

4



Personal Relationships

[A] What is meant by the word "friend"? The dictionary defines it as: "one attached to another by affection or *esteem*." Americans use the word freely—that is, a friend may or may not be a person to whom there is a great attachment. A friend might be a casual *acquaintance* or an intimate *companion*.¹ Friends may have known each other since childhood or they may have recently met. It is difficult to *formulate a precise* definition of this word as it is used in the United States, because it covers many types of relationships. "My friend and I went to the show last night." "My friends gave me the name of a good doctor." "My friend *consoled* me 10 when I was depressed." We hear such daily *references* to the word "friend" without knowing the quality of the friendship referred to.

Circles of Friends

[B] It is common for Americans to have different "circles of friends" such as church friends, work friends, or sports friends. A person may choose not to involve members of different circles in the same activity.² (One's friends from the office may never meet one's friends from the sports club.) Terms such as "office mate" and "tennis *partner*" indicate the *segregation* of friends. The office mate is a friend in the office and the tennis partner is a friend on the courts. People have different types of friends: one may have many good friends and one best friend. "Best friends" are usually two people of the same sex who have known each other for a long period of time. People usually have more casual friends than close or best friends.

Mobility and Friendship

[C] Americans are geographically *mobile* and learn to develop friendships easily and quickly. Approximately one out of every five American



families moves every year.³ People *relocate* because they begin new jobs, attend distant colleges, get married, have children or simply want a
5 change in their lives. Perhaps as a consequence of this, people form and end friendships quickly. Students attending two or three universities during their undergraduate and graduate years may change their circles of friends several times.

- [D] Relationships based on a common activity may *fade* or end when the activity ends. Students might meet in classes and remain friends for the *duration* of the course and then stop seeing each other after the final examination. The same holds true for neighbors who are the closest of
5 friends until one moves away. In these friendships, shared daily experiences form the *foundation* for the relationship. *Enduring* friendships develop when individuals have similar interests and a common *outlook* on life. The high rate of mobility in the United States can explain a great deal about *transient* friendships.

Instant Friendships

[E] It is easy to be misled by instant friendships which may appear to be deep and personal but are really *superficial*. Friendship and friendliness are not synonymous. Friendliness characterizes much of American daily interaction but is not always an indication of friendship. Strangers may 5 share life histories without any intention of *pursuing* a relationship. Characterizing instant friendships is the appearance of two people becoming close but, in reality, there is no strong bond between them. Brief *encounters* do not always imply *desire* for further contact. Many people frequently smile or say, "Have a nice day" or "See ya later," or even 10 extend an invitation as part of a cultural pattern of politeness. Such expressions do not always suggest an offer of continued friendship.



Male-Female Relationships

[F] In the United States men and women *socialize* relatively freely and develop a variety of relationships. Single people of opposite sexes may be close friends and share personal problems with each other without being romantically involved. There are no fixed rules for romantic or intimate relationships but there are restraints. Men and women interact in varying degrees of *intensity*. Dating may be serious or casual. A couple may *terminate* a relationship after three dates or may date *steadily* and *exclusively* for a long period of time. They may date with or without the intention of getting married. *Alternatively*, people may choose to have *multiple* dating partners so as not to become too seriously involved with one person. The commitment and obligations of people who are dating depend principally on the couple's attitude.

[G] Married men and women sometimes consider each other best friends as well as *spouses*. They also socialize with members of the opposite sex either as couples or independently. (A working wife may have a close male friend at her job.) This does not mean that there are no constraints on the married man or women. The limitations of these relationships are not always visible but they do exist. Most, but not all, married American couples practice *monogamous* relationships.

Intercultural Friendships

[H] With foreign visitors (students, businesspeople, tourists), Americans may not always be the first ones to begin friendships. It is possible that some Americans, because of their linguistic and geographic *isolation*, are hesitant about interacting with foreigners. However, it is important to know that Americans are receptive to developing friendships with international visitors. In general, it is advisable to approach Americans first in order to initiate friendships. One foreign student, after having lived in the United States for several years, said that the most important advice he could give to newcomers would be, "Don't be *passive* when it comes to making friends with Americans. Begin conversations, extend invitations and make the first move."

