


## Unit 5 Health

Health science: Life expectancy


Reading skills: Comparing different genres

Writing skills: Describing statistical information

### 1 SPEAKING

**a**  Guess the life expectancy for the countries by matching ages a–h.

- |           |         |
|-----------|---------|
| 1 China   | a) 81.2 |
| 2 India   | b) 76.7 |
| 3 Mexico  | c) 75.8 |
| 4 Russia  | d) 76.1 |
| 5 Spain   | e) 79.3 |
| 6 Turkey  | f) 68.3 |
| 7 the UK  | g) 82.8 |
| 8 the USA | h) 70.5 |

**b**  In recent years, medical studies have shown life expectancy has improved in the industrialised world. It is highly likely it will continue to improve. Why do you think this is the case? Make notes then discuss your ideas with your partner.

**b** Read the three texts again. What are the differences between the three genres? Think about the following categories:

- 1 The information given in each text
- 2 Whether the language is formal, neutral or informal
- 3 Grammar features, e.g. pronoun use, noun phrases
- 4 Vocabulary used

#### STUDY SKILLS: SOURCES FOR WRITING

Is it appropriate to use information from all three articles when writing an academic essay? Why / why not?

### 2 READING 1

**a** The texts below are all excerpts from introductions to articles on life expectancy. Read and match them to the following three genres:

- 1 academic article
- 2 government report
- 3 newspaper article

Are they talking about the same information?

#### Text A

Traditionally, medical professionals, particularly epidemiologists, regarded 65 as the age at which somebody becomes elderly. This was based on the expectation that they probably only had a few years left to live. Improvements in life expectancy and health mean that categorising someone as old because they've turned 65 no longer makes sense. Instead, researchers suggest looking at how long a person may have left to live, based on average life expectancy, which in the UK is currently around 79 years for men and 82 for women (this is expected to rise in the future).

#### Text B

Human population aging is a multidimensional phenomenon. It differs from aging at the level of individuals. Each additional year individuals are alive, they grow one year older, but defining how populations age is much more complex. The study of human population aging can be divided into three components. The first is the change in the age structure of the population and the reasons for its change such as fertility and mortality. The second component is the change in the age-specific characteristics of people. The third component of the study of human population aging is the interaction between changes in age structures and changes in the age-specific characteristics of people.

#### Text C

Retirement may be beckoning and your knees may be creaking. But if you are 60, you are merely middle-aged. Scientists say that as we live longer, we need to rethink what we classify as being old. They say that rather than saying old age starts at a fixed age such as 60 or 65, we must factor in how much longer we have to live. They suggest that we don't think of ourselves as being old until we are within 10 to 15 years of the average life expectancy for our countrymen and women.



### 3 READING 2

- a Read about life expectancy in the EU. Does the paragraph mention some of the ideas you talked about in 1b?

#### *Life expectancy in the European Union*

Economic development and the improvement in some environmental conditions (for example in many urban areas), improved lifestyles, advances in healthcare and medicine, including reduced infant mortality, have resulted in a continuous increase in life expectancy at birth across Europe during the last century. This process has been going on for longer in Europe than in most other parts of the world, placing the EU-28 among the world leaders for life expectancy. Over the past 50 years, life expectancy at birth has increased by about 10 years for both men and women in the EU-28.

- b Study Table 1 below and answer the questions.

- What years are referred to?
- What different groups in each country are represented?
- What information is interesting and/or surprises you?
- What information would you discuss in a summary of the information in the table?

