BRITISH COUNCIL Aptis

Task 3 Reading Unit 7

Reading: Part 3

Four people respond in a comment section of an article about when the right time to get married is. Read their comments and answer the questions below.

Person A:
People today are getting married later in life. Back in the day, people would usually get married right after college, and they would work on improving their life in unity. Today, people strive for independence. I believe this is a better option, because you get to find out who you are, you learn how to live on your own and you know what you want. Many divorces happen because people decided they wanted something else in life.

Person B
In my personal opinion, getting married at a young age can be quite beneficial. Before your struggles begin, you find your life partner and you can deal with the hardships together. Building a life together is really amazing, you know you have someone to count on when things get tough, and you know who Will be there for you through thick and thin. Being married very young might be hard at first, but once you adapt to each Other, you have a best friend for life.

Person C
Marriage is an outdated concept. I can see why people found it necessary in the past, but today I don't see the need for it. I believe people should chase their dreams; they need to put themselves and their own needs first. In a marriage, you always need to compromise, and sometimes even give up on your dream career for the sake of your family. That is a big sacrifice and I am not sure whether many people are willing to make it. I personally could never do it, but there is still this social pressure to get married, which I find so unnecessary.

Person D
People grow up under different circumstances and have different ideas about life, so I don't think we can make a general statement on when it is best to get married. For some people, it Will be later in life, while for others, it might even be right after secondary school, and many Will choose not to ever go down that road. Whatever decision we make, we will still have to face different life challenges, and hopefully, people Will be able to make the right choices for themselves. I believe one should get married when they feel ready, regardless of their age or the situation in their life as things are never going to be perfect and there is always going to be something that needs to be changed.

1. Who believes marriage is an old-fashioned institution?
2. Who believes people should get married regardless of other circumstances in their life?
3. Who believes people should work on their careers before getting married?
4. Who believes one should only concentrate on their goals in life?
5. Who thinks people should get married when they are young?
6. Who believes there is always compromise in a marriage?
7. Who believes that age is not important, as long as the person feels ready to get married?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

BRITISH COUNCIL Aptis

Reading: Part 3

Four people respond in a comment section of an article about social media. Read their comments and answer the questions.

Person A

The Internet and social networks are a two-dimensional phenomenon. And people live in a three-dimensional world. And I think they should strive for the fourth dimension. And higher, if there are any. Not to be projected in 2D, like cartoon characters, which is how they experience infantile degradation. 2D is not determined by time, so a lot of time and life energy is lost in the 3D–2D relation. Viewed in this way, the Internet represents a great deception and slavery of the soul and mind. Social networks are even more dangerous because they propagate the use of both the official name and the image, and can cause narcissistic personality disorder due to self-love for one's character, like the mythological Narcissus, a man, and are accompanied by the curse of inability to get a partner in the real 3D world.

Person B

Those were beautiful times, when I didn't know where and how my colleagues spent their free time, that my cousin went on vacation to Greece, that a friend from high school got engaged... I really don't get that posting of personal life in public. Maybe it's because I have nothing to publish, but it all seems like a desperate distraction. I was in those waters in 2011, trying to come up with interesting statuses and comments on the Internet. And then I wondered what it was for; just internet points and likes? Sometimes it would take me up to three hours a day to think of what to post and interfere with me while I worked, studied... Then I realised that there are much better and more important things in life than that.

Person C

On social networks, young people today often express their feelings, but also their inclination towards art: through songs, quotes, videos and photographs. On the one hand, they can show their individuality, share what they care about with the world and see that they are not alone, that their problem is not so big and scary. On the other hand, they can express their creativity and find inspiration in the work of their peers. In adolescence, inclusion in various peer groups and communities is very important for their self-confidence and self-esteem. Using social networks and connecting through them can be of great benefit to adolescents, not only in socialisation, but also in spreading messages and points of view.

Person D

I am annoyed by many things, but again — we are all users of social networks, everyone needs attention from time to time, so we satisfy that need in this way. Their biggest flaw is the creation of an apparent network and connection, without essential closeness. It is stupid when I see sarcasm and the effort to be witty at any cost at any moment, building an image and the general opinion that you are so important and that someone is following you because of your importance, and the opinion that everyone is copying you. And in general, it annoys me when I see that someone is promoting themselves too much, especially when that someone hasn't been a kid for a long time. What irritates me the most is the desire to fake an ideal life, a face without wrinkles, a life.

