

mentioned.

Hobbies

Past and Present

During the twentieth century, more and more people found that they had leisure time – time when they didn't have to work or study. This raised an interesting question. What do you do when you are free to do anything you like? Many people took up a hobby, and it's interesting to compare the hobbies people, particularly young people, choose today with the hobbies people chose, say, fifty or sixty years ago.

Stamp collecting is one of the first things that come to many people's minds when they think about hobbies. Organising your collection seems like the perfect way to relax for a few hours. It seems that people have been collecting valuable things since ancient times. 1 When stamps appeared in the nineteenth century, they were cheap and colourful and children started to keep them. By the middle of the twentieth century, collecting stamps was a popular pastime for both children and adults, with some stamps worth a large amount of money – far more than most children could afford.

There are still many people today who collect stamps, but technology has had an impact. Emails can be sent instantly and freely around the world, which means that people aren't buying stamps like they used to. 2 Rare stamps are still in demand, and probably always will be, but fifty years ago the number of collectors was higher. It seems that stamp collecting as a hobby of millions of young people has had its day.

Another hobby that has changed because of technology is building models. In the 1950s and 60s, generations of young boys and girls built plastic models of planes, boats and cars. 3 Young people are still making and showing off these models, but the nature of them has changed. In the past, they were simply made of wood or plastic, with few moving parts. Modern models have all kinds of electronic and computerised parts, in some cases making them more like robots than traditional models!

Of course, we can't ignore computers when it comes to free time. Computers have had a huge impact on leisure since they were invented in the middle of the twentieth century. 4 Gradually, however, the computer has become a part of almost every home, where it provides entertainment and a whole set of new hobbies that people fifty years ago would have thought were very weird. Today's teenagers use their computers for playing computer games, running websites, communicating with friends around the world – all hobbies that were impossible until quite recently.

Computers have changed hobbies in other ways, too. These days, no matter what hobby you are interested in, you will almost certainly find a huge amount of information on it on the internet. 5 Today's teenagers are instantly in touch with online clubs that tell them all they need to know. People have produced webpages on almost every hobby you can think of. You can get advice from experts and easily buy equipment to take your hobby to the next level. Taking up a new hobby, or developing one you already have, has never been easier or more fun.

Some hobbies, though, haven't changed much. Many young people fill their free time with activities that their parents and grandparents enjoyed. 6 Fishing is as popular as it ever was. Young people with good balance do gymnastics. Teenagers play sports and games like they always have done. A teenager from the past might be confused by a video arcade or a CD player, but many things haven't changed, and perhaps never will. Ask your parents what they did with their leisure time and you might be surprised at some of the differences, but also at some of the similarities.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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

A Hobbies seem to have become less important as time has passed.

B Young people in the past had to rely on people they knew, or perhaps the local library, to learn about their hobby.

C They proudly put these on display in their bedrooms, or wherever else their parents would let them.

D However, most people in the past were too busy and too poor to buy expensive works of art or coins.

E At first, they were seen as strange machines used by big businesses.

F That in turn means that fewer children are becoming interested in the hobby.

G For instance, people still go dancing, even if the rhythm of the music has changed.

Word Box

4 Use words and phrases from the article to complete the sentences. You've been given the first letter to help you.

1 One day, my collection of butterflies might be quite v_____ .

2 I don't know if I can a_____ to buy any new stamps for my collection.

3 I prefer t_____ songs to modern pop songs.

4 It might sound a bit w_____ , but in my free time I like to study grammar.

5 I like music that has a strong r_____ .

6 I'd like to try gymnastics, but I know I would keep losing my b_____ !

7 Let's go down to the v_____ a_____ and play *Alien Invasion*.

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