

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

Level 2: Intermediate

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: Third conditionals

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. *injured*
2. *infer*
3. *atrocious*
4. *reach out*
5. *evidence*
6. *imbalance*
7. *voluntarily*
8. *vices*
9. *social circle*
10. *neglectful*
11. *virtues*
12. *overstepping*

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. As an extension activity, ask students to highlight the key words in the article.

Key:

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2. *atrocious*
3. *virtues*
4. *evidence*
5. *neglectful*
6. *social circle*
7. *injured*
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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*. 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 had been an atrocious 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 the uses of the third conditional. In preparation, write the word *regret* on the board and ask students what it means. Ask them to give examples of regrets, again staying sensitive to any difficult topics. Rewrite students' answers in the form of the third conditional to demonstrate the structure for students who have never seen it before, or who need a refresh. Then have students annotate the sentences on the worksheet.

Key:

If I had been an atrocious person, then people wouldn't have interacted with me like they did, seemingly voluntarily and happily.

- b. Have students complete the sentences and annotate as in task a.

Key:

1. *I have no idea how much we would have gone over to help if he hadn't asked.*
2. *If my injured friend had measured our care by how much we independently and spontaneously came over to help, he might have sat home sore and lonely, wondering why nobody cared.*

- 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. Ask students to think about their friends and the friendships they've worked to maintain. Encourage them to choose lighter-hearted stories, but try to also include situations where there might be regrets or things that *would have gone differently if ...* in order to practice the third conditional.
- 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.