

# Teenage rebellion

## Discussion

Look at this questionnaire about what you, and people you know, did, or do, as teenagers. Tick the appropriate boxes.

You	A friend	Someone in your family	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	wore an earring or earrings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	wore rings on other parts of their body.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	always wore black.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	wore very unusual clothes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	had an unusual hairstyle.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	started smoking before they were 14.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	dropped out of school or college.

Compare your answers in pairs. In what other ways do young people express rebellion?

## Reading

1. Read the following news item which appeared in *The Daily Telegraph*. Discuss the questions below in pairs:

Schoolgirl Ashley Wallace, 16, was furious when the headmaster of her school, Neil Watts, 50, ordered the school photographers to change the colour of her hair from pink to brown in the final prints of the official school photographs.

1. Why do you think the headmaster wanted the colour of Ashley's hair changed?
2. Why do you think Ashley was furious?
3. Why do you think Ashley dyed her hair pink?

2. Now read the views of Ashley and the headmaster and answer the questions below.

### ASHLEY'S VIEW

I couldn't believe it when I realised what they had done to me. I was so annoyed that I went straight to the headmaster and complained.

My hair was a mousy brown and it looked ridiculous because you could still see all the pink through it. All of my friends were asking what I had done to my hair. I was just fuming.

The school should have given me the option either to be in the photo and have my hair airbrushed or not be in it. If I had been given the choice, I would rather not have been in it at all. One thing is certain – there is no way I am going to change my hair colour now!

### THE HEADMASTER'S VIEW

We have been trying to resolve the issue of Ashley's pink hair since before Christmas. Initially, we were assured that she would return it to the natural colour over the holiday but since Christmas her hair has remained pink.

Our code of conduct clearly states that pupils are expected to bring credit upon themselves by their appearance and we do not feel that pink hair fulfils this requirement.

Despite this we have acted very reasonably. We have not excluded Ashley from school and we have allowed her to attend normal lessons in the final year of her exams.

We also allowed her to be in the photograph for the whole year group. However, we feel strongly that, as the photograph is a record for the school, Ashley's hair colour does not bring credit upon the other pupils and the school. Therefore, we asked the photographic company to tone down the hair colour in the photograph.

1. Why was Ashley furious?
2. What did she think the school should have done?
3. How long had Ashley had pink hair?
4. How did the headmaster feel about her hair?
5. In what ways did he feel the school had been reasonable towards her?

## Discussion

Discuss these questions in pairs or small groups:

1. Who do you think is right – Ashley or the headmaster? Why?
2. Are there any better solutions to the problem of Ashley's hair? What are they?
3. If a 16-year-old arrived at school one morning with pink hair in your country: what would her friends say? what would her teachers say? what would the headteacher say?

## Language

1. Ashley uses quite informal language. Find the informal expressions she uses to say these more formal phrases:

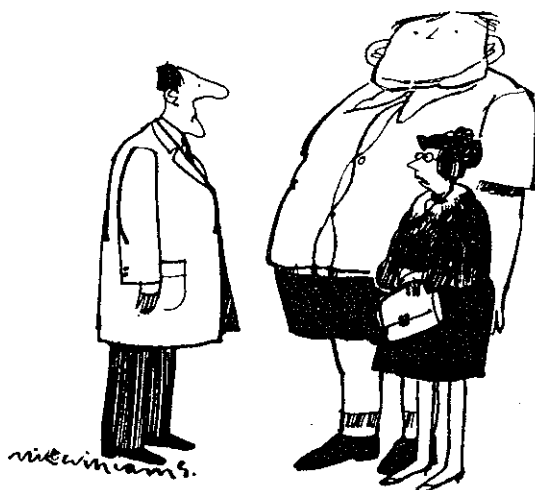
- a. I sought an immediate meeting with the head.
- b. I was extremely upset.
- c. I have no intention of ...

2. Find the more formal expressions the head uses to say these less formal phrases:

- a. We've been trying to sort out ...
- b. First, we were told ...
- c. pupils ought to show a bit of self-respect ...
- d. We haven't thrown Ashley out of the school. ... we've let her come to school as usual ...

3. Put these sentences into more formal English:

1. I was so cross that he did not sort out the problem of the timetable.
2. There's no way I'm going to let him into my classes again.
3. I'm going straight to the boss.
4. We've decided that your son should not come back to this school.
5. First, I'd like to make it clear to you that classes will take place as normal.



"I think he's swallowed his father."

## Discussion

Discuss these situations in pairs:

1. Jessica wears old black clothes all the time. She has rings in her ears and her eyebrows. She has dyed her hair black and uses black eye make-up. Her brother is getting married soon. Her mother wants her to wear something different for the wedding. Should she? And if so, what?
2. You have invited your neighbours and their children to a party at your house. Their 15-year-old son arrives wearing shorts, black tights, an orange T-shirt and has a number of chains round different parts of his body. Should you say anything about the way he is dressed? If so, what?
3. Mark's 18-year-old son usually has shoulder-length hair. Mark has insisted that he gets it cut before a family wedding. He arrives at the church with short hair – dyed bright green. What should Mark say or do?
4. Jenny is 16 and gets good results at school. She wants to leave school at the end of term, get a job (any job will do), and move into a flat with three of her girlfriends. Should her parents persuade her to stay on at school? If so, how?
5. Mary accidentally finds cigarettes and beer hidden in her 14-year-old daughter's bedroom. Should she say anything to her? If so, what?

Have these or any similar situations happened to you or anyone you know?

Compare your answers with other groups.

## Protest

Some forms of popular music are influential in shaping teenagers' opinions. Look at these quotations and discuss the questions:

*'Your sons and your daughters are beyond your command. Your old road is rapidly agin'.'*  
(Bob Dylan, *The Times They Are A-changin'*, 1964.)

Are these lines relevant today?  
Do all teenagers rebel against their parents?  
Do you know any who haven't?

*'If I'm more of an influence to your son as a rapper than you are as a father, you got to look to yourself as a parent.'*  
(Ice Cube, in an interview in 1990.)

Do you agree with this or not? Why?  
Is there anything parents can do to stop their teenage children rebelling?