

# Middle-class teenagers in India

## Secondary Lesson Plan

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### **SOURCE**

*Into India*

### **Learning area**

Studies of society and environment

### **Level**

Middle secondary

### **Description**

Students read and discuss an extract about teenagers in India and complete related activities.

### **Purpose**

To develop understandings of the diversity among teenagers in India, the way they might be represented in popular magazines and some similarities and differences between Indian and Australian teenagers.

### **Duration**

100 minutes

### **Possible outcomes**

In relation to *Studies of society and environment — a curriculum profile for Australian schools*, this lesson can contribute to outcomes in the following strands:

- Time, continuity and change
- Culture
- Natural and social systems
- Investigation, communication and participation

### **Materials required**

A class set of Handout *Indian teenagers today* (from below)

## Procedure

### 1. Introduction

Explain that this lesson is about middle-class teenagers in India. India's middle class has grown rapidly and was estimated to be over 100 million people in 1994, out of a total population of over 900 million. In this instance, middle class can be taken to mean people with some disposable income to spend.

### 2. Indian teenagers today

Ask students to read Handout 1, *Indian teenagers today*. Discuss the extract with the class, using the following questions about the *India Today* article referred to as a guide:

- What kind of background might the teenager have?
- What is the tone of the article?
- What kind of image of the teenager is portrayed?
- Would Indian teenagers agree with the description?

### 3. Writing tasks

Set one or more of the following writing tasks:

- Are the 'rules' in the *India Today* article genuine or are they an example of media hype? Write a short essay giving your opinion and the reasons for it.
- Re-write the 'rules' from the *India Today* article from the point of view of the teenager.
- Write a set of 'rules' as they might appear in a comparable Australian magazine about Australian teenagers.
- Write a serious set of four or five rules for yourself or for other Australian teenagers. Compare them with the rules written by other class members.

### 4. Is there a typical teenager?

Use the following extract from an interview with Indian teenager, Aneesha Baig, to introduce a discussion of this question.

*Aneesha Baig*

'I wouldn't say I'm a typical teenager, though I'm a lot like my friends because we sort of influence each other. There are all sorts of teenagers in India. You've got those who have lots of money and go to discos every evening, who have a ball, who do not take their studies seriously. Then you have those who like books and reading and think that spending time with family members is very important. And then there are those who come from orthodox and conservative backgrounds, so I can't say anyone is a typical Indian teenager.'

## Extension activity

According to a 1994 survey of 1365 undergraduates in major Indian cities:

- 34% of males and 17% of females thought that girls should not work after marriage
- 35.5% of males and 15% of females went on dates regularly
- 55% of males and females were clear about their careers
- 35% of males and females smoke at least occasionally

Ask students to consider what the results of a similar survey might be in Australia. Conduct a poll in the class and compare results. Discuss the factors that might account for differences and similarities.

## Acknowledgements

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## Related Resources

[Access Asia: Secondary Teaching and Learning Units](#) 1996, Curriculum Corporation, Carlton, Vic.

## Handout

### *Indian teenagers today*

A teenager in an Indian village might occasionally go to the cinema to watch a Hindi movie along with a glass of hot tea and a bag of peanuts, or watch a television in a shop window or in a market square (along with dozens of other teenagers). In middle-class urban environments, however, teenagers are raging into the twenty-first century in places such as Toto's Garage Pub and the Razzberry Rhinoceros (the Razz Rhino for short). Pubs, cocktail lounges and rock bars are the new, trendy meeting places. Teenagers go there to meet friends, relax and dance to western pop and Hindi movie music.

An article in the magazine *India Today* in 1994 described a certain type of Indian teenager this way: 'He is as smooth as the gel on his hair. As cool as his deep-grey sunglasses. As rushed as the beat on his raunchy rap disc. He scratches a moustache, just starting to sprout, says life is a bitch. Tame it or get bitten on the seat of your bell-bottoms. The new generation is playing by a fresh set of rules, OK?

**Rule 1** It's war out there. Choose your weapons and make sure you are quick on the draw. If all you got is a degree, you are dead.

**Rule 2** You've only got yourself to bank on, so watch your back. Friends are potential rivals.

**Rule 3** Idealism is a drag. Rebellion is a bum trip and no one has time for losers. Work the system.

**Rule 4** If you've got it, flaunt it. Date in style, splurge like there is no tomorrow, pamper yourself.

**Rule 5** Rules 1-4 are confidential. Mention them and they'll say you're hyper. Break them and they'll know you're totally bonkers.'