

www.**Breaking News English**.com

Ready-to-use ESL/EFL Lessons by Sean Banville

"1,000 IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS"

The Breaking News English.com Resource Book

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/book.html>

Rent-a-friend agencies growing in Japan

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0909/090922-rent-a-friend.html>

Contents

The Article	2
Warm ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Student Survey	8
Discussion	9
Language Work	10
Writing	11
Homework	12
Answers	13

THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090922-rent-a-friend.html>

There are many new ways of making friends in today's world. The best known of these is meeting new pals online. The Japanese are doing things a little differently. There is a growth in rent-a-friend agencies. The only catch is that the friends you meet will not become your true friends. You simply rent one when you need one for a specific occasion. The friends for rent are professional fakers. They will pretend to be anyone you want them to be. They serve a very useful purpose in Japan, where it's very important to keep up social appearances. If you do not have a best man for your wedding or you need a rich aunt to seal a business deal, rent-a-friend agencies will provide you with the perfect impersonator.

Britain's Guardian newspaper reports on Ryuichi Ichinokawa, the owner of the "I want to cheer you up" agency. He has been the best man at weddings, making jokes about happy couples he did not know, and has acted as the uncle of students at school sports days. The Guardian says: "He dutifully cheered them on, recorded their efforts on his handheld video camera and joined in the adult-and-child races." Ichinokawa charges just over \$150 as a rental charge, but says there are extra fees for singing at a karaoke party or making a speech at a wedding. Ryuichi says he plans everything in detail so he doesn't embarrass his client. He boasts: "In three and a half years I've never once been caught out."

WARM-UPS

1. FRIENDS: Walk around the class and talk to other students about friends. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

many ways / making friends / doing things differently / pretending / rich aunts / deals / cheer up / best man / happy couples / rental charges / karaoke / detailed plans

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. RENT-A-????: What would you rent, if you could? Complete this table. Talk about what you wrote with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you heard.

Rent a ...	Reason for renting	What you would do
friend		
world leader		
movie star		
pet		
country		
company		

4. SOCIAL APPEARANCES: Students A **strongly** believe it is important to keep up social appearances; Students B **strongly** believe people worry too much about their public image. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. MANY FRIENDS: Talk about these friends with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you heard.

- childhood friends
- online friends
- boyfriends / girlfriends
- long-lost friends
- best friends
- "just good" friends
- former friends
- school friends

6. RENT: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'rent'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090922-rent-a-friend.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Most Japanese people rent their friends. | T / F |
| b. Friends from rent-a-friend agencies usually become lifelong friends. | T / F |
| c. The friends you rent will pretend to be anyone you ask them to be. | T / F |
| d. People rent friends in Japan to maintain their public image. | T / F |
| e. The owner of a friend-rental agency often knows the bride at weddings. | T / F |
| f. The owner cheered for children he never knew at a school sports day. | T / F |
| g. You have to pay extra for your rented friend to sing or make a speech. | T / F |
| h. The agency owner said he was found out as a fake just three times. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. ways | a. costs |
| 2. pals | b. ideal |
| 3. catch | c. brides and grooms |
| 4. purpose | d. disadvantage |
| 5. perfect | e. shame |
| 6. happy couples | f. methods |
| 7. fees | g. function |
| 8. detail | h. brags |
| 9. embarrass | i. friends |
| 10. boasts | j. accuracy |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. ways of making | a. useful purpose |
| 2. doing things a | b. at weddings |
| 3. need one for a | c. in detail |
| 4. They serve a very | d. friends |
| 5. keep up social | e. you up |
| 6. I want to cheer | f. for singing |
| 7. the best man | g. little differently |
| 8. there are extra fees | h. been caught out |
| 9. he plans everything | i. specific occasion |
| 10. I've never once | j. appearances |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090922-rent-a-friend.html>

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

There are many new ways of _____ friends in today's world. The best known of these is meeting new pals _____. The Japanese are doing things a little differently. There is a _____ in rent-a-friend agencies. The only catch is that the friends you meet will not become your true friends. You simply rent one when you need one for a specific _____. The friends for rent are professional fakers. They will _____ to be anyone you want them to be. They serve a very useful purpose in Japan, where it's very important to keep up _____ appearances. If you do not have a best man for your wedding or you need a rich aunt to seal a business _____, rent-a-friend agencies will provide you with the _____ impersonator.

