**Unit 7**

**Part One Preview questions**

1. How will you describe people in their twenties?

**Positive: energetic/incandescent with their energies, impatient to be on their own, eager to find their own way of living in the world, ambitious, brave, curious, adventurous, vivacious, confident, optimistic, cheerful, straightforward**

**Negative: changeable, baffled, confused, lovelorn (sometimes), rash, reckless, immatureway of living in the world.**

1. What does “the trying twenties” mean? Why is the twenties a “trying” period?

**Here “trying” means straining one’ s power of endurance, so the phrase means that the twenties is a period in which people undergo many ordeals that will temper their willpower and make them more mature.**

**Twenty-somethings are presented with numerous tasks which they are not yet equipped to deal with. For example, to prepare for a career , to find a mentor who will guide you through life, to find a mate with whom you will spend yourlife, etc. These are the things that were once irrelevant, but now have become imminent. In a sense these are the “trials” they need to go through as they are becoming an adult.**

1. Who is the author? Can you introduce the author briefly?
2. What do you expect to read in this passage? What is it likely about?
3. **Structure of the Text**
4. Part One (Para.1--- Para. 10):

The twenties is the period when \_\_ **one is eager to find his own way of life** \_\_\_\_. Some choose to go to **\_\_\_** **graduate school\_\_\_\_\_\_**, some **\_\_\_\_\_** **get married \_\_\_\_\_\_** early and **\_\_\_\_\_\_** **tryout different jobs \_\_**to see which suits them best, and some\_\_\_\_\_\_ **stay single \_\_\_**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **put their career first \_\_**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  
(2) Part Two (Para. 11- Para. 14)

Two impulses are at work during this period. One is to **\_\_\_\_\_\_** **be set as early as possible \_\_\_\_**; the other is to\_\_\_\_\_**keep experimenting**. **A balance struck between the two \_\_** determines what one’s twenties will be like.

(3)Part Three (Para. 15 --- Para. 24)

People in their twenties have many **\_\_\_\_“illusions”\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** which fill them with **\_\_\_\_** **enthusiasm \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** in every effort they make. Illusions also **\_\_\_\_\_** **bring will power \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**. Young people don’t usually have much money while the problems they face are endless, but **\_\_\_\_\_\_** **with sturdy wills \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**they can overcome any difficulty.

1. Part Four (Para. 25 --- Para. 30)

Twenty-somethings also tend to believe there is **\_\_\_\_** **only one true course in life \_**, which cannot be **\_\_\_** **altered \_\_\_\_\_\_\_**. They **\_\_\_\_\_\_** **are blind to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**other possibilities. Thus if they find any part of their personality not congruent with that course, they will regard it as **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** **undesirable \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** and try to suppress it.

They **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** **shape their character \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**to fit the course they have chosen, instead of the other way round. They will rediscover**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** **those suppressed parts \_\_\_\_\_\_\_** later in their forties.

**Part Two Comprehending Questions, key words and important sentences**

Part One (Para.1--- Para. 10):

**Comprehending Questions:**

1. What features of the Twenties have been mentioned?

**Incandescent with our energies, having outgrown the family and the formlessness of our transiting years, we are impatient to pour ourselves into the exactly right form — our own way of living in the world.**

1. Why does the author think graduate students is a safe and familiar form for those who can afford it?

**It postpones having to prove oneself in the bigger, bullying arena.**

1. What tasks of of this period can you find?

**To shape a dream, that vision of one’s own possibilities in the world that will generate energy, aliveness, and hope. To prepare for a lifework. To find a mentor if possible. And to form the capacity for intimacy without losing in the process whatever constancy of self we have thus far assembled.**

1. How might the young man with vague aspirations of his future career spend his twenties?

**get married early and tryout different jobs to see which suits them best**

1. What about the woman’s life in her twenties?

**stay single and put their career first**

1. Which one of the terrifying aspects of the twenties has been discussed? Is it true or false in the author’s eyes? And why?

**One of the terrifying aspects of the twenties is the conviction that the choices we make are irrevocable.**

**False**

**But since in our twenties we’re new at making major life choices, we cannot imagine that possibilities for a better integration will occur to us later on, when some inner growth has taken place.**

**Paraphrase the following sentences:**

1. *Incandescent with our energies, having outgrown the family and the formlessness of our transiting years, we are impatient to pour ourselves into the exactly right form — our own way of living in the world.* **(Para. 1)**

**Full of energies, we don’t rely on the family any more and are beginning to establish our own identity. We are eager to find a way of life that is most suited to us.**

1. *The Trying Twenties is one of the longer and more stable periods, stable, that is, in comparison with the rockier passages that lead to and exit from it.* **(Para. 9)**

**Compared with the teenage period and the thirties, the Trying Twenties is longer and more stable.**

1. *Although each nail driven into our first external life structure is tentative, a tryout, once we have made our commitments we are convinced they are the right ones.* **(Para. 9)**

**Although the things we do that may fix our life’s course are only experimental, we are confident enough to believe our choices are correct once we have made up our mind.**

