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IDOLS OF YOUTH

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Contents

Introduction.....	3
Chapter I. Youth and politics.....	5
Chapter II. Youth subculture.....	8
Chapter III. Investigation.....	12
Conclusions.....	18
Literature.....	19
Appendix.....	20

Introduction

The aim of our project is to learn some information about everyday life of young people nowadays, their subculture, fashion and clothes, their attitude towards politics, and about their idols.

To achieve this aim we have learnt a great amount of information from Internet, books and periodicals and held **the investigation** – we asked our schoolmates (9-11 forms) some questions connected with the topic.

The objectives of the work are:

- to develop skills of research work and their application to the solution of actual practical tasks;
- to find out answers to the questions closely connected with the topic;
- to enlarge our vocabulary with the terms connected with the topic;
- to improve our knowledge of the English language.

Everybody says your youth is probably the best time of your life, that being young means romance, love, new discoveries and so on. But it is also the most difficult time because you have to make some very important decisions which will influence all your future life. Things are not easy nowadays even for adults, but for teenagers who have to find their own place in society, they are very difficult. Every boy and girl leaving secondary school should choose an institution of higher education or, if he or she doesn't want to study any more, choose a job straight away. In planning your future you have to think about the possibility of finding a job after finishing your education.

Emotional problems for young people can be far more difficult than financial ones. The typical teenager problem is that "nobody understands me". The parents often continue to treat their teenage children as if they were infant, when the children probably consider themselves to be grown up. Disagreements appear because of a new value system. This new system can be opposite the old one. The parents advantage in this case is quite clear. In the transition period we, as a rule, depend on our "tutors". It is not a problem for parents to find arguments against children's actions. The reason can be different: danger, anxiety, trouble and so on. For many years children do not understand their parents. But eventually a new period of life comes. It is necessary to persuade parents that the child has become independent. Otherwise children remain with a "child status" for a long time. You should not run to your parents and demand independence. It is not simple because many arguments will not work. All sides of the conflict in order to find a way to achieve harmony and to make a compromise.

Youth is also the time to meet your first love. It is, of course, wonderful to fall in love for the first time. Sometimes teenagers suffer when it is unrequited love but other times the affectionate feeling is shared by both. It is widely known that first love often has an unhappy end that also increases young people's problems. It might seem naive at first but we feel sorry for people who have never fallen in love, no matter how long it lasted. Any human being can have personal problems like bad health, putting on weight, bad skin and hair, zits, long nose or big ears and so on. So teenagers think that such problems are serious and there is no way out. Finally, sure it is false, most 15-17 year-olds we met were very nice and smart. Moreover, we talked to many older people and most of them remembered their teenage years as the best time of their lives.

A lot of problems at school and problems with parents can result in violence, teen pregnancy, drinking alcohol and taking drugs. It was awful to learn that every day about 10 children die from guns or commit suicide in the USA. As for Russia, the situation is growing worse and worse, too. Here is a rating of the most common causes of teenage suicide in our country: 1) rape; 2) getting into debt and being unable to repay it; 3) drugs; 4) school problems; 5) loneliness; 6) unrequited love. We were shocked to read a newspaper article about a 17-year old guy who committed suicide because his parents didn't let him marry the girl he loved.

Teenagers are not safe today. Not only the world, but their own homes become scary places for them. It is awful when parents are alcohol abusers and treat their children badly. Then kids become outcasts. They also miss classes and don't do their homework. As a result, they quit school and leave home. Soon they may become drug users and criminals. In other words it is difficult to be a teenager.

One of our friends thinks that it is fearful to be a teenager. She says that the world is becoming a very scary place. More and more teens are turning to drugs and alcohol. Young people are under the pressure of their mates who say it is just fun to smoke and drink beer. They are influenced by adulthood. Many of them associate taking drugs with having a great party and real fun, but it may be the last party in their life. But if teenagers have a sober mind, they won't get into trouble.

A lot of teenagers think that being young is exciting and fun, in most situations it is romantic. But some of our mates think it is dangerous, maybe because of very dangerous time. So as you see, it is very difficult to be young nowadays, as, indeed, it always was. But you can only be young once and some wonderful things can happen only when you are young. So it is better to enjoy youth while it lasts.

Chapter I. Youth and politics

Young people are not much interested in politics. The most well-known *political youth organizations and movements* among the teens in Russia you can find in the table. [3]

1.	National-patriotic youth organizations (skinheads, etc.)	32%
2.	National-bolshevic party (limonovci)	25%
3.	«Idushiye vmeste»	13%
4.	Youth organization of the CPRF	13%
5.	Youth organization of «Soyuz pravyyh sil»	12%
6.	«Molodyezhnoye yedinstvo»	12%
7.	«Sokoly Zhyrinovskogo»	12%
8.	Youth organization of «Yabloko»	11%
9.	«Nashi»	10%
10.	«Za Rodinu»	8%

These organizations and movements are based on different ideologies.

Nationalism is an ideology which holds that the nation, ethnicity or national identity is a «fundamental» until of human social life, and makes certain claims based upon that belief. Xenophobia denotes a phobic attitude toward strangers or of the unknown and comes from the Greek word (xenos), meaning «foreigner», «stranger», and (phobos), meaning fear or dislike of foreigners or in general of people different from one's self. For example, racism is sometimes described as a form of xenophobia. Racism refers to beliefs, practices, and institutions that discriminate against people based on their perceived or ascribed «race». Extremism is a term used to describe either ideas or actions though critics to be hyperbolic and unwarranted. In terms of actions, it is often used to identify attempts to use aggressive or violent methods to cause political or social change. Anti-Semitism (alternatively spelled anti-Semitism) is hostility toward or prejudice against Jews as a religious, ethnic, or racial group, which can range from individual hatred to institutionalized, violent persecution.

Tolerance is a social, cultural and religious term applied to the collective and individual practice of not persecuting those who may believe, behave or act in ways of which one may not approve. [1]

A problem can't appear out of nothing; it certainly has a foundation. And what is it? How do we come from common situations to slogans like «Russia for Russians» and «Moscow for

Muscovites?» There are a number of elements which are leading to what we now have in our society.

First of all, I think the most important is the growth of distrust in people of other nationalities. Too much bad was done, for example by particular people from the Caucasus to Russians, so that we begin to forget that not all people from there are bad and not all Russians are good. There are just bad and good people in the world and it doesn't depend on ethnicity.

The second reason is personal experience. We are made so that remember bad and unpleasant things longer. So a rude word, an impolite gaze cast at a young lady, and things like this may leave a deep mark in a person's mind. And negative feelings from just one episode may be transferred to racial hatred. It is like a snowball which was pushed from the top of the mountain.

The third reason, I think, is because big cities are over crowded. The city can't take as many as would like to live there. For example, the number of Moscow citizens is more than 11,000,000 and because of immigration from day to day, it is higher. So long queues, crowds of people in the streets, and overfull buses make us feel like fish in sardine tins. Certainly in this situation city dwellers are not pleased by lots of newcomers.

There are about 50 extremist youth organizations in Russia. The RF Interior Ministry did not take up the problem of youth extremism until last year, when the ministry's expanded collegiums session decided to place the activity of radical groups under control, keeping a separate file on each of them. As a result, a new subdivision was created recently within the ministry's CID structure: a juvenile inspectorate. This means that underage extremists have been transferred from police to security service jurisdiction. Thus far the new department has a staff of only eight people, but the entire Organized Crime Directorate was entrusted with preventive work among extremist youth organizations.

Today the Interior Ministry divides these organizations into three main types. First, nationalist organizations building up political capital and aspiring to power. Second, the so-called «Aryan gangs», or criminal groups created to counterbalance ethnic criminal groups. And finally, informal Nazi and soccer fan youth associations, the largest and potentially the most dangerous.

