

1 Young people have always been far ruder than anybody else. But the young of today are worse than previous generations. This is the depressing conclusion of a survey by Demos. Employers questioned say that young recruits lack “soft” skills; they don't know how to have a conversation, aren't very flexible, don't listen properly and don't know enough about customer relations or even how to be polite to customers. These attributes, employers say, are more valuable than diplomas – or would be if young people had them. It is, however, the degree of rudeness that especially bothers employers. According to the survey, the past 10 years have seen a noticeable deterioration. Rudeness becomes extremely evident when anybody tries to confront the young about **their** behaviour.



2 The young have never been so complacent, pleased with themselves, demanding, uncooperative and downright rude – and apparently unaware of it. But social incompetence, lack of confidence, shyness, intense egocentrism – these are other problems the young face at work. They just don't have enough experience, awareness of others and knowledge to deal with any situation. But why are they so much worse? To some extent it is surprising. After all, education nowadays is less competitive and school-children are formally evaluated for their speaking as well as their listening skills. A lot of schoolwork is done in groups and teams where students are encouraged to cooperate with each other. The sad truth is that a lot of the “teams” at school aren't so at all, but one poor fool doing all the work while the others are lazing around. School lacks authenticity.

3 The survey points to other problems – lack of creativity, an inability to talk to people **which** arises basically from the failure of parents to provide their children with a preparation in basic manners. In many households a separatist regime is used where the children either eat in another room or appear at the table only during meals. They don't talk to adults, don't ask or answer questions, have no small-talk, don't learn anything; they are stuck in the narrow perimeters of their interests and experience.

4 Education and parenting are also at fault in producing many young geniuses. They are encouraged too much to pursue their own interests but general knowledge is frowned upon. It could hardly be any worse, but there's more. “Youth” culture has never before been so clearly distinct from mainstream culture. There is a mass of television, music, even literature, aimed specifically at under 25s that the rest of **us** have never heard of. The new survey undoubtedly reveals a big problem. We know now why employers all over the country are unsatisfactorily divided regarding age as they never were before. But, awful as they might seem, don't blame young people. At least not entirely. It's not all their fault. And, as the Demos concludes, it's up to employers to find a way to solve the problem.

I COMPREHENSION (15 POINTS) {BASE ALL YOUR ANSWERS ON THE TEXT}

A *Are the following sentences TRUE or FALSE? JUSTIFY. (3 pts)*

1 The fact that youths nowadays are more disrespectful than they used to be is based on a study.

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2 These characteristics in youths are due to the negative influence of school.

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3 Adults and youths share the same interests and knowledge.

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B *Answer the following questions. (3 pts)*

1 Which characteristic in youths makes employers more worried?

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2 Why are youths unable to communicate with other people nowadays?

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3 What do employers disagree about?

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C *Find in the text words or expressions that mean the same as the following. (3 pts)*

1 qualities (para 1)

2 self-satisfied (para 2)

3 disliked (para 4)

D *What do the underlined words in the text refer to? (3 pts)*

1 their (para 1)

2 which (para 3)

3 us (para 4)

E *Complete these sentences with information from the text. (3 pts)*

1 School-children are formally evaluated for their speaking skills. Also,

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2 The children don't talk to adults, don't ask or answer questions, have no small-talk because

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3 Young people might seem awful. But

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