Reading

3 Read the text. Choose the correct answer, A, B, C or D.

1 The article says that people are shocked when they

A find out that their photos are online.
B see people they don't know in photos.
C see what they looked like the night before.
D look in the mirror before they go out.

2 The writer says that people look best

A after they have eaten.
B before they go out.
C late in the evening.
D when they get home.

3 The main problem with most photos taken while out is that people

A take them from above.
B don't look very relaxed in them.
C don't realise their friends are about to take them.
D haven't learned how to use their phones as cameras.

4 The writer claims that people

A often think they are less attractive than their friends.
B don't usually like photos of their friends.
C are often surprised by photos of their friends.
D often imagine that they look better than they really do.

5 The article tells us

A why we don't like photos of ourselves.
B how to take better photos of our friends.
C who to compare ourselves to so that we feel better.
D how to prepare ourselves for going out.

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LOOKING GOOD?

As you prepare to go out, you check yourself in the mirror. Everything looks good. Your hair style is great, your complexion is tanned and your smile could make George Clooney jealous. Later in the evening, when friends take photos, you are happy to pose for the camera. The next day, however, when the photos are uploaded to the Internet, you are shocked. You don't recognise that person. It can't be you! Your facial features are all wrong, your skin too pale and your hair is horrific. So just why do we look different in photos to how we imagine ourselves to be?

There isn't just one reason. Firstly, people often look better early in the evening than later on. You have probably just come out of the shower, brushed your hair and put on your elegant clothes. If there was something wrong, you would do something about it and then admire yourself again. When the photos are taken, you may be tired or perhaps full after a good meal. Your hair may not look quite so good as it did. Often, when people get home and look in the mirror, they think: "I look terrible". It's just that, being home and alone, it doesn't matter.

Another reason is to do with how we physically see ourselves. When we look into a mirror, we see our face from above. This is a more flattering angle than looking up at our face from below. When we stand in front of the mirror, we also turn slightly and smile, trying to make ourselves look as good as we possibly can. In contrast, our friends probably don't take as much care when they whip out their smartphones. Photos may be taken when we aren't aware of it, often not from our best side. You could keep your eyes open all evening to see when someone is preparing to take a photo. You would then have time to set yourself up to look stunning. But, although you might be happier with the resulting photos, you won't enjoy such a relaxing evening.

Finally, there is the comparison with the people around you. Why do they all look so good in photos compared to you? Even those who aren't as attractive or slim as you? The reason is that you know exactly how they looked all evening because you could see them. There are no surprises. However, you are comparing yourself not to how you really looked but to an image of yourself that was in your head. An image in which your complexion is clearer, your eyes bigger and even your clothes are more stylish.

So can we do anything about it? On the one hand, it is probably true that we will never be pleased with photos of ourselves, for all the reasons discussed above. There's a good reason why many celebrities go out of their way to avoid having unplanned photos of them taken. On the other hand, it is worth remembering that everyone else feels exactly the same as you do. So, when they look at photos of you, they will be just as envious of you as you are of them. This should be reassuring, but it might also be best to give your friends' social networking pages a miss when you suspect they may contain photos of you!

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