



A bowler **smiles** at her friends after a good shot.

Why **is** the girl in the photo **smiling**? It **sounds** like an easy question: she's **having** a good time with friends and she's **feeling** good after a good shot. But psychologists **are** forever **arguing** about this question.

Some **believe** that smiling **is** an individual act: we **smile** because we **feel** happy ... unless we're **trying** to hide our emotions. Others **claim** that we **smile** to build social relationships. Some animals **use** a **grin** to show that they **don't want** to fight, for example, so perhaps our smile **serves** the same function.

So who's right? In one study, researchers filmed people bowling. If you **watch** people doing a very social activity like this, it **looks** as if they're **always smiling**. They **stop** smiling only when they **are concentrating** on their next shot. But when **do** they **start** smiling again? After each good shot, the researchers took photographs to identify when the smile **starts** – while the player **is still looking** down the alley or a few seconds later when they **turn** round to share their happiness with the group?

And the results? Only around 4% of bowlers **smile** with their backs to their friends. Far more – 42% – **smile** as soon as they **turn** round. The conclusion: we usually **smile** not because we're happy, but because we're friendly.



- 1 What are the two theories of smiling?
- 2 Why did the researchers choose a bowling alley?

Answers: 1 We smile because we feel happy; we smile to build social relationships. 2 Because bowling is a very social activity.