According to the Interior Ministry, at present there are between 15,000 and 20,000 skinheads in Russia, about 5,000 of whom live in Moscow and the Moscow region. They also have stepped up their activity in St. Petersburg and the Leningrad region (there is an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 members of skinhead organizations although only 70 individuals are on police record). These groups do not have a common leadership or strict hierarchy and are based on a territorial principle while the main source of funding is contributions by their members. At

the end of the last year, however, skinheads tried to organize a general congress. The congress was thwarted. In Moscow alone, police received approximately 50 tip-offs about upcoming

Chapter II. Youth Subculture

Culture is an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning; also it is the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution, organization or group.

Subculture is a social group within a national culture that has distinctive patterns of behavior and beliefs.

Today the life of many young people is influenced by popular culture. The youth follow certain stereotypes that are showed on TV, movies and music. They frequent stadiums and concert halls. They follow their idols in their tours through the country and support them.

Punks



The punk subculture is a subculture based around punk rock. It emerged from the larger rock and roll scene in the mid-to-late-1970s in the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia. The punk movement has spread around the globe and developed into a number of different forms. [4, 6]

Music is the most important aspect of the punk subculture. Punk music is called punk rock, sometimes shortened to *punk*. Most punk rock is performed in a specific style of rock music, although punk musicians sometimes incorporate elements from other genres. Different punk subcultures often distinguish themselves by having a unique style of punk rock, although not every style of punk rock has its own associated subculture. Most punk rock songs are short, have complicated arrangements and feature lyrics that express punk values. Punk rock is usually played in bands instead of by solo artists.

Here are some **punk** bands: The Bay City Rollers, Leif Garrett, Shawn Cassidy, Osmonds, The Clash, Subhumans, Dead Kennedys, Rancid, Guttermouth, The Unseen, NOFX, The Damned, Sex Pistols, Sham 69, Operation Ivy.

Goths



The Goth subculture is a contemporary subculture found in many countries. It began in the United Kingdom during the early 1980s in the gothic rock scene, an offshoot of the post-punk genre. The goth subculture has survived much longer than others of the same era, and has continued to diversify.

The bands that began the gothic rock and deathrock scene were limited in number, and included: Bauhaus, Specimen, Siouxsie & the Banshees, The Damned, Southern Death Cult, Ausgang, Sex Gang Children, 45 Grave, UK Decay, The Virgin Prunes, Kommunity FK, Alien Sex Fiend and Christian Death. Gloria Mundi, Joy Division, The Cure, This Mortal Coil, Dead Can Dance, mittageisen, early Adam and the Antsand Killing Joke have also been associated.

By the mid-eighties, the number of bands began proliferating and became increasingly popular, including The Sisters of Mercy, The Mission (known as The Mission UK in the US), Xmal Deutschland, The Bolshoi and Fields of the Nephilim. The nineties saw the further growth of eighties bands and emergence of many new bands. Factory Records, 4AD Records, and Beggars Banquet Records released much of this music in Europe, while Cleopatra Records among others released much of this music in the United States, where the subculture grew especially in New York, Los Angeles, and Orange County, California, with many nightclubs featuring "gothic/industrial" nights. The popularity of 4AD bands resulted in the creation of a similar US label called Projekt Records. This produces what is colloquially termed ethereal wave, a subgenre of dark wave music. [5, 6]

By the mid-1990s, styles of music that were heard in venues that goths attended ranged from gothicrock, deathrock, industrialmusic, Gothabilly, EBM, ambient, experimental, synthpop, shoegazing, punk rock, to 1970s glam rock.

Straight Edgers



Straight edge teenagers:

- Participate in animal rights protests
- Follow a vegetarian diet
- Are aggressive towards different beliefs and lifestyles
- Hurt people physically
- Have a tidy appearance
- Have tattoos and pierced earlobes

These days straight edgers participate in animal rights protest, are involved in environmental and political issues and protests. Music also plays important role. This subculture originally grew out of the punk rock movement in the 1980s.

Straight edge kids make a statement with their fashion as well as with their philosophy. A tidy appearance is popular, with baggy trousers and T-shirts.

Hippies



The hippie subculture was originally a youth movement that began in the United States during the early 1960s and spread around the world.

Hippie fashions and values had a major effect on culture, influencing popular music, television, film, literature, and the arts. Since the 1960s, many aspects of hippie culture have been assimilated by mainstream society. The hippie legacy can be observed in contemporary culture in different forms — from health food, to music festivals, to contemporary sexual mores, and even to the cyberspace revolution.

The hippie legacy in literature includes the lasting popularity of books reflecting the hippie experience, such as *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*. In music, the folk rock and psychedelic rock popular among hippies evolved into genres such as acid rock, world beat, heavy metal and psychedelic music. Many contemporary bands performing at hippie festivals and their derivatives are called jam bands, since they play songs that contain long instrumentals similar to the original hippie bands of the 1960s. [6]

In the UK and Europe, the years 1987 to 1989 were marked by a large-scale revival of many characteristics of the hippie movement. This later movement, composed mostly of people aged 18 to 25, adopted much of the original hippie philosophy of love, peace and freedom. The summer of 1988 became known as the Second Summer of Love.

Chapter III. Investigation

To achieve the aim of our project we held the investigation – we asked our schoolmates (9-11 forms) some questions connected with the topic.

Questionnaire (for pupils)

1. Who is your idol?
 - Singers, musicians
 - Actors
 - TV stars
 - Models
 - Sportsmen
 - Parents, relatives
 - Cosmonauts
 - Scientists
 - Historical figures
 - Politicians
 - Businessmen
 - Your variant
 - It is difficult to answer
2. What is your idol's name?
3. What attracts you in your idol?
 - Talent
 - Appearance
 - Fashion
 - Character
 - Your variant
 - It is difficult to answer
4. Do your parents know about your idol?
 - Yes
 - No
5. Do they like your idol?
 - Yes
 - No

- It is difficult to answer
6. What do your friends think about your idol?
- Like
 - Dislike
 - Indifferent
 - It is difficult to answer
7. How have you learnt about your idol?
- TV
 - Internet
 - Books
 - Magazines, newspapers
 - Friends
 - Parents
 - Teachers
 - Your variant

Some questions about you:

1. Sex: Male/Female
2. Form: 9/11

Questionnaire (for teachers)

1. Who is your idol?
- Singers, musicians
 - Actors
 - TV stars
 - Models
 - Sportsmen
 - Parents, relatives
 - Cosmonauts
 - Scientists
 - Historical figures
 - Politicians
 - Businessmen
 - Your variant
 - It is difficult to answer

2. What is your idol's name?

3. What attracts you in your idol?

- Talent
- Appearance
- Fashion
- Character
- Your variant
- It is difficult to answer

4. How have you learnt about your idol?

- TV
- Internet
- Books
- Magazines, newspapers
- Friends
- Parents
- Teachers
- Your variant

According to the results of the questionnaire (*9 forms*), girls' idols are singers and musicians as well as actors and models. Also among girls' idols there are many writers and TV stars. A lot of girls think their idols are their parents and relatives, and it means that they are proud of their family. We have to notice that among their idols there are not so many scientists and astronauts, and there are no businessmen and historic figures at all. Political problems are not an interesting sphere for girls.

Talent and character are very important for them, and I think it is right. The way of dressing is not a popular answer, girls are much more interested in idol's appearance.

86% of parents know about their daughters' idols, but only 25 % agree with their choice. 17% are against, and 14 % of girls don't know about their parents' attitude towards their idols.

There are no girls whose friends don't like their idols. 43 % like them and about 50% are indifferent.

Internet and television are the main sources of information, and it was interesting to learn that friends are very important information source for girls, too. And it was really great to find out, that girls pay more attention to books than magazines. Unfortunately, girls don't get much information from their teachers.

