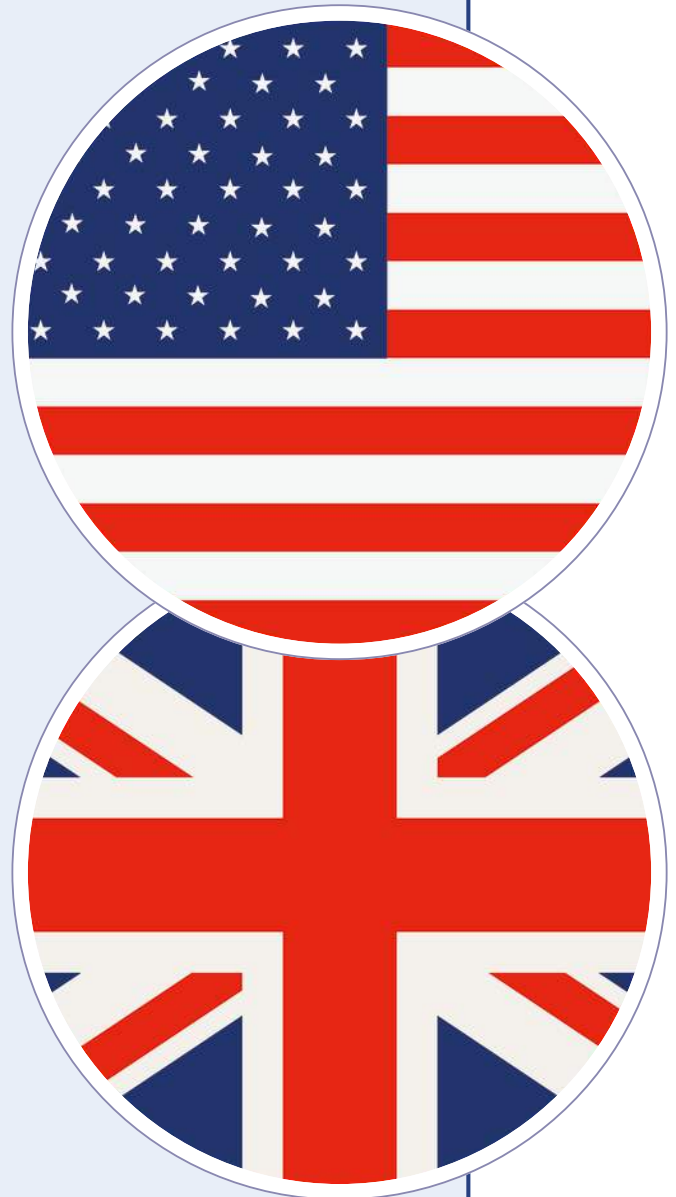


Englisch betrifft uns

EBU on the Web 2019/2

Topical texts
in English lessons

- *Comprehension*
- *Analysis*
- *Creative writing*
- *Background Information*



© Alvaro_cabrera – Freepik.com

The Topic

Teenage pregnancy

Finding out you are pregnant as a teenager, especially if the pregnancy is unexpected and not wanted, can put enormous stress on a young woman and her family. Teenage pregnancy is a very complex social problem, which needs to be understood from various sides, e.g. the girl's parents or the boy who got her pregnant.

Chelsie Pryer became pregnant when she was 15. In the interview with Joan McFadden from *The Guardian* she reports about her way from a shocked and puzzled teenager to a mother of two children, who is happy about her present situation.

Reference to obligatory topics

Adolescence, teenage problems, seeking meaning in life, growing up

Background information – further links

<https://powertodecide.org/what-we-do/information/national-state-data/national>

The website of "Power to Decide", a campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy, offers a large amount of national data concerning the USA and gives advice to girls and young women confronted with early or unwanted pregnancy.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-pregnancy>

The website of the World Health Organization gives background information about adolescent pregnancy worldwide.

<https://pregnantandunplanned.wordpress.com>

Stories of teenagers who became pregnant at an early age

The Text

"'I will always be amazed that I didn't guess I was pregnant': having a baby at 15"

The Guardian 27 January 2018

The Link (URL)

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/jan/27/i-didnt-guess-i-was-pregnant-having-a-baby-at-15>

Annotations

abortion – a medical operation to end a pregnancy so that the baby is not born alive

amazed – very surprised, astonished

ambitious – determined to be successful, rich, powerful etc.

assumption – something that you think is true although you have no definite proof

benefit – an advantage, improvement, or help that you get from something; *here*: social/financial support from the state

bump – *Beule*

contraception – the practice of preventing a woman from becoming pregnant when she has sex, or the methods for doing this

crucial – extremely important

Devon – a county in southwest England

dizzying – making you feel dizzy (feeling unable to stand steadily)

feckless – lacking determination, and not achieving anything in your life

gossip – information that is passed from one person to another about other people's behaviour and private lives, often including unkind or untrue remarks

to head – to go or travel towards a particular place

nasty – extremely unpleasant and hurtful

nursing – the job or skill of looking after people who are ill, injured, or old

perception – *Wahrnehmung*

to put about – (*informal*) to give other people news or information, especially when it is unpleasant or untrue

to reassure – to make someone feel calmer and less worried or frightened about a problem or situation

resilient – able to become strong, happy, or successful again after a difficult situation or event

to retaliate – to do something bad to someone because they have done something bad to you

self-esteem – the feeling of being satisfied with your own abilities, and that you deserve to be liked or respected

sensitive – able to understand other people's feelings and problems

stunned – too surprised or shocked to speak

thrilled – very excited, happy, and pleased

to wreck – to completely spoil something so that it cannot continue in a successful way

