

I was always the first to message friends. When I stopped I lost my entire circle. Am I a crap person?

Level 1: Elementary

Article summary: This is an advice column where a reader is asking about maintaining friendships when he is the only one staying in contact.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Writing, Speaking

Language focus: Language for staying in touch with friends

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

- b. Before reading the article carefully, students use the key words to fill the gaps in the sentences to ensure that they know how the words are used in other contexts.

Key:

1. evidence
2. social circle
3. injured
4. infer
5. imbalance
6. volunteer
7. vices
8. reach out
9. virtues
10. neglect

1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to let students consider the importance of friendships and how to maintain them. Ask students to share stories about their friends and how they stay in touch. Be sensitive to any very painful stories students may have and steer them away from those discussions.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do this task individually and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. Weaker groups can take each group of five at a time, while stronger groups can take all ten as a whole. As an extension activity, ask students to highlight the key words in the article.

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1. social circle
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3. Comprehension check

- a. Students answer the questions with *True* or *False* based on the information in the article. If possible, encourage the students to add more explanatory information when they answer, e.g. in item 2, they may say *He says he's 43. That means he's in his 40s.*
- b. Encourage students to correct the three incorrect statements. If they're not sure, have them work in pairs to find the correct answers.

Key:

1. False – *She's the advice columnist.*
2. True
3. True
4. True
5. True
6. False – *'If I were a terrible person ...'*
7. True
8. False – *He asked for help rather than waiting for it.*
9. True
10. True

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4. Key language

- a. This activity helps students see and organise the key vocabulary into categories. Some students might be able to intuit meanings based on the phrases themselves, whereas others might find more metaphorical phrases like *keep in touch* more difficult. Encourage them to find the phrases in the article to understand them from context.

Key:

Making contact

send a message

make a call

call someone

invite someone

ask for help

Keeping relationships going

keep in touch

make plans

visit someone

Life changes and support

move to a new place

help a friend

- b. Have students work together to add more key vocabulary to the table.
- c. Students complete the sentences with their own ideas. Encourage weaker students to practice saying their ideas out loud in pairs or small groups before committing their answers to paper.

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the statements related to the article and give their reasons and justifications for each answer, referring to their own experiences wherever possible.

6. In your own words

- a. a. Ask students to think about their friends and the friendships they've worked to maintain. Encourage them to choose lighter-hearted stories and to find opportunities to make use of the words and phrases they learned in this class.
- b. Students then present their anecdote in pairs, and then, after a short discussion, some can present to the class. They should make sure to include all bullet points in their response, as this is not dissimilar to the kind of speaking activity they might see in international exams.