2 BAT READING COMPREHENSION
TOXIC FRIENDS

Reading Comprehension. Choose the best answer according to the text. Only ONE answer is possible.
Glossary:

rift: esquerda, desavinença	get rid: desfer-se	undermine: sabotejar
ditch: deixar plantat	boundaries: límits	threshold: llindar

For years, American psychologists have told romantic couples how to repair their **rifts**. But now therapists are being visited by troubled patients who want to know how to **get rid of** those "friends" who are ruining their lives. More than 10,000 psychologists and counsellors are offering sessions on relationships with friends in America. The phrase "toxic friends" is becoming common and has been recognized by the American Psychological Association. The publishing industry has quickly reacted with a succession of books with titles such as Toxic friends / True friends or A Smart Girl's Guide to Friendship, that are at the top of the American best-sellers list.

1. According to the text a .toxic friend. is ...
a) a friend who improves your self-esteem.
b) an invention of psychologists.
c) a friend who can make your life difficult.
d) a friend who is a drug addict.

2. .Toxic friend. is an expression thought up by...
a) he self-help industry.
b) therapists.
c) no-one in particular.
d) the American Psychological Association.

According to psychologists, these toxic friends come in several forms: the passive aggressive debilitated, who delivers cruel criticisms dressed up as friendly questions; the naysayer, who undermines all your initiatives; the plan-breaker, who **ditch**es you at the last minute; and the non-stoppers, who won't let you go home when you want to because they want you to solve their personal problems.
To deal with all these kinds of problematic friendships, Christine Northman, a relationship counsellor, has a common approach. She says that in order to maintain our emotional health in friendship there must be a level of reciprocity, so friendships need to be frequently evaluated. She says: "Only with emotional maturity can we see ourselves and our relationships more clearly. It can seem a bit cruel to break up friendships, but sometimes all we need to do is put some **boundaries** around 'toxic' friends: keep them in our lives but see them less frequently."

3. Which of these definitions best describes a naysayer?
a) A tactful friend, always trying to be polite to his/her friends.
b) A friend who will never be supportive of things we want to do
c) A violent person who denies his/her real mean intentions.
d) A busy person having no time to say anything to his/her friends.

4. Christine Northman affirms that we should...
a) visit friends more often to keep up our emotional health.
b) visit friends to keep reciprocity in friendship.
c) analyse our relationships with our friends very often.
d) not care too much about friendship.

5. When treating the toxic friend problem, counsellors advise us to...
a) see them within the boundaries of the city.
b) avoid them forever.
c) give those friends a chance.
d) avoid them from time to time.

Not treating the "toxic friends" problem can have unhealthy consequences. A recent study found that when people meet a person who is considered a toxic friend their heart rates and blood pressure increase. Most therapists agree that toxic friendships are a more difficult problem for women than for men. Males, having a much lower **threshold** for complications in friendships, will disconnect themselves from a negative friendship more easily, and faster, than women. Women friends can become "energy vampires" like the "crying sister" who keeps you on the phone for two hours with problems but no solutions and who leaves you exhausted.

6. Most therapists agree that the toxic friend problem...
a) mostly affects stressed women.
b) does not affect happy people.
c) is more frequent among weak people.
d) is easier to solve for men.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

7. A 'crying sister' could be defined as a person who...

a) ditches you on the last minute.
b) is always crying on the phone.
c) tires you telling you about her problems.
d) takes away all your energy.

Not everyone is convinced that therapy is the answer, though. For some, it is part of the problem rather than the solution. Mike Albo, a self-help American writer, thinks that the psychological literature and the self-help industry have taught these toxic friends a new kind of language. With it, they are trying to convince us that we rather than they might be having some sort of psychological problem. "One thing that worries me about friendship counselling is that **underminers** predominate in the self-help society," Albo says. By accepting the type of discourse that is common among therapists we might be internalising a problem we didn't have in the first place.

Mike Albo has also another warning for those confronting toxic friends: "Listen to their side of it because perhaps it's you who is toxic."

The Sunday Telegraph. Adapted

8. Mike Albo thinks that…

a) therapy can solve all your problems with undesirable toxic friends.
b) self-help books are the only solution for our psychological problems.
c) the toxic friends' problem cannot always be solved by therapy.
d) toxic friends not therapists always tell you the truth.

The text selects 6 different types of people who are toxic. Write these types down:

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