

**TEACHERS: Have a student read each paragraph. Ask for questions about meaning. Ask them to use the terms in a sentence. Make sure everyone understands before moving to the next paragraph.**

1. When someone has a birthday, he or she might say, "I just turned 25." In this context, the verb "to turn" means "to become". We don't say, "I just became 25." We use this term in the future as well. EX: I will turn 25 next month. Sometimes children say, "I'm five going on six." The meaning is that they will soon turn six.

2. Generally it is impolite to ask someone other than a child how old they are. However, for someone you know well, you might ask, "Do you mind if I ask how old you are?" If the person doesn't want to tell you, they will give you some humorous answer. For example, a woman in her eighties might say, "I turned 30 on my last birthday." Americans take a "dim view" of being old, so they attempt to hide that fact. Many people color their hair to hide the gray or get plastic surgery to take away wrinkles.

3. Is age valued in your culture? Is plastic surgery and dying hair an accepted part of your culture?

4. Newborn babies are "a bundle of joy". People talk about their "new little one", or their "bouncing baby boy". Toddlers are able to walk and are often called "tots". A funny slang term for a baby or toddler is "rug-rat". This refers to the fact that little children often play on the floor, crawling and scampering on the carpet.

5. Adults can be categorized as young adults (early 20's), middle aged (40's) or seniors (people 60 and beyond). A 20-something crowd is a group of people between 20-29. EX: This music appeals to the 20-something crowd.

6. If someone is "in the prime of life", they are at the peak of their success and power. At what age do you think people usually achieve this?

7. Someone who is middle aged might have a "mid-life crisis". This is a time of anxiety about who you are and where you are going. Sometimes people make sudden lifestyle changes when they are having a "mid-life crisis". For example, they might sell their practical car and buy a shiny, red sports car. Or they might quit their job and hitchhike across the country. Some people even divorce their spouses and re-marry.

8. Someone who is "over the hill" is past their prime. The implication is that you have reached your peak and are on the downward part of your life where things get worse instead of better.

9. Age 62 marks the official senior citizen age-the legal age at which you can retire or collect Social Security benefits. Though these days, the government encourages people to work much longer by providing higher monthly benefits if you postpone retirement.

10. There are several names for elderly people including, "old timer", "old folks" or "old as the hills". More negative terms include: geezer and codger. Sometimes older women are referred to as "little old ladies". This is because sometimes, people shrink as they age.

11. The period of old age can be referred to as, "twilight years", "golden years" or "autumn of one's life". Though these are pleasant descriptors, many Americans feel that the last few years of life are far from being "golden". Indeed, these years are frequently marked by ill health and lost independence. It is not common here for older parents to move in with their children as it is in some countries. Those who cannot live alone are encouraged to go to "assisted living centers" or "skilled nursing facilities". Though in the past, these places could be very grim, nowadays there are many luxurious living centers where seniors can enjoy a large degree of independence, but have someone there to help out with some of their needs.

How does this compare with conditions for seniors in your country?

12. Certain life stages are referred to as “an age”. For example, “awkward age” refers to adolescence at the time of puberty. EX: He’s thirteen and at that awkward age.  
At this stage, adolescents feel their noses and ears are too big, and they feel very clumsy and awkward.

13. An “in-between age” is a period of transition. For example, an adolescent moving into their older teens. Underage refers to a person who is not old enough to legally do activities such as driving, voting or drinking. EX: There’s not much for underage kids to do at night. The restaurant can lose its liquor license if it serves alcohol to underage students.

14. The voting age is 18. College age is 18-22 when many students attend college. A “ripe old age” refers to someone quite old. EX: He lived to the ripe old age of 90. A “gray panther” is an elderly person who strongly seeks to protect their rights as they age.

15. Someone who ages gracefully, continues to look youthful and have a youthful attitude as they age, without acting inappropriately for their age. For example, a woman who continued to take care with their looks and clothes would be aging gracefully. A woman in her 80’s wearing mini-skirts would not be aging gracefully. Neither would a woman who “lets herself go” and no longer pays attention to her hygiene and looks.

16. If you are told to “act your age”, it means, act appropriately. This term generally applies to someone who is acting too young.

17. If you “look your age” or “show your age”, you appear to be aging. EX: Look at all my wrinkles. I’m starting to show my age.

18. A person who is “ageless” doesn’t show their age. For example, they might be in their 50’s or in their 80’s. EX: She is so active and involved in the community that she seems ageless.

19. A “generation gap” is the lack of understanding between one generation and another. It was a term used in the 60’s to describe hippies and their parents who served in World War II and tended to be very conservative and responsible. These responsible people had a hard time understanding their “free love” hippie children.

20. Do you have a generation gap in your country? What are the differences in the generations? So you sometimes feel that your grandparents understand you more than your parents?

**Discuss in your group: (Teachers, try to stay in the background unless needed to stimulate discussion.)**

1. As a general rule, are young people more selfish than older people? Give an example to support your belief.
2. Is it better for kids to learn of the dangers of life themselves, or should they be repeatedly warned against drinking, drugs and sexual promiscuity?
3. At what age can young people drive, drink, vote and serve in the military in your country?
4. Should people be forced to retire by age 65 in order to provide work opportunities for the younger generations?
5. Do you feel like most older people are hopelessly out of touch with the modern age?
6. Does it scare you when you realize that your parents are growing older?
7. Have you experienced the death of a parent? What helped you to survive that experience?
8. Are your parents very engaged in caring for your children?
9. Are your children as close to their grandparents as you were to your own grandparents?
10. What do you think of older people who wear trendy clothes?