for younger ones; by six, pound grain, produce milk and butter and sell them in the market
Chagnon	Amazon: the Yanomamö	girls: help mother: by ten, run a home; by 13, married and starting to have babies; boys: fewer responsibilities, play longer, marry later

**Main concept:** social anthropologists see cultural communities in their own terms  
**Implications:** to avoid imposing outside ideas onto people in other cultures; other communities may think Westerners don't know about how to rear children properly

**Conclusions:** childhood is a changing phenomenon; cross-cultural views show a wide variety of childhoods; anthropology teaches us to be cautious about interfering with or criticizing other cultures; anthropologists study different ideas of childhood and how they affect children

# Photocopiable worksheet: Making a summary (Answer sheet)

## A very brief synopsis of the main idea:

Montgomery argues that childhood is a social construction and cites six contrasting anthropological studies from around the world to show that childhood and children's roles are interpreted differently. Childhood is a changing phenomenon; there are a wide variety of childhoods and they affect children differently. (45 words)

## A short synopsis for students who do not know about anthropology:

Montgomery takes an anthropological view of childhood as a social construction, which means that the understanding of childhood is different in different cultures, so adults have different expectations of children. She cites six studies which show how parents treat children in highly contrasting ways as a result of different beliefs about childhood and expectations of children. The studies also show how children in different cultures adopt completely different roles, according to age and gender. Montgomery concludes that anthropologists see cultural communities in their own terms; they study different ideas about childhood and see how they affect children. (97 words)

## A summary without details but with an element of interpretation:

Montgomery draws contrasts between childhood 100 years ago and today and claims that childhood is a social construction. She explains that the understanding of childhood is different in different cultures; adults have different expectations of children and interpret their roles differently. The argument for social construction is supported by six detailed studies in anthropology from around the world. These studies show how there are quite different beliefs about childhood and so parents treat children in contrasting, even opposite, ways. Children's roles are interpreted differently too, and they vary with children's age and gender. Childhood is thus a very varied and changing phenomenon. Anthropologists study such childhoods (the use of the plural shows very different ideas and experiences). They see cultural communities in their own terms. Montgomery implies that, like anthropologists, we should avoid imposing outside ideas about children onto people in other cultures; we should be cautious about interfering with or criticizing other cultures regarding children. (156 words)

## A longer summary:

Montgomery presents the concept of childhood as a social construction, emphasizing how the understanding of childhood is different in different cultures and adults have different expectations of children. She introduces this idea by contrasting current ideas about play, school, family life and consumption with those of 100 years ago, when children worked, and were part of public life and producers.

The writer quotes the evidence of six studies. First, Ehrenreich and English show how children in colonial America worked and contributed to the household economy. Second, Briggs' study of children among the Inuit in Canada shows how adults treat young children with tolerance and leniency, while teaching and discipline come later. In contrast, Morton's study of children in Tonga shows how parents regularly tell children off or shout at them and beat them. In another contrast, Gottlieb's research with the Beng in West Africa shows

how children are treated with reverence because it is believed that they have a connection with the spirit world. A fifth study by Johnson of the Fulani in West Africa shows how young children are expected to care for younger ones and to produce food items and sell them. Finally, Chagnon's study of the Yanomamö in the Amazon shows clear gender and age differences regarding home and marriage for young people between 10 and 13 or more.

The reasons for such differences in children's lives lie in the different beliefs about childhood and different expectations that adults have of children. The writer uses these studies to show how anthropologists see cultural communities in their own terms; they avoid imposing outside ideas onto people in other cultures and are cautious about interfering with or criticizing other cultures. Culturally, there are many childhoods around the world; anthropologists study these different ideas and how they affect children.