**Language Points:**

incandescent; **characterized by glowing zeal**

provisional; **for the present time only, with the strong probability of being changed**

make one’s move; **take action**

moratorium; **(pl. moratoria) a permissive delay; legal authorization to delay payment of a debt**

exhilarating; **very exciting; making lively or joyful**

streak; **— a quality which sometimes appears among different qualities of character**

ego-boosting; encouraging; ego: **self-esteem; boost: help or encourage**

tentative; done, said, etc. to test sth**.; hesitant or exploratory; not definite or decisive**

momentum; **the force gained by the movement or development of events**

irrevocable; **that cannot be changed once started**

Part Two (Para. 11- Para. 14)

**Comprehending Questions:**

1. What are two impulses?

**One is to build a firm, safe structure for the future by making strong commitments, to be set. The other urge is to explore and experiment, keeping any structure tentative and therefore easily reversible.**

1. What does the balance struck between these impulses do?

**The balance struck between these two impulses makes for differences in the way people pass through this period of provisional adulthood and largely determines the way we feel about ourselves at the end of it.**

**Paraphrase the following sentences:**

*Yet people who slip into a ready-made form without much self-examination are likely to find themselves following a locked-in pattern.* **(Para. 12)**

**Yet people who follow exactly in others footsteps without considering whether it suits him may find that there is too little excitement in their life.**

**Language Points:**

make...for; **result in**

provisional; **for the present time only, with the strong probability of being changed**

Part Three (Para. 15 --- Para. 24)

**Comprehending Questions:**

1. What can we learn from the vivacious, 24-year-old junior executive?

**Even while we are delighted to display our shiny new capacities, secret fears persist that we are not going to get away with it.**

1. Who is Goethe? What does his hero suffer from and how does he end his life?

**Goethe himself was a poet. his hero torn by his hopeless passion for the “perfect” woman, drank a glass of wine, raised a pistol, and put a bullet through his head.**

1. What’s the author’s opinion of “illusions”?

**“Illusions” is usually thought of as a pejorative, something we should get rid of if we suspect we have it. The illusions of the twenties, however, may be essential to infuse our first commitments with excitement and intensity, and to sustain us in those commitments long enough to gain us some experience in living.**

**Paraphrase the following sentences:**

1. *So we hasten to try on life’s uniforms and possible partners, in search of the perfect fit.* **(Para. 17)**

**So we tryout different ways of life and spend time with different people who may become our lifelong partners in order to find the ones most suitable for us.**

1. *“Perfect” is that person we imbue with the capacity to enliven and support our vision or the person we believe in and want to help.*  **(Para. 18)**

**The “perfect” person is someone who stands by us and helps us realize our dreams, or it is someone we trust and want to help.**

1. *Goethe’s hero struck such a chord in young people throughout Europe that a wave of suicides followed the book’s publication.* **(Para. 18)**

**Young people all over Europe identified so strongly with Werther, the hero of Goethe’s book, that many of them also committed suicide when their relationship failed after the book was published.**

1. *For if we didn’t believe in the omnipotent force of our intelligence, if we were not convinced that we could will ourselves into being whatever kind of persons we wish to be, it wouldn’t make much sense to try.* **(Para. 24)**

**Because if we didn’t believe that we could do anything as long as we could make the best use of our intelligence, or that with strong will power we could always become the kind of persons we want to become, we would never bother to try. If we have doubts about our ability, we will not have the guts to do anything.**

**Language Points:**

vivacious; **full of life and high spirits**

trepidation; **great fear or worry about sth. unpleasant that may happen**

imbue...with; **(usu. pass.) fill or inspire sb. (sth.) with**

infatuation; **unreasonable, all-absorbing passion or desire**

speculate...on; **form opinions without having definite or complete knowledge or evidence; guess**

infuse...with; **to put (a quality) into sb. (sth.); fill sb. (sth.) with (a quality)**

omnipotent; **almighty or unlimited in power**

fortify strengthen; **give courage to**

Part Four (Para. 25 --- Para. 30)

**Comprehending Questions:**

1. Upon discovering the every first independent form, what might the twenty-somethings do?

**They may assume it is the forever one and cling to it obstinately.**

1. If any parts of the personality that might interfere with our choice of “one true course in life”, what will they do?

**They cannot, will not, dare not know how strongly we are influenced by the deep tugs of the past, by identifications with our parents and the defense mechanisms we learned in childhood.**

1. If there is any blemish on the behavior or something annoying about the one we love, what will they do?

**this is the age when we are certain all that’s needed is to have it pointed out**

**Paraphrase the following sentences:**

1. *That the parental figures, unknowingly internalized as our guardians, provoke the very feelings of safety that allow us to dare all these great firsts of the twenties. They are also the inner dictators that hold us back.* **(Para. 26)**

***Our parents, whom we deem as our protectors and guides without consciously being aware of it, give us a sense of safety which fills us with the courage to face up to the challenges of the twenties.***

1. *Well into our forties, we will still be dredging up exactly those suppressed parts we are now making every effort to ignore.*  **(Para. 30)**

***When we are in our forties, we will rediscover and expose the parts of our personality that we find undesirable and try to suppress now.***

**Language Points:**

brim with; **be or become full to the brim**

raise one’s hackles; **make sb. angry**

blemish;

confide ...to; **are convinced**

dredge up; **bring up (usu. sth. unpleasant)**