2 **Skim the text below. After reading, choose the best title from the four alternatives a, b c or d. Give your reasons as to why you chose this title.**

a. South American customs
b. My fifteenth birthday party
c. Stepping into womanhood
d. Teenage problems

The journey through life from birth to death involves several **gradual** changes, such as the **transition** from babyhood to childhood, from childhood to adolescence and from adolescence to adulthood. Every culture recognizes that these changes are important, and has developed rituals and ceremonies to mark them. A ceremony or ritual that marks a **significant** stage in someone's life is called a 'rite of passage.'

One important rite of passage happens to girls in Spanish speaking regions of Central and South America. When a girl reaches her fifteenth birthday, she has a special birthday party called a 'quinceañera.' This marks the end of her childhood, and her transition into **womanhood**. It starts with the girl dancing a **waltz** with her father. The girl is wearing a dress similar to a wedding dress, and shoes with flat heels. The dancing continues with the girl dancing only with her male relatives. After a while, the dancing stops and the ceremony marking her transition to womanhood begins.

This ceremony has three stages. First, the girl must blow out the candles of her 'childish' birthday cake, the last cake of this type she will ever have. Next, the youngest girl in the family, a sister or a cousin, hands her a present of a doll. But she gives it back, showing that she has finished with childish things. Finally, her mother gives her a present of a pair of shoes with heels. She places the shoes on her daughter's feet. This act is a **symbol** of the ending of the girl's childhood as she now steps into the world as a woman. The dancing starts again, but now the girl dances with partners who are not members of her family.

3 **Read the text in Activity 2 in more detail, then answer these questions.**

1. A rite of passage is **(a)** a journey **(b)** a party **(c)** a ritual
2. Why is 15 an important age for many young girls in Spanish speaking countries?
3. In the quinceañera, what is the significance of the following?
   (a) a birthday cake **(b)** a doll **(c)** a pair of shoes with flat heels

LIVEWORKSHEETS