Only 21% of girls don't have idols.

There are very sporty boys in the 9th forms of our school, so they choose idols among sportsmen (36 %, cyclists, footballers). Also among boys' idols there are actors, musicians and singers, as well as historic figures and scientists. Many boys choose their parents – so we can say they respect and admire them. There are no TV stars (!), models (and it is clear), astronauts, politicians and businessmen.

Boys choose talent and character as the most important qualities. They don't mention appearance and the way of dressing. Some of them notice professional skills.

75 % of parents are not interested in their sons' idols, but 25% of parents who do it, agree with their sons' choice.

There are no boys whose friends don't like their idols. 38 % like them and about 38% are indifferent.

Television is the main source of information (55 %). Also there is an Internet, and sometimes friends and parents. Unfortunately, young people don't read books.

As we can see, girls have more idols than boys. As we know, among boys' idols there are sportsmen, and girls choose actors, singers. Surprisingly, boys often choose historic figures, scientists as their idols. Girls take another way: there are TV stars, astronauts among their idols, but they do not choose historic figures at all. Both sides did not choose businessmen and politicians in their answers.

Boys and girls choose parents and relatives as their idols. It means they are proud of their families.

Both sides choose talent and character as the most important qualities of their idols. Certainly, girls choose appearance, the way of dressing, but boys also think about professional skills.

Friends say nothing against about teenagers' idols. A lot of young people agree with their friends' choice.

Many parents are not interested in their children's idols and 25 % of parents agree with their choice.

TV and Internet are the main sources of information, but boys read books less than girls. And both sides do not discuss this question with their teachers.

There are very sporty boys in the *11 forms* of our school, so they often choose idols among sportsmen (footballers, boxers). And it was a pleasure for us to learn that among boys' idols there are their friends and classmates. Some pupils have chosen actors, models (!), astronauts, scientists and politicians. Many boys have noticed historical figures. It means that

pupils are interested in history, especially in Russian history. And there are no variants about TV stars, musicians, parents (!) and businessmen.

It's interesting, boys choose talent as an important quality, as well as appearance and character, and one person said about idol's fashion. And only the one said about professional skills.

Parents of the 11th form pupils are not interested in their sons' idols, but some who do it agree with their children's choice.

Among boys' friends there is no man, who answered, that friends don't like their idols. But 22 % of their friends are indifferent.

Young people don't choose their parents, teachers and friends as the main sources of information, but they have the same interests with their friends. Magazines and newspapers are both useful for getting information, and the most of pupils choose television (and it is clear, because football matches are shown on it). Surprisingly, but two boys chose books as the best source, that we didn't expect.

Strangely enough, girls' idols are generally sportsmen, instead of actors and singers as we assumed. Though those are also available, but in small percent. Only one person has told that her idol is the politician that brightly shows attitude of youth to politics, that is they are not interesting in it. A lot of girls consider parents and other relatives as their idols, they are proud of successes of the family and, probably, will choose the same job, or will continue family business. It is necessary to notice answers about historical figures. We can say, schoolgirls are interested in history, particularly in history of our country. Girls of the eleventh classes don't have idols among TV stars, models (!), cosmonauts, scientists and businessmen.

Most of girls have chosen idols because of their talent. To my mind, that is very laudable and correct. Equal on importance they consider appearance and character, pay less attention to fashion, and only one person has noticed professional skills of the idol.

Exactly half of girls' parents know about daughters' idols and only 26 % of them approve their choice. 37 % are categorically against, and there are a lot of schoolgirls who do not know about parents' attitude towards their idols.

There is no girl whose friends do not like her idol. For the biggest part of them it really does not matter, but there were 24 % of friends dividing interests of each other.

The Internet and TV are the main sources of information for girls, they prefer magazines to books. They often communicate and share information with their friends and rare with parents. Girls do not read much and do not get any information on idols from their teachers, that is strange enough because two persons named historical figures as their idols about whom teachers told them at the lessons. About half of schoolgirls could not name their idols. Perhaps,

they have a huge amount of them. And they cannot simply choose one person from all their variety. And only one girl has told that she has no idol in general.

It was very interesting for us to learn how elder generation relates to youth idols and what idols they have in common.

According to the results of our questionnaire adults (teachers, parents, etc.) more often choose idols among their parents and other relatives, and they also choose actors and sportsmen in their answers. They think talent and character are the most important qualities. We have to say that opinions of elder and young generations are rather alike. But elder generation pays not so much attention to appearance and the way of dressing.

And elder generation has not so many idols as young people.

Conclusions

Today the life of many young people in Russia as well as in other countries of the world is influenced by popular culture. The young people follow certain stereotypes they meet from TV, movies, and music. They try to imitate the images of their idols.

They follow their idols in their tours throughout the country and support them. Unfortunately they are often intolerant to those who do not share their views. It is a specific aspect of the youth subculture that cannot be ignored.

Actually, more of them don't like to read books, magazines. They surf the Internet all day long and watch TV. But many young people have other interests. For some of them getting knowledge is of primary importance. They are fond of reading serious books, listening to serious music. They go to conservatory and theatre.

It is considered to be that subculture is the culture of those who are dissatisfied with their place in society. Such as Goth, Hippies, Skinheads and Punks.

Unfortunately, talking about information sources, teenagers don't speak about it with their teachers... And you can see it in our research paper: e.g., among the girls' idols there are not so many historical figures and scientists. It was really nice for us to find out that girls and boys often choose their parents as idols, and they try to follow them in all aspects.

