Unit 7
The Virtue of Growing Old

OBJECTIVES
• Learn 112 new words and expressions;
• Grasp the main idea and structure of the texts and understand difficult language points;
• Discuss the virtues of growing older and being young;
• Sentence patterns;
• Writing: Is it wise to make friends online?
• Skill training

Memorable Quotes
• At 20 years of age the will reigns, at 30 the wit; at 40 the judgment.
  — Benjamin Franklin

• Old wood best to burn, old wine to drink, old friends to trust, and old authors to read.
  — quoted by Francis Bacon

1. Warming up - Memorable quotes
Memorable quotes
Pre-reading questions
Background information
Watch & discuss

1. Warming up - Pre-reading questions
1. What, in your opinion, are the advantages and disadvantages of growing older?

• Suggested phrases:
  • no longer look good / health will get worse / our eyes and ears will fail us / stay in our lonesome apartments / more experienced / more reasonable judgments and decisions / less concerned with worldly pursuits / heritage
When we grow old, we no longer look good. Our health will get worse and we will not be able to move about easily any more. We will not be able to do anything but to watch children playing. Moreover, our eyes and ears will fail us and we will have many difficulties in our daily lives. Furthermore, as our children have their own lives, we will have to stay in our lonesome apartments.

From another perspective, however, there are still many advantages of growing old. Old people are obviously more experienced and are able to make more reasonable judgments and decisions than young people. They are less concerned with the worldly pursuits and know what is more important and what is less important. Above all, they are more appreciative of what life has to offer us and their wisdom is a great heritage to young people.

Young people are beautiful and full of energy. They love new things and are ready to meet any challenge in their pursuit of happiness. They are creative and like to indulge in the wildest fantasies, which in a sense is the mother of innovation. In short, they represent the future of mankind.

Faust is the protagonist of a classic German legend who makes a pact with the Devil in exchange for knowledge. Faust's tale is the basis for many literary, artistic, cinematic, and musical works. The meaning of the word and name has been reinterpreted through the ages. "Faust" (and the adjective "Faustian") has taken on a connotation distinct from its original use, and is often used today to describe a person whose headstrong desire for self-fulfillment leads him or her in a diabolical (恶魔的) direction.
1. What is the Americans' attitude toward the problem of growing older? And how is this attitude expressed in their daily life? The answer to this question can be found in the first two paragraphs. The beginning statement tells readers about the fact that Americans worship youth. In other words, they are afraid of growing older. This fear is manifested in their efforts "to delay the effects of age" with the passion for cosmetics and physical exercises.

2. How many aspects does the author list to show the distinct advantages of growing older? What are they? The writer mentions three aspects to show distinct advantages of growing older, i.e. less concern of one's appearance (Para. 3), less uncertainty about the unknowns in the future (Para. 4) and self-identity (Para. 5).

3. Why are young people often confused, uncertain and troubled despite their carefree façade? (Para. 4) The writer says, "when you are young, major decisions await you at every turn. " This suggests that they feel uncertain about what would happen to them and what they would do in the future.

4. How does the author contrast young people with older ones in terms of self-identity? (Para. 5) The writer presents the distinct difference between the adolescents and the forty-year-olds by repeated use of "Being young means..." or "It means..." in contrast with "I ... now... " or "I no longer...".

5. What significance does the author draw from her parents' contentment in their sixties? The writer learns the significance from her parents' contentment that the newer (younger) is not necessarily better, and she can be happier than before as she grows older.
In this part the writer airs her own view about growing older.

Main Idea of Part 1

Why do people want to hide their gray hair and delay the effect of aging?

They worship youth and are afraid of growing older, so they try every means to look young.

Does the writer deny the virtues of being young?

No, she does not. The writer admits the virtues of being young, but what she really wants to talk about is those advantages of growing older, which are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs. So the last sentence of the second paragraph is both thematic and transitional.

Does the writer deny the virtues of being young?

... gladly sign with the devil just to be young again. (L.1 Para. 2)

Literally, the phrase "sign with the devil" means "to sign a contract with the devil, so that the devil would help you become young again". In the text the phrase is metaphorically used to mean "to be ready to do anything, even to work for the devil just to be young again".