[I] A characteristic of American personal relations is the absence of fixed rules governing them. Therefore, a variety of friendships are possible in the United States. Even within a person's own culture, recognizing when a relationship has the *potential* to develop into a friendship is not always

easy. When one is living in a foreign country, one is faced with unfamiliar friendship patterns which add to the *challenge* of initiating and maintaining meaningful relationships.



Comprehension Questions *

Choose the best answer for the following questions. You will find the answer stated either directly or indirectly in the reading passage.

1. Another title for this passage could be:
 - a. Complex Interpersonal Relationships
 - b. American Insincerity in Friendships
 - c. Friendship and Dating in the United States
2. According to the reading passage, the word "friend" in English is: [A]
 - a. Impossible to define.
 - b. Used very generally.
 - c. Used too freely in the United States.
3. A "circle of friends" refers to: [B]
 - a. A closed, secretive group of friends.
 - b. A group of friends in a dance group.
 - c. A group of friends who have a common interest.
4. What is the relationship between the "office mate" and the "tennis partner"? [B]
 - a. They are part of the same circle of friends.
 - b. Both terms demonstrate the categorization of friends.
 - c. The "office mate" never plays tennis; the "tennis partner" never works in an office.
5. One effect of mobility on friendships might be: [C]
 - a. A lack of permanence.
 - b. A termination of every relationship.
 - c. Stability.
6. The friendship between neighbors who move away may fade because: [D]
 - a. They can no longer be close friends.
 - b. They have no fixed group of friends.
 - c. They no longer share daily experiences.
7. Instant friendships lack: [E]
 - a. Strong commitment.
 - b. Interesting conversations.
 - c. Friendliness.

The capital letter in brackets refers to the corresponding paragraph in the reading.

8. "In the United States men and women socialize relatively freely." This means: [F]
- Everyone believes in free love.
 - There are fewer social restraints on male-female relationships in the United States than in some other countries.
 - Men and women don't have to pay for anything they do.
9. Married men and women "socialize with members of the opposite sex either as couples or independently." This means: [G]
- Married men and women are not faithful to each other.
 - Married men and women are not restricted from interacting with members of the opposite sex.
 - Married men and women can do whatever they want.
10. Why might geographic and linguistic isolation cause some Americans to be hesitant about interacting with foreigners? [H]
- Some Americans have not been exposed to foreigners and do not know how to act with them.
 - Some Americans have been taught never to extend their hospitality to foreigners.
 - Most Americans speak only one language.

Vocabulary List'

<i>Paragraph A</i>	<i>Paragraph B</i>	<i>Paragraph C</i>	<i>Paragraph D</i>
esteem	partner	*mobile	fade
acquaintance	segregation	relocate	duration
companion			foundation
formulate			enduring
precise			outlook
consoled			transient
*references			

<i>Paragraph E</i>	<i>Paragraph F</i>	<i>Paragraph G</i>	<i>Paragraph H</i>
* superficial	* socialize	spouses	isolation
pursuing	* intensity	monogamous	passive
encounters	terminate		
* desire	steadily		
	exclusively		
	* alternatively		
	multiple		

*See vocabulary exercise D.

long

Paragraph 1

potential
challenge

Phrases and Expressions

a great deal [D]
to be romantically involved [F]
to become serious about someone [F]
to make the first move [H]

Vocabulary Exercises *

A. First choose the correct word for the definitions. Then fill in the blanks in Definitions the sentences following the definitions. Note: *You may have to change the grammatical form of the word used in the sentence.*

esteem [A] formulate [A] partner [B]
acquaintance [A] precise [A] segregation [B]
companion [A] consoled [A]

1. a person who takes part in an activity with another; one engaged in the same business as another _____

Unfortunately, the doctor's business _____ was unsuccessful and caused the doctor to lose thousands of dollars.

2. clearly expressed; definite; exact _____

The novelist writes with _____ .

3. a person someone knows _____ .

Most people say "hi" to friends and _____ .

4. one who accompanies or spends time with another; a friend

The older woman never goes anywhere without her _____

5. to express or reduce to a formula; to express in a systematic way

*The capital letter in brackets refers to the corresponding paragraph in the reading.

