

STUDY SKILLS: reading complex texts effectively

1 Look at the title of the article and read the first paragraph. Answer the following questions.

- 1 What type of text is this?
- 2 What are the key words in the title?
- 3 What are the two things you learn about youth culture?

2a Building an overview Read the text quickly and follow the points below.

- Read to find the main topic only of each paragraph. (This will often be given in the first sentence of a paragraph.)
- Make a note of the main topic of the paragraph.

2b Look at your overview notes from Exercise 2a. Which paragraphs are closely connected?

3 Use your overview notes to identify in which paragraph you might find information about:

- 1 Hip-hop culture no longer being an urban phenomenon
- 2 People's earnings increasing in the late 1940s
- 3 Punk influencing the wider fashion industry

4 Reading for detail Pay attention to complex noun phrases and reference words. Identify the following noun phrases and references in the text.

- 1 The subject of 'is' (line 2)
- 2 The object of 'led' (line 7)
- 3 'with which' (line 12)
- 4 'them' (line 17)
- 5 'this' (line 30)
- 6 The subject of 'is' (line 46)

5 Read the whole article in detail and add notes about the key points to your overview notes. Identify the supporting points and argument that connect to the topic of each paragraph. Compare your notes with a partner's.

6 How would you describe the relationship between youth culture and mainstream fashion in your country? Are there any distinct youth sub-cultures?

COMMERCE, PUNK AND HIP-HOP: THE EMERGENCE OF YOUTH CULTURE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE MAINSTREAM

Whilst the existence of distinct styles of fashion and music that are associated with young people is undoubtedly an important feature of the Western world, it has not always been so. With regard to clothes, for example, for most of history, young people could only choose from mainstream adult fashions as that was all that existed. (Rouse)

Significant economic developments after 1945 led directly to young people making their own decisions concerning taste and style. Principally, there was a huge demand for labour which led to an elevation in salary levels, particularly for young people, who then had relatively large amounts of disposable income with which they could enjoy their lives in the period between school and marriage. (Abrams p.9)

This increase in disposable income meant that these young people became an identifiable consumer market and many industries, such as television, fashion and music, produced goods and services that were directly aimed at them. In a sense, youth culture was defined by the products that were produced specifically for young people by industry and commerce.

However, not all types of youth culture develop in this way. Whilst much of youth culture has been a result of commercial activity, there are undoubtedly smaller sub-cultures which are stylistically innovative and which are created by the young people themselves. Punk and hip-hop cultures illustrate this, and also reveal further connections between mainstream society and youth culture.

The punk culture of 1970s England may be seen as a direct reaction by young people against the intense commercialisation of youth fashion and music. This sub-culture was not the result of the commercial targeting of the young by industry, rather it was created independently by young people. However, punk culture went on to form a different connection with the mainstream culture when its style was adopted by the fashion industry, such that models had green hair, clothes were ripped and cosmetics companies sold make-up in vivid colours. (Rouse).

This adoption of an innovative youth sub-culture by the mainstream culture is also present in the historical journey of hip-hop culture. Rap music and an urban look of baggy jeans, sports shoes and baseball caps, emerged from a very specific social and geographical sphere, namely the young black culture of inner city North America. Yet, this specific style has now spread amongst young people of all races across the world, from Boston to Beijing, and is as much suburban as it is urban. This has occurred because of the direct marketing of this specific sub-culture to the wider youth market by companies on a global scale to substantially increase their profits. For example, in 1992, MTV launched a music show entitled 'Yo! MTV raps', and, by 1993, 80 percent of teenagers 'favoured the [Hip-hop] style'. (Speigler p.447)

Thus, it can be seen that youth culture is directly connected to mainstream consumer culture, although this relationship is not as simple as may first be assumed.

WRITING SKILLS: summarising

7a Identifying main points You are going to summarise the article on page 56 in 150–200 words. Complete the flow chart for the first half of the article with the words in the box.

| | | |
|----------|---------|---------|
| adults | defined | feature |
| products | 1945 | spend |

Youth culture/style a ¹ _____ of Western societies →
 not always the case →
 young people wore same clothes as ² _____
 this changed after ³ _____ →
 young people had more money to ⁴ _____ as they
 wanted due to elevation of salaries →
 businesses targeted young people's disposable income
 by making special ⁵ _____ for them →
 youth culture ⁶ _____ by these products.

7b What information has been left out? Why?

8 Avoiding plagiarism As you make notes or a flow chart, it is important to use your own words in order to avoid plagiarism. Analyse the flow chart in Exercise 7a and identify language that has been changed from the original.

9 Rephrase the following ideas:

- 1 due to an elevation of salaries
- 2 disposable income
- 3 youth culture was defined by these products

10 Make a flow chart for the second half of the text. Compare your flow chart with a partner's. Have you left out similar pieces of information? How have you changed the language?

11a Compare the first sentence below with the first part of the flow chart in Exercise 7a, then with the original text. What are the differences? How many clauses does this sentence have?

While youth culture is a part of Western societies, this has not always been the case as, for a long time, young people only had adult clothes to choose from.

11b Change the rest of the flow chart for the first half of the text into two or three sentences. Use linking words such as *however*, *as*, *consequently*. Compare your sentences with a partner's.

11c Complete the full summary of the text, using the flow chart you made in Exercise 10.

