

Could AI help cure 'downward spiral' of human loneliness?

Level 1: Elementary – Teacher's notes

Article summary: The article presents two sides to considering AI for companionship and whether it can help solve loneliness.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Modal verbs

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

Quiz Results

8–12 points: You're probably an introvert. You may like listening and thinking more than speaking and going to parties. You enjoy quiet time alone. You enjoy observing the world around you. You might prefer to text than talk.

13–18 points: You're probably an ambivert. Your personality can be introverted or extroverted. You can adapt easily and feel comfortable in many different situations.

19–24 points: You're probably an extrovert. You may be outgoing and like to talk. You're like it when all eyes are on you. You are excited about being with other people. Your social life is busy, and you like that!

1. Warmer

- a. The purpose of this activity is to get students thinking about their personality type and what qualities and attributes it has for them. When thinking about the extrovert, introvert and ambivert labels, remind students that none is better than any of the others. It is a continuum that may change over time and in different circumstances. After students have completed the quiz, give them the point values below so they can tally their answers. Encourage students to share their answers, as well as their thoughts and opinions about the topic. Please note this quiz is not scientific.

	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. I feel excited at parties.	3	2	1
2. I need alone time every day.	1	2	3
3. I love meeting and talking to new people.	3	2	1
4. I prefer reading books to going out.	1	2	3
5. I work better alone.	1	2	3
6. I work better in a team.	3	2	1
7. I prefer talking.	3	2	1
8. I prefer listening.	1	2	3

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and compare their answers in pairs or small groups. You may wish to mention that *loneliness* is the noun form of *lonely*.

Key:

1. *introvert*
2. *relationship*
3. *chatbot*
4. *artificial intelligence (AI)*
5. *lonely*
6. *social skills*
7. *conversation*
8. *morals*
9. *solution*
10. *privacy*

- b. Before reading the article carefully, students use some of the key words to fill the gaps in the sentences to ensure that they understand and know how the words are used in other contexts.

Key:

1. *introverts*
2. *artificial intelligence / AI*
3. *conversation*
4. *lonely*
5. *relationship*
6. *chatbots*

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3. Comprehension check

- a. Students answer the questions based on the information in the article. They may do this in different ways, e.g., in item 1, they may say, 'The 2013 sci-fi film *Her* starred Joaquin Phoenix and Scarlett Johansson', or similar.

Key (suggested answers):

1. *Her; Joaquin Phoenix and Scarlett Johansson*
2. *that it has an important role*
3. *by improving their social skills, practising conversation, and feeling connected to society*
4. *nearly four million people (or over 7%)*
5. *young adults and mothers with small children*
6. *heart disease, dementia, stroke, depression, anxiety, early death*
7. *having a close human friend*
8. *We need to have rules to make sure AI has good morals and to protect privacy.*
9. *Scarlett Johansson*

4. Key language

- a. The activity allows students to review modals of possibility and recommendation. You may wish to review the modal verbs before students begin. As an extension activity, have students underline the rest of the verb phrases in each sentence.

Key:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. <i>should</i> | 4. <i>could</i> |
| 2. <i>could</i> | 5. <i>could</i> |
| 3. <i>would</i> | 6. <i>may</i> |

- b. Students can go back to the article to find examples of modal verbs.

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the statements related to the article and give their reasons and justifications for each answer, referring to their own experiences wherever possible.

6. In your own words

- a. Ask students to research more about AI.
- b. Students could then present their reports to the class. Encourage students to share their opinions and give reasons to support their answers. Encourage students to use some of the given phrases in their presentations when stating facts and their views.