In the 1970s, parents’ guru and psychologist Penelope Leach published her book *Your Baby and Child* advising parents to be empathetic to their children as they are growing up and to take a ‘feeling approach’ to parenting. But in recent years, many people, from expert sociologists and paediatricians to ordinary parents, are starting to question whether we are really bringing up a new generation of children in the right way. In the age of computers, PlayStations, and Facebook, are we giving our kids too much, and should we go back to the days of some good, old-fashioned discipline?

In his book, *The Spoilt Generation*, American writer and father Ari Sigman argues that parents shouldn’t be afraid to punish or discipline their children, and that youngsters are spending too much time on their own being badly educated by technology. For many, his ideas might seem puritanical and conservative, or even unrealistic in the era of techno-gadgets. Sigman suggests that it’s all right to physically punish children by smacking them, that fathers need to take a greater role in childcare, and the government should offer incentives for mothers to be at home more during the early years of a child’s life. He also considers that the media and technology can create serious addictions among children, and destroy their morals and values.

His support of physical punishment caused controversy in the UK, where government legislation is quite strict and even touching a child in certain circumstances at school can be seen as abuse by an adult. Sigman argues that government interference in these matters may have gone too far and that a complete lack of physical contact, especially when a child is upset, is more damaging. He also stresses that nowadays, parents often give out confusing messages about their relationship with their children, which causes more problems when it comes to understanding who is the boss. Parents shouldn’t say their children are their best friends, as that’s impossible as a biological notion.

Whether you agree with him or not, Sigman’s overall message to parents is to stand up and say no without feeling guilty. Too many parents today are frightened of their children’s reaction to conflict and often give in to them, but children still need to know that they can’t always have everything they want all the time.

**Narrator:** Extract 0, example

*If you’re in Manchester this week, here are some of the things you can do, see, or visit. What’s on the list, Jenny?*

Well, Dave, for pop lovers, don’t miss one of the UK’s biggest bands, The Arctic Monkeys, with their ‘northern roots’ style. Their influences include Pulp, Oasis, The Libertines, and The Clash, so if you’re looking for a concert this is a must. They are playing at The AMC on Thursday night at 8.00 p.m. Tickets from £35 and more concerts coming up in Sheffield, Liverpool, and London.

**Narrator:** Extract 1

*Are you having a weekend break with all the family? Then how about an afternoon at Old Trafford? It’s summertime and the Wildcats are back for more fun and adventure in one of the most popular family musicals, Disney’s High School Musical 2. There is one performance a day from Monday to Friday at 5.30 p.m. and with the special matinee at 2.30 p.m., two on Saturday. For groups of four or more children, there’s a £7 discount on tickets.*

**Narrator:** Extract 2

*If you don’t fancy a Disney show, drop the kids off at the Palace Theatre and head for the Great Northern cinema nearby. New releases this week include Gamer, a fast-moving sci-fi movie set in the next century, where humans can control other humans on a massive scale. Starring Gerald Butler and Amber Valletta, we give this thriller a three-star rating. Showings at 2.50 p.m., 5.00 p.m., and 7.30 p.m.*

**Narrator:** Extract 3

*Feeling hungry? Don’t forget to eat out at two of Manchester’s top restaurants, although you’ll have to book in advance. The Vermilion is a fabulous Asian fusion restaurant just ten minutes by taxi from Manchester’s great Piccadilly shopping area. If you prefer really excellent Italian food, go to Puccinini on Charley Road. You might even bump into a celebrity or two, as it’s often visited by both of Manchester’s Premier League football teams.*

**Narrator:** Extract 4

*There are loads of great places to see comedy in Manchester, including the Arena. This week top British comedian, Eddie Izzard, is on stage in his latest show, Stripped. On a break from filming in Hollywood, Izzard is back to confront us with the tricky topics of human civilization and religion. It’s guaranteed to get you laughing! Book tickets online or call 0161 950 2000.*

**Narrator:** Extract 5

*And, finally, a visit to Old Trafford is a totally unforgettable experience for football fans. If you can’t get tickets for a match, take a tour of the stadium and see what goes on behind the scenes. Look down from high up in the North Stand on the magnificent pitch, walk down the players’ tunnel, and visit the players’ dressing rooms. To book tickets call the information centre anytime between 8.00 a.m. and 8.00 p.m.*

**Presenter:** Welcome to Techno Talk. Do you immediately answer an email alert the minute it pops up on your computer screen? Can you stop yourself from picking up your BlackBerry when the second it starts vibrating on the table? In today’s world of ever-changing technology, many people are having trouble deciding what is a real priority. On the programme today we’ve invited Lucy Miles, a research consultant working on a project to investigate how technology is affecting the way we process information.

Lucy: Well, the concept of information overload; with so many different ways to access information, should we be worried about this?

**Lucy:** No, it’s more complicated than that. With so much information available we are attracted to things that maybe we didn’t have access to in the past, or that simply didn’t exist. Psychiatrists researching into this have discovered that many people are beginning to feel depressed or insecure, especially at work or around people with high social expectations, if they think they can’t process all the information quickly enough. Apart from that, a lot of companies are finding that their...
staff simply can’t distinguish between what is a distraction and what is important, and this leads to problems when making important decisions.