Assignments

1. Do you know/Have you heard about a girl who became pregnant at a very early age? What problems for the girl or the girl's family did/might come up? (Introduction/Awareness)
2. Read Chelsie's story about her pregnancy and her present situation. Then trace her (emotional) development from her early pregnancy to being a happy mother of two children. Examine how various people around her contributed to this development. (Comprehension)
3. What do you think about Chelsie's development? Which factors were beneficial to her final happiness? Can you imagine factors that might have had a negative impact on her development? (Evaluation)
4. An agony aunt is a person who writes a column in a newspaper or magazine, in which they reply to readers who have written to them for advice on their personal problems. Read 16-year-old Jenny's letter to an Agony Aunt.

Dear Agony Aunt,

I'm three months pregnant.

I don't think I could stand having an abortion.

I'm not sure if I should tell my parents about it because they'd kill me.

My boyfriend has dumped me and says it's my problem, not his. I have nobody to turn to.

What can I do?

Discuss the problem presented in the letter with your partner or in a group. What advice would you give the girl? You can make use of the information you have gained from the newspaper article. Then write the letter from the Agony Aunt's perspective.

(Creative writing)

Suggested Solutions

2. The emotional stages of Chelsie's development

- she grew up as a happy girl (family, friends, boyfriend, school going well)
- at the age of 14 she became pregnant, which came as a shock (her contraception failed)
- during and after the medical examination she was in a way paralyzed and detached (everything around her was in slow motion, she was stunned, the situation seemed to have nothing to do with her)
- she was contemplating the question of whether she was going to keep her baby or give her up for adoption; she was not sure that she would be a good mother
- she felt looked after by her family while she was trying to decide what to do next
- she accepted the fact that she was about to have a baby because it was too late for an abortion
- she informed her boyfriend about her pregnancy but still could not decide whether to keep the baby
- when her daughter (May) was born, she fell in love with May, which made her decision even more difficult
- when she went back to school, the reactions of her teachers made her realize how bad the general perception of teenage mothers and unplanned pregnancy is
- she was upset by the gossip about May's father
- she decided to keep May with the support of her family, although she was still worried that she would not be a good mother
- her supportive family increased her confidence
- when the relationship with May's dad ended, she decided it was time for a fresh start (and moved to Edinburgh); she has become happy in her job and started a new family
- her resumé in retrospect: when she became pregnant at such a young age, she thought it was the end of her life, but it was "the beginning of something wonderful"
- having her second child, Freddie, was different from the first time: she has become more self-confident

The reactions of others and how they influenced her development

Chelsie's family (her mother and her brothers)

- she brought her daughter up, so she is very close to her
- Chelsie's mother gathered her daughter in her arms when she told her about the pregnancy
- they did not criticize her or make her feel bad
- they looked after Chelsie while she tried to decide what to do next
- they listened to Chelsie when she worried about her future
- they were very sensitive and reassured her about her capabilities, but they did not try to make a decision for her
- when Chelsie's daughter was born, her mother was there for her and she encouraged her not to put the baby up for adoption; she was sure that Chelsie would do everything to create the best life for daughter
- when Chelsie went back to school, her family looked after her daughter
- her mother and her brothers were very happy when she decided to keep the baby and have always supported her emotionally and practically > a supportive family
- her mother followed her to Edinburgh to be closer to her daughter

Chelsie's boyfriend (May's father) and his parents

- his response was not very positive
- he and his parents were stunned
- when Chelsie went back to school, his family as well as her own looked after her daughter

Chelsie's teachers

- the teachers' perceptions of Chelsie had changed: half were supportive and encouraging, the other half believed that her life would be a disaster and that she had thrown her bright future away

Chelsie's new partner Philipp

- he and May are very close
- he seems to be very caring, he supports her

Chelsie's evaluation of her development and her present situation

- society still sees teenage mums and unplanned pregnancy negatively; girls are particularly criticized, whereas boys are expected to want to have sex, i.e. they are not considered to have wrecked their lives; girls are still seen as 'feckless' and out of control, with no sense of responsibility
- she has learned that getting pregnant at a very early age is not like the end of her life but the beginning of something wonderful

3. Positive factors/possible negative factors

In fact things have worked out well for Chelsea, in particular because of her strong family and probably because of her own strong character, but the worries she had about her baby's life and the gossip that she perceived about her and her boyfriend were upsetting and could have influenced her considerably. However,

she overcame them in the end. What also caused and still causes her some concern is the fact that society as a whole discriminates against teenage mothers.

4. Creative writing

The Agony Aunt's answer could consider the following aspects: go to your mother because you need her help; try to be as calm as possible and tell her about your problem; she will be angry at first because parents are usually concerned about their children's future and they want to do what's best for their children; the longer you wait, the more complicated the problem will be because she will find out about your pregnancy sooner or later; go to your doctor and discuss the possibility of an abortion, maybe you will change your opinion; if you decide to keep your child, maybe your boyfriend will discover that it's also his responsibility; if you think you can trust a teacher at your school, why not ask him/her for help?