

## Ageing population quotes communicative activities

### Quoting and commenting on quotes practice

Choose one of the quotes below that you have an opinion on. Without showing your worksheet to your partner, read out or paraphrase the quote(s) and make your own comments, then see what your partner thinks about your comments and about what the person who you quoted said. Discuss for as long as you like, then do the same thing with your partner's quote and comments. Continue switching roles and doing the same until your teacher stops you. You can do the quotes in any order you like, skipping any you don't understand or have no opinions on.

### Useful (neutral) phrases for quoting (without commenting yet)

- ...'s statement/ point/ truism/ recommendation/ suggestion/ conclusion/ theory/ thesis/ argument/ assertion/ explanation/ observation (that)...
- ... states/ says/ mentions/ describes/ emphasises/ stresses/ suggests/ adds/ concludes/ points out/ argues/ asserts/ explains/ observes/ proposes (that)...

### Useful phrases for commenting on quotes

#### Positive comments on quotes

- ... proves/ shows/ demonstrates/ establishes/ confirms (that)...
- As... says/ states/ mentions/ describes...
- classic/ seminal/ ground-breaking/ widely-quoted/ valuable/ invaluable...
- This is supported by/ This is backed up by/ This tallies with...
- It is (clearly/ obviously/ almost certainly/ probably/ generally/ often/ increasingly) + true that/ accurate to say that/ obviously the case that...
- ... makes an important point
- ... gets straight to the heart of the matter.
- ... deserves some (more) thought.
- ... serves as a useful reminder (about/ of/ that...)
- ... has a serious message (for/ about...)
- ... provides a good example of...
- It's difficult to add anything to...
- In fact, it is possible to go further and say that...

#### Negative comments on quotes

- Although/ While/ Though.../ .... but/ However/ Unfortunately (in reality/ in fact/ actually/ for most people/ for the majority of people/ for the vast majority of people/ unless...)
- This can (easily) be (totally) disproved/ dismissed/ ignored/ refuted (because...)
- There is no need to say/ call this... (as he/ she does)
- It is difficult to understand why/ to support the opinion that...(when it comes to...)
- It seems (more/ equally) likely that.../ ....is just as probable...
- This is contradicted by/ goes against/ is disproved by/ is inconsistent with...
- ... is (probably) a (gross) over-exaggeration/ is a (total) distortion of...
- ... is a (very/ extremely) controversial claim/ contentious claim
- ... is (probably) an unattainable goal
- ... is too obvious to be worth stating
- More data is needed (in order to be able to make a judgement on...)

When your teacher stops the activity, ask about any quotes you don't (fully) understand or can't think of comments for, discussing the quote as a class each time.

## Student A

1. "Every industry is going to be affected (by the aging population). This creates tremendous opportunities and tremendous challenges." – Pat Conroy
2. "Women may be the one group that grows more radical with age." – Gloria Steinem
3. "And the beauty of a woman, with passing years only grows!" – Audrey Hepburn
4. "Age has no reality except in the physical world. The essence of a human being is resistant to the passage of time. Our inner lives are eternal, which is to say that our spirits remain as youthful and vigorous as when we were in full bloom. Think of love as a state of grace, not the means to anything, but the alpha and omega. An end in itself." – Gabriel García Márquez, *Love in the Time of Cholera*
5. "You don't stop laughing when you grow old, you grow old when you stop laughing." – George Bernard Shaw
6. "To all, I would say how mistaken they are when they think that they stop falling in love when they grow old, without knowing that they grow old when they stop falling in love." – Gabriel García Márquez
7. "When I was younger, I could remember anything, whether it had happened or not; but my faculties are decaying now and soon I shall be so I cannot remember any but the things that never happened. It is sad to go to pieces like this but we all have to do it." – Mark Twain
8. "It's paradoxical that the idea of living a long life appeals to everyone, but the idea of getting old doesn't appeal to anyone." – Andy Rooney
9. "The value of marriage is not that adults produce children, but that children produce adults." – Peter De Vries
10. "The secret of a good old age is simply an honorable pact with solitude." – Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*
11. "Lines don't make beautiful women less beautiful" – Isabel Wolff, *A Vintage Affair*
12. "You can live to be a hundred if you give up all the things that make you want to live to be a hundred." – Woody Allen

