Practice for the test

Questions 1-6
Choose the correct letter, a, b, c or d.

1. How many friends do the majority of people probably have?
a 30 real friends or fewer **b** a minimum of 30 real friends
c 150 Internet friends **d** 400 Internet friends over the course of their lives

2. It is difficult
a to believe the numbers about friendship. **b** to keep your friends happy.
c to trust what you read on social networking sites. **d** to give a definition of friendship.

3. Friendship means
a different things to different people. b dying for your friends if you need to.
c helping each other until it is no longer necessary. d accepting people with different views.

4. Sometimes people worry because
a they think that they have too many friends. b they spend too much time with friends.
c they think they are too old to make friends. d there are no guidelines about friendship.

5. Most of us
a are dissatisfied with our friends. b build friendships late in life.
c are frightened to talk to strangers. d need to be with others.

6. What does 'Strangers are friends we have not met yet' mean?
a We have not met strangers before. b Strangers are also our friends.
c We should not talk to strangers. d Strangers may become our friends.

It is said that most people have no more than 30 friends at any given time, and 400 over the whole of their lives. However, on social networking sites, most users have about 150 friends. If these numbers are correct, then friendship means different things in different situations.

One of the reasons people have more online friends than real friends at any particular point in time is that online friendships do not require much time and energy: it is easy to make Internet friends and keep them forever. Another possibility is that it is difficult to say 'no' when somebody asks us to be their friend online, even if we feel we don't really know them. The fact that they ask us suggests that they do consider us a friend, which is a nice feeling. Alternatively, they may be 'collectors' of online friends and simply want to use us to get a higher number of friends and appear to be popular.

Online friendships are quite easy, but in the real world, things are much more difficult. There are no rules about friendship. There are no guidelines about how to make friends, how to keep friendships going, and how to finish friendships if we want to move on. People also have very different opinions about friendship: some people would die for their friends and value them more than family. Others feel that friends are temporary, only there to help each other until they are no longer needed. If people with such different views become friends, this can lead to problems.

Because of these different definitions of friendship, it is easy to be unhappy about our friends. We may want our relationship with them to be deeper or closer, or we may want to have more friends in our lives. Sometimes we simply do not have the time to develop our friendships, or we fear we have left it too late in life to start. If we move to another country or city, we have to find ways to make new friends again.

This dissatisfaction shows us how important friendships are for most of us. We should not think that it could be too late to build new friendships. We also need to understand that the need to be around others is shared by many people. Therefore, we should not be too frightened to start talking to people who may become our friends in the future: it is likely that they too would like to get closer to us. Remember what people say: strangers are friends we have not met yet.

LIVEWORKSHEETS