

Generations

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. How different are your attitudes and values from those held by your parents and grandparents?
2. Do you have similar attitudes and values as other people your age? Give examples.
3. What is a stereotype? Can you think of an example of a stereotype?



B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. characteristic | a) hopeful |
| ___ 2. consist of | b) having a good understanding of technology |
| ___ 3. current affairs | c) good at solving problems with whatever is available |
| ___ 4. birth rate | d) the number of people born in one year |
| ___ 5. optimistic | e) having a good variety |
| ___ 6. originate | f) to be made up of |
| ___ 7. resourceful | g) political and social events happening at a particular time |
| ___ 8. crave | h) to begin |
| ___ 9. diverse | i) to have a strong need or desire for something |
| ___ 10. tech-savvy | j) a quality or trait |

Reading

FROM BOOMERS TO ZOOMERS

The *characteristics* of different generations

1. A generation **consists of** people who are born and live at around the same time. The term “generation” is used to talk about steps on a family tree. For example, grandparents, parents, and children represent three different generations of a family.
2. This term, however, refers not only to family structures, but also to broader social and historical groupings. Generational groups are thought to share similar characteristics that are often shaped by the technology, **current affairs**, and economics of the time they live in. These characteristics are only stereotypes. In reality, the attitudes, values, and behaviors within generational groups are much more varied.
3. People born between 1946 and 1964 in Western cultures are called baby boomers due to the sharp increase (or “boom”) in **birth rates** as soldiers returned home after World War II. This generation grew up in a time of great economic growth, and many of them were able to climb the corporate ladder through company loyalty and hard work. As a result of their successful careers, baby boomers have been described as **optimistic** and confident, but they have also been criticized for being materialistic. They are known for having strong values, which may have **originated** when they were active in the anti-war and civil rights movements as young adults.
4. Members of Generation X were born between 1965 and 1980. Gen Xers grew up in a time when computers were changing the way people worked and interacted. Consequently, they are considered to be the first digital generation. Gen Xers are often characterized as being **resourceful** and independent. However, they are sometimes seen as more pessimistic than baby boomers. They became adults during the economic decline of the 1980s and ‘90s and had fewer work opportunities than the previous generation.
5. Millennials, also called Generation Y, were born between 1981 and 1996. They are the first generation to have grown up with the internet. Millennials are typically good at multitasking and have ambitious career goals, but many people think they are selfish and **crave** attention. This opinion is not supported by millennials’ passion for racial justice and the environment.
6. Generation Z, or zoomers, were born between 1997 and 2012. In Western societies, Gen Zers are more racially, ethnically, and culturally **diverse** than any previous generation. They are generally open-minded and do well in new situations. Like millennials, zoomers are **tech-savvy** and spend many hours a day on social media platforms and electronic devices. This can lead to feelings of isolation and depression, and many Gen Zers suffer from mental health challenges as a result.

“Each generation supposes that the world was simpler for the one before it.”

—Eleanor Roosevelt

Comprehension

A. Complete the Information

Complete the information using the reading.

Ex. Generation: Baby Boomers

Births start: 1946

Births end: 1964

Positive characteristics: optimistic, confident, have strong values

Negative characteristic(s): materialistic

1. Generation: Generation X

Births start: _____

Births end: _____

Positive characteristics: _____

Negative characteristic(s): _____

2. Generation: Millennials

Births start: _____

Births end: _____

Positive characteristics: _____

Negative characteristic(s): _____

3. Generation: Generation Z

Births start: _____

Births end: _____

Positive characteristics: _____

Negative characteristic(s): _____

Comprehension cont.

B. Make It True

Change part of each statement to make it true according to information in the reading.

1. The term “generation” only refers to family structures.
2. Members of a generation all share the same characteristics.
3. Baby boomers were born before World War II.
4. Gen Xers had more work opportunities than baby boomers when they entered adulthood.
5. Millennials don’t care about the environment.
6. Zoomers all come from similar backgrounds.

Vocabulary Review

Complete the statements with a word from page 1.

When you finish, discuss each statement with a partner. Do you agree or disagree?

1. There's one _____ that all politicians share—none of them are trustworthy.
2. Watching the news and other _____ shows on TV is depressing.
3. Only _____ people will get good jobs in the future. If you don't know how to use technology, you won't be successful.
4. I'm not _____ about the future. Who would be? There's war, famine, corruption, etc.
5. Most people on social media _____ attention. They are always uploading videos and photos to say, "Look how great I am!"

Words in Context

Look back at the article on page 2 and find the correct word.

The paragraph where it is found is given in parentheses.

Ex. (para. 2) a synonym for "diverse" _____ *varied* _____

1. (para. 3) a phrase that means "to move up in a company or get promoted" _____
2. (para. 4) a synonym for "communicated" _____
3. (para. 4) an antonym for "optimistic" _____
4. (para. 5) an adjective that means "having high goals" _____
5. (para. 6) a word that means the opposite of "a strong feeling of happiness" _____

Language Review

GENERALIZATIONS

A. Reference

A **generalization** is a broad statement about members of a group. However, the statement might not be true for each individual in the group. English speakers use adverbs such as *often*, *sometimes*, *usually*, *normally*, *typically*, and *generally* to allow for the existence of exceptions.

Read the statements from the article. Then discuss the questions with a partner.

- Gen Xers are *often* characterized as being resourceful and independent.
- However, they are *sometimes* seen as more pessimistic than baby boomers.
- Millennials are *typically* good at multitasking.

