

1b A confused generation

Reading

- 1 Work in pairs. Look at the photo accompanying the article below. Discuss the questions.
 - 1 What does it show?
 - 2 What do you think the matter is with the young girl?
 - 3 Is this situation familiar to you?
- 2 Discuss what effects you think China's recent economic boom has had on the attitudes of the younger generation and the older generation.
- 3 Read the article and compare your answers.
- 4 Look back at the article and find examples of the following to show how attitudes are changing in China.
 - language use
 - caring for the old
 - the relationship between parents and children
 - shopping
 - knowledge of the world
- 5 Do Bella's parents seem to accept the changes that are happening in China or not? Do you think the changes are difficult for Bella too? Why? / Why not?

Grammar the passive

- 6 Work in pairs. Look at the examples of passive verbs from the passage (1–6). Then look at uses of the passive (a–d). Which are true and which are false?
 - 1 Bella is the name that she **has been given** by her English teacher.
 - 2 But at the same time these new values **are also being questioned**.
 - 3 '**Have** our lives **been made** richer by all our new possessions?'
 - 4 **Is** Chinese culture **being supplanted**?
 - 5 When they go shopping Bella makes sure that the 'right' western brands **are selected**.
 - 6 'Our advice **is not listened to** and it **is not wanted**,' her mother says.
 - a The person doing the action – the agent – is not the main focus of the sentence.
 - b We use *from* to introduce the agent in a passive sentence.
 - c The agent is often unimportant or unknown – it is the action that interests us.
 - d The passive is often used because we want to start a sentence with something that has already been mentioned.

Change brings problems. Bella lives with her parents in a brand new apartment in Shanghai. Her real name is Zhou Jiaying – 'Bella' is the name that she has been given by her English teacher. Her parents are representative of a confused generation in a confused time. In modern Chinese society different ideologies are fighting against each other. Enormous material benefits have been brought by China's economic boom, but the debate is not about these; it's about family life and values. Old values – the respect of family and the older generations – are being replaced by new ones which place money as the critical measurement of one's position in society. But at the same time these new values are also being questioned. Have our lives been made richer by all our new possessions? Is Chinese culture being supplanted? As in all changing societies people are trying to find the right balance between the 'new' and 'old'.

Recently, Bella's family put their grandfather into a nursing home. It was a painful decision. In traditional China, caring for aged parents has always been an unavoidable duty, but times are changing. Bella's ambition? 'I want one day to put my parents in the best nursing home' – the best that money can buy, she means.

'When she told us that' Bella's father says, 'I thought – is it selfish to think she will be a dutiful and caring daughter and look after us? We don't want to be a burden on her when we get old. This is something my daughter has taught us. Once it was parents who taught children, but now we learn from them.' The family can buy many more things these days, and when they go shopping, Bella makes sure that the 'right' western brands are selected. (Pizza Hut is her favourite restaurant.) She also teaches her parents the latest slang.

Her parents want to be supportive, but they no longer help with Bella's homework; in spoken English she has surpassed them. She has already learnt much more about the world outside than them. 'Our advice is not listened to and it is not wanted,' her mother says. 'When she was little, she agreed with all my opinions. Now she sits there without saying anything, but I know she doesn't agree with me.' Bella glares, but says nothing. 'I suppose our child-raising has been a failure.' In China there is no concept of the rebellious teenager.



▶ THE PASSIVE

Present simple passive

I am given, you/we/they are given, he/she/it is given

Present continuous passive

I am being given, you/we/they are being given, he/she/it is being given

Present perfect simple passive

I/you/we/they have been given, he/she/it has been given

For further information and practice, see page 85.

- 7** **1.3** Look at the grammar box. Which of the verbs in bold in 1–6 below also sound natural in the passive? Transform the sentences from active to passive. Listen and check.

There are many children like Bella in China. They ¹ **admire** western brands. Their parents ² **have spoiled** them a little perhaps. Often these children ³ **receive** a better education than their parents. Their parents ⁴ **send** them to private schools and they ⁵ **encourage** them to go to university. In China the new economy ⁶ **is raising** everyone's hopes.

▶ WORDBUILDING forming adjectives from nouns

There are various endings in English: *-ful, -ish, -ent, -ious, -ive*, used to form adjectives from nouns.
support → *supportive*, *rebel* → *rebellious*

For further information and practice, see Workbook page 107.