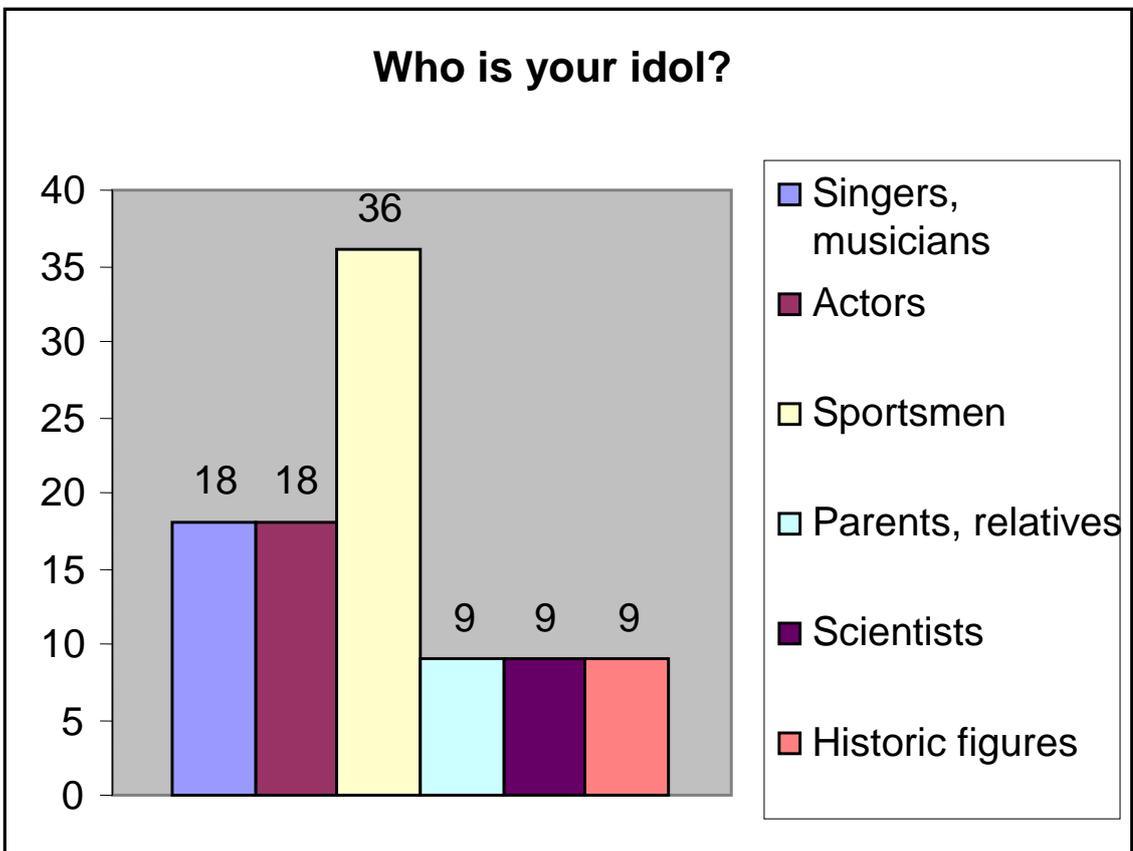
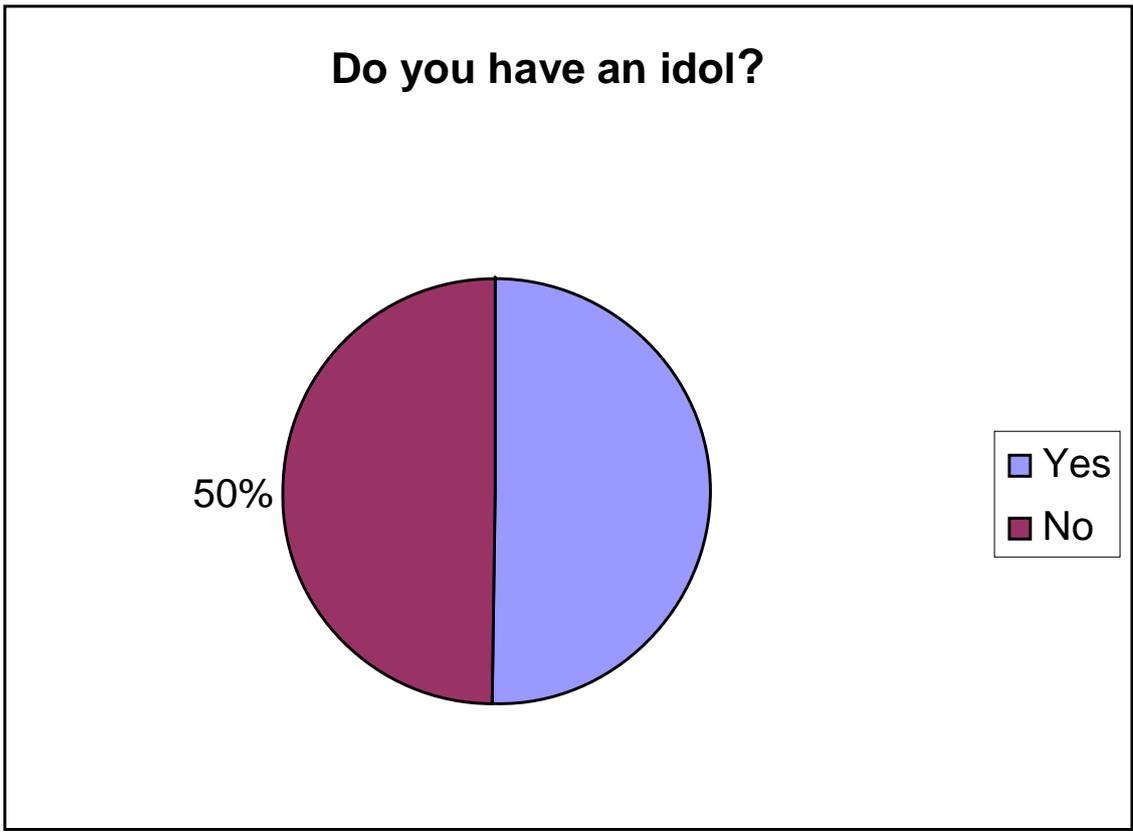
In our opinion, the differences between teenagers and elder generation are not rather big. Both sides choose talent and character as the main qualities of idols. They also choose their parents, actors and singers, and sportsmen.

Many adults say: "Don't create an idol yourself."

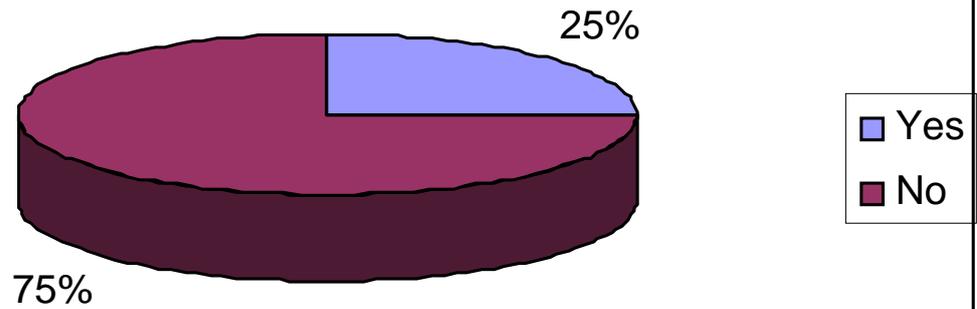
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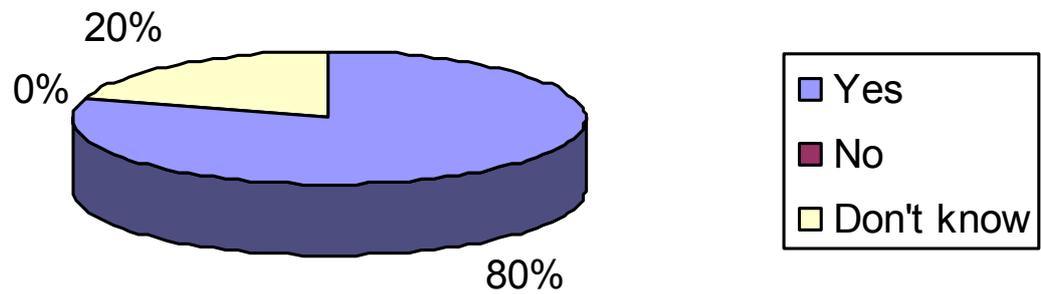
Appendix
Boys, 9 form



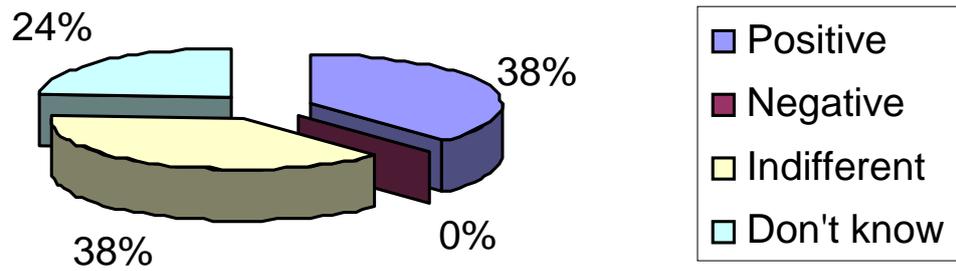
Do your parents know about your idol?



