

36 questions to fall in love



1 LEAD IN Discuss the following questions in small groups.

- 1 What is your definition of love? Are there different kinds of love? Describe them.
- 2 Do you believe in love at first sight? Why/why not?
- 3 Is it possible to *make* someone fall in love with you? If so, how?

2 READING Read the article and answer the questions.

- 1 How did the Arons think they could encourage people to fall in love?
- 2 Did the people in the experiment know each other beforehand?
- 3 As well as answering the questions, what else did the people have to do?
- 4 What evidence is there that this approach works?
- 5 Are the questions guaranteed to make you fall in love? Why/why not?

36 Questions to Fall in Love

Is there a method of falling in love? Researchers Elaine and Arthur Aron think that there might be. They devised a questionnaire of 36 questions that would encourage people to become closer by telling each other all about themselves, their hopes and dreams, their fears, and encouraging them to be really honest with each other.

To start with, the questions are quite easy to answer: Would you like to be famous?, or What is your perfect day? But as the conversation progresses, the questions become more personal. For example, Do you have a secret hunch about how you will die?

The Arons tested their theory by asking 52 sets of male and female strangers and 19 sets of female strangers to sit opposite one another and ask and answer the questions, before staring into each other's eyes for four minutes.

Six months later, two of the people got married.

Since then, other people have tried the experiment, and reported that it works. Of course, you don't need to use the questions to fall in love. You can also try them with people you already know well: members of your family, friends, even your wife or husband - to get to know each other even better.



3 Look at the questions below (taken from the original 36 questions) and decide together which questions are most/least personal.

1. Given the choice of anyone in the world, who would you want as a dinner guest?
2. Would you like to be famous?
3. When did you last sing to yourself?
4. Do you have a secret hunch about how you will die?
5. If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one quality or ability, what would it be?
6. What is your most terrible memory?
7. What roles do love and affection play in your life?
8. Your house, containing everything you own, catches fire. After saving your loved ones and pets, you have time to safely make a final dash to save any one item. What would it be? Why?
9. Alternate sharing something you consider a positive characteristic of your partner. Share a total of five items.
10. Complete this sentence: "I wish I had someone with whom I could share ..."
11. Tell your partner what you like about them; be very honest this time, saying things that you might not say to someone you've just met.

4 VIDEO. Work with a partner. You are going to watch a video of two people, Cam and Emily, asking each other these questions. While you watch, Student A should take notes of Cam's answers, and Student B take notes of Emily's answers.



5 Compare your notes with your partner and discuss the following questions.

- 1 Do you think Cam and Emily became closer over the course of the interview? Why do you think that?
- 2 Do you think they would be well suited as a couple? Why/why not?
- 3 Do you think they actually became a couple afterwards? Why/why not?



6 GRAMMAR Put the words in the correct order to make more questions from the experiment.

1 in/life/do/you/what/most/for/feel/your/grateful?

2 could/anything/change/if/what/your/be/it/would/you/life/about?

3 treasured/is/your/what/memory/most?

4 you/friendship/does/what/to/mean?

5 your/how/warm/is/close/family/and?

6 greatest/life/your/is/the/accomplishment/what/of?

7 last/in/another/of/when/you/cry/front/person/did?

7 SPEAKING Work with a partner. Choose 5-6 of the questions on this page and the previous page that you don't mind being asked. Ask and answer the questions (don't worry, it won't make you fall in love!)



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Key, Notes and further reading

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- 1 By asking a series of increasingly personal questions.
- 2 No, they were strangers.
- 3 Look into one another's eyes for four minutes.
- 4 One couple got married, and others have replicated the experiment and fallen in love (but a lot of people didn't!)
- 5 No, because not everyone in the experiment did, plus the questions can also be used to deepen friendship.

3

This is a subjective question, but the questions were grouped in the following way in the experiment:

Set 1 (least personal)

1. Given the choice of anyone in the world, who would you want as a dinner guest?
2. Would you like to be famous?
3. When did you last sing to yourself?
4. Do you have a secret hunch about how you will die?
5. If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one quality or ability, what would it be?

Set 2 (more personal)

6. What is your most terrible memory?
7. What roles do love and affection play in your life?
8. Your house, containing everything you own, catches fire. After saving your loved ones and pets, you have time to safely make a final dash to save any one item. What would it be? Why?
9. Alternate sharing something you consider a positive characteristic of your partner. Share a total of five items.

Set 3 (most personal)

10. Complete this sentence: "I wish I had someone with whom I could share ..."
11. Tell your partner what you like about them; be very honest this time, saying things that you might not say to someone you've just met.

4

See the transcript below for details.

5

This is also subjective, but Cam and Emily did date after the experiment. We don't know if they stayed together.

6

- 1 What in life do you feel most grateful for?/What do you feel most grateful for in life?/For what do you feel most grateful in life? (This is the most formal option)
- 2 If you could change anything about your life, what would it be?
- 3 What is your most treasured memory?

