

**Unit  
1**

# Discovering yourself

## A father and son's fishing trip

Read how a father gives advice  
to his son about the future

### Tomorrow may never happen

Advice on how to live life  
in the moment

### Rites of passage

Find out how young people  
around the world make the  
transition to adulthood



## Starting point

1 Match the questions with the answers.

### Getting to know YOU

- 1 What is your earliest memory?
- 2 When was your happiest moment?
- 3 Which famous person do you most admire?
- 4 What makes you depressed?
- 5 What characteristic do you most dislike about other people?
- 6 What characteristic do you most dislike about yourself?
- 7 Which do you respect most: your character or your appearance?
- 8 What's your favourite word?
- 9 Who would you invite to your dream dinner party?
- 10 What do you consider your greatest achievement so far?
- 11 What's the nicest thing anyone has ever said to you?
- 12 How would you sum up yourself in six words?

- a** David Beckham, Mick Jagger, Tony Blair, Bill Gates and my grandfather, who died last year. Alice, Hong Kong, China
- b** When I was two years old, and saw the snow for the first time. Peter, Germany
- c** Nelson Mandela. Gavin, Australia
- d** Bad manners, bad driving. Mary, Ireland
- e** Grey clouds, rain. Harry, UK
- f** Bad reputation. Such a good girl. Mercedes, Venezuela
- g** I don't think I'm very pretty, but I hope I'm a kind and friendly person. Megan, New Zealand
- h** Butterfly, but don't ask me why! Millie, South Africa
- i** Having a beautiful, perfect, gorgeous baby boy. Georgina, UK
- j** My mother stopped to talk to a friend in the street, and I got bored. Konnie, India
- k** I try not to, but I get very jealous. Mark, Nigeria
- l** I missed you. William, Spain

2 Work in pairs and discuss your answers to the questions.

## Active reading (1)

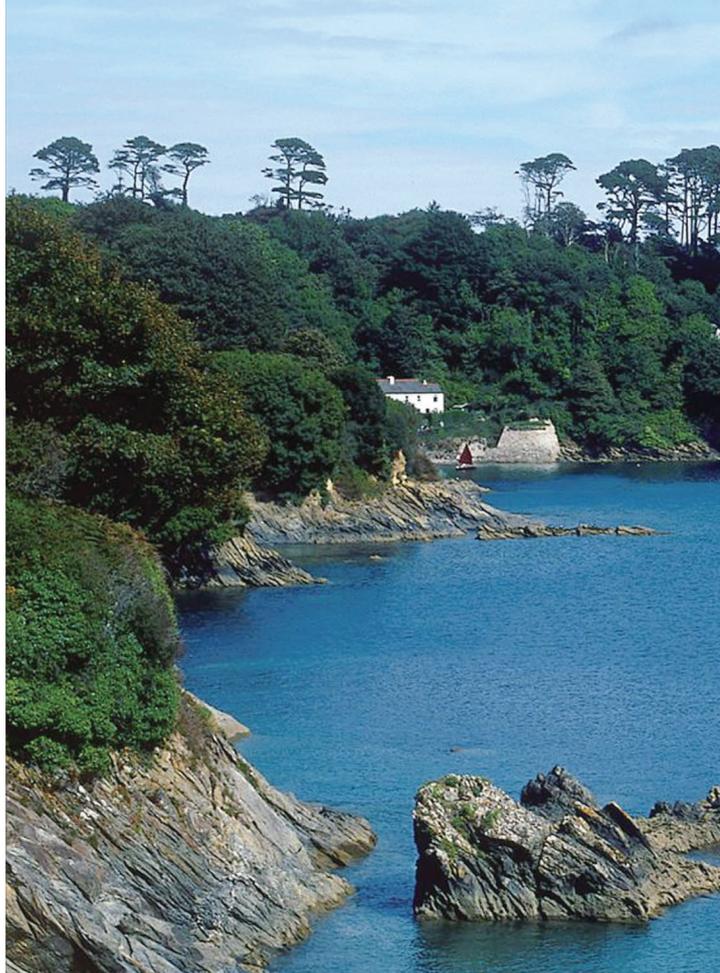
1 Work in pairs and discuss the main worry of a final-year student in the US. Choose from the list:

- saying goodbye to all their college friends
- thinking about a job for the future
- passing the final exams
- finding a partner to spend the rest of their life with

2 Answer the questions about how you might feel during your last year at university.

- 1 How will the last year at college be different from earlier years?
- 2 What will you be thinking more about, your exams or your future?
- 3 How sure are you about what you want to do?
- 4 Who is also likely to be concerned about your future?
- 5 Who will you turn to for advice?
- 6 What do you think they'll say?

Now read the passage and find out how the writer might answer the questions.



# Catching CRABS

<sup>1</sup> In the fall of our final year, our mood changed. 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. We all sensed we were coming to the end of our stay here, that we would never get a chance like this again, and we became determined not to waste it. Most important of course were the final exams in April and May in the following year. No one wanted the humiliation of finishing last in class, so the peer group pressure to work hard was strong. Libraries which were once empty after five o'clock in the afternoon 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.

<sup>2</sup> But there was something else. At the back of everyone's mind was what we would do next, when we left university in a few months' time. It wasn't always the high flyers with the top grades who knew what they were going to do. Quite often it was the quieter, less impressive students who had the next stages of their life mapped out. One had landed a job in his brother's advertising firm in Madison Avenue, another had got a script under provisional acceptance in Hollywood.

The most ambitious student among us was going to work as a party activist at a local level. We all saw him ending up in the Senate or in Congress one day. But most people were either looking to continue their studies, or to make a living with a white-collar job in a bank, local government, or anything which would pay them enough to have a comfortable time in their early twenties, and then settle down with a family, a mortgage and some hope of promotion.

<sup>3</sup> I went home at Thanksgiving, and inevitably, my brothers and sisters kept asking me what I was planning to do. I didn't know what to say. Actually, I did know what to say, but I thought they'd probably criticize me, so I told them what everyone else was thinking of doing.

<sup>4</sup> My father was watching me but saying nothing. Late in the evening, he invited me to his study. We sat down and he poured us a drink.

<sup>5</sup> "So?" he said.

