1) Make a list of things that your parents sometimes say about you. What do you think parents (can / should) do to live happily with their teenage children?

SURVIVING TEENAGERS (adapted from The Daily Telegraph)

It might be difficult to accept, but a new approach to living happily with teenagers is for parents to look at their own behaviour.

"The key to getting teenagers to respect you is to respect them first," says Penny Palmano, who has written a best-selling book on teenagers. "You can't continue to treat them the same way that you have been treating them for the previous 12 years: they have opinions that count. 1 You'd be very upset. You'd never say that to an adult, because it shows a total lack of respect." Palmano, who has a daughter aged 19 and a 16-year-old stepdaughter, has even allowed the children to hold several teenage parties at her home. They passed without problems. "I've found that if you have brought them up to do the right thing, and then trust them to do it, usually they'll behave well," she says. "I make them sandwiches and leave them alone. But I make it clear that they have to clear up any mess. 2"

She agrees that teenagers can be irritating: enjoying a world that is free of responsibility, yet desperate for independence. She doesn't think, however, that they are trying to annoy you. Until recently, scientists assumed that the brain finished growing at about the age of 13 and that teenage problems were a result of rising hormones and a desire for independence. 3 This would explain why many teenagers can't make good decisions, control their emotions, prioritise or concentrate on several different things at the same time. 4 It means that they do not intentionally do the wrong thing just to annoy their parents," says Palmano.

The key to happiness for all, Palmano believes, is calm negotiation and compromise. If you want your teenagers to be home by 11 pm, explain why, but listen to their counter-arguments. If it's a Saturday, you might consider agreeing to midnight (rather than 1 am, which is what they had in mind). 5 Instead, ask if they've had a problem with public transport and let it pass; they've almost managed what you asked. She urges a bit of perspective about other things, too. "There have been times when my daughter's room has not been as tidy as I expected, but as she said once, I'm a teenager - what do you expect? I'm not turning into a criminal, it's just clothes on the floor."

"It's vital to choose your battles carefully: don't criticise teenagers for having an untidy room, then suddenly criticise them for other things. 6 One minute, it's about an untidy room and the next, you're saying, 'And another thing ...' and criticising them for everything."

Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose the correct sentence from A-G which fits each gap (1-6). There is one extra sentence which you do not need.

A But it turns out that the region of the brain that controls common sense and emotions is not fully mature until the early twenties.
B If they are up to 20 minutes late, don't react angrily.
C For example, they may find it difficult to make the right decision between watching television, ringing a friend, or finishing their homework.
D Parents often complain that teenagers can be charming to people outside the home but irritating to their family.
E I've never had a problem; in fact, the kitchen was sometimes cleaner than I'd left it.
F On these occasions, parents tend to mention all the other things that they may or may not have done wrong.
G Imagine if you'd spent two hours getting ready to go out for the evening and someone said, 'You're not going out looking like that, are you?'

2) (Review “Slides Pre-Intermediate” UD 4 - word bank p. 27) Who does the household chores in your family, and why? Which of the chores do you not mind doing? Which would you prefer to avoid?

Complete the text by writing one word in each gap.

According to a recent study of teenagers, most of them do not do housework just (0) for pocket money. While many do household chores because they see it (1) a way of getting ready for adult life, others feel they have a duty to help their parents because it is fair, especially if their parents work.

More than two-thirds of the young people who were surveyed clean floors (2) least once a week and more than 80% regularly set the table for meals or (3) the washing-up. Girls are more likely than boys to wash (4) own clothes. (5) are, however, a few teens who only do the housework because they are made (6) by their parents. They argue that they should (7) be expected to help out at home because in their view, their teenage years are a period which should be enjoyed (8) than interrupted with household responsibilities.

Do you think what the text says about teenagers and household chores is true?

KEYS: EX 1: 1 G – 2 E – 3 A – 4 C – 5 B – 6 F (D is not needed) - EX 2: 1 as 2 at 3 do 4 their 5 There 6 to 7 not 8 rather
Reading AND USE OF ENGLISH  Part 7

Read the questions, then quickly read the texts. When you find the part of a text which matches the question, underline it.

You are going to read a newspaper article about people who have no brothers or sisters. For questions 1-10, choose from the people (A-E). The people may be chosen more than once.

Which person
realises that the positive relationship they had with their parents isn't shared by all only children?

thinks people make a judgement about only children which is mistaken?

thinks they developed a better understanding of adults because of being an only child?

finds their present circumstances a challenge?

says that only children have needs which can be difficult for others to deal with?

realised at a particular point that they were happy being an only child?

was unaware that their reactions to being an only child were not unique?

had problems as a child because they lacked a necessary skill?

says they accept their situation because they don't know anything different?

mentions a positive benefit of spending a lot of time alone?

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Being an only child

"What's it like to spend a lifetime without brothers and sisters?" asks Joanna Moorhead.

