**Article Analysis**

**How to be happy aged 100**

**Note to teachers:** Vocabulary given can be used to help explain unknown words/phrases, to ask the client for synonyms to show understanding, or to ask client to find a synonym for the word/phrase given in the definition

Eg. Can you find a synonym for ‘condemned’?

**Précis:** This article is a tongue in cheek response to a report by the office of national statistics that stated that 35% of babies born today will live to be 100. It starts with a negative scenario of life at 100, then goes on to give advice to avoid this. The advice includes how to stay in good health, having friends and family to look after you and keep you company, not caring what other people think, positive thinking, embracing the physical ‘deterioration’ and saving plenty of money.

**Cultural references:**
- Report into longevity of future generations in UK - [http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/mar/26/third-babies-2012-live-100](http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/mar/26/third-babies-2012-live-100)
- Dignitas – a Swiss assisted dying/suicide group for those with terminal illnesses and severe physical or mental illnesses

**Headline/Subheading:** (If client hasn’t read article) What do you think the article addresses?

**Photo Caption:** show off – to behave in an ostentatious/conspicuous way in order to make an impression

flout- refuse to respect/obey, ignore

What do you understand by ‘show off’? ‘flout rules’? ‘have a laugh’?

What will people think of you?

**Paragraphs**

1: mixed blessing – a situation having both advantages and disadvantages

doomed – condemned

rotten – very bad, unpleasant

ghastly – resembling ghosts, terrifying,

shun – avoid, ostracize

bitter – feeling hostility or resentment

How many children born today will live to 100?

What’s a ‘mixed blessing’?

What do you understand by ‘take steps’?

Have you read Gulliver’s Travels?

In what way were the Struldbrugs ‘doomed’?

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Why was their situation ‘rotten’?
Is it a fair analogy for those who live to 100? Why/why not? (discuss the various descriptions of the Struldbrugs)

2: verboten (German) => forbidden – not allowed/permitted
done for – (informal/slang) doomed to death or destruction/kaput
ill/poorly – sick, not in good health
ox – bull, male cattle
cheery – cheerful, happy, good-humoured
What’s the first piece of advice given?
Is this really advice (do you have a choice?)
What is recommended if you are ill?
What adjectives are given to describe this person?
What simile (comparison) is used? As strong as an ox
What’s the joke? ‘doesn’t mind wiping your bottom’? Is it just a joke?

3: greens- (green) vegetables
chum – (informal) close friend
What does ‘to avoid the above’ refer to?
What’s the advice given to avoid getting ill?
What sort of pills? Vitamins and minerals?
Can you find two informal/familiar terms? doggies, walkies
Why ‘keep getting doggies’? dog’s life expectancy 11-15 years
Why ‘go for walkies’? This is what you say to your dog
Why might you need ‘outdoor friends’?
Which pieces of advice do you agree/disagree with? Give reasons
Do you think you should always ‘live life to the full’/’live for the moment’?

4: wild – extravagant, crazy, chaotic
fondly – affectionately
What do you understand by ‘repression’ here? Keeping your emotions to yourself
What can it cause?
How should you express yourself?
What can be extravagant? Behavior, home décor, clothing
Why will people think you’re eccentric?
Do you plan to do these things in your old age?

5: dreary – sad, lonely, boring
burden – responsibility, duty
Why does the article suggest you have a lot of children?
Would you agree that it’s good to have family in old age? Why/Why not?

6: quandary – predicament, dilemma
abroad – to another country
In your opinion, what are the benefits of positive thinking?

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Why does saying ‘I wish I was (were) dead’ pose a problem to friends and family? To what do the last two sentences refer? Euthanasia, assisted dying. ‘go abroad’ – Dignitas, Switzerland

7: wrinkle – a line on the skin (esp. in old age)
wart – verruca
blemish – imperfection
whisker - hair on cheeks and chin
swath/swathe – large area/section
sagging – lacking firmness, hanging down
What should you do/think about your imperfections?
What is meant by ‘work’? plastic surgery etc.
What do you think of this advice?

8: heaven knows – (informal/offensive?) – I don’t know
gruel – a thin, watery porridge
Is it far from the truth that ‘retirement age will probably have gone up to 85’?
What’s the advantage of this? Do you think people will really have ‘saved loads of money’? Why/Why not?
According to the article, why is saving money important?
More seriously, why is it important to save money for your retirement?

9: totter – walk/move as if about to fall, as from old age
fit as a fiddle – in very good health
swing by – visit briefly
droves – in large numbers
Why should you make friends with younger people?
What do you understand by ‘tottering distance’?
Who else will be able to keep you company?
What does ‘your dozens of children’ make reference to? Point 4
What does it say about them?

Conclusion: Is the article serious?
Are there serious points? Give examples
Did anything make you laugh/offend you?
Are there any interesting points you will remember?

Going Further:
Do you hope to live to be 100?
Should you wait until 100 to do all of these or live for the moment?
What would you add?
Will everyone live to 100 and be in good health? Diet/exercise/alcohol/smoking
Children today - overweight, allergies, over-protected (from bacteria: building up immunity), lack of exercise (video games, playing outdoors…)
Rising retirement age

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Cost of ageing population
Quality of life in old age – social isolation, poor health…