Table 1

	Total		Men		Women	
	2010	2014	2010	2014	2010	2014
EU-28	79.9	80.9	76.9	78.1	82.8	83.6
Belgium	80.3	81.4	77.5	78.8	83.0	83.8
Bulgaria	73.8	74.5	70.3	71.1	77.4	78.0
Czech Republic	77.7	78.9	74.5	75.8	80.9	82.0
Denmark	79.3	80.7	77.2	78.7	81.4	82.8
Germany	80.5	81.2	78.0	78.7	83.0	83.6
Estonia	76.0	77.4	70.9	72.4	80.8	81.9
Ireland	80.8	81.4	78.5	79.3	83.1	83.5
Greece	80.6	81.5	78.0	78.9	83.3	84.1
Spain	82.4	83.3	79.2	80.4	85.5	86.2
France	81.8	82.8	78.2	79.5	85.3	86.0
Croatia	76.7	77.9	73.4	74.7	79.9	81.0
Italy	82.2	83.2	79.5	80.7	84.7	85.6
Cyprus	81.5	82.8	79.2	80.9	83.9	84.7
Latvia	73.1	74.5	67.9	69.1	78.0	79.4
Lithuania	73.3	74.7	67.6	69.2	78.9	80.1
Luxembourg	80.8	82.3	77.9	79.4	83.5	85.2
Hungary	74.7	76.0	70.7	72.3	78.6	79.4
Malta	81.5	82.1	79.3	79.8	83.6	84.2
Netherlands	81.0	81.8	78.9	80.0	83.0	83.5
Austria	80.7	81.7	77.8	79.2	83.5	84.0
Poland	76.4	77.8	72.2	73.7	80.7	81.7
Portugal	80.1	81.3	76.8	78.0	83.2	84.4
Romania	73.7	75.0	70.0	71.4	77.7	78.7
Slovenia	79.8	81.2	76.4	78.2	83.1	84.1
Slovakia	75.6	77.0	71.8	73.3	79.3	80.5
Finland	80.2	81.3	76.9	78.4	83.5	84.1
Sweden	81.6	82.3	79.6	80.4	83.6	84.2
United Kingdom	80.6	81.4	78.6	79.5	82.6	83.2

- c Read the two paragraphs below. Do they include your ideas in questions 3 and 4 in 3b?

**Table 1 shows** how in a brief, four-year period between 2010 and 2014 life expectancy from birth increased by one year throughout the EU. **The greatest increase** was seen in the male segment of the population with **an increase of** 1.2 years **compared to** a 0.8-year increase for females. Life expectancy in 2014 **was highest** in three Mediterranean countries: Spain, Italy and Cyprus. **This suggests** diet and **possibly** improved healthcare in these countries is helping to extend the life in those populations. However, **the greatest increases** in life expectancy between 2010 and 2014 occurred in either northern European countries (Luxembourg and Denmark) or some Central European countries (Slovakia, Slovenia and Poland). In northern Europe, **it is likely that** advances in medicine and treatment are prolonging life, while in parts of Central Europe improved overall healthcare **could account for** increased life expectancy.

The table also **gives a breakdown** of differences in longevity between men and women in different EU countries. In Cyprus in 2014, men had **the greatest longevity** of all EU countries and live to an average of almost 81 years. Cypriot men **also accounted for** the greatest increase in life expectancy between 2010 and 2014. Longevity for men in two of the Baltic states was the lowest with the average being 69.1 and 69.2 in Latvia and Lithuania respectively. Spanish women live **longer than** women in other EU countries with **an average age of** 86.2 years, while women in Bulgaria **on average** live to the age of 78 years, which is the lowest life expectancy for women in the EU.

### 4 LANGUAGE FOCUS

#### Describing statistical information

- a Notice the language in bold in 3c. Put the words in bold into the four categories below. There is an example for each category.

A language used to refer directly to the table	B comparative language	C language for talking about quantity	D language to explain the data
Table 1 shows	the greatest increase	an increase of	this suggests ... possibly

- b Add the six expressions below to the table.

- the number of
- compared to
- describe(s)
- a comparison is made between
- larger
- this might indicate that



**c** In column D, is the language definite or tentative? Why?

**d** Study the information in Table 2, which focuses on life expectancy over the age of 65. Fill in the gaps in the paragraph below. Use words and expressions from the table in 4a. More than one answer is possible in some gaps.

Table 2 <sup>1</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ changes in the life expectancy of people at age 65 in EU countries in 2010 and 2014. Overall, there was an <sup>2</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ of just over half a year between the two dates. There was a <sup>3</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ increase for men <sup>4</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ women. In 2014, men could expect to live just over a year <sup>5</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ while women could expect to live for another six months. This <sup>6</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ that men are becoming aware of the need to live healthier lives after the age of retirement.

