

## 1 SPEAKING

**a**  Work in groups. Decide who is happier in each pair below. Give reasons for your choice.

- 1 men / women
- 2 younger / older people
- 3 extroverts / introverts
- 4 employed people / unemployed people
- 5 richer people / poorer people
- 6 married people / unmarried people
- 7 people who focus on personal success / people who focus on relationships

## 2 READING

**a** Read the article on page 39 about happiness quickly and check your ideas in exercise 1a.

**b** Read the article again, and complete the notes.

<b>happiness</b> Ways the author's life and research match	1 women are happier than men 2 3 4
<b>unhappiness</b> Ways the author's life and research match	1 2
Points the author thinks are wrong	1 2

**c** Read the article again and answer the questions.

- 1 Why did the author say she wrote the article?
- 2 Why is the research about happiness and age surprising, according to the author?
- 3 How does the author think she might change her life at the end of the article?

## 3 SPEAKING

**a**  Work in groups and answer the questions.

- 1 Underline two things you agree with in the article and two things you disagree with.
- 2 Who is the happiest person you know? Why do you think they are happy?
- 3 Do you think people are born happy or do you think they become happy because of circumstances (e.g. relationships, job, money)?



### BETTER READING: PATTERNS OF ORGANISATION

Being able to identify how a text is organised will help you to follow the development of arguments or ideas.

**1** Decide which pattern is followed in the article.

A Introducing the topic and purpose of the text

B Introducing the topic and the author's opinion

Introducing different viewpoints (author's comment)

Highlighting positives and negatives

Summing up the author's opinion

Summarising the research

**2** Match the correct function to each paragraph (A–G).

- 1  Identifies factors that match the author's experience
- 2  Identifies social features that affect happiness
- 3  Gives an overview of the author's opinion related to research
- 4  Identifies personal qualities that affect happiness
- 5  Highlights the importance of the topic
- 6  Gives an overview of topic and purpose
- 7  Identifies factors that differ from the author's experience



# HAPPY?

## ARE YOU SURE?

What makes people happy at different ages?

by Elaine Jones

- A** My granddad used to say, 'if you've got your family, you'll always be happy.' But what does make people happy? Has it got something to do with money, age, personality, gender, relationships or love? Or is there a secret to it? Is there something happy people know that unhappy people don't? I'm a twenty-five-year-old female journalist. I'm a bit of an extrovert, and I'm quite successful. I have lots of good friends and I would say I'm pretty happy. But I wanted to find out how to ensure that this state of happiness continues, and whether my granddad was right.
- B** A quick search online reveals one key piece of information - happiness is a big business. The number of titles on how to be happy has caused a publishing boom. There are literally thousands of happiness experts out there, and every one of them seems to have the answer. The question is, do they all agree? I started off by reading some of the research.
- C** So, for the initial findings: Women are usually happier than men. Tick. Extroverts are usually happier than introverts. Tick. People who don't live with children are happier than those who do. Tick. Given my situation, this was going really well. And then I read the research about happiness and age.
- D** Most people would say that the young are happy and the old unhappy. I'd always felt that this made sense. When you're young, you have your health, and life is full of excitement and possibility. As you grow older, you lose these things. However, research suggests the opposite is true. According to several different studies, we are happiest in our seventies. There is a short peak in happiness levels between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one, but then it drops significantly. This has something to do with stress levels. Research has shown that people are usually more stressed in their twenties and hence are less happy. The unhappiest time in a person's life is usually around fifty to fifty-three, then people tend to get progressively happier.

- E** Happiness also has a lot to do with our general circumstances. According to much research, being unemployed is a particularly negative experience which affects our general happiness. At this point I take a deep breath - journalism is not a very stable profession. Studies also show that money is important too, as the rich are usually happier than the poor. Although a lot depends on how much the people around you have - it seems we're happy with our (lack of) wealth as long as other people don't have more than us.
- F** More than money, success has always been a big factor in my life. I've always believed that if I work hard, I'll have more of it, and that will make me happier. But according to a recent book, *The Happiness Advantage*, this simply isn't true. The author suggests that relationships are more important than success. I think this is what my granddad was saying. There is a lot of debate about whether people who are married are happier than people who are single. But it's not just marriage, it's our relationships in general. In one large study, the top 10% of happiest people all had strong social relationships.
- G** So, given all this data, I'm not sure how I feel. Perhaps a little confused, to be honest. After reading and writing about happiness, I feel, well, less happy. My life and happiness don't seem to mirror the statistics. I'm pretty sure I'm happier now than I was when I was eighteen. I'm also less stressed. But it has also made me think about my priorities. Perhaps I should care less about my career and more about my relationships. It seems my granddad was right after all. He also used to say, 'always listen to your heart'. Mine is telling me I'm doing just fine.

