

Chilling-out time

1 Girl gangs

a) Read these statements and match each with a photo.

Statement	A	B	C	D	E	F
Photo						

A “In the police service we see a lot of young people who chill-out on the streets. And we see more and more girls. Some get very noisy and aggressive after a few drinks. They can be frightening for other people, especially if alcohol or drugs are involved. You wonder sometimes what their parents think they are doing! I hope my daughter will have better things to do when she’s that age.”

B “I was in a girl gang until last year. We were all bored at home but we didn’t have much money, so we just hung around. Sometimes we smoked or chatted up some boys. It was a laugh. Then one of the girls got in trouble with the police. She stole some CDs. We got scared so we didn’t meet so often. Then we split up. I’ve got a boyfriend now and I’m doing an apprenticeship, so I’ve got better things to do.”

C “I’m really worried about my younger daughter. She’s out all evening and when I ask her where she’s been, she just says ‘Out!’ I’ve seen her with a gang of girls down the road. OK, kids like to hang around with their friends. But I don’t know what they do all the time. I don’t want her to start drinking or smoking – or worse! But she won’t talk to me or her sister.”

D “Yes, I’m in a gang. We’re girls but we fight tough. No one really cares about us so we care for each other. Our leader’s in prison at the moment. She stuck a screwdriver in an old guy ’cause he started shouting at us. We don’t carry guns but we all have knives – we have to protect ourselves. Members have to pass a test, so that everyone knows you’re brave enough.”

E “I don’t have time to hang around on street corners. Washing other people’s hair is hard work, but I’m learning something useful. I want a proper career, not just some boring job. I don’t want to waste my time doing stupid things with a lot of other girls. They just hang around with boy gangs and steal things.”

F “There’s a girl gang on our street. I don’t want anything to do with them. They’re racist. They just punch me and my sister because we aren’t white and steal our money. And they have awful fights with other gangs. I know that they get someone older to buy alcohol for them. I think they’re stupid.”



1 Kim Winston, 17



2 Sue Pelter, Liverpool police



3 Jodie Manalu, African, 14



4 Sophie Coolidge, 16




5 Janis Morgan, London



6 Katie Peters, 14

Lösungsvorschläge: Ex. 1 a): A: 2; B: 1; C: 5; D: 6; E: 4; F: 3

b) Look at the statements again. How do the people feel about girls in gangs?
Sort them into positive and negative.

 c) What do you know about girl gangs? Use the information you have collected and add any experience you may have.

 d) "Gangs are a waste of time." Discuss this statement and then vote on it.

2 Good or bad?

Read the text first and then put in the correct expressions.

"It can sometimes be _____ to be a member of a gang.

natural leaders

the leader

_____ may not have much contact with other children, except

Most children

at school. _____ only spend about a year in a gang.

are bullied into

Everyone has to _____ in the group. Some people are

put pressure on

_____. They will always _____

find out where they stand

of any group. But dangers arise when _____

An only child

takes the group towards violence, alcohol or drugs. This can quickly lead to

be at the head

_____. They start to steal from people or local shops. Leaders

can _____ weaker members and make them do things they

good for a child

do not want to do. Younger and weaker members _____ doing

illegal activities

stupid and illegal things."

Sarah Hall, psychologist


3 A very different 'girl' gang

In southeast London a small group of elderly¹ women like to get together outside their houses to have a nice chat. The oldest is 96. They just sit on the benches near their homes and talk to each other. "We like to talk to other people," one of them says, "and most of us can't walk very well. When it's warm enough, we sit here and chat."

Doesn't sound like a dangerous girl gang, but some neighbours have complained². They say that the grandmas are too noisy, and now the seats may be taken away.

a) What sort of 'gang' is the article about? Say something about the members and their activities.

b) What do you think of the neighbours who have complained?

 c) Can you think of an answer to the problem?

¹elderly [ˈeldəli] – älter; ²to complain [kəmˈpleɪn] – sich beschweren

Lösungsvorschläge: Ex. 1 b): Negative: A, B, C, E, F; positive: D; 2 good for a child • An only child • Most children • find out where they stand • natural leaders • be at the head • the leader • illegal activities • are bullied into • put pressure on