Presenter: So, can we do anything about this in practical terms?

Lucy: Well, one major development is that technology companies themselves have been experimenting with new software that can help employees control and regulate the amount of in-coming emails they receive and prioritize them. One example is a system which delays email alerts and helps the person decide how urgent a message really is by analysing the language it contains. It can even assess whether the person receiving the mail is working on something important and the interruption is a waste of time. So, maybe more new technology can change bad habits from the past.

UNIT 7 EXAM PRACTICE

T 7

Stieg Larsson was a Swedish journalist and fiction writer who is widely known for his interesting crime novel series The Millennium Trilogy, which was highly praised by many book critics and became an instant bestseller. He was born in 1954 in Skelleftehamn, which is 400 miles north of Stockholm. Larsson began his career as a journalist in 1977, first as a graphic artist and then as a news reporter and feature writer. He became well known for his opposition to racist and far-right-wing movements. In 1995, Larsson worked at Expo, a magazine which investigated and exposed anti-Semitic and far-right organizations and he was later asked to lecture on the topic in Germany, England, and France.

Larsson had always been interested in detective and crime fiction, and he started writing his first novel in 2001. Over three years, he completed two books and started on a third one, discovering that he really enjoyed fiction writing although he had never thought of it as more than a hobby. One of his work colleagues recommended him to an important Swedish publisher who immediately decided to sign him as a writer after reading some of his prose. His first big seller, The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, was an immediate international phenomenon, but unfortunately Larsson didn’t live to see its great success because he died of a heart attack in 2004 in Stockholm. The book sold almost three million copies in Sweden and received several important honours, such as the Glass Key Award for the best Nordic crime novel in 2005. The third title in the Millennium series is called Castle in the Sky.

UNIT 10 EXAM PRACTICE

T 10

Presenter: And now with us in the studio is Amanda Deakins from the Institute for Future Studies. Welcome to the programme. 

Amanda: Thank you.

Presenter: Amanda, perhaps you could tell us a bit about your work first. I mean, it must be difficult to study the future because the future hasn’t happened yet.

Amanda: Yes, I see what you mean. I suppose what we really do is look at the present and use that to tell us about the future. So we take the latest developments in science and technology and we look at them and we ask a number of questions and decide what effect the particular developments will have on the future.

Presenter: Can you give us some examples?

Amanda: Well, yes, certainly. Er … well, one problem is that scientists invent things because they can.

Presenter: Sorry, how is that a problem?

Amanda: Well, something might be a very clever invention but actually not very useful. So, for example, take voice-activated light switches. You just walk into a room and say ‘Lights’ and the lights go on or off.

Presenter: That sounds cool.

Amanda: Cool, yes, but not very useful, because actually people prefer ordinary traditional switches and switching lights on and off by hand.

Presenter: Really?

Amanda: Take another example. Like … there are a lot of different door entry systems now. You’ve probably stayed in a hotel where you’ve had a key card, like a credit card thing, that lets you into your hotel room.

Presenter: Yes. I know what you mean.

Amanda: Nowadays, fingerprint entry systems are quite popular. There are also face recognition systems too, and systems which recognize your eyes and so on.

Presenter: And will these systems replace keys completely in the future?

Amanda: One of my colleagues thinks that fingerprint entry systems will be in every home within the next 25 years.

Presenter: But what do you think?

Amanda: I’m not so sure. Keys are more to us than just things which open doors. They have a sort of cultural importance too. I mean, there are magic keys in children’s stories; there are keys that open boxes full of treasure. Fingerprints just aren’t the same.

Presenter: True. But keys also get lost.

Amanda: Yes, you’re right, they do … so I’m not quite sure what will happen about keys and fingerprints.

Presenter: Are there any things you feel certain will become popular?

Amanda: Oh yes. Wireless connections. Well, they’re here already to some extent but they will get better and better and more and more common. Soon everything will be connected without the need for wires. You’ll be able to listen to music or watch DVDs or play computer games in any room in your house all from one central control system and all connected without wires.

Presenter: Yes, I can see that that would be popular … tell me, Amanda, have you been surprised at all by anything that at first you thought would become popular but now you think probably won’t?

Amanda: Um, yes, actually, quite a few things. Automatic doors is one.

Presenter: Automatic doors?

Amanda: Mmmhm. There was a study recently where four different families each lived in a very hi-tech house for two weeks at a time and they were filmed and asked about their experiences afterwards.

Presenter: And …?

Amanda: Well, it was very interesting to see which things they liked and which they didn’t. I’d always thought automatic doors were a great idea but strangely none of the families liked them – especially the family whose dog got locked in the bedroom.

Presenter: Oh dear!

Amanda: Yes, I’ll be surprised if we see them in houses in the future.

