BRITISH NEWS

Pregnant in the Classroom

Teenage pregnancy is a serious problem in Britain. Young girls suffer shock, fear and rejection when they find out that they have become pregnant 'by accident'.

Having a child and starting a family can one of life's most beautiful experiences. But becoming pregnant because of a careless or unwanted sexual experience can be a nightmare. Many teenage girls find themselves trapped, lonely, and afraid when they discover that they are pregnant. In this month's issue of The School Times we take a look at the subject of teenage pregnancy.

For more on this story see 'Pregnant in the Classroom' on pages 4 & 5 and read this month's interview on pages 6 & 7

Stepmom

Julia Roberts (left) and Susan Sarandon (right) star in the new movie Stepmom — a moving story about motherhood

Queen Victoria's Love Letters

The most unusual love story between Queen Victoria and her Scottish friend John Brown

See page 10
**Pregnant in the Classroom**

To see what it’s really like to be a teenage mother, Children’s Express talked to Ruth (not her real name) aged 17, who had a baby daughter a year ago. Living at home with her mother, who helps her with child-care, she describes her life

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*From The School Times Audio Tape*

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Children need and deserve the very best start in life. But the sad facts show that children born to single teenage mothers are more likely to end up in care

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What did she find was the hardest part about being pregnant and having the child?

‘The hardest part is when you get depressed, like you want to go out — because I’m a person that likes to go out — but who would I leave her [the child] with? You see, people not being mothers are free, very free ... and the other thing was not being in college to finish my education.’

Ruth had to drop out of college. Had it not been possible to stay at school?

‘You can if you want. But I got pregnant in July and by November, because it was winter and it was cold and I didn’t want to get up, I wanted to stay in bed all the time. I got really tired, and I didn’t want to go to classes...’

Did it change her relationship with her boyfriend?

‘Yeah, it did. Because we weren’t really close during my pregnancy, he was away a lot, and I was bored, I was upset and I was depressed, because I needed him most times.’

Ruth has three friends who also have babies. One of those friends is very close. So what happens when they meet?

‘Most of the time it’s just baby, baby ... That’s all we talk about.’

Does having a baby mean she can go out less often?

‘Yeah, it does. Especially when they’re young, because you have to be there, especially if you are breast-feeding, you have to be there.’

‘You see, people not being mothers are free, very free’

Does she mind having to stay at home?

‘Yeah, I do care, because I can’t go out. People say to me, “Shall I babysit?” but I don’t really like leaving her to go out, I just feel guilty leaving her with someone else, so I just stay home most times.’

Couldn’t she go to work?

‘That’s the point as well. It’s really hard to get work, because the time you have to start and the time you have to finish, you haven’t got someone to look after your child. A childminder costs like £65-70 a week, and I’m not even getting that much from my income.

*continued on page 5*
[Ruth is on £10.20 family allowance and £64 income support]. So it’s really hard to get a job."

For Ruth, the best part of being a mother is having someone to cuddle. But were there times when she wished that she didn’t have a child?
‘I wish it all the time, but it’s here, so I can’t really do nothing, unless the clock should turn back and I would still be a virgin ...’ [Ruth laughs].

But she is optimistic, and plans to return to college part-time this autumn.
‘I’m still 17, and I’ve got till I’m 30 to make a career. So by next year I must do the exam, and pass.’

What does she want for the future?
‘I want to become educated, have a good job and be successful. The aim I’ve got is to be a secretary.’

And what does she want for her daughter?
‘I want her to be different, not like me and get pregnant at my age.’

Adapted and used with kind permission of Children’s Express, London

WORDS
- drop out of – leave
- bored – fed up; tired and unhappy
- childminder – someone who looks after children (for pay)
- family allowance – money from the government given to parents with children
- income support – people on low pay can get support from the government to raise their income
- cuddle – hug or embrace
- optimistic – hopeful; have high hopes for the future

"Most of us become parents long before we have stopped being children."
- Mignon McLaughlin

552 words, 2,591 characters (no spaces) 2 normalsider

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**PREGNANT IN THE CLASSROOM** puzzle

1. Person who looks after a child for pay
(see words)
2. Ruth often felt like this
3. She is the type of ... who likes to go out
4. She wasn’t really close to this person during her pregnancy
5. Ruth said that people ‘not being ... are free, very free’
6. Ruth does not like leaving her baby with someone else, so she has ‘to ... home most times’
7. She wants her child to be ... from her and not get pregnant so young
8. She doesn’t like leaving the baby with someone ...
9. She got ... in November
10. When babies are young you have to breast- ... them
11. Present tense of ‘needed’
12. The best part is having

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# School Times Worksheet

## Pregnant

### Comprehension

*Answer the following questions about ‘Pregnant in the Classroom’*

*Answer with a complete sentence (you may need to use a separate piece of paper)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What type of person is Ruth? How does she describe herself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>What was the hardest part about being pregnant?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What does she say about people who are not mothers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>How was her relationship with her boyfriend during her pregnancy? Were they close?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Does Ruth go out as often as she used to? If not, why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>How does she feel about using a babysitter?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>What does Ruth say is the best part of having a baby?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Would she like to ‘turn the clock back’ (go back and do things differently)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>What plans does Ruth have for the future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>What does she wish (want) for her daughter?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Teacher,

This issue of The School Times contains several articles that deal with the family in one way or another. We hope that you and your students will find the articles interesting. But we also hope that they will lead to discussions in the classroom. The subjects involved, divorce and motherhood in Stepmom; and teenage pregnancy, sex and birth control, may also be subjects that your students feel strongly about. We would highly recommend opening these subjects to a class discussion.

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Graham Greene, English writer (1904–1991)

‘There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.’

Please note that CENTURY is not photocopy material. Thank you for your many letters requesting a free sample copy of CENTURY for a 10-day trial period. We will send them out to you as soon as we receive them from our printer in late February.

Yours,

Peter Young, Editor

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School Times Worksheet

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The Crossword Puzzle

environment text

Bullied Children’s School Hell
Bullying is something that children of all ages experience

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Jumbled Words
Page 11
1 Stepmom 2 pregnant 3 teenager 4 rude 5 Victoria 6 Tiger Woods

Tess & Tom
Picture Crossword
page 11
Key word: STUPID

The Crossword Puzzle
page 9
ACROSS
1 upstairs; 5 care; 7 drama; 9 to; 10 bike; 11 me; 12 man; 13 by; 14 door; 15 lucky; 17 girl; 19 little; 21 no; 22 Stephen; 25 we; 26 good; 27 one; 28 young; 29 years

DOWN
1 United; 2 son; 3 again; 4 rude; 5 comedy; 6 every; 8 am; 10 bar; 12 Morrissey; 13 badly; 16 college; 17 Gibson; 18 cope; 20 to; 21 new; 23 idea; 24 kids

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