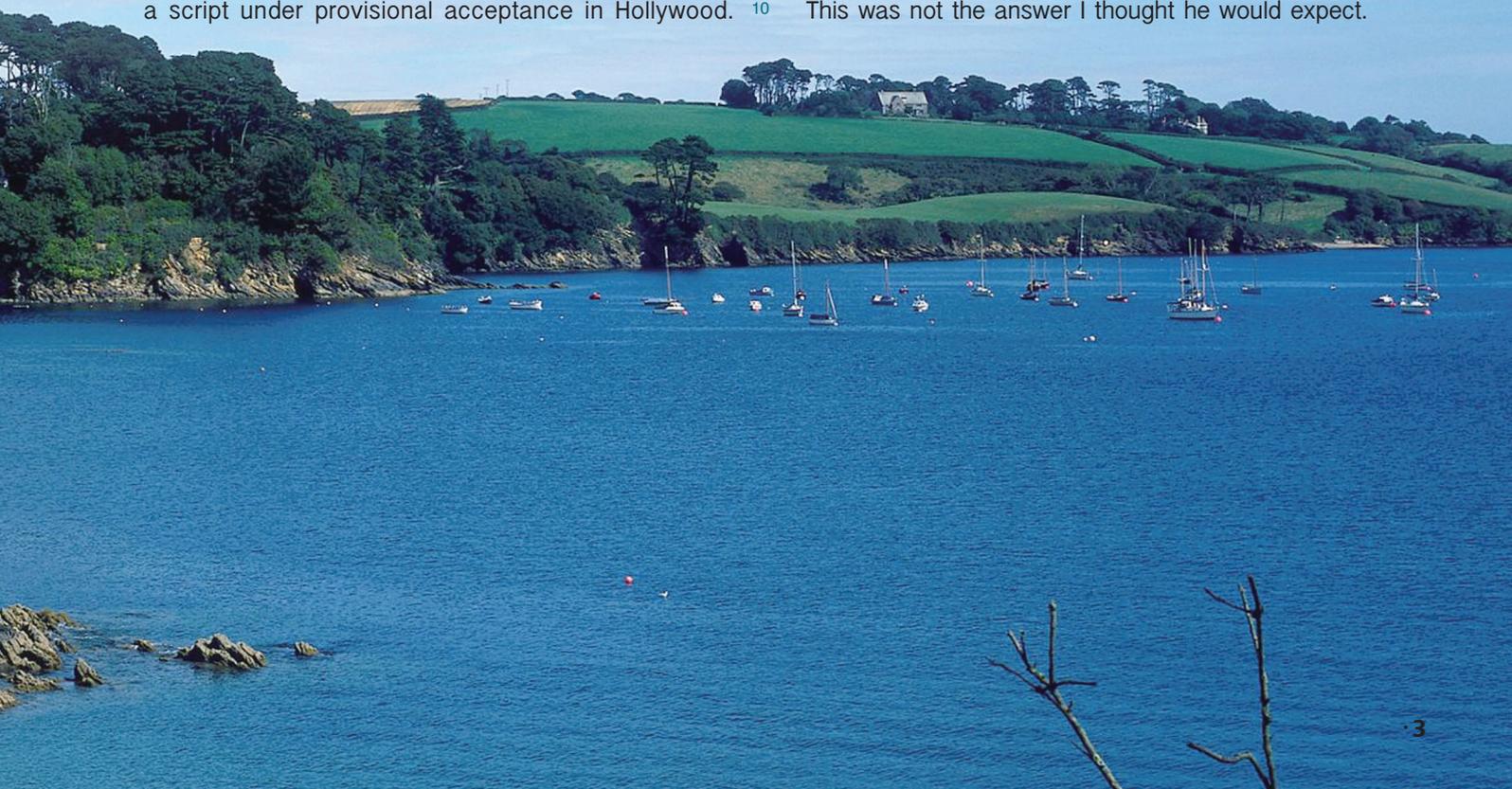
<sup>6</sup> "Er ... so what?"

<sup>7</sup> "So what do you really want to do?" he asked.

<sup>8</sup> My father was a lawyer, and I had always assumed he wanted me to go to law school, and follow his path through life. So I hesitated.

<sup>9</sup> Then I replied, "I want to travel, and I want to be a writer."

<sup>10</sup> This was not the answer I thought he would expect.



Travel? Where? A writer? About what? I braced myself for some resistance to the idea.

11 There was a long silence.

12 "Interesting idea," he said finally.

13 There was another long silence.

14 "I kind of wish I'd done that when I was your age."

15 I waited.

16 "You have plenty of time. You don't need to go into a career which pays well just at the moment. You need to find out what you really enjoy now, because if you don't, you won't be successful later."

17 "So how do I do this?"

18 He thought for a moment. Then he said, "Look, it's late. Let's take the boat out tomorrow morning, just you and me. Maybe we can catch some crabs for dinner, and we can talk more."

19 It was a small motor boat, moored ten minutes away, and my father had owned it for years. Early next morning we set off along the estuary. We didn't talk much, but enjoyed the sound of the seagulls and the sight of the estuary coastline and the sea beyond.

20 There was no surf on the coastal waters at that time of day, so it was a smooth half-hour ride until my father switched off the motor. "Let's see if we get lucky," he said, picked up a rusty, mesh basket with a rope attached and threw it into the sea.

21 We waited a while, then my father stood up and said, "Give me a hand with this," and we hauled up the crab cage onto the deck.

22 Crabs fascinated me. They were so easy to catch. It wasn't just that they crawled into such an obvious trap, through a small hole in the lid of the basket, but it seemed as if they couldn't be bothered to crawl out again even when you took the lid off. They just sat there, waving their claws at you.

23 The cage was brimming with dozens of soft shell crabs, piled high on top of each other. "Why don't they try to escape?" I wondered aloud to my father.

24 "Just watch them for a moment. Look at that one, there! He's trying to climb out, but every time the other crabs pull him back in," said my father.

25 And we watched. The crab climbed up the mesh towards the lid, and sure enough, just as it reached the top, one of its fellow crabs reached out, clamped its claw onto any available leg, and pulled it back. Several times the crab tried to defy his fellow captives, without luck.

