

## Unit 7 - Skills Practice



**The objectives for this unit are:**

- reading: read a text about the perfect age to be.
- writing: write a letter of agreement.

## Unit 7 - Skills Practice - Reading

The following words and phrases appear in the text you are going to read in this section:

**smug** looking or feeling too pleased about something you have done or achieved  
What are you looking so smug about?

**forge** put a lot of effort into making something successful or strong so that it will last  
Strategic alliances are being forged with major European companies.

**pass out** lose consciousness  
He passed out after the car crash.

**wholeheartedly** completely and enthusiastically  
I agree with you wholeheartedly.

**hot** sexually attractive  
Angelina Jolie is so hot!

**subpar** below an average level  
I'm afraid these results are subpar.

**go out on a limb** risk doing something that other people are not prepared to do  
I wouldn't go out on a limb like this if I didn't have the data to justify it.

**flawed** having a fundamental weakness or imperfection  
We can't accept this delivery - the goods are flawed.

**flock** gather together in large numbers  
Thousands of people flocked to the beach this weekend.

**fair-weather friend** a person whose friendship cannot be relied on in times of difficulty  
Sarah turned out to be a fair-weather friend.

# Is 29 the perfect age?



In news designed to make a small, specific segment of the population feel very smug, researchers have discovered that 29-year-olds are more popular than any other age group. At 29, humans will have an average of 80 friends – 30% more than the average 64 friends across other ages. Your popularity has peaked because you're still in touch with your old school friends, but you've been in the workplace long enough to have forged strong bonds with your colleagues, or at least to have gone drinking outside of the office and passed out on the pavement.

I turned 29 five months ago, and although anything could happen in the next 28 weeks, I wholeheartedly agree with the researchers. I've never counted my friends – I don't trust the number I have on Facebook because some of them are relations, who have been forced to be my mates, and one of them is a guy who helped me move house in 2007 – but I can confirm that as I approach 30, my friendships are of the highest quality.

This isn't because I've become wiser, hotter, or otherwise more attractive to new acquaintances, but because I've recognized my limitations. At 21, my friendships were forged over spilled sticky drinks and speakers playing subpar house music. At 29, you're just about self-aware enough to realise that if a friendship is best nurtured in an environment where fragmented heart 'Best Friends Forever' necklace you just bought was a total waste of £14.99.

Your late teens and early twenties are a terrible time to make friends. They're a terrible time to do anything. You're still working out who you are and what you're into, and usually the only way to discover anything interesting is to make a series of temporarily disastrous mistakes. You lack any kind of perspective, you're useless to workplaces everywhere, because your blind enthusiasm is terrifying and no one will show you how to send a fax or explain to you why fax machine use has persisted over a decade into this millennium.

As a result, you're broke and anxious, and your living arrangements probably leave much to be desired. I can't be the only one who has unthinkingly invited friends to come

over for dinner, only to remember as they arrive that the flat has no communal eating space, and they would have to consume their meals while sitting on my bed, like the grandpas and grandmas of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Although I am the only person I know of who lived in a building where the car park doubled as a studio for a pirate radio station.

I believed my teens and twenties were supposed to be my best years, and wasted a lot of energy panicking and running around to ensure that even though I was having a miserable time, it looked fun in the photos. I wish I'd known that ageing would bring me nothing but joy and perspective, and that my twenties wouldn't get really good until the very end of the decade. At 26, it seemed unthinkable that I would ever land a job I really loved, or a relationship that made me truly happy. Let alone live in a flat that didn't frighten me, or get to a point financially where I could use my debit card without holding my breath and making the sign of the cross. It does get better. Unfortunately, there's no way you can speed up the worst parts of your twenties, but working through it is what makes you strong, secure, and happy at the end of the decade.

Although I'm not sure that I'm more popular than ever before, at 29 I'm confident that I'm a good friend. I might not be more interesting than before, but I'm more interested. I know that listening to other people and learning about the world around me has more value than trying to be the loudest, most outrageous girl in the room. I value kindness over coolness, and I'd rather go out on a limb to help someone than hold back and hope I don't seem too keen. Most importantly, I've and they come and go. It's better to have five emotionally sound pals than 50 idiots in your phone book. Ironically, this sense of peace and security sends new friends flocking. Everyone wants to be your mate when you stop pursuing fair-weather pals. It isn't until you're 29 that you realise your mum was right all along: you'll never be popular until you genuinely stop caring about being popular.