The student became nervous when trying to _____
his ideas in front of the teacher.

6. comforted; gave solace _____

The grieving man was _____ by his daughters.

7. separation; isolation from a group _____

It is illegal to _____ schoolchildren from each other
because of skin color.

8. respect _____

The student held his professor in high _____.

B. Choose the word that *best* defines the italicized word.

Multiple Choice 1. The executive and his family *relocated* five times in three years. [C]

- | | |
|--------------|----------|
| a. succeeded | c. lost |
| b. profited | d. moved |

2. Each year the two friends wrote to each other less and less and eventually their friendship *faded*. [D]

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. appeared gradually | c. disappeared slowly |
| b. appeared suddenly | d. ended quickly |

3. Her work schedule determined the *duration* of their trip. [D]

- | | |
|--------------|-----------|
| a. location | c. cost |
| b. enjoyment | d. length |

4. The building could not withstand the earthquake because the *foundation* was poorly designed. [D]

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| a. base | c. furniture |
| b. lighting | d. roof |

5. The couple attributed their *enduring* love to their complete trust in each other. [D]

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| a. jealous | c. lasting |
| b. dying | d. passionate |

6. A positive *outlook* is necessary for a happy life. [D]

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| a. personality | c. answer |
| b. thinker | d. attitude |

7. A friendship which is *transient* may last, for example, 3 days, 3 weeks or 3 months. [D]
- a. not permanent
 - b. active
 - c. permanent
 - d. not important
8. The woman became irritated when the strange man began *pursuing* her. [E]
- a. confusing
 - b. following
 - c. staring at
 - d. leading
9. Brief *encounters* do not always result in further contact. [E]
- a. successes
 - b. parties
 - c. arrangements
 - d. meetings
10. The president *terminated* the meeting early. [F]
- a. cancelled
 - b. began
 - c. ended
 - d. continued
11. Because the worker progressed *steadily*, the boss was pleased. [F]
- a. poorly
 - b. quickly
 - c. slowly
 - d. continuously
12. They dated each other *exclusively* for two years. [F]
- a. only
 - b. happily
 - c. slowly
 - d. rapidly
13. Sometimes parents encourage their teenage children to have *multiple* dating partners. [F]
- a. several
 - b. hundreds of
 - c. younger
 - d. older

C. Read the definitions of the following words and note what parts of speech they are. Use them in sentences.

Words in Sentences

1. spouses [G]: partners in marriage; husbands or wives (noun)

2. monogamous [G]: having one spouse or lover at a time (adjective)

3. isolation [H]: the state of being apart or alone (noun)

4. passive [H]: taking no active part; submissive (adjective)

5. potential [I]: something that has possibility for development or growth (noun)

6. challenge [I]: a task that calls for special effort or dedication (noun)

D. Choose the correct word form for each sentence. Make verb tense **Word Forms** changes, make nouns singular or plural, and use active or passive voice as applicable.

1. references, (to) refer, reference [A]
 - a. Although I searched for hours in the library, I did not find three important _____ that I needed.
 - b. Where is the _____ book that you told me about?
 - c. "Please _____ to the back of the book for the bibliography," said the teacher.
2. mobile, mobility [C]
 - a. Sociologists are studying the high rate of _____ in the United States.
 - b. The family enjoyed their _____ home because they were able to travel frequently.
3. superficial, superficially, superficiality [E]
 - a. Professors encourage their students not to do _____ work.
 - b. The young woman stopped going out with her boyfriend because she didn't like his _____.
 - c. It seemed that the teacher didn't know the answer because she explained it _____.

4. desire, (to) desire, desirable, desirous [E]
- a. It is _____ to sleep eight hours before taking an exam.
 - b. After five years in a famous cooking school, he fulfilled his _____ to become a great chef.
 - c. "You may have whatever you _____," said the bride to the groom.
 - d. In the novel the older man had been _____ of the younger woman for several years.
5. socialize, social, socially, sociable [F]
- a. The business partners also saw each other _____.
 - b. The hostess was not feeling very _____ when her guests arrived.
 - c. "Don't _____ while you're working," said the boss angrily.
 - d. What _____ activities are available to university students?
6. intensity, intense, (to) intensify, intensely [F]
- a. The authors worked with such _____ during the day that they were exhausted at night.
 - b. The _____ light hurt the drunk man's eyes.
 - c. Her son was working so _____ that she didn't want to disturb him.
 - d. His love for his wife _____ when she showed that she trusted him.
7. alternatively, (to) alternate, alternatives, alternate [F]
- a. The commander made an _____ plan in case the first one failed.
 - b. The social worker _____ between loving and hating his work.
 - c. The student could stay up all night to finish her term paper. _____, she could do it in the morning.
 - d. There are _____ to nuclear energy.

