

Topic 3

Part 1

Interpersonal Relationships



Think of various relationships in your life – in your family, with your friends, your partners, etc.

Try to explain the difference.

- 1 to know someone/ to meet someone
- 2 a friend/ a colleague
- 3 a friend/ a girlfriend
- 4 a partner/ a couple
- 5 a close friend/ a best friend

Now read/skim the text. Don't worry about new words.

Number the questions in the right order – which of them can you answer as the first one, which of them as the second one, etc.

- ___ How long have they known each other?
- ___ How often do they see each other?
- ___ Why is she his best friend?
- ___ How did they meet?
- ___ Why do they get on well?

Just Good Friends?

I'll never forget our first meeting because it was quite romantic. I had two tickets for a concert in London, but at the last moment the girl who was going to go with me couldn't come. So I went to the concert hall early to get my money back for one of the tickets. Paulina was standing in the queue. We started talking, and I found out that she was there for the same reason. My tickets were better than hers so I suggested that we sat in my seats and we gave her tickets back. After the concert we went for a drink and we've been friends ever since then.

We've known each other for two years. After that first meeting we started going out together and we fell in love. Everything went well at first but after six months **we started to argue** a lot and finally **we broke up**, but we stayed close friends, which isn't always easy.

I think **we get on very well** mainly because **we've got the same sense of humour**. **We've got a lot in common** – we like and dislike the same people and things, and **we've got the same tastes** in music. Our personalities are quite similar too. Paulina seems quite shy when you first meet her but **when you get to know her** she's really extrovert and funny. I think I call her my 'best friend' because she's a person I can talk to about anything and I know **I can trust her**. Our friendship is very important to me.

Nowadays, we only see each other about once a month because she's studying at university and I'm working in London, but **we keep in touch** by e-mail all the time. Some people are surprised when I say that my best friend is a woman, especially an ex-girlfriend. But I think it's perfectly possible for us to be 'just good friends', although maybe when one of us finds a new partner it'll be more difficult. I hope not.

Vocabulary

Look at the words in bold in the text. Match them with the meanings below.

- 1 We began to speak angrily to each other.

- 2 A lot of things about us are the same.

- 3 When you know her better.

- 4 We like the same kinds of things.

- 5 We laugh at the same things.

- 6 We have a good relationship.

- 7 I can depend on her.

- 8 We contact each other regularly.

- 9 We stopped going out together.

Making conversation

Your best friend

Think of your best friend and write down notes/answers to the questions below. Then join one of your schoolmates and interview him/her about his/her best friend.

	NOTES
Who's your best friend?	
How long have you known each other?	
How did you meet?	
Why is he/she your best friend?	
Why do you get on well?	
Do you ever argue? What about?	
How often do you see each other?	
How do you keep in touch?	

Adapted from:

Oxenden, C. Latham-Koenig, Ch. English File Intermediate. Student's Book. Oxford: OUP, 1999. p.130

Topic 3
Vocabulary – learn or revise

Taken from:
McCarthy, M. O'Dell, F. English Vocabulary in Use. Cambridge: CUP, 1994, p. 70

35 Relationships

A Types of relationships

Here is a scale showing closeness and distance in relationships in different contexts.

	CLOSER ←	→	MORE DISTANT
<i>friendship:</i>	best friend	good friend	friend acquaintance
<i>work:</i>	close colleague		colleague/workmate
<i>love/romance:</i>	lover	steady boy/girlfriend	ex-*
<i>marriage:</i>	wife/husband/partner		ex-*

* ex- can be used with or without (informally) another word: She's my ex. (girlfriend, etc.)

Mate is a colloquial word for a good friend. It can also be used in compounds to describe a person you share something with, e.g. **classmate**, **shipmate**, **workmate**, **flatmate**.

Workmate is usual in non-professional contexts; **colleague** is more common among professional people.

Fiancé/ée can still be used for someone you are engaged to, but a lot of people feel it is dated nowadays. You will sometimes see **husband-/wife-to-be** in journalistic style.

English has no universally accepted word for 'person I live with but am not married to', but **partner** is probably the commonest.

B Liking and not liking someone

<i>core verb</i>	<i>positive</i>	<i>negative</i>
like	love adore worship idolise	dislike hate can't stand loathe
respect	look up to admire	look down on despise
attract	turn s.b. on	repel turn s.b. off
be attracted to	fancy	

She doesn't just like Bob she **idolises** him! I **can't stand** him.

I really **fancy** Lisa, but her friend just **turns me off**.

Fancy and **turn off** are informal. **Repel** is very strong and rather formal.

C Phrases and idioms for relationships

Jo and I **get on well with each other**. [have a good relationship]

Adrian and Liz **don't see eye to eye**. [often argue/disagree]

I've **fallen out with** my parents again. [had arguments]

Tony and Jane have **broken up / split up**. [ended their relationship]

George is **having an affair** with his boss. [a sexual relationship, usually secret]

Children should respect **their elders**. [adults/parents, etc.]

Let's try and **make it up**. [be friends again after a row]

She's my **junior** / I'm her **senior** / I'm **senior to her**, so she does what she's told. [refers to position/length of service at work]

(See Unit 69 for more words relating to likes and dislikes.)

Taken from:
Adapted from:
Redman, S. English Vocabulary in Use (pre-intermediate+intermediate). Cambridge: CUP, 2000, p.92

44 Describing character

A Opposites

Many positive words describing character have clear opposites with a negative meaning.

<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
warm and friendly	cold and unfriendly
kind	unkind
nice, pleasant	horrible, unpleasant
generous (= happy to give/share)	mean (= never gives to others)
optimistic (= thinks positively)	pessimistic (= thinks negatively)
cheerful (= happy and smiling)	miserable (= always seems unhappy)
relaxed and easy-going	tense (= nervous; worries a lot; not calm)
strong	weak
sensitive	insensitive (= does not think about others' feelings)
honest (= always tells the truth)	dishonest

Jane is very **tense** at the moment because of her exams, but she's usually quite **relaxed** and **easy-going** about most things.

I think the weather influences me a lot: when it's sunny I feel more **cheerful** and **optimistic**; but when it's cold and raining I get very **miserable**.

He seemed a bit **unfriendly** at first, but now I've got to know him I realise he's very **warm** and **kind**.

The shop assistant told me that the dress I tried on looked better on people younger than me. I thought that was very **insensitive** of her, but at least she was being **honest**, I suppose.

B Character in action

People often talk about qualities of character that you may need in a work situation. Again, some of these words come in pairs of opposites: one positive and one negative.

<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
hard-working	lazy (= never does any work)
punctual (=always on time)	not very punctual; always late
reliable	unreliable (= you cannot trust / depend on someone like this)
clever, bright (<i>infml</i>)	stupid, thick (<i>infml</i>)
flexible	inflexible (= a very fixed way of thinking; unable to change)
ambitious	unambitious (= no desire to be successful and get a better job)

Some pairs of opposites do not have a particularly positive or negative meaning:

He is very **shy** when you first meet him because he finds it difficult to talk to people and make conversation; but when he knows people quite well he's much more **self-confident**.

People often say the British are very **reserved** (= do not show their feelings), but when you get to know them they can be very **emotional** like anyone else.

C Using nouns

Some important qualities are expressed through nouns.

One of her great qualities is that she **uses** her **initiative**. (= she can think for herself and take the necessary action; she does not need to wait for orders all the time)

That boy has got no **common sense** (= he does stupid things and doesn't think what he is doing). His sister, on the other hand, is very **sensible**. (= has lots of **common sense**)