

- a Read the case studies. Rate each one from 1–5 (1 = not very serious, 5 = very serious) according to the impact you think the obsession might have on their life.
- b Compare your score with a partner and try to justify it.

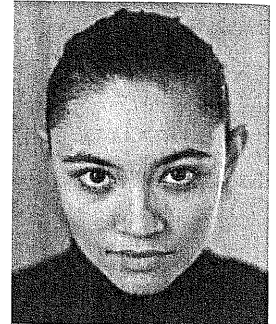
Case study 1

Mark, 23, is obsessed with his partner Alison who he's been going out with for over three years. Alison is very attractive and since the start of their relationship he's always worried that she'll leave him for someone more interesting and better-looking. He sends her about 30 text messages a day and calls her incessantly on her mobile. He admits to having hired a private detective a couple of months ago to make sure she wasn't cheating on him. Mark says, 'I really love her.'



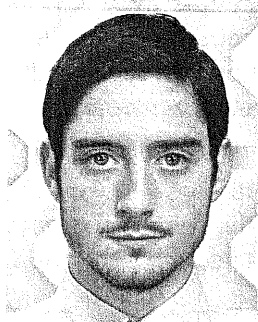
Case study 2

Karen, 19, has been obsessed with 'single food eating' for the last three years. Basically, this means she can only eat one certain food type at a time – that's to say she can't mix textures or flavours, and she has to brush her teeth after each different food she eats. So, for example, if she has chicken, potatoes, and peas, she will eat all the peas first, then all the potatoes, and finally the chicken.



Case study 3

Phil, 29, has an 'order' obsession. He puts all the books on his bookshelves in strict order according to their publication date. Similarly, all the magazines in the rack at his home have to be chronologically ordered. He admits to feeling 'seriously stressed' if someone takes out a book or magazine and then puts it back in the wrong place.



Case study 4

Helen, 41, is obsessed with the stage show *Mamma Mia*. Since it opened in London in 1999 she has been to see the show more than five hundred times, always sitting in the first five rows of the theatre. She spends all her money on buying tickets and has not had a holiday for years. Helen says 'Abba's music gives me such a high. I can't live without it.'



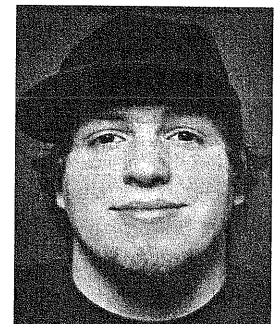
Case study 5

Amanda, 25, has an obsession with germs. She is unable to shake hands with anyone, as she knows that is how germs are transmitted from person to person. She can't even cope with holding her child's hand, or her partner's. She cleans the bathroom and kitchen twice a day from top to bottom, and won't have carpets or rugs in her house as she believes that this is where germs breed. She also disinfects all her daughter's toys every evening to prevent her catching anything.



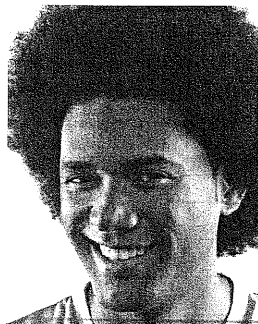
Case study 6

Sean, 18, has had an obsession with car number plates since he was five or six years old. Whenever he sees a car, he automatically looks at the number plate, and starts adding up the digits. 'I find it impossible to watch a car go by without trying to see the number plate and adding up the numbers,' he says.



Case study 7

Simon, 36, is obsessed with Arsenal, the football team he supports. He goes to all their home games and travels all over the country to see them when they play away. All the rooms in his house are painted in red or white, the Arsenal colours, and there are pictures of all the players, past and present, on all the walls. His two young boys are named after famous Arsenal players. His wife likes football and is an Arsenal fan, but only goes to some of their home games. 'Arsenal are my life,' says Simon.



Case study 8

Maria, 28, is obsessed with going to the gym and healthy eating. She works on a night shift at a call centre. She sleeps during the morning and then spends every afternoon at the gym, six days a week. She works out in the weights room and also does aerobics or spinning. She weighs herself three times a day. 'If I've put on any weight, I have to spend another hour at the gym,' says Maria.

