

Simon, 47, and his daughter Emily, 16, answer today's question ...

Is teenage life better now than in the past?

home → life → teenagers



14

Simon Everything is so different from when I was a teenager. Technology is the greatest change. I had a computer – but only for games, really. And I remember my dad's first mobile phone in the car – it was **huge**! But the internet and smartphones changed teenage life forever. We wrote letters; *they* are texting each other all day. We bought a few CDs every month; *they've* got almost every song in the world – in a **tiny** device in their pocket! When we moved home, we often never saw old friends again. Now it's simple to stay in contact with anyone, anywhere. To me, teenage life looks more exciting than it was.

Not everything is positive, of course. I don't think teenagers now are as healthy as we were in the past. They don't do enough exercise. Without technology, we were more active and spent a lot of our free time outside. Roads were safer, of course, but it's **unbelievable** to think that often our parents didn't have any idea where we were!



READING

1 Read the article quickly. Who thinks teenage life ...

1 is better now?

2 was better in the past?

2 Read the article again. Choose the correct answers.

- 1 When Simon was a teenager,
 - A his dad owned a computer and a mobile phone.
 - B he owned a computer.
 - C he played games on his dad's phone.
- 2 Simon thinks that before the internet
 - A teenagers spent a lot of money on music.
 - B it was hard to stay friends with people you didn't see.
 - C teenagers enjoyed writing letters.
- 3 Why does Simon think that teenagers spent a lot of time outside?
 - A because their parents weren't worried about them
 - B because the roads weren't as dangerous
 - C because phones and computers didn't exist
- 4 Emily thinks that teenagers
 - A need technology for their school work.
 - B shouldn't use social media.
 - C aren't as happy as they were.
- 5 During the week, Emily
 - A has extra music and language lessons.
 - B never has time for lunch.
 - C doesn't do any sport.
- 6 Why does Emily think she has to go to university?
 - A because her friends want to go
 - B because jobs will be harder to find in the future
 - C because she always gets good marks at school

Emily Yes, technology makes our lives easier and is now essential for entertainment and school. But it brings problems too – the worst are **awful** things like bullying on social media ...

My problem is that teenage life is too busy now. On weekdays, as well as normal lessons, there are clubs at lunchtimes. Then after school on Mondays I have Spanish lessons, trumpet on Wednesdays and our band practises on Fridays. And weekends are just not long enough! On Saturday there's yoga club and on Sunday we often see relatives. Then there's homework, of course. Sometimes I'm **exhausted** on Sunday evenings!

The future will be harder for us, too. And I get worried about that. My friends and I feel the most important thing is to get a good degree – or we won't be able to leave home and get a job. And that means we have to get good marks in everything now. It's stressful.

I think my parents' teenage years were more **relaxed** than ours are today.



3 Match the **highlighted** words in the text to the meanings.

awful

exhausted

huge

relaxed

tiny

unbelievable

1 difficult to think is true

2 calm and not busy

3 very tired

4 very bad

5 very small

6 very big



TALKING POINTS

How was your parents' teenage life different from yours?

What problems can modern life bring for teenagers?

READING

1 Read the title of the newspaper article. Tick (✓) the information you think it will include. Read the article quickly and check.

- 1 not much choice in courses
- 2 the number of students who dislike school
- 3 reasons students are unhappy at school
- 4 the most boring subjects at school
- 5 the best types of jobs
- 6 a solution to the problem

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

EDUCATION IS BORING AND DOESN'T PREPARE THEM FOR THE FUTURE, SAY STUDENTS

Do you find your school lessons boring? Many teenagers say they don't enjoy their classes and think the education system needs to change to make it more interesting and useful.

Around 80% of students said they were unhappy with their school life, and almost 50% said there were not enough courses to choose from.

When asked how they felt about their education, students said they often didn't find it very interesting. 'It does only a tiny bit to help us find **employment**,' says Naomi, 16, from Cardiff. 'This really needs to change so our education makes sure we are helped to become successful later in life.'

Nicholas, 13, from London says when he is studying in class, he is often exhausted because he is always doing tests, which makes him lose interest. 'It's always about getting good results in tests, not about giving you more **knowledge** to help you when you leave school to get a job.'

The other thing students say is a problem is that often the lessons don't include anything connected to their interests. 'They don't seem to know who we are as young people in the 21st century. There isn't much technology used in the classroom, whereas in our personal lives, we – and everyone else – use technology in lots of different and exciting ways,' says Jessie, 16, from Winchester.

Education experts agree: 'Today's system is too **focused on** helping students pass exams and it doesn't help them prepare themselves for real life and work,' says Nigel Jones from EducateUK, an organisation that wants to make changes to the education system.

But what can be done to change this? 'We need to focus education on helping young people to develop the **skills** and knowledge they need in the modern world,' says Jones. 'We think that there should be a new, more relaxed course system that gives teachers more choices to make lessons more fun, interesting and **practical**.'

The idea is popular with students too. 'I'd love to have new, more useful classes at my school,' says Mark, 14. 'I'd like to learn computer programming so that I can become a video-games developer when I'm older.'

2 Read the newspaper article and answer the questions.

- 1 Most students say that they think their education is
 - a good enough.
 - b not good enough.
- 2 Naomi thinks that the education system
 - a isn't very good at helping students find a job.
 - b helps students be successful in life.
- 3 Nicholas says he feels tired because he
 - a has a job after school.
 - b does lots of exams.
- 4 Jessie thinks that teachers
 - a don't use technology enough in the classroom.
 - b use technology too much in the classroom.
- 5 Nigel Jones thinks education
 - a needs to change.
 - b should prepare students for exams.
- 6 Nigel thinks that lessons should be
 - a more relaxing.
 - b more useful.

3 Match the **highlighted** words in the article to their meanings.

focused on

knowledge

practical

skills

employment

- 1 giving most attention to
- 2 facts and information
- 3 things you can do well
- 4 work
- 5 useful in real situations

4 Complete the sentences with a word from the box.

employment focused on knowledge practical skills

- 1 It can be difficult to find _____ after leaving school.
- 2 I want to get a really good job where I can use my _____.
- 3 This book has some really _____ tips on how to pass English exams.
- 4 My uncle has a very good _____ of trains.
- 5 My sister is in her last year of high school and is really _____ getting into a good university.