1. Who thinks it's desperate to publish everything on social media?
2. Who thinks you should strive to live in the real world?
3. Who thinks social networks hold us back in forming relationships?
4. Who thinks you can get more self-confidence through social media?
5. Who thinks that social media is misrepresenting an ideal image of life?
6. Who thinks social media is a good way to express your feelings and ideas?
7. Who thinks that we use social media to satisfy our need for attention?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Reading: Part 3

Four people respond in the comments section of an online magazine article about education and work. Read the texts and then answer the questions below.

Petra
As you get older, responsibilities like a job and family dominate your life. It can be hard to balance things. Studying at university is demanding. So you should do it at an age when you are independent and carefree. It is also important to learn how the world of business works. Spending unpaid time in a company is a great way to get that experience. Any course that can give you an opportunity to do that is worth considering.

Antonio
Life doesn't really get serious until you hit your mid-twenties. Before that, try out different things and get some life experience. It's only as you approach your thirties that you need to get serious about your career. That's the time to start thinking about further education. Many colleges offer inexpensive courses for more mature students. Going back to student life for a year is a great idea, and you can then return to the world of work at management level.

Eleanor
Nowadays, it is popular for school leavers to take a break before they think about an occupation or a place at university. I think the most important thing is to start working as soon as you can. You need practical experience for your CV, and that can be more valuable than a diploma. Nevertheless, your studies do not have to stop just because you are working. Colleges and universities offer options for people who want to do both.

Jermaine
I think we should all keep learning, but you don't need a piece of paper from an institution to prove it. There are many free courses available online. Of course, not all are good, but a little research will help you identify which one is best for you. A lot of young people get into debt because they have to pay for their studies. With the resources available online these days, you can take control. You won't regret it.

1. Who thinks you should study when you are older?
2. Who thinks formal qualifications are too expensive?
3. Who thinks you should go to university when you are young?
4. Who thinks you should study independently?
5. Who thinks you should combine a job with studying?
6. Who thinks you should choose a course that is practical?
7. Who thinks you should get a job immediately after leaving school?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

BRITISH COUNCIL **Aptis**

Reading: Part 3

Read the four opinions posted on a travel forum. Then, answer the questions.

How do you spend your free time?

Person A

What is better than lying in the sun all day long? I surely can't think of anything. When I go on vacation, I like to experience tropical beaches and exotic places. I work hard all year long and I try to make the most of my time off. However, I must admit that I tend to indulge more than I normally would than I'm at home. Like for example, on my last holiday to Dubai, I rented a yacht and had a lobster dinner nearly every night. It was so luxurious!

Person B

Ever since I can remember, we have gone on a family holiday to Greece every June. There are just so many islands to discover, I can't really imagine going anywhere else. Each village has its own unique culture, and I have been studying Greek to know more about the islanders. It does make things easier when you have your own boat, which my family does. My dad sailed it over from England when he was a teenager.

Person C

Have you ever gone hiking on a snowy volcano? I haven't yet, but it is on my bucket list. I have been dreaming of going to Iceland ever since I saw photos in a travel blog. Unfortunately, it's a bit out of my travel budget. Last summer, when I went trekking in the Rocky Mountains of Canada, I took some incredible photos of the breath-taking views. I packed a tent and camped out in the wilderness. It was a great way to save money and I got to see the beautiful stars too.

Person D

I am a history major so naturally I love to go to museums when I travel. However, my thirst for culture doesn't stop there. I try to go to the sites of famous events and try to imagine what life was like in the past. I don't care much for the hot weather. In fact, I travel at off-season times to avoid it. I hate crowds so it works out well for me. I usually get a cheaper rate on flights that way, which is a bonus. I use the money I save to book all of my excursions

Who ...

1. spends a lot of money on holiday?
2. enjoys outdoor activities?
3. participates in tradition?
4. enjoys landscapes?
5. dislikes busy places?
6. prefers hot destinations?
7. is learning a new skill?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

BRITISH COUNCIL **Aptis**

Reading: Part 3

Read the four opinions posted on a film forum. Then, answer the questions.

How was the movie?

Person A

I had high expectations for this film. It's a sequel I had been looking forward to since the end of the last one. I even went to the cinema alone so that I wouldn't be interrupted by anyone. But, was I ever let down! The special effects were so unrealistic and poorly done. There was very little character development and too many plot holes in the story line. I can't believe I waited a whole year for that. The only saving grace was the lead actor. He played his part well, but I can't say the same for the others.