4 What does friendship mean to you?

5 How warm and close is your family? (warm and close collocates better than close and warm)

6 What is the greatest accomplishment of your life?

7 When did you last cry in front of another person? (There is another When did you last...? Question in the video- this is a useful structure for students to know)

7

Note that because some of these questions are very personal, it is important that students can choose what they'd like to answer. If necessary, they could also make up their own questions, using similar constructions.

Transcript

Cam: My name is Cam and I'm 24.

Emily: my name is Emily and I'm 22 years old.

Cam: I'm nervous about today to be perfectly honest.

Emily: I really want to see if study works. I think it will be... You know what if we hate each other or we don't like what we're saying? I think it would be cool to see if it's effective.

Cam: Hey how's it going?

Emily: Great, how are you?

Cam: Good. Emily, right? Cool.

Emily: Nice to meet you.

Cam: Yeah, nice to meet you – are you nervous at all for this?

Emily: yes.

Cam: Yeah me too, we can just get started. So the first question: **Given the choice of anyone in the world whom would you want as a dinner guest?**

Emily: Instinctually I want to say Clint Eastwood...

Cam: Nice... I would say Neil Armstrong, or something like that...

(Would you like to be famous?)

Cam: I think I would like to be famous, I guess not an A-list celebrity or anything like that, maybe a D-list one, so some people would know who you are you know you'd be that guy.

(When did you last sing to yourself?)

Emily: I sang to myself on the car ride over here. I was listening to Taylor Swift...

Cam: Nice, what song?

Emily: The whole album.

Cam: Oh nice...

Emily: Unlike, Fearless, not even her new stuff so...

(Do you have a secret hunch about how you will die?)

Cam: They're keeping the questions pretty light, as you can see...

Emily: I used to think I was going to die really young, like in high school when I was angsty, I was like I'm going to be, that's going to happen, but then I hit 18, I was like forget that Emily, you're going to live to a hundred, you're making the century club.

(If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one quality or ability what would it be?)

Cam: I've always wanted to be a good artist..

Emily: I'd like to be maybe a bit more assertive like maybe not too much though, I don't want to push people into doing anything they don't want to do...

(What is your most terrible memory?)

Emily: My most terrible memory was the morning my sister called me to tell me my mum had had a heart attack.. Yeah, she's okay...

Cam: That's good that she's okay but I could imagine that is terrifying. Is she doing well?

Emily: Yes she is doing well.

Cam: Yes I would say mine would be when my grandma's mind just kind of started deteriorating, because she'd live with us for my whole life, you know to see her forget who I am and you know call me a different name and she would wake up some days and you know, she's a 90-year-old woman, and she'd wonder why she didn't have school. That whole part is pretty terrible I would say so yeah, really hard.

(What roles do love and affection play in your life?)

Emily: I know people need affection and I do too but I have to like more think about sometimes my actions, people need validation sometimes and they need to hear that all sometimes my actions. People need validation sometimes and they need to hear that or see by touch stuff like that... Romantic love hasn't, hasn't been a big role in my life for the past... A little over a year now, and trying to be a bit more cautious about who I give and receive that love from, because it is so important.

(Your house catches fire. If you could save anyone item what would it be?)

Cam: I have a stuffed animal, Buster, he's a dog, so I probably might save Buster.

Emily: Mine is Fluffy, he is also..

Cam: R, okay, Buster and fluffy should meet one day...

(Alternate sharing something you consider a positive characteristic of your partner.)

Emily: I was worried about this coming into it because I can be a little bit awkward, that you made me feel at ease..

Cam: Yeah, you know you seem very cool and calm and confident at the same time, so I guess that's three, but, yeah, you have a good personality.

Emily: I also like what you're wearing. I think the colours really compliment you and make you look handsome..

Cam: Thank you.

Emily: You're welcome.

Cam: I like your face, a nice face.

Emily: Your face is very symmetrical, which is something we subconsciously look for, but because I know that, I consciously look for.

Cam: I say like a lot like this like that, but you're very very well spoken...

Emily: I actually swear all the time, I'm trying really hard..

Cam: (swears) Alright, curse like a sailor?

Emily: yeah.

(Complete this sentence: "I wish I had someone with whom I could share...")

Cam: It would be nice to have someone that you can literally say anything and everything and they would still like you and respect you not think you're a weirdo.

(Tell your partner something you like about them)

Cam: You have a very nice smile, I would definitely make out with you.

Emily: Okay. Yeah I was kind of thinking about that, like on our break like yeah I would definitely make out with him yeah I think it's pretty attractive, we have a lot of things in common and I like what I like and it's a good thing you know it's a good thing that you have a lot of stuff in common.

Further reading/sources:

https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/11/fashion/no-37-big-wedding-or-small.html?_r=0

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/open-gently/201310/36-questions-bring-you-closer-together>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elaine-aron-phd/36-questions-for-intimacy_b_6472282.html