1. Does everyone believe that Gen Xers are resourceful and independent?
2. Does everyone believe Gen Xers are more pessimistic than baby boomers?
3. According to the article, are all millennials good at multitasking?

Now, re-read the article. Can you find any other generalizations that use adverbs?

B. Practice

Think about your own generation. Write 3 generalizations about people who are close to you in age. Use adverbs in your sentences to show that there may be exceptions. When you finish, share your statements with a partner.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Discussion

1. Do you think the reading accurately describes your generation? Why or why not? According to the article, are you “typical” for your generation?
2. Describe some people you know who were born in each generation other than your own. Do you think their characteristics match the descriptions in the reading?
3. Do you see any similarities between baby boomers and millennials? Millennials and Gen Zers?
4. What are the benefits and drawbacks of society becoming more diverse?

Research

Generations are often grouped by other criteria than the ones used in the reading. Choose one of the following generations and go online to find out how it got its name and what the characteristics of this generation are. Share your findings with your classmates.

- Woke generation
- Sandwich generation
- Boomerang generation

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

FROM BOOMERS TO ZOOMERS

The characteristics of different generations

1. A generation _____ people who are born and live at around the same time. The term "generation" is used to talk about steps on a family tree. For example, grandparents, parents, and children represent three different generations of a family.
2. This term, however, refers not only to family structures, but also to broader social and historical groupings. Generational groups are thought to share similar characteristics that are often shaped by the technology, current affairs, and economics of the time they live in. These characteristics are only _____. In reality, the attitudes, values, and behaviors within generational groups are much more _____.
3. People born between 1946 and 1964 in Western cultures are called baby boomers due to the sharp increase (or "boom") in _____ as soldiers returned home after World War II. This generation grew up in a time of great economic growth, and many of them were able to climb the corporate ladder through company loyalty and hard work. As a result of their successful careers, baby boomers have been described as _____ and confident, but they have also been criticized for being materialistic. They are known for having strong values, which may have originated when they were active in the anti-war and civil rights movements as young adults.
4. Members of Generation X were born between 1965 and 1980. Gen Xers grew up in a time when computers were changing the way people worked and _____. Consequently, they are considered to be the first digital generation. Gen Xers are often characterized as being resourceful and independent. However, they are sometimes seen as more _____ than baby boomers. They became adults during the economic decline of the 1980s and '90s and had fewer work opportunities than the previous generation.
5. Millennials, also called Generation Y, were born between 1981 and 1996. They are the first generation to have grown up with the internet. Millennials are typically good at multitasking and have _____ career goals, but many people think they are selfish and _____ attention. This opinion is not supported by millennials' passion for racial justice and the environment.
6. Generation Z, or zoomers, were born between 1997 and 2012. In Western societies, Gen Zers are more racially, ethnically, and culturally _____ than any previous generation. They are generally open-minded and do well in new situations. Like millennials, zoomers are tech-savvy and spend many hours a day on social media platforms and electronic devices. This can lead to feelings of isolation and _____, and many Gen Zers suffer from mental health challenges as a result.

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read about the characteristics of different generations. They answer comprehension questions, review vocabulary, and figure out the meaning of new words from context. Students learn how to use adverbs when generalizing, and they analyze common stereotypes about people based on their age.

LEVEL: Int – High Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: discussion, baby boomers, Generation X, Gen X, millennials, Generation Y, Gen Y, zoomers, Generation Z, Gen Z, stereotypes, generalizations, adverbs, boomerang generation, woke generation, sandwich generation

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class. Answers will vary.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. j | 3. g | 5. a | 7. c | 9. e |
| 2. f | 4. d | 6. h | 8. i | 10. b |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. Discuss the quote. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 8. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

A. COMPLETE THE INFORMATION

- Generation: Generation X
Births start: 1965
Births end: 1980
Positive characteristics: resourceful, independent
Negative characteristic(s): pessimistic

- Generation: Millennials
Births start: 1981
Births end: 1996
Positive characteristics: good at multitasking, ambitious, passionate about racial justice and the environment
Negative characteristic(s): crave attention, selfish
- Generation: Generation Z
Births start: 1997
Births end: 2012
Positive characteristics: diverse, open-minded, tech-savvy
Negative characteristic(s): isolated, depressed

B. MAKE IT TRUE

- The term “generation” refers to family structures as well as to social and historical groupings.
- In reality, members of a generation have varied attitudes, values, and behaviors.
- Baby boomers were born after World War II.
- Gen Xers had fewer work opportunities than baby boomers when they entered adulthood.
- Millennials are passionate about the environment.
- Zoomers come from diverse backgrounds.

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Vocabulary Review

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 1. characteristic | 4. optimistic |
| 2. current affairs | 5. crave |
| 3. tech-savvy | |

Words in Context

- to climb the corporate ladder
- interacted
- pessimistic
- ambitious
- depression

Language Review

A. REFERENCE

Go over the information about generalizations. Review placement of adverbs in a sentence. (The type of adverb used in this section usually comes at the beginning of a sentence, after the BE verb, or before the main verb.)

B. PRACTICE

Answers will vary.

Discussion

Answers will vary.

Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

Research

Place students in small groups for this research project. Invite each group to present their findings to the class. Do they consider themselves members of any of the three generations?

Listening

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. consists of | 4. interacted, pessimistic |
| 2. stereotypes, varied | 5. ambitious, crave |
| 3. birth rates, optimistic | 6. diverse, depression |

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the word *Behavior*. Most other English-speaking countries spell it this way: *Behaviour*. Make it a challenge for your students to find this word in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spelling.