Conversational Activities

A. A proverb is a short, popular saying expressing a well-known truth or **Proverbs fact**. A quotation is a passage that is taken word for word from the author. **and Quotations** Proverbs and quotations serve to communicate attitudes, values, and beliefs. The following is a list of proverbs and quotations on the theme of friendship. Read them and discuss the questions that follow.

Quotations

Friendship is the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words.

GEORGE ELIOT, pen name for Mary Ann Evans
(*English novelist, 1819-1880*)

Don't walk in front of me
I may not follow
Don't walk behind me
I may not lead
Walk beside me
And just be my friend.

ALBERT CAMUS (*French writer
born in Algeria, 1913-1960*)

Proverbs⁴

Italian:

Everyone's friend is no one's friend.

Chinese:

Cooked at one stirring makes friends too easily.

German:

In trade and commerce friendship ceases.

Friends are made in wine and proved in tears.

When you require nothing, go to your friends.

Arabic:

If your friend be honey, do not eat him.

Don't wash the cup of friendship with vinegar.

Spanish:

There is no better mirror than an old friend.

Among soldiers and friends compliments are superfluous.

Persian:

It is rest to take trouble for a friend.

One is never a friend by force.

English:

You may find your worst enemy or best friend in yourself.

Make new friends and keep the old; one is silver and the other gold.

Discuss:

What do these quotations and proverbs suggest about the meaning of friendship?

Do you know any other proverbs on friendship?

B. Friendship is universal; a close friend is a close friend anywhere. There are qualities we all admire in friends and things all of us would do for friends. The purpose of the following set of questions is to enable you to share your views on friendship with other class members. Answer the questions individually and then discuss your responses in small groups. Which questions elicit a wide variety of responses? Do you think any of the responses are influenced by culture?

1. In your country, where, when or how did you first meet most of your friends? Check as many as apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> childhood | <input type="checkbox"/> jobs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> within the family | <input type="checkbox"/> neighbors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sports | <input type="checkbox"/> college or university |
| <input type="checkbox"/> organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> from other friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> high school | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ | |

2. How many years have you known your closest friend?

- less than one year
- one to five years
- five to twelve years
- twelve to twenty years
- more than twenty years

3. In your country, did you have close friends from different countries? YES NO If so, which countries?

Are your friends members of other religious groups? YES NO
If so, which religions?

4. Are most of your close friends of the same sex as you, or of the opposite sex? Check one.

- . my sex
- . half are men and half are women
- . opposite sex

Are there any societal attitudes that encourage or discourage friendships between people of the opposite sex?

Are friendships with people of the opposite sex different from friendships with people of the same sex? If so, how?

5. Are most of your friends:

- a. married men
- b. married women
- c. single men

- d. single women
 - e. married couples
6. Do you prefer going out with a group of friends or with one or two friends? Explain your preferences.

Do couples (married or unmarried) usually go out with groups of people, with one other couple, or alone?

7. What qualities do you like in a friend? Check the five that you think are the most important.

- sense of humor
- intelligence
- warmth
- physical beauty
- loyalty
- independence (i.e., your friend is not too dependent on you)
- complete honesty
- similar religious beliefs
- similar political beliefs
- similar educational background

8. Which of the following actions or types of behavior would probably end a friendship of yours? Circle all that apply.

- a. lending money to a friend
- b. borrowing money from a friend
- c. spending too much time together
- d. one friend becoming involved with someone you didn't like
- e. getting married

- f. having children
- g. getting divorced
- h. changing political views
- i. changing religious views
- j. moving away
- k. one becoming more successful than the other
- l. changing professions

Have you ever lost a friend for any of these reasons? Are there other reasons for which friends terminate their relationships?