Person B

I don't really like watching movies in the cinema. I would much rather stay in and stream one at home. My friends really wanted to see this new film, so I joined them on a whim. The tickets cost an arm and a leg and I couldn't believe the prices for concessions! I could buy 3 packages of popcorn at the supermarket for the price of medium size! Was the movie good? Well, yes, it was alright, but I could have done without spending all that money!

Person C

Normally, I avoid films that are based on books that I have read. I don't feel like they ever do the literature any justice. However, this one was the exception. The director really respected the author's vision and included all the necessary plot points. Of course, some details were missing, but if they were included, the film would be like 6 hours long. The set was also amazing. Overall, I can't find a flaw! That being said, I still don't think I'll watch any other book-based movies.

Person D

I can't stand musicals. I think there are too many dance numbers and not enough content. So, I was hesitant when my girlfriend wanted to go watch one. I can't believe I am admitting it, but it blew me away! The emotion of the actors was incredible. I laughed. I cried. I did think it could include a bit more dialogue though. Action films are still my favourite, but I definitely will give musicals another chance after enjoying this one so much.

Who ...

1. watched a different genre?
2. attended the cinema unaccompanied?
3. disliked the experience?
4. thought the film was perfect?
5. watched the movie impulsively?
6. only liked part of the cast?
7. would watch something similar in the future?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

BRITISH COUNCIL **Aptis**

Reading: Part 3

Read the four opinions posted on a forum discussing work-life balance. Then, answer the questions.

Work-Life Balance

Person A

To be honest, I keen on going to the office every day. Having a physical space that defines my job really helps me separate work and home life. I wouldn't say I am close with any one I work with, but we do have some pleasant office banter which helps pass the time. When I leave my job, I don't think about it at all and I can focus all my energy on my two-year old. The salary isn't the greatest, but we get over a month of vacation time a year and sick days. It's ideal for a working mom like me because I can use them to take care of my daughter.

Person B

Every morning, I listen to music as I get ready. I feel like this habit really helps me get into the mood for work. It's not that I hate my job, but I just despise the journey. It sometimes takes me over an hour to get to the office by public transport, and if there's delays, that figure could double. Some of my friends have the flexibility to do their jobs from home, but unfortunately my boss has not come around to that idea yet. We get free coffee and lunch catered at work, but I would gladly prepare my own food if it meant I could save hours of my life travelling to and from the office.

Person C

I'm in between jobs at the moment. Even though my last job was perfectly suited to my university degree and close to home, it wasn't the right fit for me. My boss had unrealistic expectations and my co-workers were so competitive and unsupportive. Some say that's what working in Journalism is like everywhere. It's nice to be taking a break from such a negative environment, and I am using this time to focus on my interests. I have been designing jewellery in my free time, and I am very passionate about it. I might even try to turn it into a career.

Person D

I worked for a company for six years and made some incredible bonds with my colleagues. What started off as an occasional after work happy hour outing to celebrate the end of the week turned into life-long friendships. I think that is common when you work in such a stressful environment. The salary was quite generous, so I didn't mind the long hours at the time. That being said, I quit when I got married. I can't imagine having a family under those working conditions. I now work for a different firm, but I still see all of my old co-workers regularly.

Who ...

1. developed relationships at work?
2. is a parent?
3. is unemployed?
4. wants to change industries?
5. has a routine?
6. has a long commute?
7. has good benefits?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

BRITISH COUNCIL **Aptis**

Reading: Part 3

Read the four opinions posted on a neighbourhood forum. Then, answer the questions.

My neighbourhood

Person A

I have only been living here for a few weeks, so I am still quite new to the area. So far, I am pretty impressed with all that the neighbourhood has to offer. I thought I would miss my old area a lot more, but that's not the case. There's a ton of nature around here. So far, I am really enjoying taking long walks through the ravine and I have also started going jogging along the path. It would be perfect if I owned a dog.

Person B

When I moved to the neighbourhood, I had the intention of going for runs around the block instead of going to the gym. However, that changed when I saw how busy the streets are in the morning. There are so many people that I feel like I am in an obstacle course trying to get past them. That's the main reason that I really miss my old area. It was never crowded. I guess the advantage of living in a heavily-populated place is the transport links. I've sold my car and started taking the buses and it has saved me loads of money.