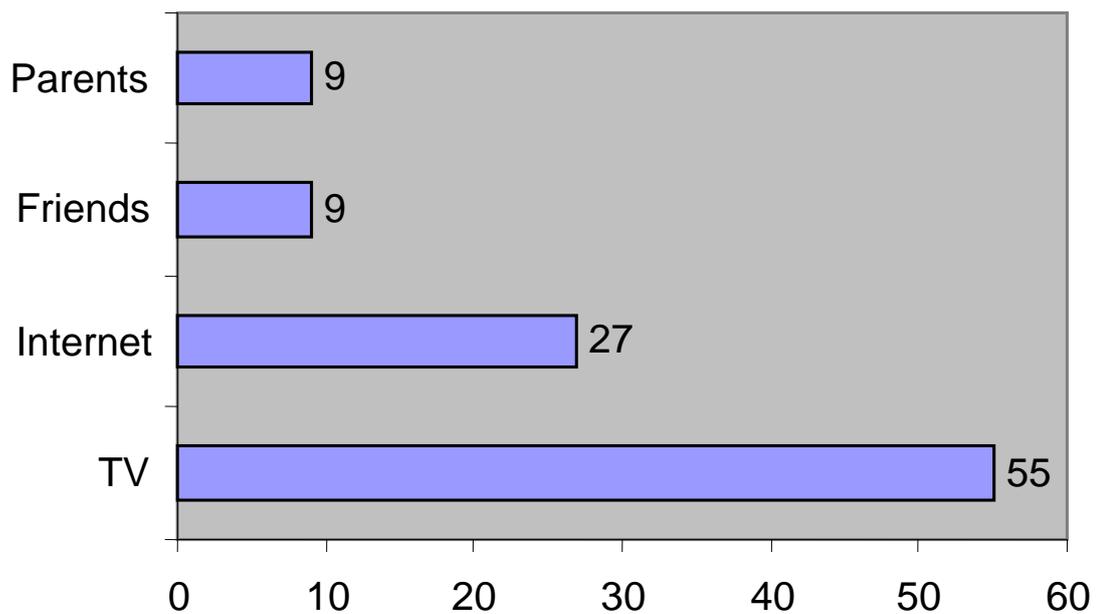
Do your parents like your idol?



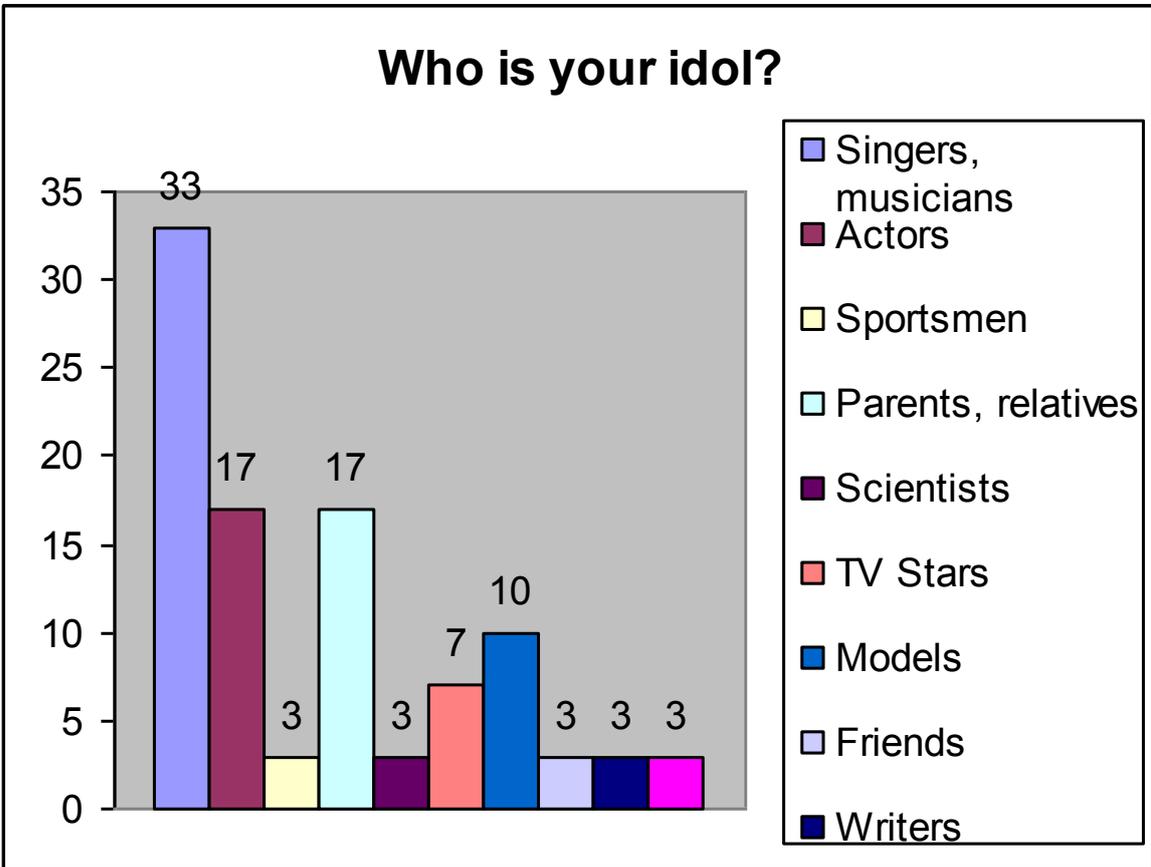
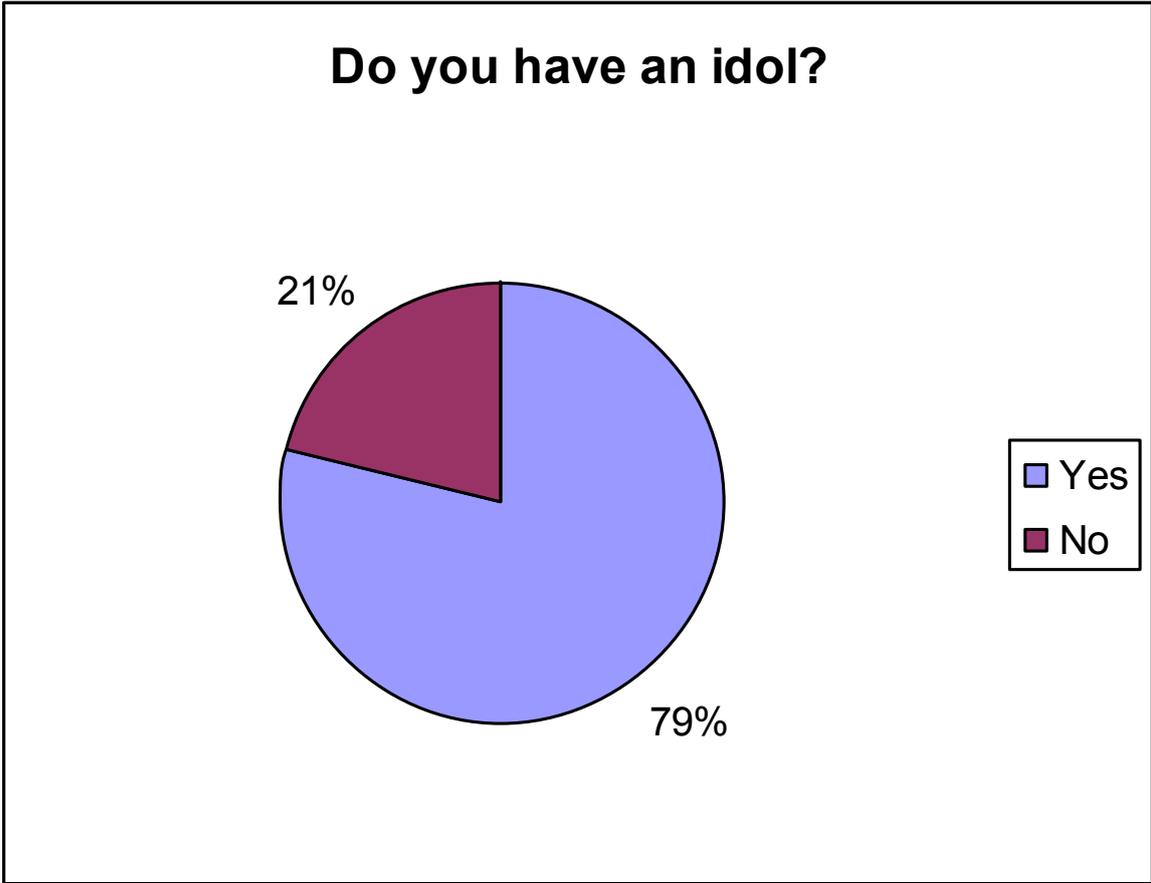
What is your friends' attitude towards your idol?