26 "Now watch!" said my father. "He's starting to get

bored with this game."

27 Not only did the crab give up its lengthy struggle to escape, but it actually began to help stop other crabs trying to escape. He'd finally chosen an easy way of life.

28 Suddenly I understood why my father had suggested catching crabs that morning. He looked at me. "Don't get pulled back by the others," he said. "Spend some time figuring out who you are and what you want in life. Look back at the classes you're taking, and think about which ones were most productive for you personally. Then think about what's really important to you, what really interests you, what skills you have. Try to figure out where you want to live, where you want to go, what you want to earn, how you want to work. And if you can't answer these questions now, then take some time to find out. Because if you don't, you'll never be happy."

29 He paused.

30 "So you want to travel?" he asked.

31 "Yes," I replied.

32 "Better get you a passport. And you want to be a writer?"

33 "I think so."

34 "Interesting choice. We've never had a writer in the family," he said.

35 My father started the motor and we set off back home. ■

## Language and culture

The **Charles River** is the river which flows through Boston, on the east coast of the US. Harvard University, Boston University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are all located along the Charles River.

**Madison Avenue** is a fashionable shopping street in New York. The name became famous as a synonym for the advertising industry, although many of these agencies have now relocated.

**Congress** is the name for the body of people elected in the US to make laws. Congress consists of two parts, the House of Representatives and the **Senate**.

**Thanksgiving** is a US festival held on the fourth Thursday of November, when families get together for a traditional celebration dinner. Because it gives thanks for the foundation of the first colonies in North America, it's not celebrated in the UK.

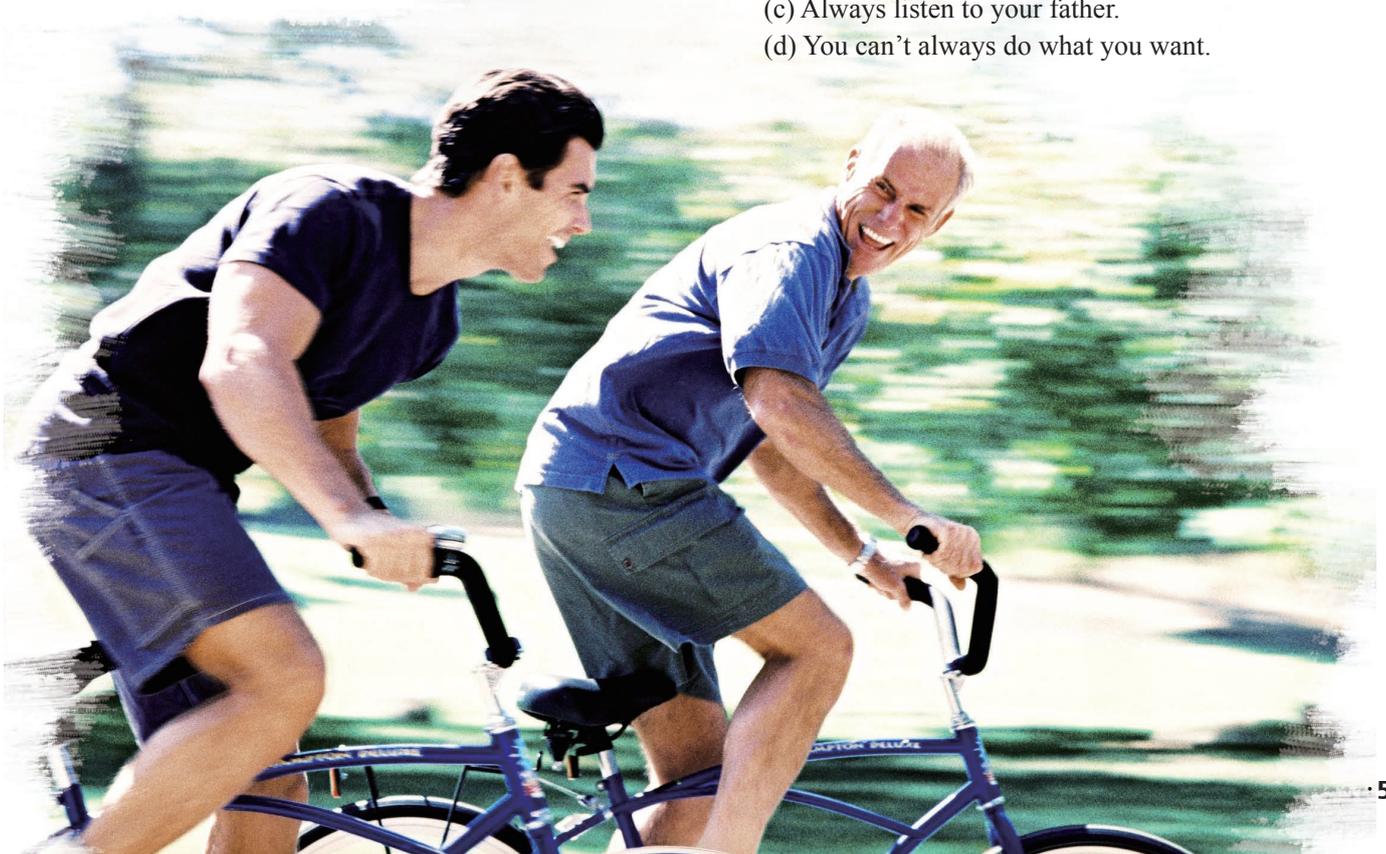
**Reading and understanding****3 Choose the best summary of what happened in the crab cage.**

- 1 The cage was full of crabs. All of them were trying to escape, but because there were so many, none of them could get out, and they all ended up falling back into the cage, and fighting with each other.
- 2 The cage was full of crabs. One of them managed to escape by climbing to the top, but when it had got out, it turned and started to help other crabs to escape by pulling them out.
- 3 The cage was full of crabs. One of them was trying to escape, but each time it reached the top the other crabs pulled it back. In the end it gave up trying and started to prevent other crabs from escaping.

**4 Choose the best answer to the questions.**

- 1 What happened to the students in the fall of the final year?
  - (a) They became more relaxed.
  - (b) They became more serious.
  - (c) They spent more time outside.
  - (d) They stopped going to lessons.

