

Five intimate friendships is the optimal number – I scrape two

Level 3: Advanced – Teacher's notes

Article summary: The writer examines the state of her friendships and reflects on research that suggests we should have five close friends and the endorphin-firing activities that create closeness between friends.

Time: 90 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Word formation (affixes)

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to introduce the topic of friendship and help prepare students for reading. Make notes on the board and ask students to skim the article to see if they can find any of the answers mentioned.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and compare their answers in pairs or small groups.

Key:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. <i>twitch, twitching</i> | 8. <i>spontaneity</i> |
| 2. <i>inadequate</i> | 9. <i>slumps, slumped</i> |
| 3. <i>confidence</i> | 10. <i>cut it</i> |
| 4. <i>slips, slip</i> | 11. <i>underpin</i> |
| 5. <i>transient</i> | 12. <i>tally, tallied</i> |
| 6. <i>thoughtless</i> | 13. <i>cumulative</i> |
| 7. <i>catastrophic</i> | |

As an extension, you could focus on pronunciation and ask students to identify words with the same word stress, for example:

Ooo: confidence, transient

ooOo: catastrophic, monolithic

And to check understanding, you can ask students for synonyms, for example:

1. *spasm/twinge* 2. *insufficient* 3. *secret* 4. *pass you by* 5. *short-lived* 6. *careless* 7. *disastrous, devastating* 8. *impulsiveness* 9. *slouch* 10. *suffice* 11. *support* 12. *match* 13. *added up*

3. Comprehension check

- a. Ask students to scan the text to find the paragraph that contains the information, and then read it carefully before they make their choice.

Key:

2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9

4. Key language

- a. Students could be asked to do this exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs. The answers given are words used in the article.

Key:

in-	-less	un-
inadequate	careless thoughtless	unease
-ation	-ance / -ence	-ic
formation	maintenance	idyllic

- b. Ask students to complete the sentences with words from task A.

Key:

1. *thoughtless*
2. *unease*
3. *idyllic*
4. *inadequate*
5. *maintenance*

5. Discussion

- a. Allow students time to note down their ideas about each statement individually and then discuss the statements in small groups. Invite someone from each group to share their main idea(s).

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6. In your own words

- a. This task can be done individually or in pairs. It could also be done as a homework task if needed. You could show students examples of infographics, TikTok or YouTube videos, or blog posts (e.g., do an online search for “how to communicate better”) and get students to analyse the clearest ones.

Encourage students to do some research and include new information in their materials. They can use an online tool or app to create the final product. If the task is done for homework, save a few minutes at the start of the following class for students to present.