**Table 2**

	Total		Men		Women	
	2010	2014	2010	2014	2010	2014
EU-28	19.4	20.0	17.5	18.2	21.0	21.6
Belgium	19.6	20.3	17.6	18.4	21.3	21.9
Bulgaria	15.6	16.0	13.8	14.1	17.1	17.6
Czech Republic	17.4	18.1	15.5	16.1	19.0	19.8
Denmark	18.4	19.5	17.0	18.1	19.7	20.8
Germany	19.5	19.9	17.8	18.2	20.9	21.4
Estonia	17.4	18.4	14.3	15.2	19.5	20.4
Ireland	19.3	19.8	17.7	18.4	20.8	21.1
Greece	19.7	20.3	18.2	18.8	20.9	21.6
Spain	20.9	21.5	18.6	19.3	22.9	23.5
France	21.3	22.0	18.9	19.7	23.4	24.0
Croatia	16.7	17.5	14.7	15.5	18.2	19.1
Italy	20.4	21.2	18.3	19.2	22.1	22.8
Cyprus	19.7	20.2	18.3	18.9	21.0	21.4
Latvia	16.1	17.0	13.1	13.8	18.1	19.0
Lithuania	16.7	17.4	13.8	14.3	18.8	19.5
Luxembourg	19.6	20.7	17.3	18.4	21.6	22.7
Hungary	16.5	16.9	14.1	14.6	18.2	18.6
Malta	19.9	20.3	18.5	18.6	21.1	21.7
Netherlands	19.5	20.1	17.7	18.6	21.0	21.4
Austria	19.8	20.3	17.9	18.5	21.4	21.8
Poland	17.6	18.4	15.1	15.9	19.5	20.4
Portugal	19.3	20.2	17.2	18.1	21.0	21.9
Romania	16.1	16.6	14.2	14.7	17.6	18.1
Slovenia	19.2	19.9	16.8	17.7	21.0	21.6
Slovakia	16.3	17.4	14.1	15.1	18.0	19.1
Finland	19.7	20.1	17.5	18.2	21.5	21.7
Sweden	19.8	20.3	18.3	18.9	21.2	21.6
United Kingdom	19.6	20.1	18.2	18.8	20.8	21.3



## CRITICAL THINKING

### IDENTIFYING AND EXAMINING KNOWLEDGE

Discuss the questions.

- 1 When reading data in the form of a table, graph or bar chart, what should you find out first?
- 2 What kind of variations in the data should you then focus on?
- 3 How can you find out about interesting trends?
- 4 How should you discuss interesting trends in a report?

## 5 WRITING

**a** Write another paragraph using information in Table 2. Use the notes below.

- greatest increase: recent members of the EU, e.g. Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) (1 year 3 months)
- same increase: Poland and Slovakia – improvements in healthcare for the elderly?
- smallest increase: Malta – life expectancy already high

