

B2-C1 English Worksheet

Introverts and Social Pressure: Saying No and Setting Boundaries

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Article

Being outgoing is often treated as a social advantage, while quieter people can face assumptions about their confidence or friendliness. In a Washington Post advice column published on 15 October 2026, a Filipina woman in her thirties described spending years trying to fit in with sociable friends. She used to push herself to attend large gatherings, despite finding them distressing. Now she prefers one-to-one meetings, but friends who knew her earlier question whether she is really introverted. Their reaction raises a familiar problem: when somebody changes how they socialise, others may be reluctant to accept the difference.

Introversion does not automatically mean shyness or dislike of people. Yet an invitation can be difficult to turn down when friends expect everyone to keep up with busy social calendars. People may worry that saying no will come across as rude, so they fail to open up about their preferences. Over time, this pressure can take a toll on both wellbeing and friendships. The columnist advised her not to try to prove she was an introvert, but to be explicit about what felt manageable. Offering an alternative, such as coffee with one friend instead of a noisy party, can make a refusal easier to understand.

The same tension appears in family obligations and workplaces where sociability is sometimes misinterpreted as commitment. Clear communication can help people set boundaries without abandoning important relationships. Some need quiet time to recharge their batteries; others enjoy frequent group activities. Rather than treating either style as a problem, considerate friends can meet halfway and make room for different ways of connecting. Such flexibility matters more than forcing everyone into the same social routine. A request for solitude is not necessarily rejection; it may be what makes meaningful contact possible.

True/False

Decide if each statement is True (T) or False (F).

No.	Statement	T / F
1	The woman formerly attended social events even when she found them distressing.	
2	Her friends have all welcomed her move towards quieter forms of socialising.	
3	The columnist favours explaining practical preferences over defending a label.	
4	Some people hesitate to refuse invitations because they fear seeming rude.	
5	The article treats introversion and shyness as exactly the same thing.	
6	The writer argues that lasting friendships require accepting every invitation.	
7	Compromise can help people maintain contact despite different social needs.	
8	The conclusion presents a need for solitude as proof of rejecting a friendship.	

Phrase Match

Match each phrase (1-10) to the correct definition (A-J).

Phrases (1-10)	Definitions (A-J)
1. fit in	A. give people a particular impression
2. keep up with	B. create time or space for something
3. turn down	C. feel accepted as part of a group
4. open up	D. recover energy after demanding experiences
5. come across as	E. refuse an invitation or offer
6. set boundaries	F. make compromises on both sides
7. take a toll	G. match the speed or level of someone else
8. recharge their batteries	H. talk more honestly about personal feelings or needs
9. meet halfway	I. gradually cause harm or strain
10. make room for	J. establish clear personal limits

Synonym Match

Match each word (1-10) to a synonym (A-J).

Words (1-10)	Synonyms (A-J)
1. outgoing	A. unwilling
2. assumptions	B. option
3. reluctant	C. sociable
4. preferences	D. thoughtful
5. explicit	E. duties
6. alternative	F. clear
7. obligations	G. adaptability
8. misinterpreted	H. inclinations
9. considerate	I. misunderstood
10. flexibility	J. presumptions

Use the New Language

Choose 5 words or phrases and write your own sentences.

No.	Your sentence
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Discussion Questions

Student A	Student B
1. After a demanding week, how do you prefer to recharge your batteries?	1. Does society reward outgoing behaviour at the expense of quieter personalities?
2. When have you gone along with a social plan despite feeling reluctant?	2. Why is introversion so often confused with shyness or a lack of confidence?
3. Do you welcome last-minute invitations, or do you like advance notice?	3. When does repeatedly declining plans become unfair to a friendship?
4. Have your friends' social preferences changed as you have grown older?	4. Are outgoing employees more likely to be viewed as leadership material?
5. Does public speaking make you nervous, even if you know the topic well?	5. Should networking and team-building outside working hours be voluntary?
6. How do you respond when someone puts pressure on you to attend an event?	6. How can cultural expectations influence family and community obligations?
7. Which family occasions feel enjoyable, and which feel like obligations?	7. Has constant connectivity created unreasonable expectations of availability?
8. Is it easier to turn down invitations by message or in person?	8. How can organisers accommodate different social preferences without labelling people?

Answer Key

True/False	1=T, 2=F, 3=T, 4=T, 5=F, 6=F, 7=T, 8=F
Phrase Match	1=C, 2=G, 3=E, 4=H, 5=A, 6=J, 7=I, 8=D, 9=F, 10=B
Synonym Match	1=C, 2=J, 3=A, 4=H, 5=F, 6=B, 7=E, 8=I, 9=D, 10=G

Example Sentences With the Phrases

No.	Example sentence
1	New employees sometimes try too hard to fit in with the team.
2	I cannot keep up with friends who go out every night.
3	She chose to turn down the party invitation without making excuses.
4	It is easier to open up when you feel listened to.
5	A quiet response can come across as unfriendly even when it is not.
6	You can set boundaries while still being considerate towards others.
7	An exhausting social calendar can take a toll on your wellbeing.
8	Many people need a quiet weekend to recharge their batteries.
9	The two friends decided to meet halfway and go out less often.
10	A good host can make room for guests with different preferences.