

## Class test - “Teenage life – teenage problems“

### Todd Strasser: Afterword to the novel *Boot Camp* (2007)

Read the following text:

5 A secret prison system for teenagers exists in the United States. Many have never heard of it, and even among those who have, few understand what it really is or how it works. You do not have to be found guilty of a crime to be placed in one of these prisons, also known as boot camps. You do not even have to be accused of committing a crime. All you have to do is be under the age of eighteen.

10 It is impossible to know how many boot camps exist. Estimates put the number between one hundred and two hundred, and the number of teens in them between four thousand and ten thousand. Most boot camps avoid publicity, preferring instead to advertise their services privately and by word of mouth. In addition a number of boot camps have been set up outside United States borders – especially in Central America and the Caribbean, but also as far away as Thailand and the Philippines – to avoid American regulations against the mistreatment<sup>3</sup> of teenage detainees. [...]

15 Once in a boot camp, teens are cut off from the outside world. They are not allowed to communicate with anyone except their parents, who are warned in advance that complaints of physical abuse<sup>2</sup> and maltreatment are lies – attempts by their child to “manipulate” them in order to be taken out of the boot camp. All forms of news and current entertainment is forbidden in order to reinforce the impression that the world inside the boot camp is the only thing that matters.

20 At the age of eighteen, teens are legally considered adults and therefore allowed to leave the facility if they choose. But teens under the age of eighteen have no choice. Should parents decide for any reason that they’ve had enough of a child, they can sentence him or her to boot camp. And the child is helpless to stop them. (320 words)

#### ANNOTATIONS

<sup>1</sup> subjected to *ausgesetzt, unterworfen*

<sup>2</sup> abuse *hier: Misshandlung*

<sup>3</sup> mistreatment *Misshandlung*

## 1. READING COMPREHENSION / VOCABULARY

Find the **correct meaning** of the following expressions and phrases. If you don't know the word, the **context** will help you to make the right decision. Tick the **right box**.

1 to be found guilty (line 3)	people agree you did something wrong	
	people agree you didn't do anything wrong	
	people are uncertain about what you did	
2 estimates (line 6)	guesses	
	surveys	
	exact figures	
3 avoid publicity (line 8)	publish your actions	
	lie to everybody	
	do everything in secret	

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4 warned in advance (line 14)	to be warned about possible advantages	
	to be warned about sth. before it happens	
	to be warned about sth. that is not important	
5 to reinforce the impression (line 11)	to make you feel alone	
	to hurt you	
	to give you the idea	

## 2. READING COMPREHENSION / MEDIATION

**Summarise the main ideas** of Todd Strasser's 'Afterword' for the school magazine 'laut!' in **German**. Make sure you write only 4-6 sentences.

## 3. SUMMARY

Write a **summary** of the 'Afterword' in **English**. In so doing respect **all the rules** for writing a summary.

## 4. ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

**Discuss** Strasser's statement that there is nothing positive about boot camps. In doing so consider **what you have learned about this topic**.

Your text should be well-structured and include the following points:

- an introduction in which you explain why it might be important to discuss this topic
- arguments for and against
- examples and explanations to support each of your arguments
- a conclusion with your personal opinion