**FAMILY MATTERS**

**Generation Gap**

***HW Read the text. What is a generation gap?***

According to the Oxford Dictionary *it is a difference in attitudes between people of different generations*. The key word here is “ATTITUDES”. Now attitude is a way of thinking or feeling about someone or something. Thus this gives us a clearer picture of what a generation gap means and when it occurs.” A generation gap occurs *when older and younger people don’t understand each other because of their difference in opinion, experience and nature*“.

Most of today’s youth are deeply influenced by the growing reach of western standards and culture. It seems as the “Global” standards and the “In” thing to do for them. Be it Music, Fashion, Behavior, Trends, Clothing – EVERYTHING is influenced by the west. It is in our nature to go for something we believe is true and will make us a better person. “It is one of nature’s ways that we often feel closer to distant generation then to the generation immediately preceding us”.

The next thing that I feel further aggravates the situation is today’s education system. Earlier the importance to academics was not very important and there was not much competition. The focus was on the all-round development of a person – sport, singing, reading books, etc. Today the focus has been shifted to academics. Learning by heart is very common. A student gives more time to academics. Therefore the interaction between parents and children becomes very little. Parents often push the child beyond his limits making the things worse. A recent study by a leading institute states that the amount of time spent with each other has effectively decreased by 75% over the last five decades.

The internet and technology has also played its role. A child spends pretty much time on the computer chatting with friends and relatives seven seas across losing the same amount of time that could have been used for interacting with a person personally his social skills suffer a lot. Even a telephone conversation is far better for improving social skills. Thus we are not able to express ourselves properly. This further bridges the divide. His social skills suffer is a very alarming situation.

Another difference that plays a role is the difference in upbringing. Earlier parents were authorative and children felt a bit scared to interact with their parents. Respect was invincible. Till date my mom is quite scared to speak to my “Nanu” (Grandfather). But today the situation is more friendly. Children treat their parents like friends. This is another thing influenced by the west. Parents may or may not realize this due to the difference in upbringing and it is often treated as rude behavior and that today’s children lack respect. In some cases it is even blamed on the school where the child studies.” People often talk of the younger generation as if they never had anything to do with it”. This further divides the gap.

**HW TASK. Answer the questions below in a written form**

1. What do you understand by the words “generation gap”? Have you had a personal experience of this phenomenon with your parents?
2. Is it possible to overcome a generation gap? How did you overcome the generation gap?
3. When do you feel the generation gap the most?
4. At what point in life does the generation gap seem to be the largest?
5. Do you think you can be a better parent than your own parents in future?
6. Do you think your generation’s fight is similar to your parents generation’s fight.
7. What do you think are some of the advantages or disadvantages of another generation?
8. When did you first become an adult in your mind?
9. What role does music play in generation gaps?
10. Write down three things that young people think about older people and three things that older people think about young people.

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| **HW. Read the two texts and the questions after the texts.**  **My Daughter**  **James Mitford:**My wife and I only had the one child. It might have been nice to have a son, but we didn’t plan a family, we just had Amy.    I see her as my best friend. I think she’d always come to me first if she had a problem. We have the same sense of humour, and share interests. I don’t mind animals, but she’s completely obsessed with them, and she has always had dogs, cats, horses, and goldfish in her life. We were closest when she was about four, which I think is a lovely age for a child. They know the parents best, and don’t have the outside contacts. She must have grown up suddenly when she went to school, because I remember her growing away from her family slightly. Any father who has a teenager daughter comes across an extraordinary collection of this people, and there seemed to be an endless stream of strange young men coming through our house. By the time I’d learned their names they’d gone away and I had to start learning a new lot. I remember I told her off once in front of her friends and she didn’t talk to me for days afterwards.    I wanted more than anything else for her to be happy in what she was doing, and I was prepared to pull strings to help her on her way. She went to a good school, but that didn’t work out. She must have upset somebody. When she left she decided she wanted to become an actress so I got her into drama school. It wasn’t to her liking so she joined a theatre group and began doings bits and pieces in films. She was doing well, but then gave it up. She probably found it boring. Then she took up social work, and finally went to work for a designer and he became her husband. And that’s really the so story of her life. She must be happy with him — they’re always together.    We have the same tastes in books and music, but it takes me a while to get used to new pop songs. I used to take her to see the opera, which is my big passion, but I don’t think she likes it very much, she doesn’t come with me any more. I don’t think she’s a big television watcher. She knows when I’m on, and she might watch, but I don’t know. It’s not the kind of thing she tells me.    We’re very grateful for Amy; She’s a good daughter as daughters go. We’re looking forward to being grandparents. I’m sure she’ll have a son. |

**My Father**

**Amy Mitford:**I don’t really know my father. He isn’t easy to get on with. He’s quite self-centred, and a little bit vain, I think, and in some ways quite unapproachable. The public must think he’s very easy-going, but at home he keeps Himself to himself. He can’t have been at home much when I was a child, because I don’t remember much about him. He’s always been slightly out of touch with family life. His work always came first, and he was always off somewhere acting or rehearsing.

