

e-lesson

Week starting: April 26, 2010

1. A generation gap?

This week's lesson is based on the views of three people about the differences between the generations.

Level

Intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B1 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. Introduce the term “generation gap,” and ask your students what, if any, are the significant differences in outlook and attitudes between the different generations in their country. Are there any aspects of one generation's lifestyle that another generation finds difficult to understand? Do any of your students believe there are any ways in which young people today behave worse, or better, than older people did at their age? Can they think of any examples of one generation having mistaken beliefs or assumptions about another?
2. Give your students between five and ten minutes to read through Worksheet A, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary. Note that many of the words that might be new are not in the glossary because they form part of Exercise 1.
3. Give each student a copy of Worksheet B, then divide the class into pairs and ask students to work together to complete Exercise 1, in which they have to find the words to match the definitions.
4. Check answers in open class. At this point, you might want to ask the students if they would agree (or disagree) with any of the opinions on Worksheet A with regard to their own country.
5. Keeping the students in their pairs, hand out Worksheet C and ask the students to work together to complete the different types of comprehension questions in Exercises 2, 3, and 4.
6. Check answers in open class.

Answers:

Exercise 1

1. look (at something through) rose-colored glasses
2. poverty
3. media
4. individualistic
5. kid
6. appreciate
7. authority
8. unthinkable
9. soap
10. youngster
11. antisocial
12. hardship
13. social networking sites
14. outlook
15. a waste of space

Exercise 2

1. Liam, John, Mary
2. John, Mary
3. Liam, John

Exercise 3

1. F
2. F
3. F
4. D
5. T
6. T
7. T
8. T

Exercise 4

1. The idea that young people are more individualistic, or even selfish, than in the past, and that their sense of right and wrong isn't as strong as that of older people.
2. He thinks a sense of separation can be increased if older people don't understand the technology that young people are very familiar with. He gives social networking websites as an example.
3. John doesn't wish that his kids, who are now young adults, were more like he was at their age.
4. The similarity lies in the idea of "respect." The media, according to Liam, create the idea that young people don't have enough respect for other members of society, while Mary believes some young people lack respect for authority.

2. Related Websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/31598018/ns/us_news-life/

An Associated Press news article (2009) summarizing a recent research report about the current generation gap, saying it is the widest in 40 years. Challenging for intermediate level.

<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/american-life/only-in-america/Whatever-Happened-to-the-Generation-Gap--80273627.html>

An article from the Voice of America news service (2009) arguing the opposite point of view, that the generation gap has almost disappeared because now everybody wants to be young and fit in with young people. Challenging for intermediate level.

<http://www.pbs.org/lifepart2/watch/generation-gaps>

Video of a PBS talk show about the current generation gap, with street interviews and a discussion of different opinions. Accessible to intermediate level.