**Student B**

13. "Those who think they have no time for bodily exercise will sooner or later have to find time for illness." – Edward Stanley
14. "Do not try to live forever, you will not succeed." – George Bernard Shaw
15. "By the time you're eighty years old you've learned everything. You only have to remember it." – George Burns
16. "He who is of a calm and happy nature will hardly feel the pressure of age, but to him who is of an opposite disposition, youth and age are equally a burden." – Plato
17. "At age 20, we worry about what others think of us. At age 40, we don't care what they think of us. At age 60, we discover they haven't been thinking of us at all." – Ann Landers
18. "Aging is not lost youth but a new stage of opportunity and strength."- Betty Friedan
19. "Our philosophy of caring for the elderly is to support their quality of life. We want to make sure they have moments of joy, that they can eat great food and spend more time with the friends and family they love. We are less concerned with extending life than in maintaining its quality." – Akira Kirahito, retirement-aged Japanese doctor
20. "An ageing society is one with increasing numbers of old people, a stage of life in which our youth-oriented culture finds few redeeming features." – FT.com
21. "Unlike in Japan – as well as China and South Korea – where older people command a respect born of Confucian tradition, in much of the west old age is mostly associated with sickness, senility and death." – FT.com
22. "The economic burden of ever-growing medical spending is a serious problem for the young United States, not for old Japan," John Creighton Campbell, professor emeritus at the University of Michigan, FT.com
23. "What's important is the ratio of workers not to elderly people but to non-workers, including children and women. By this measure, Japan's dependency ratio doesn't look so bad. There may be more old people but there are fewer (unproductive) children to worry about and more women in the workforce" – FT.com
24. "When I turned 60 I retired but spent two years moping around the house. I put on weight and realised that it was not a healthy lifestyle [...] The legal retirement age is 65 but at that age we are still fit and able to work." Makoto Hashimoto, Japanese retiree
25. "[Just] drop down dead. That's a good way of saving on medical bills. After all, we don't want to be a burden on the youngsters." Masaya Shin, retired Japanese headmaster

*Change groups. Choose comments on the quotes below to discuss in your new groups, discussing both the comments and the original quote each time.*

Pat Conroy's statement that "Every industry is going to be affected (by the aging population) [and t]his creates tremendous opportunities and tremendous challenges" gets straight to the heart of the matter. In fact, it is possible to go further and say that being able to deal with an ageing population will be the biggest factor in deciding which companies will be successful in the next thirty or forty years.

It is difficult to understand why Gloria Steinem claims that women are more likely to become radical with age than any other group. It seems more likely that the determining factor is having realised the unfairness of modern life, which could happen to anyone and is just as probable in other groups which are discriminated against such as ethnic minorities.

In general, it is accurate to say, as Isabel Wolff does in her book *A Vintage Affair* that wrinkles don't make attractive women less attractive. Unfortunately, it is difficult to support the same opinion when it comes to people who are less blessed by good looks. Therefore Audrey Hepburn's idea that women generally become more beautiful with age is probably an over-exaggeration.

Gabriel García Márquez makes an important point when he says that your mental age doesn't need to be the same as the age of your physical being. However, unless you have a comfortable life and/ or an exceptional personality, the struggle of daily life makes it almost inevitably that you will be worn down by time. In the same way, the quote from George Bernard Shaw that "You don't stop laughing when you grow old, you grow old when you stop laughing." is probably an unattainable goal for the majority of people in the world.

As with many of Mark Twain's most famous quotes, his idea that as you grow older you only remember "things that never happened" initially seems like just a stylish and witty thing to say, but in fact deserves some more thought. Perhaps what he is trying to say is that with age your regrets can overwhelm your memories, and that is certainly a danger.

It is increasingly true that, as Andy Rooney describes it, "the idea of living a long life appeals to everyone, but the idea of getting old doesn't appeal to anyone", even in countries which traditionally valued the wisdom of old age. However, there is no need to call this, as he does, "paradoxical", as it is in fact more and more possible to extend the years of healthy life and so delay actual "old age".

Gabriel García Márquez's suggestion in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* that "The secret of a good old age is simply an honorable pact with solitude." could be true for a minority of people, but for the vast majority of older people continued social contact is the secret to a long, healthy and happy retirement.

George Bernard Shaw's truism that there is no point trying to live forever seems too obvious to be worth stating, but it could serve as a useful reminder of what we want to live for.