deal
online
social
growth
making
pretend
perfect
occasion

Britain's Guardian newspaper _____ on Ryuichi Ichinokawa, the owner of the "I want to _____ you up" agency. He has been the best man at weddings, making jokes about happy couples he did not know, and has _____ as the uncle of students at school sports days. The Guardian says: "He dutifully cheered them on, recorded their _____ on his handheld video camera and joined in the adult-and-child races." Ichinokawa _____ just over \$150 as a rental charge, but says there are extra fees for singing at a karaoke party or _____ a speech at a wedding. Ryuichi says he plans everything in _____ so he doesn't embarrass his client. He boasts: "In three and a half years I've never once been _____ out."

making
acted
caught
charges
reports
cheer
detail
efforts

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090922-rent-a-friend.html>

There are _____ making friends in today's world. The best known of these is meeting new pals online. The Japanese _____ differently. There is a growth in rent-a-friend agencies. The only catch is that the friends _____ become your true friends. You simply rent one when you need one for a specific occasion. The friends for rent are professional fakers. They will pretend to _____ them to be. They serve a very useful purpose in Japan, where it's very important to keep _____. If you do not have a best man for your wedding or you need a rich aunt to seal a business deal, rent-a-friend agencies will provide _____ impersonator.

Britain's Guardian newspaper reports on Ryuichi Ichinokawa, the owner of the "I want _____" agency. He has been the best man at weddings, making jokes about happy couples he did not know, and has _____ students at school sports days. The Guardian says: "He dutifully cheered them on, _____ on his handheld video camera and joined in the adult-and-child races." Ichinokawa charges just over \$150 as a rental charge, but says there _____ singing at a karaoke party or making a speech at a wedding. Ryuichi says he plans everything _____ doesn't embarrass his client. He boasts: "In three and a half years I've never _____."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090922-rent-a-friend.html>

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'rent' and 'friend'.

rent	friend
-------------	---------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ways• differently• true• useful• social• perfect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• owner• best• video• fees• detail• caught
---	---

STUDENT FRIENDS SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090922-rent-a-friend.html>

Write five GOOD questions about friends in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

FRIENDS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'friend'?
- c) Do you have enough friends or would you like more?
- d) How good are your friends?
- e) What do you think of the rent-a-friend idea?
- f) Do you think the Japanese do things differently?
- g) Can you think of a time when you needed a fake friend?
- h) What pretend friend would you like this week?
- i) Would find-a-friend agencies work in your country?
- j) Would you like to work as a rental friend?

Rent-a-friend agencies growing in Japan – 22nd September, 2009
More free lessons at www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com

FRIENDS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think rent-a-friend agencies will start in other countries?
- c) Do you think you would notice if a major wedding guest was a fake?
- d) Do you think Ryuichi Ichinokawa enjoys his job?
- e) Do you think kids would be angry at impersonators pretending to be their uncle at school sports days?
- f) Do you think \$150 is a reasonable charge to rent a friend?
- g) Is there anything illegal about this rent-a-friend idea?
- h) Have you ever been caught out pretending to be something you weren't?
- i) When was the last time you boasted to a friend?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Ryuichi Ichinokawa?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0909/090922-rent-a-friend.html>

There are many new ways of making friends in today's world. The best (1) ____ of these is meeting new pals online. The Japanese are doing things a little (2) _____. There is a growth in rent-a-friend agencies. The only (3) ____ is that the friends you meet will not become your true friends. You simply rent one when you need one for a specific occasion. The friends for rent are professional (4) _____. They will pretend to be anyone you want them to be. They serve a very useful purpose in Japan, where it's very important to keep (5) ____ social appearances. If you do not have a best man for your wedding or you need a rich aunt to seal a business deal, rent-a-friend agencies will provide you (6) ____ the perfect impersonator.

