

Five intimate friendships is the optimal number – I scrape two

Level 1: Elementary / Pre-Intermediate – 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 (including research time)

Skills: Reading, Speaking

Language focus: Gerunds and infinitives

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

3. Comprehension check

- a. Ask students to work individually, read the statement halves carefully and find the text's relevant information before choosing the best way to complete each statement. Ask them to compare their answers in pairs or small groups before checking answers with the whole class.

Key:

- | | |
|------|------|
| 1. d | 6. g |
| 2. a | 7. e |
| 3. h | 8. f |
| 4. b | 9. c |
| 5. i | |

4. Key language

- a. First, elicit what gerunds and infinitives are. Then ask students how they choose when to use a gerund and when to use an infinitive. Some verbs and phrases are always followed by a gerund or infinitive.

Gerunds:

- After prepositional phrases or prepositions:
e.g., *I'm just not good at planning.*
- When the verb works as the subject of the sentence:
e.g., *If being our friend makes us happier, ...*
- After verbs such as *prefer, practise, dislike, detest, avoid, mind, miss, finish, keep, enjoy, consider, continue, quit, etc.*
e.g., *We enjoyed spending time with each other.*

Infinitives:

- After a descriptive adjective:
e.g., *It wouldn't be strange to have a drink with them.*
- After verbs such as *want, need, try, start, agree, decide, hope, learn, prepare, promise, etc.*
e.g., *Could we try to make our good friends our neighbours?*
- After a direct object:
e.g., *It would be wonderful to have a chance to try.*

Ask students to work in pairs to complete the activity and then look for the answers in the text. Check the answers with the whole class.

1. Warmer

- a. The purpose of this activity is 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. Alternatively, divide the class into two groups and ask each group to complete half of the items; regroup students and have them share the answers before checking with the whole class.

Ask students to explain the items in their own words in pairs. Make sure that answers that start a sentence are capitalised.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1. nervous | 6. friendship |
| 2. research | 7. regular |
| 3. strange | 8. endorphins |
| 4. trust | 9. active |
| 5. habit | 10. spoil |

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Key:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. <i>to have</i> | 6. <i>spending</i> |
| 2. <i>to count</i> | 7. <i>eating</i> |
| 3. <i>planning</i> | 8. <i>being</i> |
| 4. <i>to be</i> | 9. <i>to make</i> |
| 5. <i>to be</i> | 10. <i>to have, to try</i> |

As an extension, you could ask students to form more sentences of their own using gerunds and infinitives.

5. Discussion

- a. Allow students time to note down their ideas and encourage them to give examples and reasons for their opinions. Also, encourage them to try to use new vocabulary from the lesson in their discussion. Note down any new language on the board.

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.