

Read the article about four people (A–D) who are talking about growing up. Then answer the questions.

Reading Exercise 2: Growing Up

Growing up is never easy, but there are some ages when things are particularly complicated, such as the pre-teens, because you are too old to be a child, but too young to be a teenager.

(A) Lucy is ten and feels nobody takes her seriously. Whether she wants to do something, or doesn't want to do something, she is told that she is just a kid. Her sister, who is twelve, is allowed to do many more things, because she is considered to be older, and therefore more grown up. This is particularly so when it comes to boys, who see her as much younger than she really is, and don't take her as seriously as they do her sister. Luckily she has a friend called Michael, who is not a boyfriend, but they spend a lot of time together. She has asked her parents for a dog, but has been told that she is not ready to look after a pet, and feels this is so unfair.

(B) John is twelve and his main problem is that he doesn't have as much control over his body as he would like, because of puberty, which can be frightening. He complains of getting pimples, and his voice is changing, which makes him feel very self-conscious. This age brings more responsibilities than before, and he spends more time away from his family than he would like. This means he has to look after himself, which is not easy, although his friends seem to know what they're doing, and this makes him feel very lonely and left out.

(C) Darren is thirteen, and the amount of schoolwork he has stresses him out. There is always homework, and tests, and this frightens him because he realises that what he does at this age can seriously affect the rest of his life. When he doesn't know what to do, there is very little help available, and girls make him feel embarrassed and self-conscious. What is even worse is that everybody talks about going out with them all the time, and sometimes he feels he is the only one who doesn't know what to do when he's around girls.

(D) Linda is fourteen and spends a lot of time with girls her own age. She has to make an effort to fit in, even though she doesn't really agree with many things they say and do. Otherwise, they make her feel out of place. Her biggest problem is boys, because all her friends have boyfriends, and she doesn't, because many of the boys she knows are so stupid. She would love to be able to talk about these things with somebody, but the only people she knows are her age and they won't admit that they have the same problems. She has problems with bullies, and most of the time has too much school work to do. Then, when she feels unhappy and frustrated, she has arguments with her brothers and sisters, and sometimes this leads to her getting in trouble with her parents.

- 1) Which person would like to be older?
- 2) Which person has problems at home?
- 3) Which person worries about the future?
- 4) Which person feels isolated from her friends in a certain way?
- 5) Which person tries very hard to get on with their friends?
- 6) Which person seems happiest with someone of the opposite sex?
- 7) Which person has problems with bullies?
- 8) Which person sometimes feels uncomfortable with their body?
- 9) Which person feels unhappy with their skin?
- 10) Which person feels ignored?