A Time to Experiment

Adolescence is a time when young people start to question themselves and the world around them. They start looking at themselves in a new way. They are searching for their identity and for answers to the big questions – "Who am I?" "Where am I going in life?"

Teenagers love to experiment and are constantly trying things out. They experiment with new fashions, new music, new food, new make-up, new jewellery and new hairstyles. Teenagers in the West sometimes shave their heads, grow their hair or colour it pink or yellow according to the fashions. Sometimes these experiments end in disaster!

Above all, it's important for a teen to be cool and popular with his or her friends. Many teenagers who start smoking do so only because of peer pressure. As one seventeen-year old boy said, "I know smoking is bad for my health, but ... it's a social thing, a good way to sit down and chill with my friends." Fast food outlets have become very important for teenagers. Many don't care that too many pizzas and burgers are unhealthy and should only be eaten as part of a balanced diet. They see fast food places as ideal places to hang out with their friends.

4 **Choose the most suitable meaning, within the context of the text, for each of the following words.**

1 **cool (adj)** – **(a)** cold **(b)** calm **(c)** attractive
2 **peer pressure (n)** – feeling of wanting approval from
(a) teachers **(b)** family **(c)** friends the same age
3 **chill (v)** – **(a)** something cold **(b)** relax **(c)** become less hot
4 **hang out (v)** – **(a)** spend time with **(b)** study **(c)** go shopping

5 **In groups, choose ONE of the following topics. Note down your ideas about the topic, using examples from your personal experience. Discuss the topic with your group. Then write a paragraph summarising your ideas.**

- **a** The reasons why it is easier (more difficult) to be a teenager than a child.
- **b** Bad health habits of teenagers.
- **c** What I miss most about my childhood.