

Unit 1 Reading Worksheet 1

Name _____

1 Read and tick (✓) the photo that shows what the text is about.

16


☐

Sweet Sixteen


☐

Birthdays are always a cause for celebration, but in different countries people mark different special birthdays in a number of ways. In the United States and Canada, the 16th birthday is special. In practical terms, it means different things: you can get a driver's license with **parental consent**, you can get a job in some states, and you can donate blood. This means that at 16, society **acknowledges** that you start a new stage in your life that is a transition into adulthood.

For many girls, a Sweet Sixteen party will mark this occasion. The party can be very casual, with just close family and friends at a home get-together. It can also be a large party with music and dancing, that **observes** traditional ceremonies. In one ceremony, the girl wears a pretty **evening gown** with flat shoes. She sits down on a chair and then someone in her family—usually her father—presents her with high-heel shoes that she can now wear. The shoe ceremony symbolises the transition from girl to woman. The mother gives her daughter a tiara to symbolise the same. There is usually a father-daughter dance to the first song of the night.

As with any other celebrations, different families decide different

ways to celebrate this special day. Some families take this occasion to pass on **heirlooms** to their child. This might be something that belonged to an older relative, or something with special sentimental value to the family. Although Sweet Sixteens are usually for girls, some boys are also celebrated. In any case, in American culture, becoming sixteen is an important event in one's life. ■


☐

2 Read again and write Yes, No or Doesn't say.

1. In the U.S. you can get a driver's license at 16. Yes
2. A boy can join the U.S. army at 16. _____
3. When you turn 16 in Canada, you can start working. _____
4. After a Sweet Sixteen party the birthday boy or girl is officially an adult. _____
5. Traditionally, the mother or father of a girl offers a speech at a Sweet Sixteen. _____
6. The tiara symbolises the transition from child to woman. _____
7. All Sweet Sixteen parties have got the same conventions. _____



3 **Stop and Think!** When does one 'come of age' in your country? How is this celebrated? Is it the same for boys and girls?

Glossary

parental consent:
permission given by parents or legal guardians

acknowledge:
to recognise the importance of

observe: to follow

evening gown:
a long, elegant dress

heirloom:
something to inherit, a family 'treasure' of monetary or sentimental value