- C. Divide into small groups (three to five people) and analyze the following **Case Studies*** case studies. First have someone *read* the case study aloud. Second, try to *identify* the problem(s) and the misinterpretation(s). Use the follow-up questions to aid your discussion. Finally, choose someone to *summarize* your discussion for the rest of the class.

A DATE WITH MONA^S

John: an American student abroad

Mona: a classmate from the country in which John is studying

John is abroad studying history and languages. It is in his history class that he becomes friendly with a young woman, Mona. John soon discovers that Mona's father is one of the country's well-known historians and that he has written several books. Since John is interested in history, Mona invites him to her home to have dinner and meet her family. The warmth and friendliness of the family is exceeded only by the huge feast Mona's mother prepares. John is very happy. He doesn't have much chance to meet Mona's mother and sisters since they eat in another room. Nevertheless, he has a pleasant discussion with her father and two brothers. Later that evening he is able to talk with Mona in her parents' presence.

A few weeks later Mona invites John to another elaborate meal and discussion with her father. Again, the women disappear after serving

*Note: Case studies are usually brief stories about everyday occurrences which contain a problem for groups to solve. We use intercultural case studies primarily to gain insight into cultural problems and to discover ways of resolving conflicts of values, attitudes, or feelings.

the meal. However, this time the father and brothers must leave early. Mona joins John and they spend the evening talking alone in the living room while Mona's mother is working in the kitchen.

John wants to express his appreciation to Mona and invites her to his apartment for dinner. John tells Mona that although he lives alone in a small apartment and cooking is difficult, he would like to try cooking a meal for her. He jokingly tells Mona, "Maybe you can teach me how to prepare your food properly!" Suddenly, Mona gets very angry and says, "I didn't know you thought I was that kind of girl!" She walks away almost crying. John asks himself, "What did I do wrong?"

First analyze why Mona is hurt and angry. Then consider the following questions:

1. What special rules or customs seem to govern hospitality and eating in Mona's family?
2. John thought that he could extend this kind of dinner invitation to an American woman and so he assumed he could do the same with Mona. What was wrong with his assumption?
3. What do you think are the rules governing male-female relationships in Mona's culture? What other ways might John have shown his appreciation to Mona?

A FRIEND OF A FRIEND ⁶

Michael: an American graduate student abroad

Mr. Umm: Michael's best friend in the foreign country

Mr. Tahh: Mr. Umm's older friend

Michael is a graduate student in a foreign university. He is a good friend of Mr. Umm, who lives in the dormitory for graduate students. They share a similar sense of humor and enjoy many activities together. Since Michael is interested in architecture, Mr. Umm decides that it would be a good idea for Michael to meet his older friend Mr. Tahh, a professor of design at the university. First he tells Michael all about Mr. Tahh's architectural research. As it turns out, Mr. Tahh's research is exactly what Michael needs for his thesis.

Michael is so excited that the next day he goes directly to Mr. Tahh's office, introduces himself, and briefly mentions Mr. Umm's name. The two men spend several hours discussing their research ideas.

That evening Michael tells Mr. Umm how much he enjoyed meeting Mr. Tahh. Mr. Umm reacts coldly: "Yes, I heard you both met. I hope your research goes well." His serious tone tells Michael that something is wrong, but Michael has no idea what the problem might be.

First analyze Mr. Umm's reaction and Michael's confusion. Then consider the following questions:

1. What do you think might be the rules for introductions in Mr. Umm's culture?
2. Michael met Mr. Tahh as he might have met a professor in his American university. Why was this inappropriate in Mr. Umm's culture? How might Michael have avoided the problem?

LUNCHEON DATE

Randy: an American student

Suun: a male foreign student in the United States

Randy has been working for two months with Suun on a class project. They enjoy working on the project and studying for the exams together. Suun is eager to become close friends with Randy. One day, Suun invites Randy to lunch. Randy declines and tells his classmate that he has work to do and football practice to go to later that day.

That afternoon, Suun sees Randy with his girlfriend in a nearby coffee shop. The next week in class Randy senses that Suun is not interested in the class project any more. It seems that Suun is trying to avoid him. Randy can't understand what has happened to their relationship.