Person C

I have mixed feelings about where I live now. There is quite a big park by my house, which I thought would be perfect to walk my dogs in. However, it actually isn't pet-friendly at all. There is no off-leash area for my pups to get some exercise. While there is a trail, it is shared by walkers and cyclists, so it could be quite dangerous for animals. Asides from that, there are very few benches and no water fountains. I think it could be so much better equipped.

Person D

I think my favourite part about my neighbourhood is the walkability. I have never owned a car and I don't believe I will ever need one if I continue to live here. I have a small market just up the street where I buy most of my groceries. I know supermarkets tend to be cheaper to buy in bulk, but I much prefer the interaction I get in these mom-and-pop shops. There are also a few tasty family-owned restaurants all within two kilometres that are much better than any chain eatery in the city centre.

Who ...

1. is a pet owner?
2. would like more facilities?
3. recently moved in?
4. prefers his/her old neighbourhood?
5. supports local businesses?
6. exercises outside?
7. has changed their form of transportation?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

BRITISH COUNCIL **Aptis**

Reading: Part 3

Four people respond in the comment section of an online magazine article about living with their parents. Read their comments and answer the questions below.

Living with parents

Person A

If I had the money, I would move out immediately. All I want is somewhere that's my own, where I can do what I want, where I can have my own furniture and pictures, where no one can tell me what to do. If it was my place, I'd be happy to do the cleaning and things like that, I would look after it. But at the moment it's just a dream, because I can't find a job.

Person B

I'm perfectly happy living at home. If I lived on my own, I'd have to pay rent, do the housework, and the cooking. Here my mother does my washing, she cleans my room, and of course she cooks, and her food is wonderful. I have a nice room, I have my computer where I can watch TV ... Why would I want to leave? Even if I could afford it, I wouldn't move out. Not until I get married ...

Person C

It isn't that my parents aren't good to me, they are. If they weren't, I wouldn't live with them. But I just don't feel independent. I'm 29, but I sometimes worry that if I come back very late after a night out, I'll find them still awake waiting up for me. It's never happened, but it still makes me want to move out. Besides, it is a bit awkward to meet my friends at my parents' home.

Person D

I'd love to move out. I get on well with my parents, but I think I'd get on with them even better if I didn't live at home. My mother drives me mad - it isn't her fault, but she does. And I'd really like to have a dog, but my mother is allergic to them. I need to find my own place and visiting my parents from time to time will be enough.

Who thinks ...

1. It is much better to live with the parents.
2. He/she will have a pet when he/she moves out.
3. It is uncomfortable to get late at home.
4. He/she will move out as soon as he/she gets a job.
5. His/her mother is an excellent cook.
6. Moving out would improve his/her relationship with his/her parents.
7. His/her home's design and decoration would be different.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

BRITISH COUNCIL **Aptis**

Reading: Part 3

Four people respond in the comment section of an online magazine article about technology in our daily life. Read their comments and answer the questions below.

Technology

Person A

My mother bought me a microwave oven recently. I couldn't believe it - like me, she was never very keen on modern technology and there she was, buying me a microwave. I live on my own in a one-bedroomed flat and it just about fits into the corner of my tiny kitchen. I have to admit, it's extremely handy, particularly as I don't have a great deal of time to cook when I get home from work. I virtually depend on it now.

Person B

Like most people we have our fair share of appliances. I couldn't imagine living without a freezer or a washing machine; and who hasn't got a cooker or a fridge nowadays? I know people had to cope without these things 40 or 50 years ago, but the world was a different place then, wasn't it? Everything's so much faster now, and in some families men and women work just as many hours as each other away from home. We couldn't do that and bring up children without the support of all these labour-saving devices.

Person C

First of all, of course, we got a PC, partly because it's so useful for work, but also, I suppose, because everyone else seemed to have one. That was fine for a couple of years, but then the kids took it over with their computer games, so we got ourselves a laptop for our own exclusive use. It doesn't take up much room, and being portable we can use it in any part of the house. After that, we just couldn't help ourselves every time a new piece of technology came out; a palmtop or personal organizer, a digital video camera, a video mobile phone - we just had to have it. And the more things we buy, of course, the more we want.

Person D

We're a bit too old for all this technology. A friend of ours says we should be on the Internet but I can't see why, and to be honest I'd be too scared to use it. It's all too fast for me. In the old days everything used to be so much more simple and people seemed to spend a lot more time chatting to each other. That's one of the things I miss in this technological world.

