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Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

## **Friends help you live longer**

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**17 June, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Friends help you live longer**

**BNE:** A new health report\* says that having good friends in your old age helps you live longer. The report also says that having close friends may be more important than having close family ties. Researchers interviewed 1,500 Australians over the age of 70 about their social and family ties. The results suggest that people with close friendships were 22 per cent more likely to live longer. The researchers said this is because of the positive effects on the body of social activity and recreation.

The researchers analyzed data from an Australian study, which began in 1992. The 10-year-long study measured how behavioral, economic, environmental and social factors affected the health of 70-year-olds. The senior citizens were monitored annually for four years and then at three-yearly intervals. The team found that those with the strongest network of friends were less likely to die by the end of the ten-year period. This was true even when the senior citizen lost a spouse. The message is to keep in touch if you want to live longer.

\* <http://jech.bmjournals.com/>

"The effect of social networks on 10-year survival in very old Australians: the Australian Longitudinal Study of Ageing."

Lynne C Giles, Gary FV Glonek, Mary A Luszcz, Gary R Andrews  
Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health 2005. 59:574-579

## WARM-UPS

**1. FRIENDS:** In pairs / groups, talk about your friends. This may help you:

- Oldest friend
- Newest friend
- Best friend
- Funniest friend
- Pen friend
- Foreign friend
- Richest friend
- Kindest friend
- How we met.
- How long ago we met.
- Why he/she is special.
- How often we see each other.
- How he/she makes you feel.
- How long you think you'll stay friends.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Good friends / old age / family ties / recreation / social activity / health in old age / network of friends / keeping in touch*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**3. OLD AGE:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with friends. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**4. SENIOR BUDDIES:** Talk with your partner(s) about whether you think these statements are true or false for you about friendship in old age.

- a. I'll have more friends when I'm 70 than I have now.
- b. I'll see my friends every day when I'm in my seventies.
- c. When I'm old, my friends will be more important to me than they are now.
- d. I'll argue a lot less with my friends when we're old.
- e. I'd rather be surrounded by family than friends when I'm old.
- f. I'll still be making new friends even in my seventies.
- g. All of the friends I have now will still be friends when I'm 70.
- h. I'm looking forward to being 70 and talking to my friends.

**5. PLANS FOR 70:** Which of these things would you like to do with your friends when you reach your seventies? Talk about how different these things might be at 70.

- Hiking
- Bungy jumping
- Study English
- Travel around the world
- Bingo
- Ballroom dancing
- Go on dates
- Talk about the old days

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. Friends are more important than family for a longer life.        | T / F |
| b. A study was carried out on 1,500 British 70-year-olds.           | T / F |
| c. Good friends can help you live 22 years longer.                  | T / F |
| d. Social activity has positive effects on the body.                | T / F |
| e. A group of 70-year-olds was studied for a period of 10 years.    | T / F |
| f. The group was monitored every year over the 10-year test period. | T / F |
| g. The death of a spouse greatly affected the test data.            | T / F |
| h. The message is to keep in touch with friends for a longer life.  | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| a. report      | beneficial      |
| b. ties        | questioned      |
| c. interviewed | husband or wife |
| d. suggest     | checked         |
| e. positive    | yearly          |
| f. measured    | study           |
| g. monitored   | indicate        |
| h. annually    | group           |
| i. network     | relations       |
| j. spouse      | gauged          |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                   |                       |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| a. in your                        | likely to live longer |
| b. close                          | annually              |
| c. 22 per cent more               | old age               |
| d. the positive effects           | and recreation        |
| e. social activity                | friends               |
| f. researchers                    | intervals             |
| g. environmental                  | in touch              |
| h. senior citizens were monitored | on the body           |
| i. three-yearly                   | analyzed data         |
| j. keep                           | and social factors    |

## **WHILE READING / LISTENING**

**WORD ORDER:** Put the underlined words back into the correct order.

### **Friends help you live longer**

**BNE:** A new health report says that having good friends in your old age you helps longer live. The report also says that having close friends be more important may than having close family ties. Researchers interviewed 1,500 Australians over the age of 70 about ties family and their social. The results suggest that people with close friendships were 22 per cent live to more likely longer. The researchers said this is because of effects positive the on the body of social activity and recreation.