First analyze Suun's reaction and Randy's confusion. Then consider the following questions:

1. What type of friendship, did the foreign student want? What type of friendship did Randy want?
2. Why didn't Randy decline Suun's invitation honestly?
3. How do you decline invitations without hurting people?

MALIYTA'S PARTY EXPERIENCE

Maliyta: a newly arrived foreign student in the United States

Jan: Maliyta's American friend

Maliyta is anxious to make friends at school. Her friend Jan invites her to a party where she is the only international guest. At the party she meets several people who ask her many questions and show a deep interest in her culture. Some of them tell her to "drop by" their apartments and say that they hope to see her at school. She gives her apartment

number to several people and tells them to come by her house, which is near the school.

Several weeks pass but nobody from the party comes to Maliyta's house except Jan. Maliyta wants to ask her friend why the other American students don't come to visit her but she is too hurt and proud to ask. Jan knows Maliyta feels lonely but she can't understand why. At school Maliyta is well-liked by her classmates. Jan also remembers that her friends really enjoyed meeting Maliyta at the party.

First analyze the problem and then consider the following questions:

1. Do you think the Americans at the party were insincere or sincere in their interest in Maliyta's culture?
2. Why didn't the people Maliyta met at the party "drop by" her house? What do you think happens in Maliyta's country when people invite others to "come by"?
3. What could Jan have told Maliyta to help her understand American friendships?

D. Cross-Cultural Questions Answer the following questions about your own culture and then discuss intercultural similarities and differences.

1. If dating is an institution in your country, when do people begin to date? Are the rules for dating the same for men and women?
2. How important is dating? What are other ways that men and women meet?
3. What are common dating activities? Are chaperones present on dates? What role do parents play in dating? Does the man have to meet the parents before he takes the woman out?
4. Can the couple see each other often or even live together before marriage?
5. If dating is not common in your country, how are marriage partners found or arranged?
6. What are marriage ceremonies like in your country?

Cultural Notes

1. In the United States the terms "boyfriend" and "girlfriend" are used differently depending on which sex uses the words. If a man uses the term "girlfriend" or a woman uses the term "boyfriend," romantic involvement is implied. However, a woman may say, "I'm going to meet my girlfriend today" (meaning a close friend); but most males would *not* say, "I'm going to meet my boyfriend." Instead, they would say, "I'm going to meet a friend of mine today."

2. Traditionally the man took the initiative to invite a woman on a date. This tradition is changing: it is becoming more common for a woman to ask a man out. The invitation does not always imply a romantic interest, but may be a way of "getting to know someone."
3. A changing custom that can create problems for both men and women is the question of "who pays for whom?" on dates. Traditionally men have paid the expenses on dates regardless of whether the couple's relationship is intimate or merely friendly. Currently some women feel more comfortable paying for themselves and may occasionally pay for the man. "Dutch treat" refers to a date where each individual pays for him/herself. There are no fixed rules for payment.
4. Gift-giving to friends is not marked by any fixed rules. Usually, gift-giving occurs on special occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, and holidays. Outside of these occasions gift-giving is less prescribed:

Dates: Usually gifts are not exchanged with one's date or the parents of the date.

Dinner invitation at a home: Here it may be appropriate to bring a "token" gift such as flowers, wine, or candy.

Extended visits/host families: If one is invited for an extended stay in someone's home (two days or more), a gift is appropriate. This gift could be a nice present, a restaurant invitation, or even an offer to cook dinner for the family. (The host/hostess may refuse the offer.)

5. Friends may not always seek help and advice from other friends. Occasionally professional guidance will be sought to resolve personal problems. Professional guidance offers an alternative for people who do not wish to "burden their friends" or for people who need expert advice. Family, marital, and school counselors, private therapists, psychologists, and social workers are a few examples of people who offer professional guidance.

Supplementary Vocabulary and Phrases

to confide in someone	to be engaged to someone
to trust someone	to let someone down to
to rely on someone	reciprocate common
to feel comfortable with someone	interests loneliness
to empathize with someone	fiance, fiancée affection
to sympathize with someone	
to be hurt by someone	
to be disappointed in someone	