Britain's Guardian newspaper reports on Ryuichi Ichinokawa, the owner of the "I want to cheer you (7) ____" agency. He has been the best man at weddings, making jokes about happy couples he did not know, and has (8) ____ as the uncle of students at school sports days. The Guardian says: "He dutifully cheered them on, recorded their (9) ____ on his handheld video camera and joined in the adult-and-child races." Ichinokawa charges just over \$150 as a rental charge, but says there are extra (10) ____ for singing at a karaoke party or making a speech at a wedding. Ryuichi says he plans everything (11) ____ detail so he doesn't embarrass his client. He (12) ____: "In three and a half years I've never once been caught out."

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) knows | (b) knowing | (c) known | (d) knew |
| 2. | (a) differences | (b) differently | (c) difference | (d) different |
| 3. | (a) catch | (b) throw | (c) drop | (d) aim |
| 4. | (a) makers | (b) bakers | (c) takers | (d) fakers |
| 5. | (a) on | (b) over | (c) up | (d) down |
| 6. | (a) by | (b) of | (c) with | (d) to |
| 7. | (a) in | (b) up | (c) down | (d) out |
| 8. | (a) acted | (b) reacted | (c) enacted | (d) contacted |
| 9. | (a) effects | (b) efforts | (c) affects | (d) effigies |
| 10. | (a) fees | (b) bees | (c) tees | (d) pees |
| 11. | (a) on | (b) out | (c) up | (d) in |
| 12. | (a) beasts | (b) bloats | (c) bests | (d) boasts |

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about rent-a-friend agencies. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. FRIENDS: Make a poster about your friends, past and present. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. RENTED: Write a magazine article about someone who rented a friend. What was the occasion? Include imaginary interviews with the person who rented the friend and the rented friend.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to Ryuichi Ichinokawa. Ask him three questions about his rent-a-friend agency. Give him three suggestions on what other things he could rent people for. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. F c. T d. T e. F f. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. ways | a. methods |
| 2. pals | b. friends |
| 3. catch | c. disadvantage |
| 4. purpose | d. function |
| 5. perfect | e. ideal |
| 6. happy couples | f. brides and grooms |
| 7. fees | g. costs |
| 8. detail | h. accuracy |
| 9. embarrass | i. shame |
| 10. boasts | j. brags |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. ways of making | a. friends |
| 2. doing things a | b. little differently |
| 3. need one for a | c. specific occasion |
| 4. They serve a very | d. useful purpose |
| 5. keep up social | e. appearances |
| 6. I want to cheer | f. you up |
| 7. the best man | g. at weddings |
| 8. there are extra fees | h. for singing |
| 9. he plans everything | i. in detail |
| 10. I've never once | j. been caught out |

GAP FILL:

Rent-a-friend agencies growing in Japan

There are many new ways of **making** friends in today's world. The best known of these is meeting new pals **online**. The Japanese are doing things a little differently. There is a **growth** in rent-a-friend agencies. The only catch is that the friends you meet will not become your true friends. You simply rent one when you need one for a specific **occasion**. The friends for rent are professional fakers. They will **pretend** to be anyone you want them to be. They serve a very useful purpose in Japan, where it's very important to keep up **social** appearances. If you do not have a best man for your wedding or you need a rich aunt to seal a business **deal**, rent-a-friend agencies will provide you with the **perfect** impersonator.

Britain's Guardian newspaper **reports** on Ryuichi Ichinokawa, the owner of the "I want to **cheer** you up" agency. He has been the best man at weddings, making jokes about happy couples he did not know, and has **acted** as the uncle of students at school sports days. The Guardian says: "He dutifully cheered them on, recorded their **efforts** on his handheld video camera and joined in the adult-and-child races." Ichinokawa **charges** just over \$150 as a rental charge, but says there are extra fees for singing at a karaoke party or **making** a speech at a wedding. Ryuichi says he plans everything in **detail** so he doesn't embarrass his client. He boasts: "In three and a half years I've never once been **caught** out."

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - c 2 - b 3 - a 4 - d 5 - c 6 - c 7 - b 8 - a 9 - b 10 - a 11 - d 12 - d

Rent-a-friend agencies growing in Japan – 22nd September, 2009

More free lessons at www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com - Copyright Sean Banville 2009