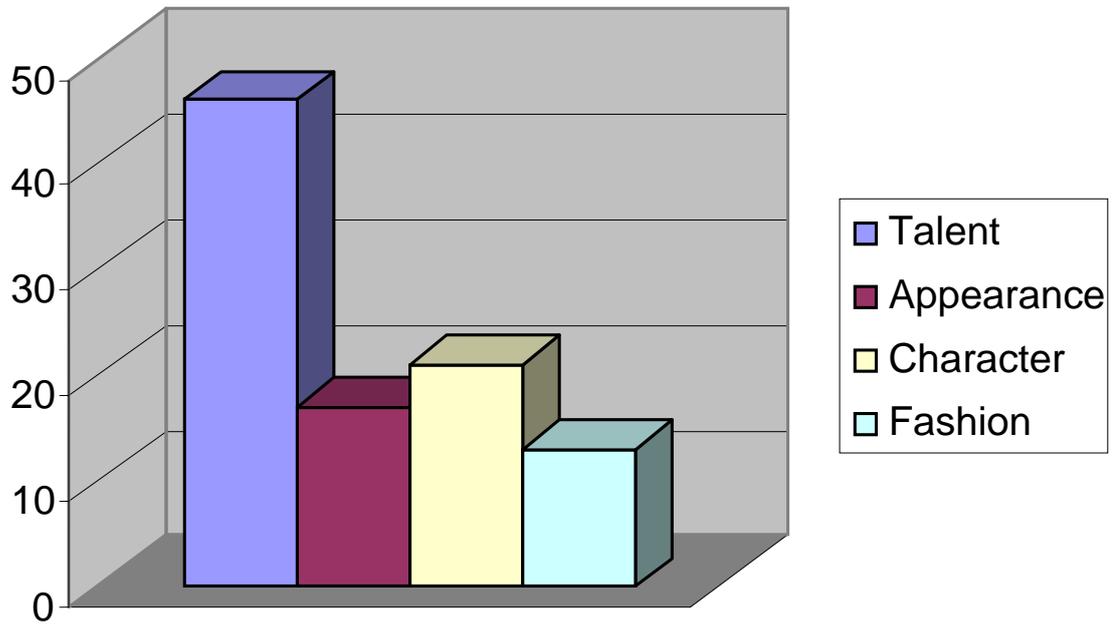
How have you learnt about your idol?



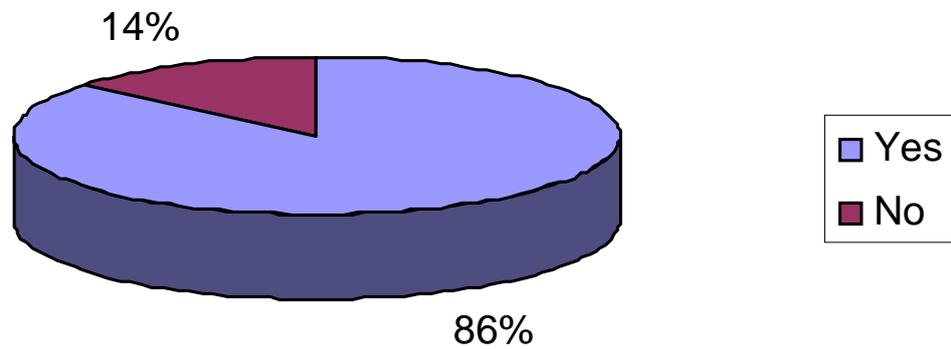
Girls, 9 form



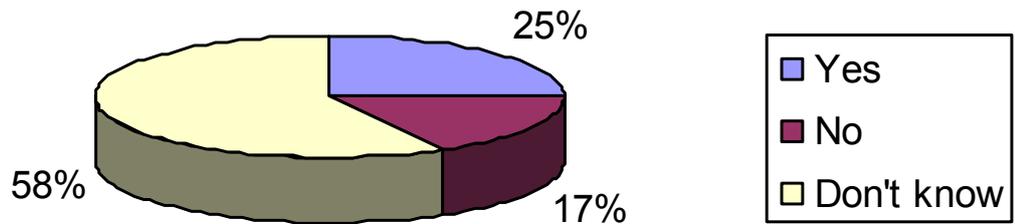
What attracts you in your idol?



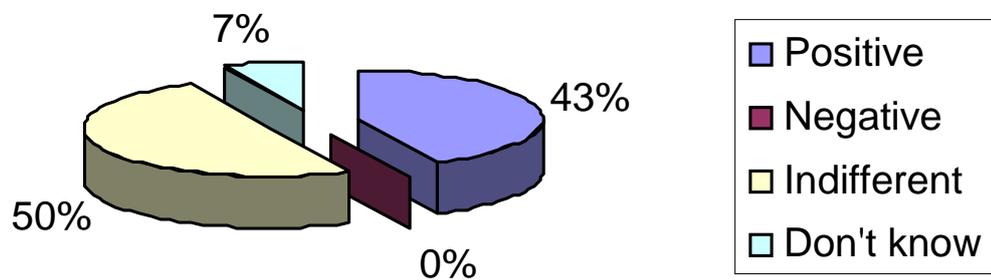
Do your parents know about your idol?

