

Friends and *Lovers*?

Keiko and Akira have been friends for a long time. But something has happened, and they might not be friends any longer. Read the story and find out: What has happened to hurt, and maybe even end, their friendship?



Akira and Keiko leave the university library after several hours of studying together, something they do often. Suddenly, Akira tries to kiss Keiko. Keiko is shocked.

“What are you doing, Akira?” Keiko asks, hardly able to speak. “You’re my best friend. We’ve been friends for five years. You’re closer to me than my brother. And now you want to kiss me?”

Akira explains, “I want our friendship to be even closer.”

“No, no, no! I don’t think of you in that way. You’re my friend. Best friends don’t act that way.”

Akira looks confused. “I don’t understand. Don’t you see me as a man?”

“Of course I do,” replies Keiko. “You’re a handsome man. But you’re a special man...my best

friend. So we can’t do this. Now do you understand?”

“No, not at all. Here is how I see it. You’re a woman and I’m a man. We like each other very much. We’re very close. So let’s do what is natural in any male-female relationship.”

“Natural? I think our friendship is natural. I thought I understood you. Maybe I was wrong,” cries Keiko.

Akira’s face is red. “So you really don’t like me at all. You just want someone to talk to.” He turns and walks quickly away.

Keiko’s anger turns to sadness. In her heart, she thinks Akira is wrong—men and women can be friends without being lovers. But now she’s not sure. What if all men think like Akira?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Can a man and a woman be close friends without being lovers? Check the opinions you agree with.

Sometimes they can be friends, but usually friendship between a man and a woman is difficult.



Maybe not. If a man and a woman are close friends, they will naturally become lovers.



Yes, they can. I know a lot of cases like that among my friends.



It's impossible, because men always want to have sex with women they like.



Of course they can. I have some good men friends and we're just friends.



Now exchange your ideas with a classmate.

TURN TO PAGE 84 FOR AN INTERACTION TIP.

LOOKING AT THE ISSUE

- What is your best friend like? Use three adjectives.

For example, *tall, kind, talkative.*

She (He) is _____, _____ and _____.

- Why is that person your best friend?

For example, *She helps me when I'm in trouble.*

We have a great time talking together.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

- Is your best friend a man or a woman?