Who ...

1. finds it impossible to resist buying the latest technology. _____
2. is frightened of some of the new technology. _____
3. likes the speed with which things can be done. _____
4. thinks people talk to each other less now. _____
5. has changed her way of thinking. _____
6. feels that technology is important in the modern-day family. _____
7. doesn't have much room for domestic appliances. _____

LIVEWORKSHEETS

BRITISH COUNCIL Aptis

Reading: Part 3

The History of Tea

A) Ancient China: The Birthplace of Tea

The history of tea dates back to ancient China, almost 5,000 years ago. According to legend, in 2732 B.C. Emperor Shen Nung discovered tea when leaves from a wild tree blew into his pot of boiling water. He was immediately interested in the pleasant scent of the resulting brew, and drank some. Legend says the Emperor described a warm feeling as he drank the intriguing brew, as if the liquid was investigating every part of his body. Shen Nung named the brew "ch'a", the Chinese character meaning to check or investigate. In 200 B.C. a Han Dynasty Emperor ruled that when referring to tea, a special written character must be used illustrating wooden branches, grass, and a man between the two. This written character, also pronounced "ch'a" symbolized the way tea brought humankind into balance with nature for the Chinese culture.

B) China's Tea History

The popularity of tea in China continued to grow rapidly from the 4th through the 8th century. No longer merely used for its medicinal properties, tea became valued for everyday pleasure and refreshment. Tea plantations spread throughout China, tea merchants became rich, and expensive, elegant tea wares became the banner for the wealth and status of their owners. The Chinese empire tightly controlled the preparation and cultivation of the crop. It was even specified that only young women, presumably because of their purity, were to handle the tea leaves. These young female handlers were not to eat garlic, onions, or strong spices in case the odor on their fingertips might contaminate the precious tea leaves.

C) Tibet's Tea History

The Chinese had introduced tea to Tibet by the dawn of the 9th century. Tibet's rugged climate and rocky terrain made cultivation of their own plants difficult, so tea had to be imported from China via yak caravan. The long, tiring journey into Tibet by yak took nearly one year and was threatened not only by the dramatic terrain of some of the highest mountains in the world, but by teaseeking thieves and pirates. To keep up with the high Tibetan tea demand, nearly two to three hundred tea-laden yaks entered the country daily. Tea became so popular in Tibet and the surrounding areas that it was used as a form of currency. Compressed tea was a common form of payment for almost anything, and workers and servants were routinely paid in this way.

D) Japan's Tea History

In the early 9th century, Japanese visitors to China were introduced to the values and traditions of tea. The Buddhist monk Dengyo Daishi is credited for bringing Chinese tea seeds to Japan when he returned from his studies abroad. Tea became an integral part of Japanese monastery life; monks used tea to help stay alert during meditation sessions. By the early 1300's tea gained popularity throughout Japanese society, but it's early religious importance permanently coloured the meaning and value the Japanese associate with tea and directly influenced the Japanese Tea Ceremony.

E) Russia's Tea History

In 1618, the Chinese presented a gift of tea to Tsar Alexis of Russia. Everyone was curious about the new beverage and tea quickly gained popularity. A camel caravan trade route emerged to transport tea into the country. This caravan covered 11,000 miles and took nearly 1½ years to travel by camel. To keep the tea-hungry Russians satisfied, nearly 6,000 camels - each carrying 600 pounds of tea - entered Russia each year. In 1903 the camel caravan was replaced by the famous Trans-Siberian Railway, which slashed the transportation time from 1½ years to just over a week.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

F) Europe's Tea History

The Portuguese and Dutch first imported tea into Europe in 1610. Rembrandt was just 4 years old! England's dance with tea did not start until 1662 when King Charles II married the Portuguese princess Catherine of Braganza. Britain's new Queen had always loved tea and brought with her, as part of her dowry, a chest of fine Chinese tea. She began serving the tea to her aristocratic friends at Court, and word of the exotic Royal beverage spread quickly.

1. Which country changed the animal transport to a new type of commuting?
2. In which country did they use to treat tea with utmost caution?
3. Where was tea needed for spiritual awakening?
4. Where did the tea ceremony trend start?
5. Which country faced adversities because of the tea commerce?
6. Who described an interesting feeling after drinking certain brew?
7. Where tea was used as a monthly wage?
8. Who was very young when tea shipping started?