

# Exam practice 4

## Relationships at a distance

**A** It is something which affects many people throughout their lives. Perhaps a boyfriend's or girlfriend's parents decide to move house, or a couple choose to study at different universities at opposite ends of the country. It is often assumed that long-distance relationships are destined to fail. However, some recent research has suggested that people in long-distance relationships actually have stronger bonds than couples who are geographically closer.

**B** Researchers from the University of Hong Kong and Cornell University interviewed couples in both normal and long-distance relationships. They measured how strongly the couples felt about each other, and the amount of communication in their relationships. Daily interactions using various means of communication – both on- and offline – were recorded, and the participants were asked to make notes about how much they felt they were sharing with their partners. The researchers found that long-distance couples felt closer to each other than other couples, despite the fact that they were geographically further apart. The main reasons for this seemed to be that people in a long-distance relationship told each other more about themselves.

**C** The positive benefits of long-distance relationships have often been overlooked in previous research. The main reason for this is that research into this type of relationship has usually been on 'problem' areas, such as jealousy and stress. However, there is growing evidence that these problems might not be as important as was previously thought. In fact, it seems that couples in long-distance relationships try harder to communicate affection, and these attempts generally work.

**D** This is probably a good thing. Modern mobility means that long-distance relationships are more common now than they were in the past. Recent statistics show that three million married couples in the USA live apart, and that 25–50% of American university students are currently in long-distance relationships. However, modern life offers solutions too. In the past, a long-distance relationship meant sending letters and making phone calls. Today, greater access to mobile technology and internet-based communication means that long-distance couples can see and hear from each other more regularly. In fact, research has shown that modern technology brings people in a long-distance relationship closer, even when the technology creates challenges. The more a couple make efforts to deal with the constraints of communication, the stronger their relationship becomes. So the next time a text message fails to arrive, think of it as a way of building on your relationships with your loved ones.

## Reading

### 1 Choose the correct answers.

- 1 University researchers asked couples to ...
  - A interact using different technologies.
  - B write about an aspect of their relationship.
  - C interview each other about their feelings.
- 2 Previous research into long-distance relationships ...
  - A often focused on negative emotions.
  - B had many problems.
  - C was seen as unimportant.
- 3 Modern technology has caused ...
  - A only problems for people in long-distance relationships.
  - B both problems and solutions for people in long-distance relationships.
  - C many long-distance relationships to fail.

### 2 Write a summary of the text in English. Take the main points from the text, but use your own words as much as possible. (Maximum 50 words)

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## Use of English

### 3 Translate the words from the text into your language.

- 1 opposite .....
- 2 jealousy .....
- 3 mobility .....
- 4 constraints .....

### 4 Complete the sentences with the correct forms of the verbs in brackets.

- 1 Nowadays, it ..... (often think) that long-distance relationships never work, but that's untrue.
- 2 Researchers found that people who ..... (live) apart tend to feel closer.
- 3 Researchers ..... (interest) to discover that distance didn't affect couples much.
- 4 She met her boyfriend while she ..... (study) at university last year.

## Writing

### 5 Choose one of the tasks. Write 100–150 words.

- 1 Write an informal email to a friend, asking about his or her recent experiences at school. Include information about your recent experiences, too.
- 2 Write an opinion essay with the following title: 'Having a strong relationship with family members means accepting their differences.' Discuss.