The researchers analyzed Australian data from an study, which began in 1992. The 10-year-long study measured how behavioral, economic, environmental and social health factors the affected of 70-year-olds. The senior citizens were monitored years four for annually and then at three-yearly intervals. The team found that those with the strongest network of friends were likely to less die by the end of the ten-year period. This was true even when the senior citizen lost a spouse. The message is touch in to keep if you want to live longer.

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'family'** and **'tie'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. WORD ORDER:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise.

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT OLD AGE SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about friendship and old age.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| • health report   | • data     |
| • live longer     | • factors  |
| • family ties     | • annually |
| • 1,500           | • network  |
| • 22 per cent     | • spouse   |
| • social activity | • in touch |

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Were you surprised by this headline?
- b. What do you think of this new study?
- c. Do you agree with the study that friends are more important than family to help you live longer?
- d. Would you rather be surrounded by friends or family at 70?
- e. Do you like reading about studies such as this?
- f. Are you worried about old age?
- g. Do you think life is less stressful for seniors?
- h. Do you think friendships between 70-year-olds are stronger than those between younger friends?
- i. Will life be good when you're 70?
- j. Do the old people you know have wonderful friendships?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. Are you looking forward to your seventies?
- c. Do you think you'll have lots of good friends when you're 70?
- d. What activities do you think you'll be doing in your seventies?
- e. Do you think life will be exciting at the age of 70?
- f. Will you have a party for your 70<sup>th</sup> birthday?
- g. What hobbies or interests will you continue into your seventies?
- h. Will you still be studying English when you're 70?
- i. When you're 70, do you think you'll still have ambitions?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

## SPEAKING

**FAMILY OR FRIENDS:** In pairs / groups, talk about whether you prefer to do / spend the following activities / occasions with family or friends. Do you think this will change when you are in your seventies?

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>FAMILY OR FRIENDS (NOW)</u>	<u>FAMILY OR FRIENDS (IN MY 70s)</u>
Shopping		
Birthdays		
Go to the movies		
Overseas vacations		
Go to restaurants		
Chat on the phone		
Visit a doctor for a health check		
Christmas, Ramadan, Diwali, Hanukkah or similar religious event		
E-mail		
Other _____		
Other _____		
Other _____		

Change partners and explain what you discussed with your previous partner(s).

Talk about whether you will still be doing/celebrating the activities/occasions when you're in your seventies and what difference being older will make.



## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **Friends help you live longer**

**BNE:** A new health report says that having good friends \_\_\_\_\_ helps you live longer. The report also says that having \_\_\_\_\_ may be more important than having close \_\_\_\_\_. Researchers interviewed 1,500 Australians over the age of 70 about their social and family ties. The results \_\_\_\_\_ people with close friendships were 22 per cent more likely to live longer. The researchers said this is because of the \_\_\_\_\_ on the body of social activity and recreation.

The researchers \_\_\_\_\_ from an Australian study, which began in 1992. The 10-year-long study \_\_\_\_\_ behavioral, economic, environmental and social factors \_\_\_\_\_ of 70-year-olds. The senior citizens were monitored annually for four years and then at \_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_. The team found that those with the strongest network of friends were \_\_\_\_\_ die by the end of the ten-year period. This was true even when the senior citizen \_\_\_\_\_. The message is to \_\_\_\_\_ if you want to live longer.

## **HOMEWORK**

- 1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.
  
- 2. OLD AGE:** Search the Internet and find more information on life for 70-year-olds. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.
  
- 3. MY SEVENTIES:** Write an essay on what you think your life will be like when you are in your seventies. Explain the main changes you think will happen. Tell these to your classmates in your next lesson. Did everyone write about similar changes?
  
- 4. DIARY / SCHEDULE:** Imagine you are 79 years old. Write the entry in your diary / journal for one day in your life. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

a. T      b. F      c. F      d. T      e. T      f. F      g. F      h. T

### SYNONYM MATCH:

a. report	study
b. ties	relations
c. interviewed	questioned
d. suggest	indicate
e. positive	beneficial
f. measured	gauged
g. monitored	checked
h. annually	yearly
i. network	group
j. spouse	husband or wife

### PHRASE MATCH:

a. in your	old age
b. close	friends
c. 22 per cent more	likely to live longer
d. the positive effects	on the body
e. social activity	and recreation
f. researchers	analyzed data
g. environmental	and social factors
h. senior citizens were monitored	annually
i. three-yearly	intervals
j. keep	in touch

### WORD ORDER:

#### Friends help you live longer

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