If there is any serious message behind George Burn's claim that "By the time you're eighty years old you've learned everything. You only have to remember it.", it is perhaps that we can easily forget hard-earned lessons about how to live our lives. Actually, though, there are also many new things that the 80 year olds of today can and do learn, such as how to use new technology and new healthy living techniques.

Plato's point that the naturally cheerful deal best with any stage of life is almost certainly true, but somewhat depressing for people who have less positive outlooks on life.

It's difficult to add anything to Ann Lander's description of ageing that "At age 20, we worry about what others think of us. At age 40, we don't care what they think of us. At age 60, we discover they haven't been thinking of us at all."

Japanese doctor Akira Kirahito's emphasis on quality of life more than on extending life is undoubtedly the best approach, especially when it comes to the very old.

It's difficult to understand why University of Michigan professor John Creighton Campbell stresses that ever-growing medical spending will be more of a problem in a comparatively young country like the US rather than in already aged Japan, and more data would be needed in order to be able to make a judgement on those views.

Japanese retiree Makoto Hashimoto provides a good example of many people's motivation for continuing to work when he mentions that "...I retired but spent two years moping around the house. I put on weight and realised that it was not a healthy lifestyle [...] The legal retirement age is 65 but at that age we are still fit and able to work."

Retired Japanese headmaster Masaya Shin's joking advice to "[just] drop down dead. That's a good way of saving on medical bills." at the end of life in fact hides a serious point, which he adds later, that "we don't want to be a burden on the youngsters."

Woody Allen's joke that "You can live to be a hundred if you give up all the things that make you want to live to be a hundred." is a useful way of reminding us that having a life worth living is more important than how long we live for. However, in reality most centenarians have at least one or two seemingly unhealthy indulgences, something that perhaps paradoxically keeps them happy and therefore healthy.

*Ask about any comments that you can't understand or don't know how to comment on, discussing them as a class each time.*

## Language presentation

*Without looking above, put one word into each gap below.*

Pat Conroy's statement \_\_\_\_\_ "Every industry is going to be affected (by the aging population) [and t]his creates tremendous opportunities and tremendous challenges" gets straight \_\_\_\_\_ the heart of the matter. \_\_\_\_\_ fact, it is possible to \_\_\_\_\_ further and say that being able to deal with an ageing population will be the biggest factor in deciding which companies will be successful in the next thirty or forty years.

It is difficult \_\_\_\_\_ understand why Gloria Steinem claims that women are more likely to become radical with age than any other group. \_\_\_\_\_ seems more likely that the determining factor is having realised the unfairness of modern life, which could happen to anyone and is just as probable in groups which are discriminated against such as ethnic minorities.

\_\_\_\_\_ general, it \_\_\_\_\_ accurate to say, as Isabel Wolff does \_\_\_\_\_ her book *A Vintage Affair* that wrinkles don't make attractive women less attractive. Unfortunately, it is difficult to support \_\_\_\_\_ same opinion when it comes \_\_\_\_\_ people who are less blessed by good looks. Therefore Audrey Hepburn's idea that women generally become more beautiful with age is probably \_\_\_\_\_ over-exaggeration.

Gabriel García Márquez \_\_\_\_\_ an important point \_\_\_\_\_ he says that your mental age doesn't need to be the same as the age of your physical being. \_\_\_\_\_, unless you have a comfortable life and/ or an exceptional personality, the struggle of daily life makes it almost inevitably that you will be worn down by time. In the same \_\_\_\_\_, the quote \_\_\_\_\_ George Bernard Shaw that "You don't stop laughing when you grow old, you grow old when you stop laughing." is probably an unattainable goal for the majority of people in the world.

\_\_\_\_\_ with many of Mark Twain's \_\_\_\_\_ famous quotes, his idea that as you grow older you only remember "things that never happened" initially seems \_\_\_\_\_ just a stylish and witty thing to say, but in fact deserves \_\_\_\_\_ more thought. Perhaps \_\_\_\_\_ he is trying to say is that with age your regrets can overwhelm your memories, and that is certainly \_\_\_\_\_ danger.

It \_\_\_\_\_ increasingly true that, as Andy Rooney describes it, "the idea of living a long life appeals to everyone, but the idea of getting old doesn't appeal to anyone", even in countries which traditionally valued the wisdom of old age. However, there is \_\_\_\_\_ need to call this, as he \_\_\_\_\_, "paradoxical", as it is in fact more \_\_\_\_\_ more possible to extend the years of healthy life and so delay actual "old age".