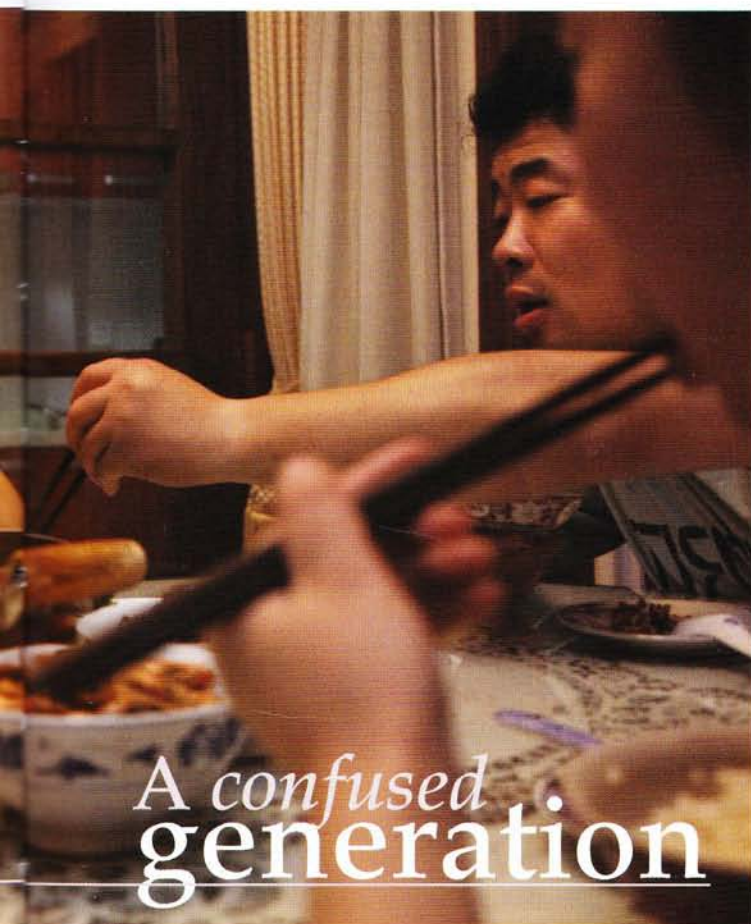
8 Pronunciation weak forms in passive verbs

- a** **1.3** Work in pairs. Listen again to the passive verbs used in Exercise 7. Which parts of the verb are stressed? Which are not stressed?
- b** Practise saying these sentences, putting stress on the main verbs and un-stressing the auxiliary verbs.
- 1 A lot of changes **have been introduced** in China.
 - 2 As a result, the average Chinese person **has been given** a better standard of living.
 - 3 Couples **are only allowed** to have one child.
 - 4 A lot of money **is invested** in each child's future.
 - 5 But changes in this policy **are being discussed**.
 - 6 The government **has been concerned** by the growing number of people over 60.
- 9** Complete the sentences by putting the verb in the correct tense, active or passive.

- 1 'Children _____ (grow) up much too quickly today. Girls of twelve _____ (dress) as if they are eighteen.'
- 2 'We _____ (leave) behind by all the new technology they use.'
- 3 'Our grandparents _____ (probably / work) harder than us, but they _____ (not / have) so much fun.'
- 4 'They _____ (live) longer and longer and we _____ (expect) to look after them. It's not fair.'
- 5 'Our parents aren't so different to us: they _____ (listen) to the same music, for example.'
- 6 'In recent years respect for wisdom and knowledge _____ (replace) by respect for money.'
- 7 'I rebelled against my parents. My children feel that they _____ (expect) to rebel, but in fact they have nothing to complain about or rebel against.'
- 8 'We _____ (often / criticise) for being selfish and having no moral values, but that's our parents' fault: we _____ (spoil) by them.'

Speaking

- 10** Work in groups. Discuss whether it was a young person or an older person that said each of the items in Exercise 9. Which of the statements do you agree with?
- 11** Do you think the 'gap' between your generation and your parents' generation is greater than the one between your generation and the next generation?