**b** Work in pairs and compare your paragraphs. Have you used the same expressions from the Language Focus?



## 6 READING EXTENSION

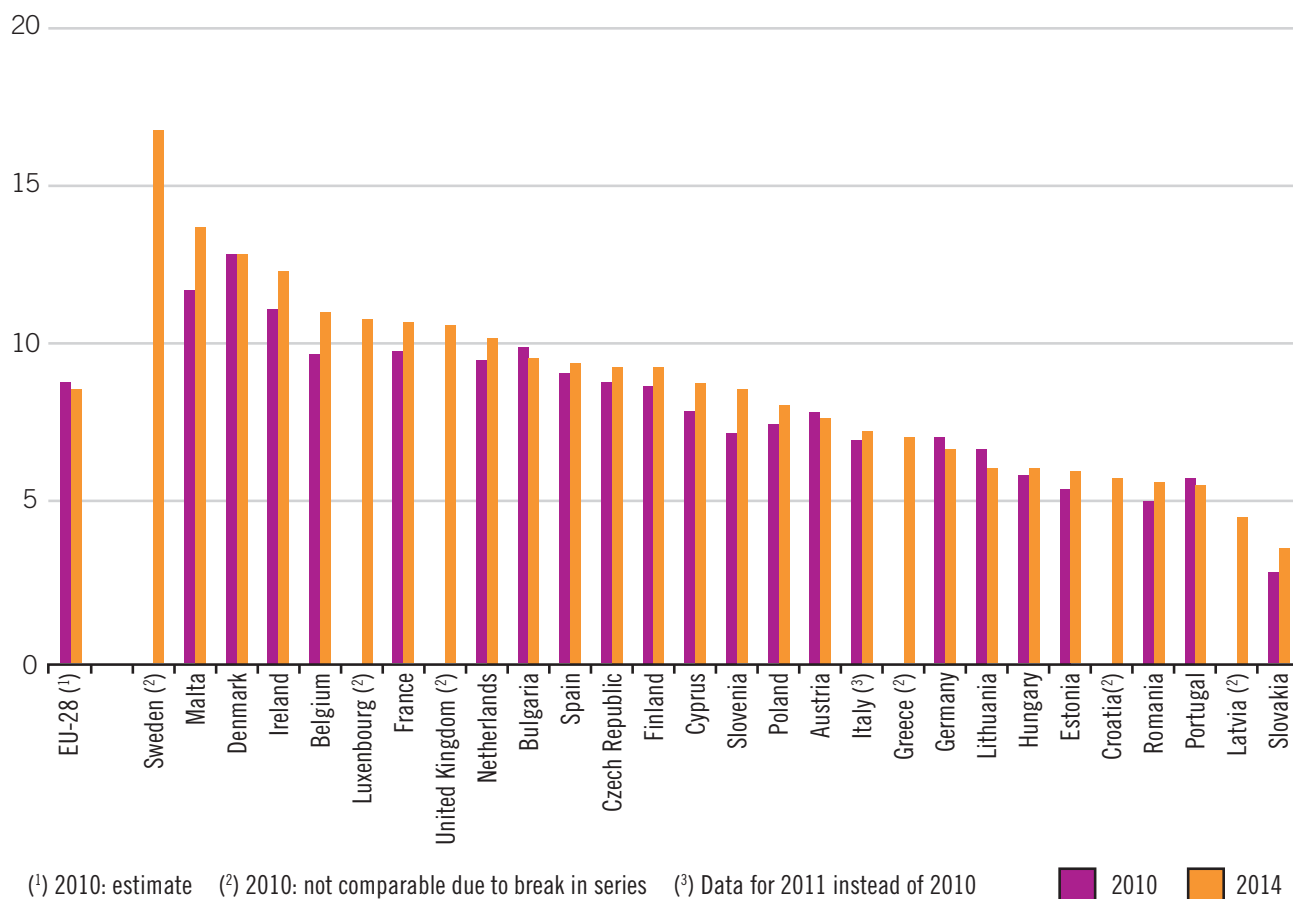
**a** Study the bar chart in Figure 1 below and read the information. Answer the questions.

- 1 What specific aspect of life expectancy is highlighted in the bar chart?
- 2 What is the main focus of the information in paragraphs 2 and 3?

**b** Notice the language in bold in the text. Sort it into the following categories:

- referring to the diagram
- talking about trends
- comparing
- explaining data

**Figure 1. EU Healthy life years at age 65, females 2010 & 2014**



### Healthy life years for women

Whether extra years of life gained through increased longevity are spent in good or bad health is a crucial question. Since life expectancy at birth is not able to answer this question fully, indicators of health expectancies, such as healthy life years have been developed. These focus on the quality of life spent in a healthy state, rather than the quantity of life – as measured by life expectancy.

Figure 1 **describes** the number of healthy life years left for women in EU countries beyond the age of 65. **A comparison is made between** the years 2010 and 2014. **It is interesting to note that** overall **there was a slight drop in the number of** healthy years European women could expect to have in their old age. **There is no obvious trend for** this drop in relation to countries. Five countries from different parts of the EU (Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Lithuania and Portugal) **all**

**showed a decrease in the number of** older age healthy years for women. **By comparison,** the one country to **demonstrate a significant increase** was Malta. **There was an increase of almost** two extra healthy years that Maltese women aged over 65 years could expect

In 2014, the country where women could expect the longest healthy life was Sweden with healthy life expectancy lasting until the age of 82. **This might indicate** the overall high standard of living in Sweden. Another Scandinavian country, Denmark, also has women living healthy lives for longer, but **it did not show an improvement** between 2010 and 2014. Slovakian women have **the shortest** healthy life expectancy of all EU women and can expect a life without physical limitations only up until about 68 years. However, there has been **a small improvement of** about a year **when comparing** 2010 to 2014.