

Pronunciation: In English, generally, if words are spelled almost the same, they rhyme. The vowels have the same sounds. Note these examples.

more - store - shore clean - bean dark - shark - park stand - hand - band fear - near
swing - sing - ring eat - cheat - beat frog - fog - log - hog smell - tell - spell

However, it is also true that words spelled almost the same have different pronunciations. For example, many words with O as the vowel are pronounced as if the vowel is U. Pronounce these words and tell which one has the UH sound.

fork - work font - front word - sword moth - mother
lone - done broth - brother cove - cover doze - dozen
worry - sorry bother - other home - some

Then there is "move" and "love". Both of these O words sound like U words. Love has the short U sound (like UH) and move has the long U sound (like OO)

TEACHERS: Have a **student** read each paragraph. Ask for questions about meaning. Ask them to use the terms in a sentence. Have the student who reads lead a discussion on the questions.

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.

Is there a particular birthday that is more important than others in your country? Are there special celebrations for the first birthday or twenty-first birthday? Describe them.

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. In fact, Americans sometimes seem obsessed with looking young.

Is age valued in your culture? Do older people accept their age or try hard to look younger? How do you feel about older people who dress like they are twenty?

3. 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. Another funny term is "ankle biter". This refers to babies being on the floor at ankle height. Do you have any funny terms for babies in your country?

There was an article in today's paper about a woman who killed her good friend so that she could steal the woman's two week old infant. Baby theft occurs in hospitals at times too.

Does this happen in your country? Do hospitals in your country take steps to ensure babies can't be stolen?

4. 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. A "millennial" is a person who reached adulthood at the turn of the century (2000). We often hear about millennials voting patterns or lifestyle choices.

Do you use this term in our country? People older than 60 didn't grow up with computers and cell phones. Life was very different for them. Do you prefer today's lifestyle, or would you have enjoyed growing up before cell phones and computers?

5. 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?

6. 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 convertible. Or they might quit their job and hitchhike across the country. Some people even divorce their spouses and re-marry.

Do you know anyone who has experienced a mid-life crisis? Did you ever go through a period of questioning who you are and what your purpose was? Can you see yourself changing careers, or selling your house and sailing around the world?

7. Age 65 marks the official senior citizen age-the legal age at which you can retire and collect Social Security benefits. Though these days, the government encourages people to work much longer by providing higher monthly benefits if you postpone retirement.

What is the retirement age in your country? Does your country provide benefits to retirees? Is running out of money after you retire a serious concern in your country? Is health care free in your country? Do you have a higher number of old people than young people in your country? Does this create problems?

8. 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. In the U.S., ageism is a big problem. That is the idea that someone who is older is no longer competent and useful. Studies show businesses discriminate against older people in hiring much more than they discriminate by race or sex. Is this also a problem in your country? Are there any solutions to this problem?