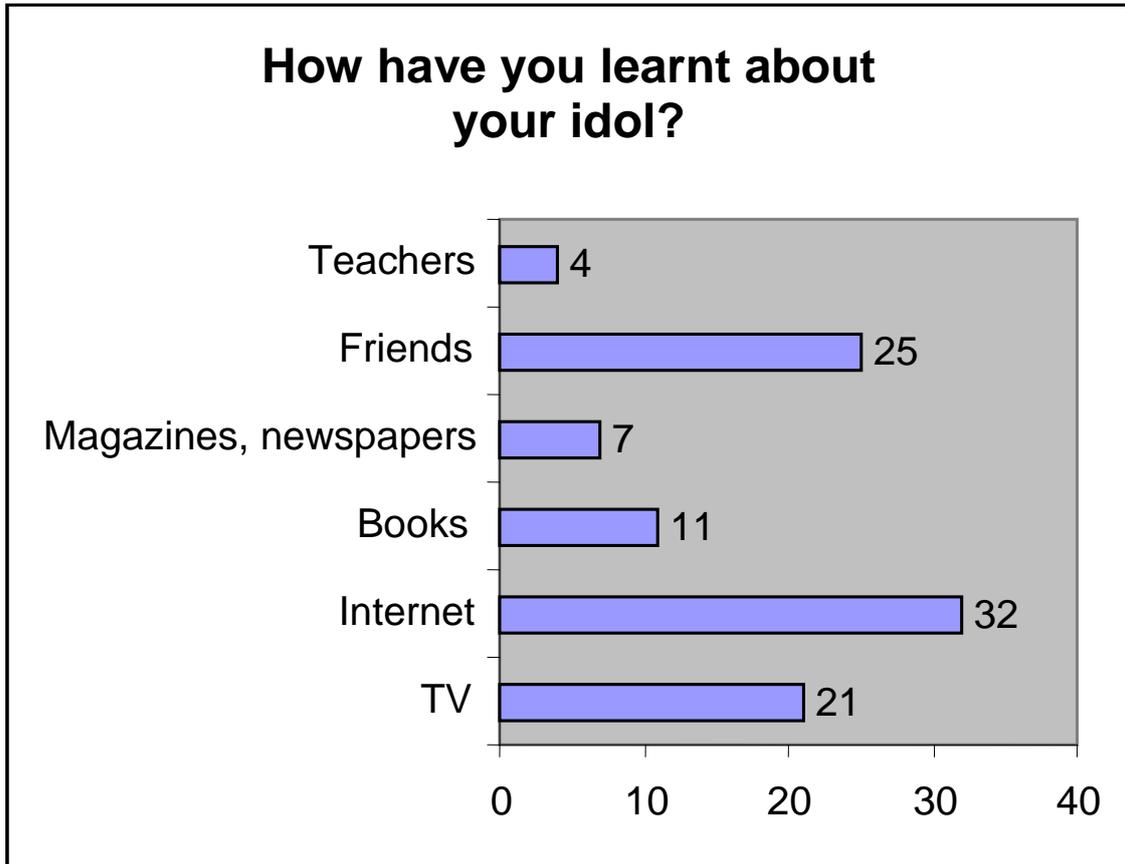


Do your parents like your idol?

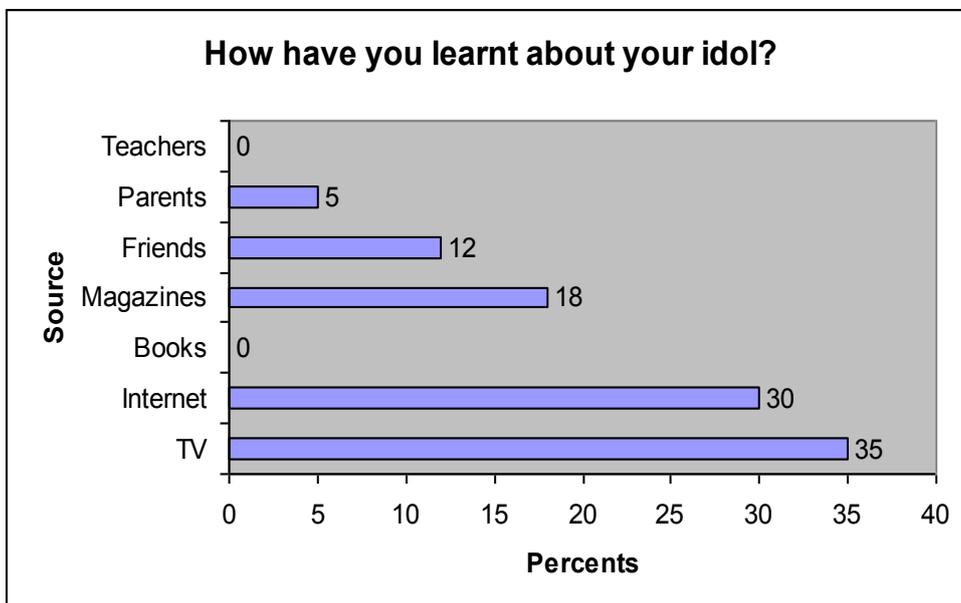
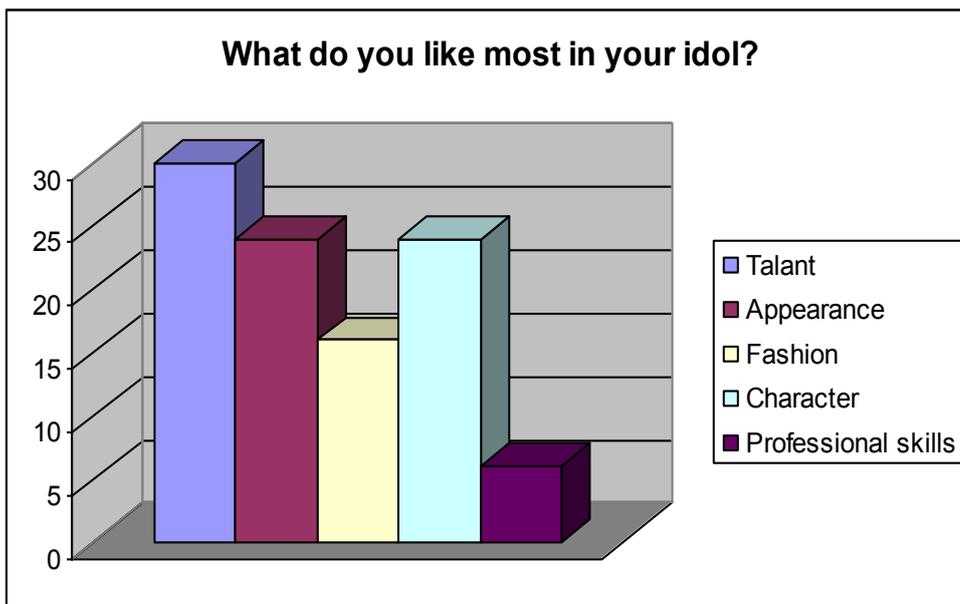
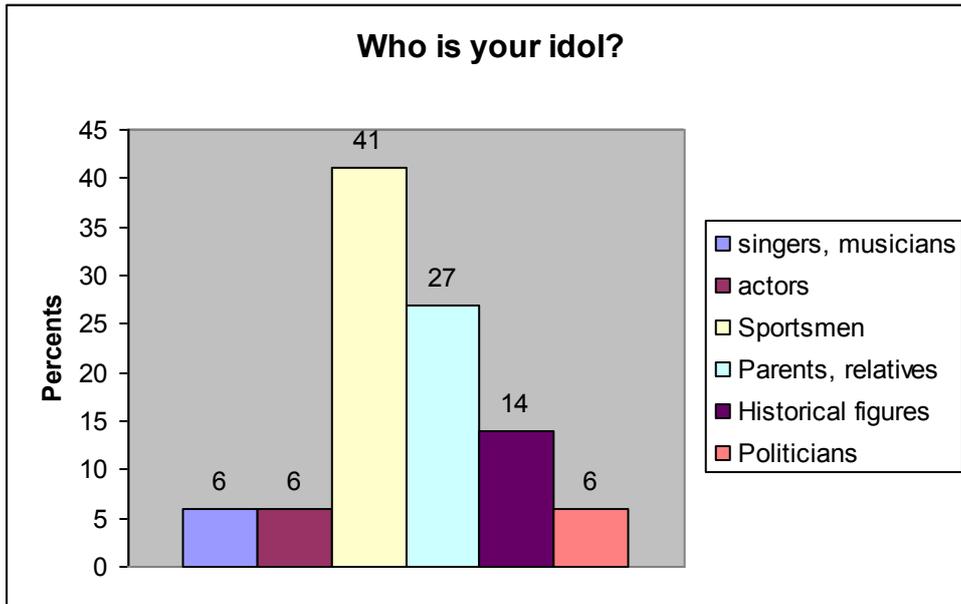