- 2 Why did some people have bags under their eyes in the morning?
  - (a) They'd been to an all-night party.
  - (b) They'd started worrying about their future.
  - (c) They'd spent all night in the library.
  - (d) They wanted to impress their teachers.
- 3 Which students had already planned their future?
  - (a) The ones who had the best grades.
  - (b) The ones who came from wealthy families.
  - (c) The quieter ones who didn't have the best grades.
  - (d) The ones who wanted to get married and start a family.
- 4 Why did the writer go home?
  - (a) He wanted to speak to his father.
  - (b) He could study better at home than at college.
  - (c) He had to attend a job interview.
  - (d) It was a national holiday.
- 5 Why did his father take him out to catch crabs?
  - (a) They needed to get something to eat for dinner.
  - (b) He wanted to show him how to catch crabs.
  - (c) He wanted to tell him something about life.
  - (d) They both wanted to enjoy the coastline and the sea.
- 6 What advice did his father give him?
  - (a) Get to know yourself better.
  - (b) Watch what others do carefully.
  - (c) Always listen to your father.
  - (d) You can't always do what you want.



## Dealing with unfamiliar words

### 5 Match the words in the box with their definitions.

acceptance ambitious attendance impressive  
productive resistance script

- 1 achieving good results
- 2 the fact of being present at an event, or of going regularly to school, church etc
- 3 the refusal to accept something new, such as a plan, idea, or change
- 4 determined to be successful, rich, famous etc
- 5 agreement to a plan, offer, or suggestion
- 6 the written words of a play, film, television programme, speech etc
- 7 very good, large, or showing great skill

### 6 Complete the paragraph with the correct form of the words in Activity 5.

To be a successful film scriptwriter takes more than training although (1) \_\_\_\_\_ on a screenwriting course will definitely help you learn the skills. You also need to be very (2) \_\_\_\_\_ – the film business is very competitive. You have to be prepared to work hard and be very (3) \_\_\_\_\_ because it takes more than just one good idea to make it big. No matter how (4) \_\_\_\_\_ your idea is, there will always be (5) \_\_\_\_\_ from producers because it's too expensive. So make sure you have plenty of others to show them. What are you waiting for? Get on with writing that brilliant (6) \_\_\_\_\_ and plan your (7) \_\_\_\_\_ speech for when you win your first Oscar!

### 7 Replace the underlined words with the correct form of the words in the box.

coastal deck defy lengthy mortgage surf

- 1 We've seen a place we like and we're applying for a loan to buy a house.
- 2 We stood on the top floor of the boat and watched the coast disappear into the horizon.
- 3 I love to walk along the beach and watch the waves breaking, and the white water hitting the shore.
- 4 In seaside areas in the north-east of the country, life is hard and fishermen have to go against the forces of nature every time they go to work.
- 5 Agreement was finally reached after a long and heated discussion.

### 8 Answer the questions about the words and expressions.

- 1 If you watch an *impromptu* performance of something, has it (a) been prepared, or (b) not been prepared?
- 2 When you *map out* your future, do you (a) plan it carefully, or (b) draw a sketch of it on paper?
- 3 If you *brace yourself for* something unpleasant, do you (a) try not to think about it, or (b) prepare yourself for it mentally and physically?
- 4 Do you *moor* a boat by (a) turning the steering wheel, or (b) tying it to a post with a rope?
- 5 Is a *rusty* piece of metal something that (a) is bright and shiny, or (b) might have been left out in the rain and is covered with brown substance?
- 6 If a bowl is *brimming with* soup, is it (a) very full, or (b) half empty?
- 7 If someone is being held *captive*, are they (a) free to do as they please, or (b) being kept as a prisoner?
- 8 If you have *figured out* something, have you (a) added numbers together, or (b) understood it?

## Reading and interpreting

### Using narrative devices

A technique which the writer uses to spark interest and to encourage a reader to read on is to change between description, narration of events, and dialogue. In this passage, the change is often signalled by a narrative device – a sentence, a time expression, or direct speech – which comes at the beginning of the paragraph, and which prepares the reader for the rest of the paragraph. The only exception in this passage is the final sentence, where it's left to the reader to think about what happens next.

### 9 Work in pairs. Look at the sentences from the passage and answer the questions.

- 1 *In the fall of our final year, our mood changed.*  
Why does the passage begin with a time expression?
- 2 *But there was something else.*  
What is the purpose of this short sentence?
- 3 *I went home at Thanksgiving ...*  
Why does the writer change from *we* to *I*?
- 4 *"So?" he said.*  
What is the effect of the change to direct speech?

**5** Crabs fascinated me.

How does the focus change with this sentence?

**6** My father started the motor and we set off back home.

Is this an effective conclusion? Why / Why not?

**10** Work in pairs and answer the questions.

- 1 What sort of relationship do the father and son have?
- 2 Do you think the son respects his father?
- 3 Do you think the father understands his son?
- 4 What is the father trying to tell his son by showing him the crabs?
- 5 How successful do you think the “crab story” is?
- 6 Is the father pleased that his son wants to be a writer?

**Developing critical thinking**

**11** Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

- 1 How important is it to be ambitious in life?
- 2 Is being ambitious a positive part of personality?
- 3 How much time should students spend planning their future?
- 4 Is it part of a university’s role to help students choose a career?