Isn't aging an experience to be dreaded? Perhaps it is un-American to say so, but I believe the answer is "No". (L.2 Para. 2)

What does the writer mean when she says "it is un-American to say so"?

She means these questions seem contrary to the values commonly held by most American people. And the American people would do anything possible to delay aging.

Let's listen to and read Part 2 of the text (Paras.3-5)
Main Idea of Part 2

- In this part, the writer illustrates a number of distinct advantages of growing older with.
  - Being less obsessed with one's appearance;
  - Being less uncertain about the unknowns;
  - Being sure of one's identity.

How is the third paragraph organized?

- It can be noticed that the technique of contrast is used to project the difference between adolescents and people in their forties. *e.g.*
  - "When my brother Dave and I were teens..."
  - "When Dave and I were young..."

Does young people's carefree façade really reflect their inner world? (Para.4)

- No. Despite their carefree façade, they are often confused, uncertain, and troubled by all the unknowns in their future.

What is implied in Paragraph 5?

- Paragraph 5 presents the third and the greatest benefit of growing older: the knowledge about yourself (the self-identity). It is implied that lack of this knowledge can bring about a kind of adolescent insanity (in contrast with the sanity of forty-year-olds) expressed in parallel structures "It means... " "Being young means... "

Is it accurate to say that older people are totally free from uncertainty?

- No, because they still have important choices to make. However, they have already made their major ones, while the young people will meet theirs at every turn.
• No matter what I weighed, though, I was never satisfied with the way I looked. (L.5, Para. 3)

• My legs were too heavy, my shoulders too broad, my waist too big. (L.6, Para. 3)

• How could we go to school wearing loose-fitting school blazers when everyone else would be wearing smartly tailored leather jackets? (L1, Page 90, Para. 5)

• But when you are young, major decisions await you at every turn. (L.5, Para. 4)

• The greatest benefit of being forty is knowing who I am. (L.1, Para. 5)
II. Text learning _ Part 2

• Being young means wondering what is worth working for. (L.3, Para. 5)

What is your understanding of the sentence?

II. Text learning _ Part 2

• Being young means feeling happy with yourself one day and wishing you were never born the next. (L.3, Para. 5)

What is the meaning of "... wishing you were never born the next"? What does this description imply?

You wish you were never born because you feel so miserable.
(Open to discussion.)

II. Text learning _ Part 2

• It means trying on new selves by taking up with different crowds. (L.5, Para. 5)

According to the author, what is the purpose of young people’s taking up with different kinds of people?

II. Text learning _ Part 2

• It means resenting your parents and their way of life one minute and then feeling you will never be as good or as accomplished as they are. (L.5, Para. 5)

Why do adolescents have such a feeling?

II. Text learning _ Part 2

• I don’t laugh at jokes that I don’t think are funny. (L.8, Para. 5)

What is implied in this sentence?

II. Text learning _ Part 2

• I’m no longer blame my parents for my every personality quirk or keep a running score of everything they did wrong raising me. (L.11, Para. 5)

How to explain the phrase "keep a running score of everything they did wrong raising me"?

It means "constantly reminding yourself of all the unhappy things that your parents did to you in the process of raising you". Here "score" means "record".
II. Text learning _ Part 2

• Life has taught me that I, not they, am responsible for who I am. (L.12, Para. 5)

Can you analyze the syntactic structure of the sentence?

II. Text learning _ Part 3

Let’s listen to and read Part 3 of the text (Para. 6)

Main Idea of Part 3

• After sharing her own experience in contrast to adolescents’ problems with the reader, in this paragraph the writer turns to the issue similar to the one mentioned in the first paragraph: the validity of American values on the aging problem. The writer cites her parents’ example to back her view, thus echoing the theme — distinct advantages of growing older makes a better phase of life.

My own parents, now in their sixties, recently told me that they are happier now than they have ever been. (Para. 5)

Their contentment holds out great promise for me. (Para. 7)

Paraphrase: Their contentment makes me believe that I’ll also be happy.

1. worship v.

