

How the Americans View Friendship

Steve and Yaser first met in their chemistry class at an American university. Yaser was an international student from Jordan. He wanted to learn more about American culture and hoped that he and Steve would become good friends. At first, Steve seemed very friendly. He always greeted Yaser warmly before class. Sometimes he offered to study with Yaser. He even invited Yaser to eat lunch with him. But after the semester¹⁾ was over, Steve seemed more distant. The two former classmates didn't see each other very much at school. One day Yaser decided to call Steve. Steve didn't seem very interested in talking to him. Yaser was hurt by Steve's change of attitude. "Steve said we were friends," Yaser complained, "and I thought friends were friends for ever." Yaser is a little confused. As a foreigner, he doesn't understand the way Americans view friendship. Americans use the word "friend" in a very general way. They may call both casual acquaintances²⁾ and close companions "friends." These friendships are based on common interests. When the shared activity ends, the friendship may fade³⁾. Now as Steve and Yaser are no longer classmates, their "friendship" has changed. In some cultures friendship means a strong life-long bond between two people. In these cultures friendships develop slowly, since they are built to last. American society is one of rapid change. Studies show that one out of five American families moves every year. American friendships develop quickly, and they may change just as quickly. People from the United States may at first seem friendly. Americans often chat easily with strangers. But American friendliness is not always an offer of true friendship. After an experience like Yaser's people who've been in this country for only a few months may consider Americans to be fickle. Learning how Americans view friendship can help non-Americans avoid misunderstandings. It can also help them make friends the American way.

美国人的友谊观

史蒂夫和亚瑟第一次见面是在美国一所大学的化学课上。亚瑟是来自约旦的外国留学生。他想更多地了解美国文化，并希望能和史蒂夫成为好友。起初，史蒂夫显得很友好。上课前他总是热情地与亚瑟打招呼。有时他主动提出与亚瑟一起学习，甚至还邀请亚瑟共进午餐。但学期结束后，史蒂夫显得比较冷淡了。这两位先前的同班同学在学校不再经常见面。有一天，亚瑟决定给史蒂夫打个电话，可史蒂夫对与其交谈似乎不太感兴趣。史蒂夫态度的改变让亚瑟感到受了伤害。“史蒂夫说过我们是好朋友，”亚瑟抱怨说，“我本来以为是朋友就永远是朋友。”亚瑟有些不解。作为一个外国人，他不理解美国人对友谊的看法。美国人对“朋友”一词的使用非常广泛。他们可能把一般的熟人和亲密的伙伴都称之为“朋友”。这些友谊都是基于共同的兴趣。当这些原来共同从事的活动不复存在时，友谊也可能随之淡化。现在亚瑟和史蒂夫不再是同学，所以他们的“友谊”已经发生了变化。在有些文化中，友谊意味着维系两个人的牢固的持续终生的纽带。在这些文化中，友谊发展得很慢，因为人们是在建立持续终生的感情。而美国社会是个快速变化的社会。有研究显示，每年每五个美国家庭中就有一家迁移。美国人的友谊建立得非常快，其变化也同样快。从美国来的人给人的第一印象是很友好。美国人常随意与陌生人交谈。然而美国人的友好并不总是真正友情的表示。来到美

学英语，练听力，上听力课堂！

国才几个月的外国人在经历了一次如同亚瑟这样的经历之后，可能会认为美国人易变。了解美国人对友谊的看法，有助于非美国人避免误解，还可以帮助他们学会以美国方式与美国人交朋友。

NOTE 注释：

semester [si'mestə] n. 学期

acquaintance [ə'kweintəns] n. 相识，熟人

fade [feid] vi. 逐渐减弱，慢慢淡去

fickle ['fikl] adj. (在感情等方面)变幻无常的，浮躁的，薄情的