**Talking point**

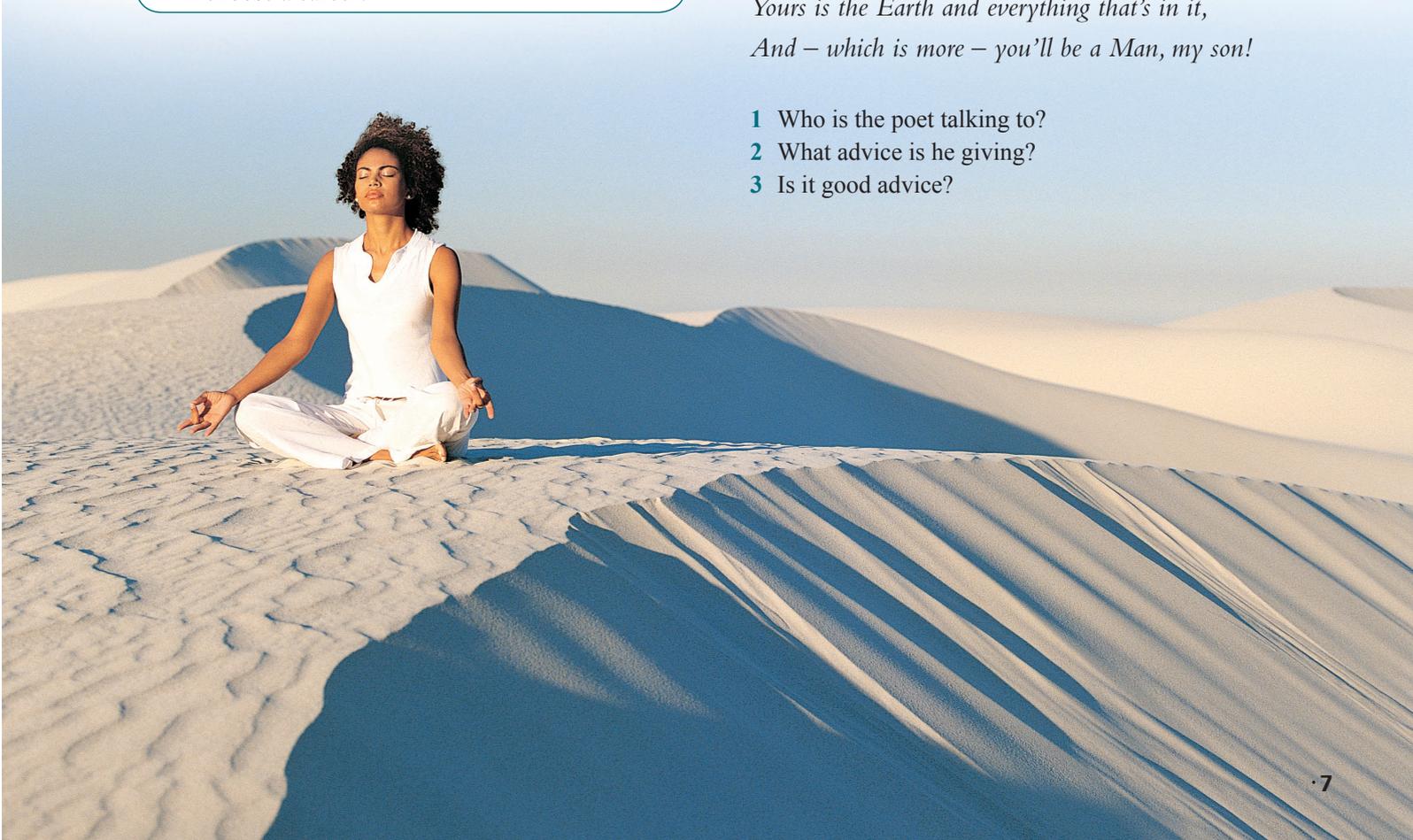
**1** Work in pairs. Discuss which are most effective in helping you know yourself better.

- therapy
- meditation
- personality tests
- horoscopes
- painting, writing, playing music
- dream analysis
- healthy relationships
- education
- physical exercise
- spirituality

**2** Work in pairs. Look at the extract from the poem *If* by Rudyard Kipling and discuss the questions.

*If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with Kings – nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;  
If all men count with you, but none too much,  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds’ worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that’s in it,  
And – which is more – you’ll be a Man, my son!*

- 1 Who is the poet talking to?
- 2 What advice is he giving?
- 3 Is it good advice?



## Active reading (2)

1 Check (✓) the statements which are true for you.

- 1 I take each day as it comes.
- 2 I try to put off until tomorrow what I have to do today.
- 3 I don't have any regrets.
- 4 I have a plan for the rest of my life.
- 5 I'm scared of what's going to happen in the future.
- 6 I prefer to wait for the right time to do something.
- 7 I try to fit as much as possible into my life.
- 8 I don't expect to be remembered when I die.
- 9 I believe everything that happens to me is good.

2 Work in pairs. Look at the title of the passage and choose the best way to complete the sentences.

- 1 The passage will be \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) a newspaper article about life expectancy
  - (b) a sad story about death
  - (c) advice about how to make the most of your life
  - (d) a warning that modern lifestyles are bad for health
- 2 The passage is likely to be \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) serious
  - (b) funny
  - (c) depressing
  - (d) a mixture of all three
- 3 The passage is likely to say \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) young people don't think enough about death
  - (b) life is short
  - (c) people are dying unnecessarily
  - (d) people don't enjoy life enough

Now read the passage from the book *Everything That Happens to Me Is Good* and check your answers.

# We are all dying

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. In fact, I've double- and triple-checked it. I've had

it substantiated and, well, there's no easy way to say it, we are dying. It's something that I always kind of knew, but never really chose to think about too much. But the fact is, within the next 70 or 80 years – depending on how old you are and how long you last – we are all going to be either coffin dwellers or trampled ash in the rose garden of some local cemetery. We may not even last that long. After all, we never quite know when the hooded, scythe-carrying, bringer-of-the-last-breath might come-a-calling. It could be sooner than we'd like. I have watched death from the sidelines, quite recently in fact, and nothing underlines the uncertainty and absolute frailty of humanity like the untimely exit of a friend.

2 Scary.

3 Now that I have depressed you, here's the good news. Knowing that we are all budding crypt-kickers takes away all the uncertainty of life. We already know how the story ends. 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.

4 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"? Well, the time is never quite right, I find. It needs to be brought forward and done now, this minute, pronto, in a hurry, as quick as your little legs will carry you. The novel that you want to write, the trip to the Grand Canyon you've always planned to take, your mind's-eye dream-job, the West End play you want to direct – you have to do them now. We're dying, see. It's official.

5 So putting your dreams on the back burner until the circumstances are right means that they'll probably never be realized. Our only regrets in life are the things we don't do. We owe it to ourselves to go out and do them now before it's too



late. Tomorrow? It's all a lie; there isn't a tomorrow. There's only a promissory note that we are often not in a position to cash. It doesn't even exist. When you wake up in the morning it'll be today again and all the same rules will apply. Tomorrow is just another version of now, an empty field that will remain so unless we start planting some seeds. Your time, which is ticking away as we speak (at about 60 seconds a minute chronologically; a bit faster if you don't invest your time wisely), 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".