• to show great admiration

Examples

- Don’t worship everything foreign.
- 她崇拜偶像吗？
- Does she worship idols?
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>2. dread</strong></th>
<th><strong>v.</strong></th>
<th>to feel great fear or anxiety about</th>
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<td>I've got an interview with the bank manager tomorrow — I'm dreading it.</td>
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<td>The landlord dreaded asking them for their rent because he knew it would end in an argument.</td>
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<th><strong>3. convince</strong></th>
<th><strong>v.</strong></th>
<th>to cause sb to believe</th>
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<td>The convincing proof that smoking causes cancer has failed to convince hundreds of millions of people to abandon the vile habit.</td>
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<td>The party failed to convince the majority of the voters that it was capable of governing the country.</td>
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<th><strong>4. work out</strong></th>
<th><strong>v.</strong></th>
<th>to exercise or improve physical fitness; to formulate or develop</th>
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<td>The boxers are working out at the gym.</td>
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<td>He had a draft worked out in his mind.</td>
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<th><strong>5. contradict</strong></th>
<th><strong>v.</strong></th>
<th>to be opposite in nature to</th>
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<td>The account of events given by the witness contradicted the version of the accused.</td>
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<td>Have you read these newspaper reports? They totally contradict each other.</td>
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<th><strong>6. be obsessed with</strong></th>
<th><strong>v.</strong></th>
<th>to preoccupy the mind of excessively</th>
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<td>David was obsessed with a girl he had just met.</td>
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<tr>
<td>He was obsessed by fear of death.</td>
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<th><strong>7. take up with</strong></th>
<th><strong>v.</strong></th>
<th>become friendly with (esp. someone undesirable); receive</th>
</tr>
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<td>Recently he has taken up with two bad boys, which makes his parents really angry.</td>
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<tr>
<td>He is not one to take up readily with new ideas.</td>
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8. **agon**y n.

- extreme mental or physical pain or suffering

**Examples**

They went through the agons of war and famine.

The injured lay there in agony.

9. **deny** oneself v.

- not to allow oneself to have something that one normally has

**Examples**

As he had a bottomless purse, he would never deny himself anything he wanted.

To keep slim, she denied herself ice-cream.

10. **quirk** n.

- a peculiarity of behavior

**Examples**

All men have their own quirks and twists.

If David were able to see that he is the one with the quirk, he would be able to laugh at himself and stop putting such high expectations on his wife.

11. **phase** n. (cl. phrase)

- stage of development

**Examples**

This is the most productive phase in this artist's life.

With the development of this machine, the mining industry entered a new phase.

12. **premise** v.

- a proposition upon which an argument is based or from which a conclusion is drawn

**Examples**

Let me premise my argument with a bit of history.

The conclusion was deduced from the premises.
### Title and outline of the composition

- **Title:** Study Abroad  
- **Outline:**  
  1. 出国留学的诸多优点；  
  2. 出国留学也有其不利条件；  
  3. 总的说来，出国留学的利大于弊，因此是可行的

### Study Abroad

- Nowadays study abroad had come into a fashion. Attending schools abroad has a lot of advantages. Firstly, many foreign universities offer better studying conditions and have more advanced teaching equipment. Secondly, students who study abroad get in touch with people from various countries, hence they can serve as mediators between people of different cultures. Thirdly, we can grasp and improve a foreign language more quickly.

### However, study abroad also presents some disadvantages. For example, we may have language barriers in the first few months or financial difficulties before getting a scholarship. Besides these, being far away from native country and without relatives and friends around, students may have a sense of loneliness

### In spite of the above-mentioned, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. So it is advisable to study abroad and the most important is that we should make contribution to our native country after we finish our study.

### Oral activities

- **Topic for discussion:**  
  - Discuss the life of an old neighbor who is excluded from the mainstream of life and lonely.

### Listening comprehension

- Listen to the Lecture about out aging society and do the exercises on Pp 98-99.
VI. After-class tasks

AFTER-CLASS TASKS

- Read Text II and discuss the questions
- Do the dictation of Unit 1, Book 2.
- Read Material 1 on the Department’s Net for this semester.