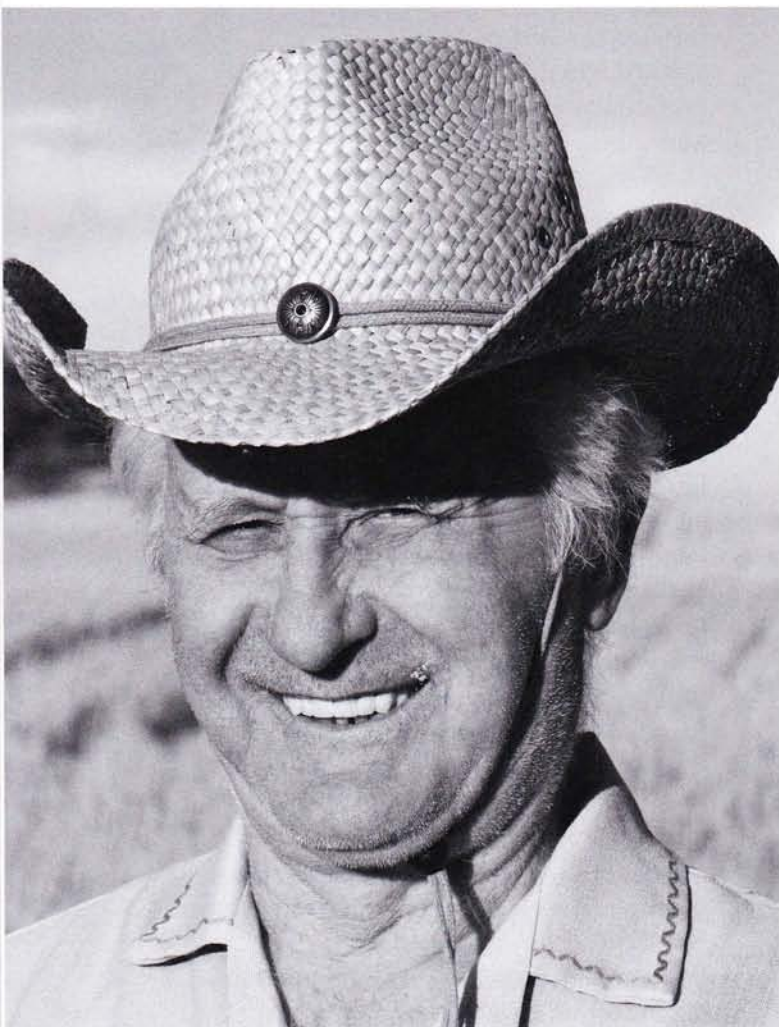
A confused generation

1b Young and old

Listening the ageing population

1 1.1 Listen to an extract from a radio programme about the ageing population. Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 People are not having so many children as in the past.
- 2 People don't eat and exercise as healthily as in the past.
- 3 Older people are not as much at risk from deadly diseases as they were in the past.
- 4 The average age that anyone in the world can expect to live to is now around 80.
- 5 In the future, the money to support the old will come from the younger generation.
- 6 The ageing population will help bring families closer together.



2 1.1 Complete the sentences with nouns. Then listen to the programme again and check.

Reasons for the ageing population

- 1 The birth _____ has declined over the last 20 years.
- 2 60 years ago, there was a baby _____ ; these 'baby boomers' are now reaching _____ age.
- 3 Improved _____ : people eat more healthily these days.
- 4 Healthier _____ : not only do people eat better, they are also more aware of the need to keep fit.
- 5 Advances in medicine have increased life _____ to around 80 in the developed world.
- 6 People are given routine _____ against life-threatening diseases, e.g. flu jabs for the elderly.

Grammar the passive

3 Rewrite the sentences from the active to the passive form.

- 1 Governments **are forcing** people to work longer.
People _____ to work longer.
- 2 Governments **have raised** the age of retirement in many countries.
The age of retirement _____ in many countries.
- 3 People **don't consider** someone to be old until they are about 80.
Someone _____ to be old until they are about 80.
- 4 The government **is encouraging** each family to have more children.
Each family _____ to have more children.
- 5 The government **reduces** taxes for families with more than two children.
Taxes _____ for families with more than two children.
- 6 The public **have not welcomed** the idea of working longer for less money.
The idea of working longer for less money _____ by the public.