In the following essay, titled “True Friends,” a student named Francine Feinstein defines friendship. See if you can identify her main point as you read her essay.

**True Friends**

Many people throw the term “friend” around loosely. They think they have friends at work, friends at school, and friends from the Internet. But is all these people really friends? The word “friend” seems to be used today to refer to anyone from long-term to short-term relationships. However, a true friend is someone who will always be there in times of need, who will always be the best company, and who will always listen and give advice.

Without any questions asked, a good friend will always be there in times of need. No matter how bad a problem is, a true friend will be the person who sits up nights and take days off work just to sit with a friend. If someone is in trouble with a difficult paper a friend will help brainstorm to figure out the problem. If someone is sick, a friend will be the first one at the door with chicken soup and will baby-sit the kids until the sick person feel better. I hate the feeling of being sick. If someone is stranded across town with a broken-down car, a friend will drop everything to make a rescue and drive the person wherever he or she needs to go. Not everyone has a friend like this a true friend will always be the first one there, no matter what.

Most of all, a true friend is also someone who will listen and give reliable advice. Some people will listen to problems and then give the advice that they think will work best for them, but that advice isn’t necessarily best for their friend. Other people will listen but then interject personal stories that relate to the problem but
don’t solve it. But a true friend listens to a problem and gives suggestions to help a friend figure out the best solution for himself or herself. In other words, a true friend knows how to listen and help a person solve problems.

In addition, a friend is someone who is always great company, because friends have so much in common with each other. Imagine working out together, grabbing a sandwich, and then spending the evening just talking--about life, about good times, about bad times, about classes at school. Right now my classes are really hard. At the end of the day, friends might rent their favorite DVD and make some fresh popcorn. Sometimes they even seem to be on the same biological clock, getting tired and waking up at the same time. Friends can always be themselves around each other.

The word “friend” may be misused in the English language, but at least we can agree on what true friends are. True friends are hard to find. But once you find them, they will always be there, listen to you and be the best people to spend time with. No wonder true friends are so rare!