

## Freedom and you

### 1. Are your parents strict?

Task 1

**Which of the following are you allowed to do? At what age are you allowed to do these things?**

- Choose your bedtime
- Travel to school alone
- Visit friends' houses after school
- Come back late at night on public transport
- Use chat rooms on the Internet
- Smoke or drink alcohol
- Own a mobile

**Think of 2 things you would like to do that your parents do not allow.**

### 2. Your parents' generation: Did they have more freedom?

Task 2

**Compare your life to the life of your parents when they were your age.**

Example: My parents didn't have as much money to spend and they didn't go shopping as much as I do.

**Compare:**

- social life
- spending money
- school
- work
- holidays
- boyfriends/girlfriends

### 3. Freedom for teenagers in the UK

#### Task 3 (a)

#### Read this text and find the answers to these questions

- a. Who is worried about teenagers in the UK?
- b. Why are parents trying to reduce their children's freedom?
- c. How can parents find out where their children are?

#### Freedom for teenagers in the UK

The long summer holidays are finally over and some parents are pleased. But why?

"We worry more about their safety in the holidays" explains one mother from North London. If teenagers are not wandering around on public transport in a big and potentially dangerous city, they are chatting to strangers in an internet chat room! Well, that's an extreme picture of the UK today, but many parents are worried about how much freedom they can give their children during the holidays and at weekends.

Weekends are not the only time to worry! Newspapers are full of stories about too many school kids going to school by car because their parents do not want them to travel alone on a bus or train. This summer there were more frightening stories of teenagers disappearing with unsuitable friends that they met on the net. All the Media stories help increase parents fears but is the UK really so dangerous? Many young people feel that life for their parents was easier.

In the 1960s young people played in the streets more and travelled around town without their parents. "At least our parents can keep tabs on us", says 16 year old Julia." So many people have mobile phones now and their parents ring to find out where they are. I use my mobile to get Dad to come to the station when I arrive late". Mobiles are not just expensive toys, they help keep young people safe. Most importantly, they make parents feel better. Only one problem though, some young people have been attacked by thieves who want to steal their mobile phones.

Young people like going out with friends but they now need to learn how to get home safely. 5 million young people in the UK between the ages of 9 to 16 use chat rooms to make friends, but they too need to be careful and never give their personal details to a stranger. Young people today have more opportunities to meet new people and go out at night more than their parents ever did. Now schools, television and newspapers must help teenagers to enjoy their freedom and to be responsible for their own safety.

Task 3 (b)

**Look at the text again and find:**

- two potentially dangerous situations for UK teenagers
- examples of how parents might be over-protective.

**4. In your country**

Task 4

**Discuss these questions.**

1. How does your country compare with the UK?
2. Are parents afraid for your safety?
3. Do young people use chat rooms?
4. Do parents give their children mobiles?
5. Are young people trained in personal safety? How to stay safe?
6. Do young people think their parents are too strict?

**5. Keeping safe**

Task 5

**Many UK teenagers of 14 and above go to clubs or parties at the weekend. What advice can you give them?**

Example:

- Tell someone where you are going.
- Give a telephone number if possible
- Don't accept a lift home from a stranger

**Think of 4 more important things to remember if you are going out at night.**

## 6. What's the best age?

### Task 6

**At what age do you think it is OK to do the following things? 12? 14? 16? 18? 21? Never?**

- Go to a night club with friends on a Saturday night
- Visit a chat room on the Internet
- Go on holiday without parents
- Go out on a "date" with a boy or girl
- Drink alcohol in a bar or café
- Smoke
- Travel alone on public transport to school or the nearest town
- Drive a car

## 7. Young people and the law

### Task 7

Young people in the UK are allowed to drive a car when they are 17, they can buy alcohol in a pub when they are 18 and they can take a part time job when they are 13.

**What are the laws for young people in your country? Would you like to change any of them?**