- 6 Have you ever noticed when you go to a buffet restaurant how they give you a bowl the size of a saucer and then say, "Have as much salad as you like but you can only go up once"? Life is like that small salad bowl. Like the hungry people waiting for their main course, we can cram as much into that tiny bowl as we can carry. I love watching people ingeniously stack the cucumber around the side of the bowl – 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. They're not greedy. They just know that they only have one shot at it.
- 7 Fill your bowl. We come this way but once so let's make the best of the short stay. Like the once-a-year holiday to Florida or Spain. Fit as much into the short time there as you can. Make sure that you go back home knackered because you got so much done.
- 8 If you don't want to be a postman then don't be a postman. Give it up and be a painter, a writer, a tobogganist, whatever. Just don't be something that you patently do not want to be.
- 9 And now is the time, not tomorrow. There is no time like the present. If you can't have what you want this very second the least you can do is start the journey now, this minute, while the inspiration is high. We all have the same amount of minutes, we all get the same

24 hours as Branson and Gates. It's just what we do with our time, how we invest it, that determines where our lives may lead.

- 10 So what I'm thinking is (and this is not molecular science) 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? What's all this back-burner stuff? And why are we all waiting for the right time when we already know that the right time isn't going to show? The right time is the cheque that's permanently in the post, it never arrives. It's the girl who keeps us standing at the corner of the Co-op looking like a spanner. No amount of clock watching will change the inevitable. She's stood us up.
- 11 We wait; the right time never arrives.
- 12 So I say stop waiting and meet providence halfway. Start filling your life with the riches on offer so that when the reaper arrives, 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.
- 13 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.
- 14 Better to leave a biography as thick as a whale omelette than an epitaph.
- 15 "Joe Smith ... hmmm. He didn't do much, did he?" ■

## Language and culture

The **Grand Canyon** is a national park in northern Arizona in the US. A canyon is a long and deep valley with steep sides made of rock and the Grand Canyon is one of the natural wonders of the world.

The **West End** is an area of London where there are a lot of restaurants and theatres.

**Richard Branson** is a British businessman well-known for his companies Virgin Records and Virgin Atlantic Airways.

**Bill Gates** is the co-founder of the software company Microsoft and is one of the world's wealthiest men.

The **Co-op** is a chain of supermarkets in Britain in which shoppers can get a share of the profits. Co-op is short for Co-operative.

**The reaper**, or **the Grim Reaper** was a popular symbol for death in the Middle Ages of the West. Usually he is shown wearing a hood and carrying a scythe, an instrument for cutting (or "reaping") hay.



## Reading and understanding

### 3 Choose the best summary of the passage.

- 1 Life is short. There's no point in worrying about death, which is inevitable. And we shouldn't worry about what we want to do in the future either. We should just accept life as it is.
- 2 These days people live longer than they used to. So we should try to fit as many different experiences into our lives as we can, by doing as many different jobs and going to as many different places as we can.
- 3 Life is short. So there's no point in planning for a future which may never come. Now is the time to do what we want to do. There's no time to lose.

## Dealing with unfamiliar words

### 4 Match the words in the box with their definitions.

biography budding cemetery cram  
elapse finite rear triple

- 1 involving three things of the same kind
- 2 an area of ground where dead people are buried
- 3 the part of a place or thing that is at the back
- 4 a book that someone writes about someone else's life
- 5 to put people or things into a space that is too small
- 6 at the very beginning of a career and likely to be successful at it
- 7 continuing only for a limited time or distance
- 8 to pass

### 5 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in Activity 4.

- 1 About two hours \_\_\_\_\_ before we reached the \_\_\_\_\_ where the war dead were buried.
- 2 I sat in the \_\_\_\_\_ seat behind the driver. My three sisters were all \_\_\_\_\_ in the front.
- 3 The entrance to the car park was blocked, so the road was full of cars which had been \_\_\_\_\_-parked one against another, making it almost impossible to get past.
- 4 We have a number of \_\_\_\_\_ authors in our class this year, one of whom has written a fascinating \_\_\_\_\_ of his grandmother.
- 5 The time we have on this earth may be \_\_\_\_\_, but there are no limits to the human imagination.

### 6 Answer the questions about the words.

- 1 If you *substantiate* a claim, do you (a) prove it is true, or (b) persuade someone that it is true?
- 2 If someone *tramples* over something, do they (a) pour water over it, or (b) walk all over it?
- 3 If someone's arrival is *untimely*, is it (a) at the wrong moment, or (b) late?
- 4 If events are described *chronologically*, do they occur (a) in the order in which they happened, or (b) in no particular order?
- 5 Is *ingeniously* likely to mean (a) artistically, or (b) cleverly?
- 6 Is *knackered* an informal British word meaning (a) very relaxed, or (b) extremely tired?
- 7 Is *patently* likely to mean (a) obviously, or (b) usually?
- 8 When something is *allotted* to you, is it (a) given to you, or (b) taken from you?

### 7 Answer the questions about the phrases.

- 1 If you *check something out*, do you (a) find out, or (b) not think about it?
- 2 If you see something *from the sidelines*, do you (a) take part in the action, or (b) stay away from it?
- 3 If something is *down to you*, is it your (a) bad luck, or (b) responsibility?
- 4 If you have something *on the back burner*, (a) will you look at it later, or (b) are you interested in it now?
- 5 If you are *in a position to do something*, are you (a) able, or (b) unable to do it?
- 6 If time is *ticking away*, does it seem (a) as if it will last forever, or (b) to be passing quickly?
- 7 If you can *have one shot at something*, (a) are you allowed to shoot it, or (b) do you have only one chance to do it?
- 8 If you *make the best of something*, do you (a) enjoy it while you can, or (b) work hard to make it a success?
- 9 If a girl *stands you up*, does she (a) fail to turn up for a date, or (b) refuse to sit down when you ask her to?

