

THE RIGHT AGE TO LEAVE HOME



A TALKING POINTS ENGLISH LESSON FOR READING,
SPEAKING, WRITING & VOCABULARY

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Introduction

In your country, what is the correct age to leave home?

Are young people independent in your country or culture?

Is there a big gap between generations in your country's culture?

The Right Age to Leave Home

Read Nigel's account of his son below:

Will someone please talk to my son?

He is 36-years-old, unemployed and still living at home. He just won't leave!

I don't know what is wrong with him. He is not stupid — he went to college and graduated. But then he came back home and the years went by and he is still here.

At the beginning, I made little hints here and there. Like, are you applying for jobs? Have you been to any interviews lately?

But my wife said I had to leave him alone. Let him find his own way, she said.

Except he didn't find his own way. He just stayed where he was.

His entire daily routine has been the same since he got back from college — he wakes up around midday, shuffles into the kitchen where he drinks coffee and eats cereal. Then he goes back to his room and plays computer games until the evening. My wife cooks dinner and he reappears to eat with us — but sometimes picks his plate up and goes back into his room. Then he continues playing computer games all night. Sometimes he will

go out — he goes to the pub with some other guys the same age as him.

He said they all live at home too.

Is this what this generation does now?

When I was their age, I already had a family of my own and a mortgage to pay. I had to work or people didn't eat. I didn't just give up and lie in my bedroom.

Me and my son rarely talk now. It's not that we have fallen out — we just don't have anything in common any more. I don't know what to say to him.

My wife has some conversations with him. He told her that he doesn't want to waste his life doing a job that he hates. Plus he thinks he should have a very well-paid job as he is a college graduate.

But he has wasted his life!

He has spent the last fifteen years at home doing nothing.

I would be bored out of my mind. I couldn't stand having nothing to do for so long.

And what kind of 36-year-old man plays computer games anyway? I thought that was something only teenagers did. Not grown men.

My brother-in-law's daughter is a little similar. She hasn't stayed at home all the time but she has left home and bounced back many times. She is currently staying at home — it drives my brother-in-law mad.

I said to him — you should try having your daughter staying at home year in, year out. At least your daughter leaves every now and then.

I worry about my son in the future. I just wonder what he will do and how he will cope with life. He doesn't seem well-equipped to take on life's responsibilities.

My wife talked to me one time and asked me if it was our fault. I said no. I don't think we did anything wrong. We gave him a good upbringing and we helped him through college.

I just think it's something about this generation.

They just don't seem capable to take on life's challenges.

Reading Comprehension Questions

How old is Nigel's son? Does he have a job? Where does he live?

Did Nigel's son attend university?

What did he do after graduating?

Who encouraged Nigel to not put too much pressure on his son?

Describe Nigel's son's routine. What does he do every day?

Does Nigel's son have any friends? What do they do?

Describe Nigel's life when he was the same age as his son now.

Do Nigel and his son talk about anything? Why/why not?

Who does talk to the son?

What did the son say about his feelings about working and the kind of job he wants?

What main thing does the son do all day? How does Nigel feel about this?

What other family member of Nigel's has some trouble with their adult child?

Does Nigel accept any responsibilities for his son's behaviour?

What does he blame for his son's behaviour?

Essential Vocabulary

unemployed	hints	applying
interviews	find his own way	entire
shuffles	cereal	reappears
the pub	generation	mortgage
rarely	fallen out	in common
conversations	waste	well-paid
bored out of my mind	teenagers	grown men
brother-in-law	bounced back	drives (someone) mad
year in, year out	cope	well-equipped
responsibilities	fault	upbringing
capable	challenges	

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Notebook—*a small book with pages of blank paper that students use to make notes when*

studying.

“I left my notebook at home so I was unable to make any notes in my English class.”

Discussion Questions

What do you think about Nigel's son?

What should Nigel do about his son?

Nigel thinks that it is a problem with his son's generation. What do you think about this? Are younger generations all like this?

Do you think the son causes arguments between Nigel and his wife?

At what age should children leave home?

Do you think it is acceptable for an adult child to live at home? Why/why not?

Do you live at home? At what age will you leave home? At what age did you leave home?

Is there a big generation gap between your generation and your parents' generation?

What are some of the differences?

Do your parents want you to move out of their home? Or are they happy for you to live there forever?

In your country, at what age does a person become an adult? What are the responsibilities of being an adult in your country?

In your country, what are the responsibilities of a person at 16?
At 18? At 21?

The Generation Gap

Get into small groups and fill in the table below. Fill in as much information as you can.

	Your generation	Your parents' generation
Go to college?		
What age leave home?		
What age get married?		
What tastes in music?		
What tastes in movies and TV?		
What tastes in fashion?		
Free time activities?		
Jobs?		

After you have filled in all the information, each group should present their thoughts and ideas to the class.

Role Play

There are two characters in this role play.

1. Nigel

You are Nigel in the story at the beginning of the lesson. You have had enough of your son staying at home without paying anything towards food, electricity and water. So you now want to give him an ultimatum – find a job or move out and look after yourself.

2. Nigel's Son

You are Nigel's son in the story at the beginning of the lesson.

Your father wants you to find a job or move out. But finding a job is so difficult.

Plus you are very comfortable where you are. You think it is your mother and father's duty to take care of you no matter what.

You tell your father you are not moving out. And there are no jobs available for you.

Take some time to prepare your role play.

When you are ready, show the class.

Writing

Write a short story about what happens after Nigel talks to his son and tells him to find a job.

Maybe the son is forced out of the family home and has to find somewhere to live. Or maybe he becomes homeless.

Or maybe he starts to look for a job – any job. He doesn't want to give up the easy life of living at home.

Or you could have your own idea for your story.

When you have finished writing the story, you can read it out loud in the next class. Or show it to your teacher for review.

Credits

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