

8 Read the passage and complete the test task.

Questions 1–6

Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer in the reading passage? Write

YES if the statement agrees with the views of the writer

NO if the statement contradicts the views of the writer

NOT GIVEN if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

- 1 There were too few participants for effective research.
- 2 The study reflected what happens in the real world.
- 3 We have all experienced situations we can share with friends.
- 4 People tend to become jealous when they hear amazing stories.
- 5 Those who do interesting activities fail to connect with friends.
- 6 You should organise your aims in their order of importance.

SCIENCE

SHOULD YOU THROW OUT YOUR BUCKET LIST?

There are two main reasons why you might not agree with Cooney, Gilbert and Wilson's research conclusions, and these do not include the fact that sixty-eight people is not a very high number to include in a study. Firstly, the video of a street magician is not the same as an incredible life experience. The research uses cost-benefit analysis, i.e. the benefit of watching the video minus the cost of not being included socially. But it is unlikely that a street performer, even an amazing one, produces results similar to the feeling of an extraordinary experience. So, when the cost of not being included is taken away from the benefit of watching the video, of course the result will be more negative.

Secondly, one wonders why the researchers assume that people who do extraordinary things only spend time with boring people who have no bucket list themselves? In reality, if you explore the Costa Rican rainforest, maybe your friend goes sailing, gets an amazing professional qualification, or watches his child graduate from college. All of these can be considered great topics of conversation. Of course people will always have lots of everyday experiences to talk about too. After all, when you return from an inspiring trip, you still have to do the laundry and call your parents.

Another possible conclusion could be that if you want to do fantastic things and not be lonely, you should choose friends who have similar ambitions. You can also be careful about the conversation topics you choose.

So before you throw your bucket list out the window, it is worth considering how useful this research is to your life goals and social situation. It certainly cannot hurt to reflect on the warning of the research. If doing great things makes you feel distant from your friends then, yes, you should probably think about how meaningful your goals are. However, if old friends cannot keep up with you or relate to your life goals, then you need to decide how much that should stop you from following your dreams.