From *The Guardian*



**Is 29 the perfect age?: Read the text and answer the questions I**

Read the text and choose the correct answers.

The text is about...

- A. friendships at different ages.
- B. having terrible friends.
- C. your mother telling you what to do.
- D. recognizing your limitations.

Most 29-year-olds have...

- A. sixty-four friends.
- B. friends who are the same age.
- C. lost touch with school friends.
- D. 30% more friends than average.

Your early twenties is a terrible time to...

- A. make mistakes.
- B. buy jewellery.
- C. use a fax machine.
- D. do anything.

The author used to live...

- A. in a car park.
- B. above a radio station.
- C. with her grandparents.
- D. in a commune.

The author now has...

- A. worse finances.
- B. a better flat.
- C. fewer friends.
- D. a job she doesn't like.

The author believes that she is now...

- A. wisher.
- B. more willing to help people.
- C. more interesting.
- D. more attractive.

## Is 29 the perfect age?: Read the text and answer the questions II

Read the text again and choose the correct endings to complete the sentences.

1	29-year-olds	have the most friends.
<input type="text"/>		
2	21-year-olds	shouldn't worry about being popular.
<input type="text"/>		
3	Adults	knows best.
<input type="text"/>		
4	The author	is now more interested in people.
<input type="text"/>		
5	Your mother	have more perspective.
<input type="text"/>		
6	You	base their friendships on having fun.
<input type="text"/>		

## Unit 7 - Skills Practice - Writing

The following words and phrases appear in this section:

**via** by means of a particular person, system, etc.

We've decided to start selling our products **via** the web.

**subject to** depending on the stated thing happening

The report is ready to be published, **subject to** your approval.

**bring about** cause something to happen

What **brought about** the change in his offer?

**exclusivity** the quality of being used by only one particular person or group

Black Tree Publications will have **exclusivity** in this deal.

**revenue** the money that an organization receives from its business

The Company's annual **revenues** rose by 30%.

**mutually** felt or done equally by two or more people

Can we find a **mutually** convenient time to meet?



## Letters of agreement: Read the text and answer the questions

Read the letter and decide if these statements are true or false.

Ms Johanna Holloway  
Henson Sporting Products  
40 Charter Drive  
Cardiff, CF1 7FT

February 11<sup>th</sup>

Dear Joanna,

Further to our conversations last week relating to your company selling its products online via our website, I am writing to confirm that we are able to offer you exclusivity in terms of your product type, subject to the following terms and conditions.

As you know, last week's discussions centred on the commission rate we would charge you on sales from our website. The figure of 7.5% was mentioned. However, after looking at our costs in more depth we feel this would not bring about the returns we are looking for.

Bearing this in mind, we would like to offer you the exclusive right to trade sporting goods via our website in return for a 10% commission on all sales. Although this is more than the initial amount proposed, we feel that the exclusivity deal makes this a viable opportunity for both sides to maximize revenue.

I sincerely hope this new offer is mutually agreeable and I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

*Wayne Peel*

1. Wayne Peel and Johanna Holloway have been in contact before.
2. Johanna's company will be one of many other companies selling sporting goods on the website.
3. Wayne's company wants to change the conditions previously discussed.
4. Wayne thinks that both companies can make money with this deal.
5. Wayne will proceed immediately with the agreement.

### Letters of agreement: Complete the phrases

Read the letter again and complete the sentences with the correct words. You must write only one word in each space.

- 1      to our conversations on the telephone.
- 2     I am  to confirm our offer of 10% commission on all sales.
- 3     This offer is  to the terms and conditions we discussed.
- 4     In principle, we are in agreement. , we feel that more discussions need to take place concerning the shared costs of this project.
- 5     I sincerely hope the offer is mutually  so that both our companies can take advantage of this opportunity.
- 6     I look forward to  your response in the near future.

### Letters of agreement: Practice

Read the task and prepare your answer.

#### Task:

A company that works in a similar field has contacted you about the possibility of combining your individual websites into one. They want to have a joint website because customers are often looking for both their products and yours. Last week you met to discuss the proposal. Read your notes on the situation and write a letter of agreement.

#### Notes:

- Meeting held on 27th of February.
- Agreement made to cooperate on website.
- Suggestions discussed: Create one new website including products from both companies.
- Post meeting research: New website will be too expensive to build, so propose having clear links on each other's websites instead.
- To do: Write to contact John Norton and explain that the new website is too costly. Make the suggestion about links and try to persuade him this is a good alternative - cheap, easy, and traffic to our existing site is good.