Gabriel García Márquez's suggestion in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* that "The secret of a good old age is simply an honorable pact with solitude." could be true for \_\_\_\_\_ minority of people, \_\_\_\_\_ for the vast majority of older people continued social contact is the secret to a long, healthy and happy retirement.

George Bernard Shaw's truism that there is no point trying to live forever seems \_\_\_\_\_ obvious to be worth stating, but it could serve \_\_\_\_\_ a useful reminder of what we want to live for.

If \_\_\_\_\_ is any serious message behind George Burn's claim that "By the time you're eighty years old you've learned everything. You only have to remember it.", it is perhaps that we can easily forget hard-earned lessons about how to live our lives. Actually, though, there are also many new things that the 80 year olds of today can and do learn, such \_\_\_\_\_ how to use new technology and new healthy living techniques.

Plato's point that the naturally cheerful deal best with any stage of life is almost \_\_\_\_\_ true, but somewhat depressing for people who have less positive outlooks on life.

It's difficult to add \_\_\_\_\_ to Ann Lander's description of ageing that "At age 20, we worry about what others think of us. At age 40, we don't care what they think of us. At age 60, we discover they haven't been thinking of us at all."

Japanese doctor Akira Kirahito's emphasis \_\_\_\_\_ quality of life more than on extending life is undoubtedly the best approach, especially when it comes to the very old.

It's difficult to understand \_\_\_\_\_ University of Michigan professor John Creighton Campbell stresses that ever-growing medical spending will be more of a problem in a comparatively young country like the US rather than in already aged Japan, and more data would be needed \_\_\_\_\_ order to be able to \_\_\_\_\_ a judgement on those views.

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Woody Allen's joke that "You can live to be a hundred if you give up all the things that make you want to live to be a hundred." is a useful way of reminding us that having a life worth living is more important than how long we live for. However, \_\_\_\_\_ reality most centenarians have at least one or two seemingly unhealthy indulgences, \_\_\_\_\_ that perhaps paradoxically keeps them happy and therefore healthy.

*Compare with the original version above. Other words might be possible in the gaps, so please check if you wrote something different.*

**Brainstorming stage**

*Without looking above, brainstorm as many suitable phrases as you can into each gap.*

**Useful (neutral) phrases for quoting (without commenting/ without commenting yet)**

**Useful phrases for commenting on quotes****Positive comments on quotes****Negative comments on quotes**

*Use the mixed answers below and/ or look at the quotes with comments above, then brainstorm more similar language.*

### Mixed answers

*Put the phrases below into the correct places above.*

- accurate
- adds
- argues
- As... says/ states/ mentions/ describes...
- asserts
- but in fact
- claims
- classic
- concludes
- confirms
- demonstrates
- describes
- deserves some (more) thought.
- dismissed
- disproved
- emphasises
- establishes
- explains
- gets straight to the heart of the matter
- ground-breaking
- has a serious message (for/ about...)
- However, in reality
- In fact, it is possible to go further and say that...
- invaluable
- is (probably) a (gross) over-exaggeration
- is (probably) an unattainable goal.
- is (very) controversial
- is a (total) distortion of...
- is an extremely contentious claim
- is just as probable...
- is too obvious to be worth stating.
- It is difficult to understand why...
- It is the difficult to support that opinion (when it comes to...) that...
- It seems (more/ equally) likely that...
- It's difficult to add anything to...
- makes an important point
- mentions
- More data is needed (in order to be able to make a judgement on...)
- observes
- obviously the case
- points out
- proposes
- proves
- provides a good example of...
- says

- seminal
- serves as a useful reminder (about/ of/ that...)
- shows
- states
- stresses
- suggests
- There is no need to say/ call this... (as he/ she does)
- This can easily be refuted (because...)
- This can safely be ignored
- This goes against
- This is backed up by
- This is contradicted by
- This is disproved by
- This is inconsistent with...
- This is supported by
- This tallies with...
- true
- Unfortunately, for the majority of people
- valuable
- widely-quoted

*Compare your completed brainstorming as a class.*

### **Extension/ Homework**

*Find some quotes on the topic(s) that your teacher tells you and prepare to comment on them and discuss them in small groups.*