A    Sam Thompson, aged 10

When my mum's friend had a baby, it made me think about being an only child for the first time. I thought, would I like to have brothers and sisters? But to be honest, my friend's sister looked quite annoying - he was always having to watch her and I decided I was better off on my own. There are lots of good things about being an only child. I have privacy, and I like that; some of my friends have to share a bedroom and I know that will never happen to me. Plus I get time on my own with Mum and Dad, and that's very special.

B    Bethany Shaw, aged 15

One of the bad things about being an only child when you're young is the reaction you get from other people. They think you're spoilt - you see that look in their eyes. And then you have to prove you're not spoilt, although you know you're not and nor are most only children. In general, I think the negatives outweigh the positives, but on the other hand it's all I've known and I'm OK with it.

C    Leah Mitchell, aged 29

I went away to school when I was seven, and the hardest thing I found was making friends. Because I was an only child, I just didn't know how to do it. The thing is that when you're an only child, often there aren't any other children at a gathering. I found being an only child interesting, in that it gave me a place at the grown-ups' table and gave me a view into their world that children in a big family might not get. And I know it has, at least partly, made me into the person I am: I never like the idea of being one of a group, for example. I'm not comfortable with being one of a gang.

D    Laura Arnold, aged 36

I know some only children feel stifled by their parents' constant demands and worries, but that wasn't my experience. I found being an only child enriching, which I think is mainly because we get on so well. I've got two children now and I do find that scary. The problem is I've absolutely no experience of this kind of situation; nothing in my past has prepared me for having to divide myself between the needs of these two little people, and the guilt is hard when I feel I've not been there enough for one of them. And on a practical level, things like sibling rivalry are going to be a whole new ball game.

E    Jasmine Weller, aged 49

I always felt a little odd, and assumed it was something about me. It was only in my 30s, when I was training to be a psychotherapist, that I found myself with a group of only children, describing our experiences. It was a revelation because it made me realise that other people felt many of the same things. Growing up in a small unit means we need time to ourselves, which can cause problems with partners and friends, who might misinterpret it as rejection. There are pluses too. Being on your own helps you to become resourceful, and develop your imagination and creativity.

KEYS: 1D 2B 3C 4D 5E 6A 7E 8C 9B 10E
EX 1 Make a list of things teenage children sometimes say about their parents.

- *They never listen to me!*
- *They never let me do what I want!*
- *They're very unreasonable.*
- *They work really hard.*
- *They help me when I have problems at school.*

What can you do to live happily with your parents?

Be honest with them and respect their point of view.

READING ACTIVITY Part 6

Ex 2 - Six sentences have been removed from the following article. Choose the correct sentence (A-G) which fits each gap (1-6). There is one extra sentence which you do not need.

A These doubts can lead to arguments and it's hard for parents to know how to deal with this.
B But that doesn't mean they're right on this occasion.
C They also need to give you the freedom to make your own decisions.
D In fact they're often not actually doing so at all.
E And don't take yourself too seriously!
F It won't help your attempts to communicate and may only increase the frustrations you're experiencing.
G As long as you show them that you appreciate this, they will begin to realise that you're not trying to cause trouble.

Talking to parents, can be difficult, but a little understanding on both sides can make it easier.

Do you ever get the feeling that your parents just don't listen to you? They'd rather discuss how much you're studying and how long you've been playing computer games this evening than helping you book tickets to see your favourite band. It's not that your parents ignore you completely; it's more that they don't see things in quite the same way as you. When you talk to them, they may give the impression that they're taking in what you say. [1] It's as if the words are going in, but the meaning just isn't getting through to them. And this isn't the only problem you may face.

As you grow up, your personality is developing and you're trying to become more independent, so naturally you have more questions and opinions about all aspects of your life. You start wondering whether your parents actually know what they're talking about. [2] That's often because it's the first time they've been responsible for a teenager and they're learning to cope!

Obviously, it's important to respect your parents and you should try to understand why they might have a different point of view from yours. Their priority is to provide you with a structured environment, where they can guide and support you. It's crucial for them to know what you're doing and that you're safe. However, it's vital that they try and see your point of view. [3] After all, in only a few years you'll probably leave home and have to look after yourself!

Although this situation is absolutely normal, it doesn't make it any easier. Ideally, your home should be a place where things can be discussed reasonably and constructively. However, parents are human too and can be hurt by what you say to them. Try to remember that in every family there are good times and bad times, but your parents are there for you throughout. [4] You'll be taking steps to earn their trust, and they might be prepared to be more tolerant.

Be sensitive! If there is something you really have to talk about, don't bring it up just before your Mum or Dad goes to work or just before bedtime. Think about what you are going to say and during the discussion, keep calm and be open and honest. Avoid talking about how your friends' parents behave in similar situations. [5] Reminding yourself that many other teenagers are having the same problems can, however, offer the best way of coping with such feelings.

The important thing is to keep talking. [6] Remember that there's no reason why people should automatically understand all your views. The more you can discuss things with your parents in a mature way, the happier you will feel. On the other hand, if you really find it impossible to talk to your parents, it might be a good idea to find a family member, teacher or professional counsellor who can help you. Above all, stay positive and remember that it won't be long before you'll be able to make your own decisions.

KEYS: 1D 2A 3C 4G 5F 6E