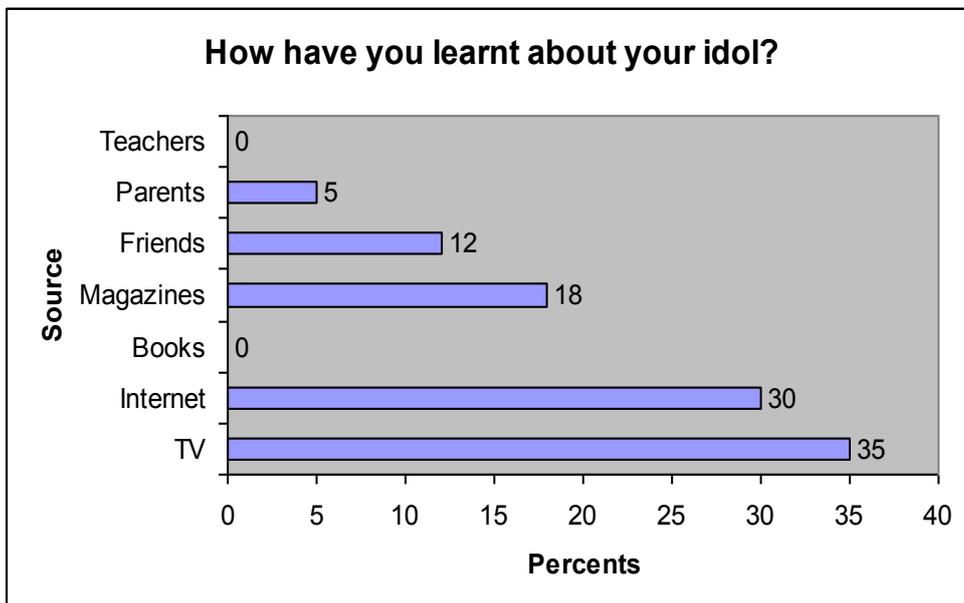
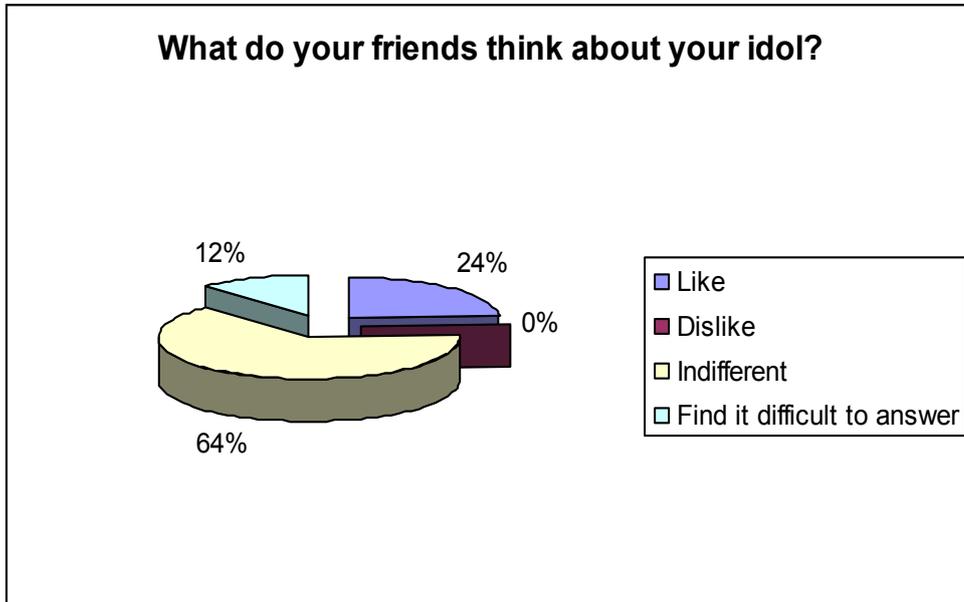
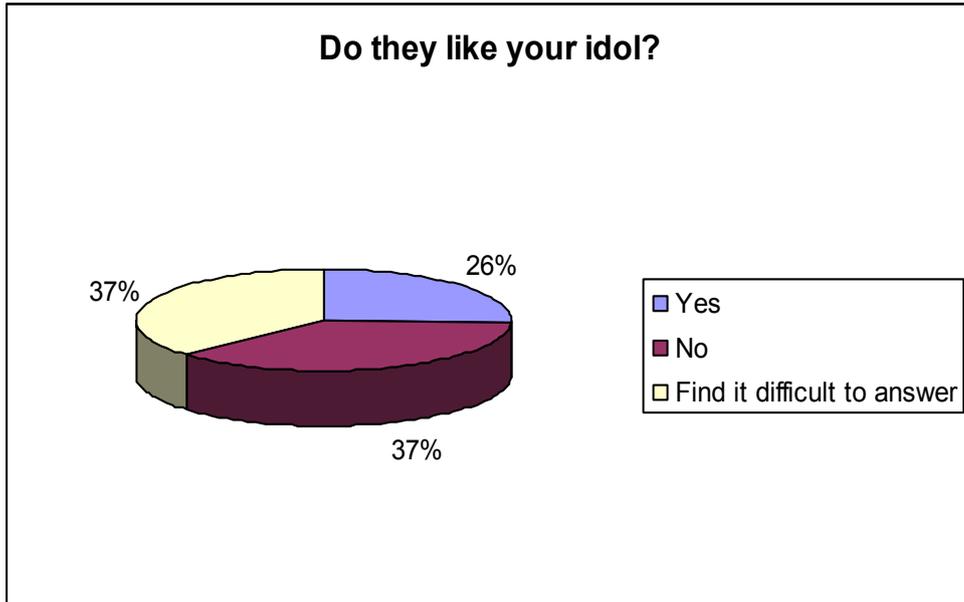
What is your friends' attitude towards your idol?

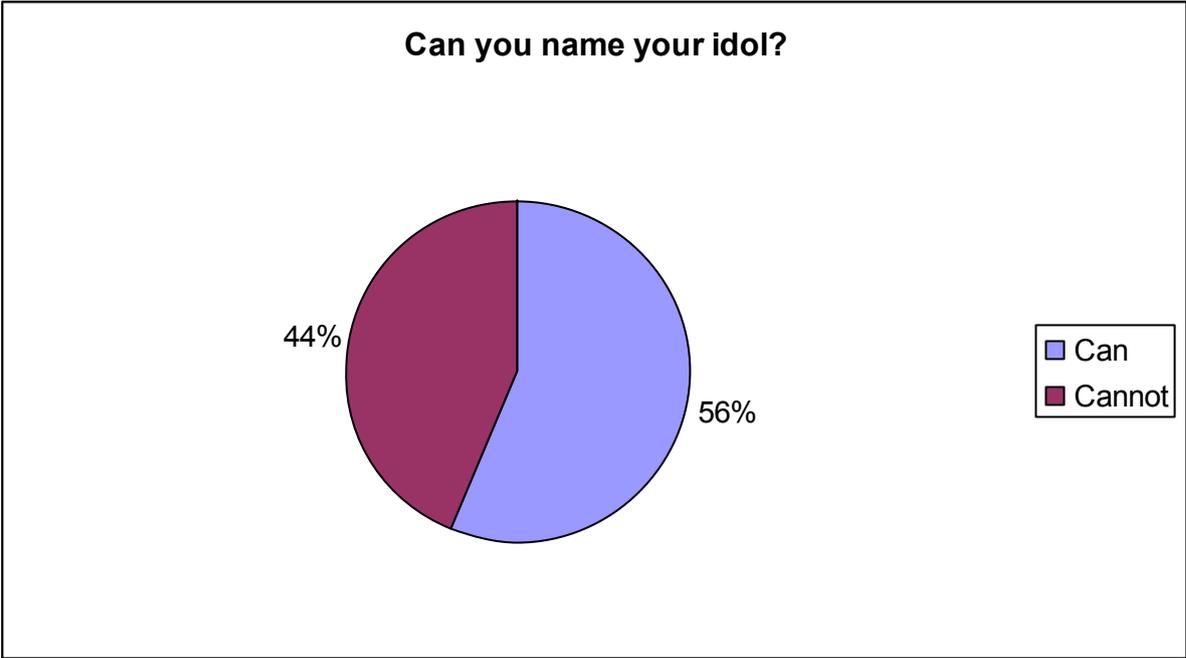




Girls, 11 form







Teachers