He loves being asked for his autograph, he loves to be ‘ recognized. He has won several awards, and he’s very proud of that. He was given the Member of the British Empire, and we had to go to Buckingham Palace to get the medal. It was incredibly boring — there were hundreds of other people getting the same thing, and you had to sit there for hours. He shows off his awards to whoever comes to the house.

I went to public school, and because of my total lack of interest and non-attendance I was asked to leave. I didn’t want to go there in the first place. I was taken away from all my friends. He must have been very pleased to get me into the school, but in the end it was a complete waste of money. I let him down quite badly, I suppose.

I tried several jobs but I couldn’t settle down in them. They just weren’t challenging enough. Then I realized that what I really wanted to do was live in the country and look after animals, so that’s what I now do.

As a family, we’re not that close, either emotionally or geographically. We don’t see much of each other these days.

My father and I are totally different, like chalk and cheese. My interests have always been the country, but he’s into books, music and above all, opera, which I hate. If they do come to see us, they’re in completely the wrong clothes for the country — mink coats, nice little leather shoes, not exactly ideal for long walks across the fields.

He was totally opposed to me getting married. He was hoping we would break up. Gerald’s too humble, I suppose. He must have wanted me to marry someone famous, but I didn’t, and that’s all there is to it. We don’t want children, but my father keeps on and on talking about wanting grandchildren. You can’t make someone have children just because you want grandchildren.

I never watch him on television. I’m not that interested, and anyway he usually forgets to tell me when he’s on.

**COMPREHENSION CHECK**

*In questions 1-3, there is not necessarily one correct answer only*

1. *How would you describe their relationship?*
2. It was closer when Amy was a child.
3. They get on well, and agree on most things.
4. He has more respect for her than she does for him.
5. They don’t have very much in common.

*2 How would you describe James Mitford?*

1. He has done all that a father can for his daughter.
2. He isn’t very aware of how she really feels.
3. He’s more interested in himself than his family.

*3 How would you describe Amy?*

1. She is selfish and spoilt.
2. It took her a long time to decide what she wanted to do in life.
3. She found happiness in marriage that she didn’t have in childhood.

*4 What did he think of her friends when she was a teenager?*

*5 Why did she leave school?*

*6 Why did she give up her jobs?*

*7 What does he think of her husband?*

*8 Is she interested in his career?*

*9 Is she going to have children?*

*10 How often do they see each other?*

**What do you think?** ***Who has the more realistic view of the relationship? Why?***

**HW TASK**

**a) Complete definitions 1 – 15 with words and expressions below. You will not need all of the words and expressions;**

**b) Use your dictionary to check the meanings of the other words and expressions below**

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| **Adolescence ● adolescent ● adopt  ● authoritarian  ● birth rate ● bring up ● dependent ● divorced ● extended family  ● family life ● formative years ● foster ● foster child ● foster family ● freedom ● infancy ● infant ● juvenile ● lenient● juvenile delinquency ● minor (noun) ● nuclear family ● nurture ● over-protective ● protective ● raise ● rebellious ● relationship ● relatives ● responsible ● separated ● siblings**  **● single ● parent ● single-parent family ● strict  ● supervision ● running ● wild ● teenager ● upbringing ● well-adjusted** |

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is the period in someone’s life when they change from being a child to being a young adult. A boy or a girl who is at this stage in their life is called an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is someone who has not reached the age at which they are legally an adult.
3. Your brothers and sisters are sometimes referred to as your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. A couple (for example, a husband and wife) who are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ no longer live together. If a married couple get \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, their marriage is legally ended.
5. A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a family that looks after someone else’s child in their own home for a period of time. A child who lives with this family is called a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The verb is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
6. A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a formal word for a young person, and can also be used as a word for a young person who has committed a crime.
7. A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ child is one who is mentally strong and able to deal with problems without becoming upset. A child who is badly behaved and refuses to obey his / her parents, teachers, etc., can be described as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
8. Your \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are those in your life when your character and beliefs are most strongly influenced.
9. If you bring someone else’s child into your family and legally make him or her your own child, we say that you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ him / her.
10. A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a child between the ages of 13 and 19.
11. An \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a baby or very young child. This period in a child’s life is called \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
12. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ both mean the same thing: to take care of children while they are growing up.
13. An \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a family group that includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a family unit consisting of a mother, a father, and their children.
14. A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ parent is one who makes their children follow rules and behave in a very “correct” way. The opposite of this is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
15. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a child or other relative to whom you give food, money, and a home. This word can also be an adjective.

**In-class work Divide into two groups like parents and children. Discuss the following questions.**

### ****Group A****Parents

1 Who do your children look like? Who do they take after in character?

2 Have you brought up your children similarly to the way your parents brought you up? Are you more/less strict? More/ less indulgent?

3 In what ways do you hope your children’s life will be better than yours?

### ****Group B****Children

1 Who do you most take after, your mother or your father? Who do you look like? Who are you like in character?

2 How much of a generation gap is there/was there between you and your parents?

3 Would you want to bring up your children similarly to the way your parents brought you up?

***As you are reading, try to answer the above questions. You won’t be able to answer them all, so try to guess the answer if you’re not sure.***