## Reading and interpreting

### Understanding writer's style

The passage is written in a very personal and modern style. It contains many short sentences and unusual idiomatic and colloquial expressions that make the passage seem challenging. However, it is important to realize that repetition is used a lot. We do not need to understand every word or even every image to be able to make sense of the passage. The same message ("life is short; act now") is repeated over and over again, in different ways, sometimes directly, and sometimes using images.

### 8 Find the sentences in the passage and decide what part of the message "life is short; act now" they give.

We may not even last that long.  
It could be sooner than we'd like.  
... go out and do them now before it's too late.  
It needs to be brought forward and done now ...

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

### 9 Work in pairs and decide what the underlined images refer to.

- 1 After all, we never quite know when the hooded, scythe-carrying, bringer-of-the-last-breath might come-a-calling.
- 2 We already know how the story ends. 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.
- 3 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"?
- 4 ... there isn't a tomorrow. There's only a promissory note that we are often not in a position to cash.
- 5 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".
- 6 Fill your owl.
- 7 The right time is the cheque that's permanently in the post, it never arrives. It's the girl who keeps us standing at the corner of the Co-op looking like a spanner.

Now discuss which are the best images, and why.

## Developing critical thinking

### 10 Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

- 1 Do you agree with the advice in the passage?
- 2 Do you think following this advice would make people more selfish?
- 3 How can you get a balance between enjoying life now and preparing for the future?
- 4 Would thinking more about death change your attitude to life?
- 5 Can you think of three things you'd like to do for yourself if you followed the writer's advice?
- 6 Can you think of three things you'd like to do for society if you followed the writer's advice?

## Talking point

### 1 Work in pairs. Look at the comments and say what they have in common.

❶ I could have taken the year off before going to university, but unfortunately I didn't.

❷ I would have spent more time studying German if I'd realized how useful it was going to be.

❸ I should have taken the opportunity to learn music when I was a child.

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

### 2 Tell the rest of the class about your biggest regret in life.

## Language in use

### word formation: compound words

#### 1 Look at the sentences from the passages.

But most people were either looking to continue their studies, or to make a living with a white-collar job in a bank ...

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

The novel that you want to write, the trip to the Grand Canyon you've always planned to take, your mind's-eye dream-job, the West End play you want to direct – you have to do them now.

Compound words are usually connected by hyphens. The hyphens can be used in different ways. These include:

- in compound adjectives, such as *white-collar* job
- in compound nouns, such as *dream-job*
- in longer phrases, when the writer wants to draw attention to the individual words, such as *bringer-of-the-last-breath*. This use is not common in everyday English.

Now find more examples of each use of hyphens in the passage *We are all dying*.

#### 2 Rewrite the phrases using compound adjectives.

- 1 a party which is held late at night
- 2 a library which is well stocked
- 3 a professor who is world famous
- 4 some advice which is well timed
- 5 a population which is growing rapidly
- 6 an economy which is based on free markets
- 7 a boat trip which lasts for half an hour

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

#### 3 Look at the sentence.

Where our lives may lead is determined by the things we do with our time and the way we invest it.

You can rewrite it like this:

*It's just what we do with our time, how we invest it, that determines where our lives may lead.*

Now rewrite the sentences using *It's what / how ... that ...*

- 1 What other people think of us is determined by how we behave.
- 2 What sort of job we are going to end up doing is usually determined by our character.
- 3 What we do as a career isn't always determined by the marks we get at university.
- 4 How we react to life's problems is often determined by our childhood experiences.
- 5 When we die is determined by our genetic clock, and the changes we make to it.

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

#### 4 Look at the sentence.

Not only did they crawl into such an obvious trap, it also seemed as if they couldn't be bothered to crawl out again.

You can rewrite it like this:

*It wasn't just that they crawled into such an obvious trap, but it seemed as if they couldn't be bothered to crawl out again.*

Now rewrite the sentences using *It is / was not just that ... but ...*

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

## collocations

## 5 Read the explanations of the words. Answer the questions.

- 1 **settle** When you *settle* somewhere you go there to stay.
- Where is *dust* likely to *settle* in a room?
  - If you *settle an argument*, is the conclusion satisfactory?
  - If you *settle the bill*, what is there left to pay?
  - What do you do when you *settle back* to watch a film?
- 2 **smooth** This word can mean flat or soft, comfortable, easy or confident.
- If the *sea* is *smooth*, are you likely to feel seasick?
  - If a *changeover* from one government to the next is *smooth*, are there lots of problems?
  - Is it a good idea to trust a *smooth talker*?
- 3 **offer** This word can refer to something you would like someone to take, something someone gives, or something that is for sale.
- If you *decline an offer*, do you say “yes” or “no”?
  - If you *offer an apology* to someone for something you have done, what do you say?
  - Where are you likely to see *special offer*?
  - If someone *has a lot to offer*, what kind of person are they?
- 4 **bear** If you *bear* something you carry or bring it. If you cannot *bear* something, you dislike it or cannot accept it.
- If you *bear something in mind*, do you forget it?
  - If you *bear a resemblance to* someone, in what way are you like them?
  - Is there anything you *can't bear to* think about?
- 5 **resistance** This word can refer to the refusal to accept something new, the ability not to be harmed by something, or opposition to someone or something.
- If there is *resistance to an idea*, do people accept it?
  - If the soldiers *met with resistance*, what happened?
  - Is there a way to *build up your resistance to* cold?

## 6 Translate the paragraphs into Chinese.

- 1 We all sensed we were coming to the end of our stay here, that we would never get a chance like this again, and we became determined not to waste it. Most important of course were the final exams in April and May in the following year. No one wanted the humiliation of finishing last in class, so the peer group pressure to work hard was strong. Libraries which were once empty after five o'clock in the afternoon 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.
- 2 Tomorrow? It's all a lie; there isn't a tomorrow. There's only a promissory note that we are often not in a position to cash. It doesn't even exist. When you wake up in the morning it'll be today again and all the same rules will apply. Tomorrow is just another version of now, an empty field that will remain so unless we start planting some seeds. Your time, which is ticking away as we speak (at about 60 seconds a minute chronologically; a bit faster if you don't invest your time wisely), 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”.

