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COMPELLING CONVERSATIONS

Questions and Quotations on Timeless Topics

AN ENGAGING ESL TEXTBOOK FOR ADVANCED STUDENTS

Written, Compiled, and Edited by
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Compelling Conversations:
Questions and Quotations on Timeless Topics
An Engaging ESL Textbook for Advanced Students
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“When the character of a man is not clear to you, look at his friends.”

Japanese proverb

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MAKING AND KEEPING FRIENDS

SHARING MEMORIES

We all want good friends. How does one make good friends? Share your ideas about friendship with your partner.

1. Did you have a best friend when you were an 8-year-old? Who?
2. What did you do together? Can you describe your best friend?
3. Who was your best friend when you were 14? What did you do?
4. Are you still friends, or pals, with the best friends of your youth?
5. Why do best friends sometimes drift apart?
6. What are some tips for keeping a friendship strong?
7. Who is your best friend now? How did you meet your best friend?
8. What activities do you do with your friend?
What makes this friendship special?
9. What do you and your best friend have in common?
10. How are you and your best friend different?
11. Have you seen the TV show “Friends”? Do you like it? Who is your favorite character?
12. Can you think of a good movie about friendship?
13. In your opinion, are there rules for a friendship?
14. What are some things that a good friend should do?
15. Are there things that a good friend should not do? Like what?
16. Do you think you are a good friend to others? In what ways?
17. Do you think friends should loan each other money? Why or why not?
18. How do you deepen friendships? Can you share five tips for making and keeping friends?
19. Which of your friends would make good roommates? Why?
20. Do you have any friends that you would not want as roommates?

VOCABULARY

Use the words or phrases you know in sentences.

- fast friends.....
- pal
- drift apart.....
- crisis
- opinion in common
- circle of friends
- betray
- roommate
- Googled
- supportive

PROVERBS

Circle the proverbs with which you agree.

- A friend in need is a friend indeed.—Latin
- Never catch a falling knife or a falling friend.—Scottish
- Do not protect yourself by a fence, but rather by your friends.—Czech
- Do not use a hatchet to remove a fly from your friend’s face.—Chinese
- Lend money to a good friend, and you will lose the money as well as your friend.—Korean
- Fate chooses your relatives; you choose your friends.—French
- Your best friend is yourself.—American
- Your best friend won’t tell you.—Mouthwash ad

REMEMBER...

- Be active**
- Be encouraging**
- Be curious**

THE CONVERSATION CONTINUES...

1. Why do fast friends often form in crisis situations?
2. How do you meet new friends? Do you have any tips for making friends?
3. How do you keep in touch with friends?
4. Do you use instant messaging with friends?
5. Have you ever Googled a friend, coworker, or date?
6. Do you think that people of the opposite sex can be friends?
7. Have you ever had a good friend of the opposite sex?
8. Do you think one can truly be friends with former romantic partners?
9. Do you know a married couple who are best friends?
10. If so, why do you think that works?
11. Have you ever felt betrayed by a friend? How did you react?
12. Do you think it is fair to judge people by their friends? Why?
13. Do you have a close circle of friends? What unites you?

14. Can one be friends with one's parents? Why or why not?
15. Can one be friends with one's children? Why or why not?
16. Can you think of classic stories about true friendship?

QUOTATIONS

Read the quotations aloud. With your partner, decide what they mean. Then, circle the ones with which you agree.

1. "Without friends no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods."
—Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.), Greek philosopher
2. "Have no friends not equal to yourself."
—Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.), Chinese philosopher
3. "A faithful friend is the medicine of life."
—Ecclesiastes 6:16
4. "The shifts of Fortune test the reliability of friends."
—Cicero (106–43 B.C.E.), Roman statesman
5. "It is more shameful to distrust our friends than to be deceived by them."
—Duc de La Rochefoucauld (1613–1680)
6. "Don't walk behind me, I may not lead. Don't walk in front of me, I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend."
—Albert Camus (1913–1960), French novelist
7. "Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born."
—Anaïs Nin (1903–1977) French-American author
8. "If a man does not make new acquaintances as he advances through life, he will soon find himself alone. A man should keep his friendships in constant repair."
—Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) English scholar
9. (A friend is) "Someone who will help you move; a good friend is someone who will help you move a body."
—Alexei Sayle (1952–), British comedian and actor
10. "Animals are such agreeable friends; they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms."
—George Eliot/Mary Ann Evans (1819–1880), English novel
11. "One's friends are that part of the human race with which one can be human."
—George Santayana (1863–1952) philosopher
12. "It is easier to forgive an enemy than to forgive a friend."
—William Blake (1757–1827), English poet
13. "Have friends. It's a second existence."
—Baltasar Gracian, (1601–1658), Spanish philosopher



ON YOUR OWN

Write a letter, by hand or on a computer, to a friend that you have not communicated with recently. Feel free to include photos, etc.

Share it with your group.