Presenter: Amanda, thank you very much for talking to us and do stay with us if you can because we have some …

UNIT 11 EXAM PRACTICE

T 11

Presenter: On tonight’s programme we look at the issue of friendship. According to the Greek dramatist Euripides, ‘One loyal friend is worth ten thousand relatives,’ and for many of us our friends may have more influence on us than our family. But who is really important?

With us in the studio is family psychologist Jenny Lewis, who has just written a book on the importance of friends in our lives. Jenny, if we could choose, would many of us put our friends before our family?

Jenny: I don’t think so. Interestingly, although family structures are changing radically and traditional models are, to some extent, disappearing, many of us still see the family unit as a vital part of our lives.

Presenter: So, why do we need friends?

Jenny: Well, friendships are basically connections between people who might share similar interests or simply enjoy each other’s company. Another point is that we can control friendships more easily than other relationships. Remember another well-known saying, ‘You can choose your friends but you can’t choose your family’. There’s a lot of simple truth in that.

Presenter: Do we normally have the same idea about what friendship means?

Jenny: Not really. In my book there are a lot of case studies which illustrate very different points of view. You might see your friends once a week and enjoy doing something together and then not see or speak to them again for another week. But other people demand more of their friends and expect them to always be there in times of crisis. Qualities such as loyalty and being reliable are often mentioned as important to friendships. A lot of it is to do with self-esteem and choice. We choose each other as friends and this makes us feel important and happy.

Presenter: Do we usually have a lot of friends or one close friend?

Jenny: Again, it varies. However, studies have shown that we probably have about up to thirty friends in our lives but only about six of them would be considered ‘good’ friends. There is evidence that people who have close friends tend to be happier and live longer.

Presenter: Jenny, thank you for coming in. If you’re interested in Jenny Lewis’ book you can call us on 0207 946 0353.
MOCK TEST 1

T1

Presenter: Each year hundreds of thousands of graduates leave university with huge debts and with ever decreasing opportunities for employment. David Rowe, a 24-year-old history graduate from the University of Sussex spoke to me earlier about his own particular story:

David, what was your situation when you left university?

David: Well, Sue, with £20,000 of debt to pay off it was pretty grim. I sent out hundreds of CVs and got no joy, I even offered to work for free! This went on for months so I decided to swallow my pride and I did something drastic … I decided to walk the streets of London with a sandwich board around my neck, plainly advertising myself in the hope of getting a job.

Presenter: How did you feel?

David: Pretty embarrassed at first, but I got on with it. I walked round the business areas of the City in a smart suit, a walking advert kind of thing.

Presenter: Well, it was certainly an original and resourceful move on your part. Did you get any response?

David: After a couple of hours of walking up and down, I was stopped by a representative of an international recruitment agency, he said he was impressed with my determination and ‘creativity’, and asked me along for an interview to see if there were any possibilities.

Presenter: How did that go?

David: After the interview I had to walk the streets for another couple of days, but then my lucky break came, I was offered a job!

Presenter: David certainly got a lucky break, unlike many other university graduates. The number of university and college students has grown considerably in the UK, with a 43% increase last year compared to 20 years before, when only approximately 17% of adults between the ages of 18 and 30 were studying at further education institutions. By contrast, the number of graduate level jobs hasn’t risen at the same speed in order to place young people in the market, and the amount of debt students owe when they leave university has increased dramatically.

MOCK TEST 2

T2

Presenter: Welcome to today’s book programme. Although many people who love books still prefer to read the printed page and hold a book in their hands, there is no stopping the development of technology and the ebook is fast becoming a reality. When Dan Brown’s third book in the Da Vinci Code series, The Lost Symbol, came out, it immediately sold one million copies within 24 hours in the UK, USA, and Canada. At the same time, Brown’s American publishers decided to offer an ebook version of the title that could be downloaded and read on screen in the hope of selling even more copies. We asked Helen Griffiths of Consumer Count, an organization which monitors technology and consumer habits, to talk to us today about books in the electronic era.

So, Helen, is this the end of books as we have always known and loved them?

Helen: Well, no, I don’t think we need to exaggerate this issue. But there is no doubt that the ebook is really becoming an issue for publishers and it’s happening very fast. The publishing industry has been through a series of crises recently and ebooks offer the chance to revive interest in reading by reaching a truly huge mass-market. It’s all about creating fresh online marketing strategies.

Presenter: Can you give us some examples?

Helen: Yes. I think books online are basically using the Internet to create interest and curiosity in the same way films do. Some authors, in particular crime writers, now sell about a third of their copies as ebooks. The technology which permits you to read a book on a hand-held screen is getting better, and people are able to skip through books, check references online, and change to audio ‘reading’. The technology companies are always inventing new and more sophisticated gadgets.

Presenter: Well, I go back to my original question then. Isn’t the printed word on a paper page in danger of extinction in the long term?

Helen: I think that despite technological advances not everyone will love e-reading. Research to date shows that most people still get more satisfaction from a book printed on paper. And let’s not forget, a book is not a song. People who buy and read a large number of books a year don’t really need additional technology to enjoy them. So the ebook is a sort of extra, it can’t replace a book. The industry recognizes that their largest readership is still on paper, because buying a book often means more than just reading.