

**Introduce yourself:** Tell your name, where you are from and where you live now.

Fill in the blank in this sentence. I am looking forward to getting older so I can \_\_\_\_\_.

**Pronunciation:** These word pairs are examples of words that should sound alike, but don't. The spelling is very similar and you would assume that the vowel sound would remain the same. But in English, this frequently doesn't happen. Pronounce the word pairs numerous times and notice how the vowel sound changes from the first word to the second.

cork - work	font - front	word - sword	meat - great	threat - great	moth - mother
broth - brother	here - there	dear - bear	fear - pear	goose - choose	most - cost
move - love	stove - love	good - food	said - paid	ball - shall	ash- wash
baked - naked	bases - gases	batch - watch	beard - heard	beast - breast	been - seen

**Students read and discuss. Teachers, have more than one person answer 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. In the U.S., the 21st birthday is very important. It means you are a legal adult. In Texas, it means you can lawfully drink alcohol.

Is there a particular birthday that is more important than others in your country?

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. Other cultures value aging. The aged are assumed to be wise and worth listening to.

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 girl/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. These terms can sound a bit negative, so shouldn't be used with people you don't know well.

Do you have any funny terms for babies in your country? Do you enjoy being around babies? Are you a baby whisperer?

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. 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?

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

Do you have the term, "mid-life crisis" in your country? Do you know anyone who has experienced a mid-life crisis?

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

At what age do you think people are over the hill?

9. 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?

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. 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 ageism a problem in your country? Are there any solutions to this problem?

### **Discuss in your group:**

1. As a general rule, are young people more or less 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? Do you think any of the age limits should be changed?
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? Do the elderly people you know feel comfortable with texting, tweeting and streaming?
6. Does it scare you when you notice that your parents are aging? For example, when I was in college, my dad came to pick me up from the airport. I hadn't seen him for several months. As he rested his hand on the gear shift, I noticed all the age spots and wrinkles on his hands. It shocked me and made me really sad to realize he was growing old. I really wanted him to stay young and vibrant like he was when I was a child. Have you had a similar experience?
7. Do you have any friends who are a lot older or younger than you? What is something you learned from an older person?
8. Would you date or marry someone much older than you? Do you think marriages work where people are ten or more years apart in age?