## 7 Translate the paragraphs into English.

- 1 对于是否应该在大学期间详细规划自己的未来，学生们意见不一。有的人认为对未来应该有一个明确的目标和详细的计划，为日后可能遇到的挑战做好充分的准备；有的人则认为不用过多考虑未来，因为未来难以预料。(map out; brace oneself for; uncertainty)
- 2 经过仔细检查，这位科学家得知自己患了绝症。虽然知道自己将不久于人世，他并没有抱怨命运的不公，而是准备好好利用剩下的日子，争取加速推进由他和同事们共同发起的那个研究项目，以提前结项。(tick away; make the best of; have a shot at)

## Reading across cultures

# Rites of passage

Is life just “one damned thing after another”, as the American author Elbert Hubbard wrote a hundred years ago, taking a rather fatalistic viewpoint? Or is it an obstacle race, in which the contestants – human beings everywhere – have to show their worth at certain crucial stages of their lives?

The sad clown Jacques in Shakespeare’s play *As You Like It* suggests that there are “seven ages” to a person’s existence, and the phenomenon of rites of passage in almost every society confirms that we prefer to think of life in terms of these stages, such as childhood, middle age and old age.

A rite of passage is a formal recognition of change, imposed by society, of a move from one stage to another, the most universally recognized one being the transition between childhood and adulthood. This can take very different forms. For example, in Jewish tradition one of the most important moments in a person’s life, marked by a religious ceremony and a family feast, is the Bar Mitzvah, when children become responsible for their actions – at the age of 13. This is roughly the same age that children can be held legally responsible in many countries.

A very different rite of passage is the tradition of the prom at the end of American high school. This is a dance with a difference. Students have to wear formal clothes – many for the first time in their lives – and it is usual to hire an expensive limousine to arrive at the prom. It is as if, for one night, they behave like adults twice their age – or at least look older than they really are.

Perhaps one of the most interesting rites of passage is the walkabout of Australian aborigines, when adolescents would be required to spend about six months walking alone through the wilderness, following the paths of their ancestors along the age-old “songlines” which mapped out the country. In so doing they penetrated the heart of aboriginal culture – the oldest continuous culture in the world – and, in the process, discovered themselves too. ■



### 1 Read the passage and answer the questions.

- 1 How did Elbert Hubbard describe life?
- 2 How many ages are there in a person’s existence according to Shakespeare?
- 3 What is a rite of passage?
- 4 What does the Bar Mitzvah mean to Jewish children?
- 5 What do American high school students wear at a prom?
- 6 What is the purpose of walkabout for young Australian aborigines?
- 7 What do they have to do during their walkabout?
- 8 What is particularly interesting about Australian aboriginal culture?

### 2 Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

- 1 Which are the most interesting rites of passage in China?
- 2 What are their origins?
- 3 What traditional rites accompany births, marriages and deaths?
- 4 What rites of passage are there at school or university?
- 5 Are they formal or informal?
- 6 Are traditional rites of passage surviving or dying out?

## Guided writing

### Planning an essay

When writing an essay, it's a good idea to plan it carefully, to make sure there's enough to write.

Before starting to plan, we need to be aware what type of text we need to write, and what the main purpose is.

#### 1 Match the passages in this unit with the text types and their main purposes.

- 1 *Catching crabs* (a) essay (i) to persuade  
 2 *We are all dying* (b) narrative (ii) to inform  
 3 *Rites of passage* (c) opinion (iii) to entertain

#### 2 Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

- 1 What was the topic of the last essay you wrote?
- 2 How long was it?
- 3 How much time did you spend planning it?
- 4 What research did you do?
- 5 How satisfied were you with your work?

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

Then some background research may be necessary. Today there are lots of resources available, especially on the Internet. However, having too many resources is not always a good thing, it's important not to waste time, or to plagiarize.

#### 3 Check (✓) the resources you use to research an essay.

- 1 my own textbooks and reference books  
 2 the Internet  
 3 the library  
 4 the media  
 5 friends and family  
 6 other

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

When we research a topic, we'll need to take notes. They should contain essential facts we want to include in the essay. They should be brief, but not so brief that we can't understand what they mean when we read them again.

#### 4 Look at the notes about the Bar Mitzvah ceremony. Write them up as one or two sentences and compare with the passage in Reading across cultures.

Bar Mitzvah: Jewish / religious ceremony, feast / children responsible for actions / 13

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

It's also important to plan the organization of the essay. This means thinking about how much time to spend on an introduction, how many examples to refer to, and how to link ideas. Most important, we need to think about how to introduce the topic, and how to conclude the essay, since it is at the beginning and the end of a piece of writing that you particularly want to engage the attention of the reader.

#### 5 Read the passage in Reading across cultures and answer the questions.

- 1 How is the topic introduced?
- 2 How much of the passage is introduction?
- 3 At what point is the concept *rite of passage* defined?
- 4 How many examples of rites of passage are used?
- 5 How much of the essay do they take up?
- 6 How does the essay end?

Finally, it's important to look at model essays, to get ideas about content and structure, and it is equally important to plan our writing. However, we can only learn to write by writing, not by reading and planning, so it's important to experiment, rather than always to follow guidelines about how to write.

#### 6 Write a short essay describing a rite of passage in China. Think about:

- 1 What is the event, and where does it take place?
- 2 In what way can it be seen as a rite of passage?
- 3 Who takes part in it?
- 4 What happens afterwards?
- 5 Has the event changed at all in recent years?

## UNIT TASK

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

- 1 Work in pairs. Think back over the unit and summarize the different attitudes towards the future which you have read about.
- 2 Design a survey about students' fears and ambitions. Use the questions below and add some more of your own.
  - 1 What ambitions do you have for the future?
  - 2 What are you afraid of, if anything?
  - 3 How important is it to plan for the future?
  - 4 What do you expect to be doing ten years from now?
  - 5 Do you think life is too short?
  - 6 Do you believe in "seizing the moment"?
- 3 Carry out the survey on a group of students.
- 4 Analyze the results of the survey and present a summary to the class.



# UNIT FILE

### Vocabulary

acceptance ambitious attendance biography budding cemetery  
coastal cram deck defy elapse finite impressive lengthy mortgage  
productive rear resistance script surf triple

### Reading skills

Using narrative devices  
Understanding writer's style

### Guided writing

Planning an essay

### Unit task

Carrying out a survey on students' fears and ambitions