

The new heads of the family?

Level

Pre-intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level A2–B1 and above)

Comment

This eLesson is about the status of children in society. The initial orientation tasks (stages 1, 2 and 3 below and students' exercise 1) help to make the text more accessible, and are particularly vital for lower-level learners. They also provide opportunities for speaking.

How to use the lesson

- 1 Write up on the board: *A good parent is someone who ...* Depending on your students' circumstances, you might also write: *A good parent or carer is someone who ...* Elicit one or two suggestions from the class. In threes, students brainstorm ideas. With lower-level groups, ask them to think of at least five ideas between them. Use the opportunity to introduce key words from the text if they arise, e.g. *spend quality time; spoil(t)*.
- 2 Dictate the following questions for students to write down. Adapt to suit your learners, if necessary. It may help to encourage your students to think of a specific age group too, e.g. ages 10–14:
 - 1 *How strict were your parents about things like smoking, staying out late, the clothes you wore?*
 - 2 *Did your parents let you do things that other parents didn't? Give examples.*
 - 3 *When they gave you presents, e.g. at Christmas time or birthdays, what sort of presents were they and how large?*
 - 4 *Did your parents give you pocket money?*
 - 5 *As a child, were your things everywhere in the house, or just in your room, e.g. toys, photographs, your drawings?*
 - 6 *Who was the boss in your family?*

Students discuss in threes.
- 3 Show students the title of the text: *The new heads of the family?* Write this on the board. Elicit some ideas about what this might mean.
- 4 Depending on your group, at this point clarify the words: *entertain, research, after-school activity*. Students complete exercise 1 without reading the text. Tell students that in some cases, there may be more than one possible answer. With lower-level groups, ask check-questions to encourage students to think more about the meaning of the sentences, e.g. (sentence 1) *Do we have International Children's Day here?* (3) *What do you think modern fathers do with their children?*
- 5 Students read and check (exercise 2). Students will find one answer in each paragraph. Tell them that the wording may be slightly different.
- 6 Students complete the comprehension task (exercise 3). Remind students of the Glossary and let students discuss their answers before feedback.
- 7 Students work in pairs or threes to complete the discussion task (exercise 4). Omit any questions that were discussed at length in the initial stages as some are linked (see above, stage 2). Monitor and note down points of interest/linguistic issues for later.

- 8 If appropriate for your group, complete the gap-fill (exercise 5). Students then note down the collocations in their note book, e.g. *covered with*, *fit in with*, etc.
- 9 To round off the lesson, choose one of the following tasks:

Writing: students work in pairs to write down a list of advice to parents, in the form of a guide.

Vocabulary (higher level students): write these words from the text on the board: *over-protect*, *over-loved*, *self-importance*. Elicit the meaning of the prefix and other examples with this prefix. Students find three other examples of *self* and *over* words with the same meaning (e.g. *overcook* ✓; *overlook* X) in the dictionary, noting the word class and the example sentence in each case. Encourage students to select useful words.

Answer key

1, 2

1 e 2 f 3 g 4 d 5 b 6 a 7 c

3

1 c 2 a 3 b 4 a 5 b 6 c 7 b 8 c

4 Students' own answers.

5

- 1 of
- 2 with
- 3 in
- 4 from
- 5 on
- 6 from, to

Related websites

The following websites might be useful, for either yourself or your students.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/8607011.stm> (UK research)

<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/015/161yutrk.asp> (article by Joseph Epstein)

<http://www.wordspy.com/words/kindergarchy.asp>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Children's_Day

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article4083278.ece>