

Stop swiping, start talking: the rise and rise of the blind dating app

Level 2: Intermediate

1 Warmer

- a. What do you think a single person should consider most when trying to find a potential romantic partner? Put the items in order of importance and discuss.

- ___ how the other person looks or dresses
- ___ how many interests they share
- ___ how easy it is to talk to the other person
- ___ having the same ideas about politics or religion
- ___ how successful the other person is

- b. How good would a dating app be to find someone based on the points above?

2 Key words

- a. Find the words in the text. A definition and sample sentence has been given for each word. The paragraph numbers are also given to help you.

1. an adjective meaning *possible or likely in the future* _____ (paragraph 1)
I have made a list of _____ courses I might take this semester.
2. a verb meaning *to start to do or use something in an attempt to help yourself when you are having difficulty dealing with a situation* _____ (paragraph 1)
In times of stress, she _____ exercise to help her relax.
3. an adjective meaning *difficult to see clearly, or causing difficulty in seeing something clearly* _____ (paragraph 2)
The people's faces in the crime documentary were _____, so they couldn't be identified.
4. a verb meaning *to provide something that is suitable for a particular situation, person, or purpose* _____ (paragraph 2)
I'm not sure if this career _____ my personality, so I'm going to work as an intern for one summer and see if I like it.
5. _____ a verb meaning *that you want or like someone, or feel attracted to them* (paragraph 7)
People who have good manners and similar hobbies _____ to me.

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6. a noun meaning *an unreasonable opinion or feeling, especially against a particular group of people* _____ (paragraph 8)
Most people don't even realize that they have certain _____ when they are looking at people's dating profiles.
7. a verb meaning *to let something become known, for example, a secret or information that was previously not known* _____ (paragraph 10)
They have finally _____ the winner!
8. a verb meaning *to behave towards someone in a way that shows your romantic interest in them* _____ (paragraph 10)
Who is that in the red shirt? Cecilia is _____ with him.
9. an adjective describing *someone who makes people do what they want by influencing them in a clever or dishonest way* _____ (paragraph 11)
My boss is very _____ and always gets people to do what he wants.
10. a noun meaning *the emotional relationship between people, especially when they are strongly attracted to each other* _____ (paragraph 13)
I love that film because the two main characters seem so in love, and there is just so much _____ between them.

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Leah Harper

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- 1 If speed dating mixed with blind dating sounds like your idea of hell, stop reading now. Ten years since dating app Tinder first encouraged users to swipe* through potential partners based largely on their looks, some single people are getting rid of profile photos. They are turning instead to “blind dating apps” hoping to make more meaningful connections.
- 2 Victoria Brown, a 26-year-old from east London, was already on traditional dating apps and was ready to try something new. Brown signed up to Blindlee, a blind dating app that hosts three-minute blurred video calls between users who match each other’s criteria. Eventually, users have the option to gradually unblur the video image. After three minutes, the app asks if participants want to continue the conversation.
- 3 The app launched in 2019 and during the pandemic the average number of matches per user increased by almost 180%. It is often compared to another popular TV dating show: Love Is Blind.
- 4 Co-founder Sacha Nasan was single when he had the idea for Blindlee – but has since met his fiancée on the app. He was unhappy with how dating apps let you judge a book by its cover and wanted to do things differently.
- 5 The disadvantage? Blindlee requires both participants to be online at the same time. Ultimately, Brown never managed to make a connection.
- 6 It’s a problem that may well be solved by S’More, another app in the digital dating market, where users’ photos are hidden until 15 messages have been exchanged.
- 7 S’More launched in June, 2020 in the US and is the country’s fastest growing dating product. S’More’s CEO, Adam Cohen-Aslatei, thinks that blind dating apps appeal to generation Z because they can see good-looking people on pretty much any social platform – they’re much more interested in content.
- 8 There is also hope that blind dating apps could help prevent prejudice and discrimination. “For ethnic and visible minorities, their experience on other apps can be diminished,” says Cohen-Aslatei.
- 9 When Tyler Proctor, a 22-year-old from Wellington, New Zealand, tried Tinder’s Blind date feature in March, 2022, he had trouble finding someone. “As a larger queer man in a smaller country, it’s incredibly difficult to find dates so I use whatever I can to help,” he says, “Unfortunately, I found I would sit on the matching screen for a long time and often gave up.”
- 10 Although most blind dating apps eventually reveal user identity before an in-person meeting, there is a certain sense of danger that comes with not being able to see the person you may be flirting with.
- 11 “It’s always about being smart and aware when you are online dating,” says Dr Hannah Shimko from the Online Dating Association. “If you are having a video call with someone and their face is blurred out, obviously you need to be aware that it could be someone who is being manipulative,” she points out.
- 12 S’More claims to be the first dating app in the world to verify that 100% of the users are real and not ‘catfishers’* using Amazon’s Rekognition software.
- 13 Dating and relationship consultant Dr Kathrine Bejanyan stresses that dating apps – blind or not – can never guarantee in-person chemistry. “There’s an essence and an energy about a person – the way they move, the way they speak – that can be communicated differently through technology versus real life,” she says.
- 14 Even so, she can see the apps’ potential for success. “I’m excited about blind dating apps,” she says.

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4 Key language

a. Find the missing prepositions in the text to complete the phrasal verbs.

1. get rid _____: to throw away, give away, or sell a possession that you no longer want or need
2. give _____: to stop doing something that you are trying hard to do
3. come _____: to exist or develop as a result of something
4. point _____: to tell someone something

b. Answer the questions using the phrasal verbs above.

1. What is the best / most annoying thing that comes with online dating?
2. Do you think it's a good idea to get rid of profile photos on dating apps?
3. Do you think people give up on relationships too easily?
4. What is the wisest thing that someone you know has pointed out to you about dating?

5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- "Online dating is great because you get to chat with the person first."
- "Blind dating is better because you don't judge someone by the way they look."
- "Dating apps give you too many options, so it is harder to find a partner today."

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6 In your own words

- a. Is finding love more difficult now than it was 10 or 20 years ago? Debate in small groups. Brainstorm arguments for and against. Your teacher will tell you if you are going to argue for or against the statement.
- b. Participate in the debate. Use some of the phrases below to help you.

Expressing and supporting a point

I think / believe ...

I'd like to say ...

What I mean is ...

An example of this is ...

In other words, ...

Agreeing

You're absolutely right. / Absolutely.

I completely / totally agree.

That's a good point.

Interrupting

Excuse me.

Can I say something?

Sorry to interrupt, but ...

Disagreeing

I don't think so.

I see your point, but ...

That's not always true.