

# Gender Inequality

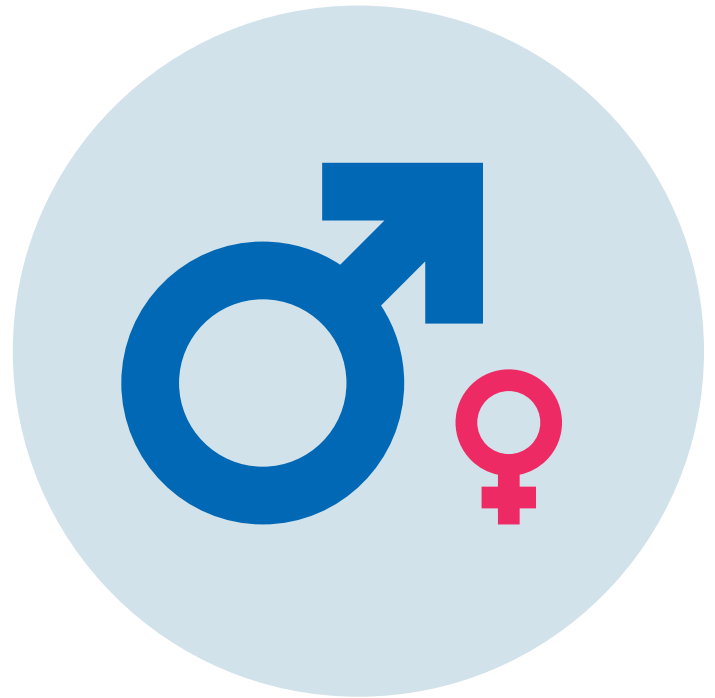
*"We must raise both the ceiling and the floor."*

—Sheryl Sandberg

## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Do women in your home country earn less than men for doing the same job?
2. Do males and females have equal education opportunities where you live? What about in other parts of the world?
3. How can men benefit from gender equality in the workplace?



### B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. counterpart         | a) an environment that offers equal opportunities for all                                    |
| ___ 2. level playing field | b) the differences in treatment, pay, etc. between men and women                             |
| ___ 3. illiterate          | c) a higher-paying and/or more advanced position at one's workplace                          |
| ___ 4. gender gap          | d) unable to read and write  |
| ___ 5. promotion           | e) a person holding an equivalent position   |
| ___ 6. stereotype          | f) to follow through with a plan, to make something happen                                   |
| ___ 7. discrimination      | g) to become the most important thing  |
| ___ 8. implement           | h) unfair treatment based on a quality such as gender or age                                 |
| ___ 9. take priority       | i) a long-held belief or opinion about a certain group or thing                              |
| ___ 10. GDP                | j) gross domestic product, the value of goods and services produced in a country in one year |

## Reading

### GENDER INEQUALITY

#### *Leveling the Playing Field*

1. Gender equality in the workplace has come a long way in developed nations. This is largely due to equal access to education. On average, women in developed nations are at least as educated as men. In the US, women can expect to earn about 80% of their male **counterparts'** salaries. While much progress has been made, this is far from a **level playing field**. And in developing nations, where two-thirds of **illiterate** people are female, the **gender gap** is much wider. There are several factors that hold women back in the workplace.
2. Throughout the world, women are still expected to be the primary caregivers of their children. Some women accept lower pay in exchange for family-friendly hours (flex-time) or benefits. Responsibilities at home may prevent women from seeking higher-paying jobs or **promotions** that require business travel. In some cultures, women are expected to marry by a certain age. Focusing on family before job training makes it difficult for women to achieve equality in the workplace. In Ethiopia, women have achieved greater success in the workplace since the minimum age of marriage was moved from 15 to 18.
3. Long-held **stereotypes** about gender roles keep many women out of certain industries and professions (e.g., computer programming or construction). While women in the US hold about 80% of the jobs in the health industry, males are much more likely to hold the high-paying positions. (Men are more often surgeons and specialists, while the majority of nurses are female.) Gender **discrimination** laws have been introduced in many parts of the world but are not always **implemented**. How can a woman prove that she missed out on an employment opportunity because of her gender?
4. To bring attention to gender inequality, the UN has declared October 13 as *International Day of the Girl*. Emma Watson, the UN's Women Goodwill Ambassador, thinks men, especially fathers, need to be more involved in the conversation. After all, gender inequality is not only hard on women. It affects families and entire nations.
5. In developing nations, addressing gender inequality in education must **take priority**. A nation's **GDP** is directly associated with the education of its girls. Each additional year of education can increase a woman's future income by 10%. An educated mother is more likely to raise a healthy daughter who will go to school, get a job, and marry later in life.

## Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers in your notebook.

1. In comparison to a male with the same experience and expertise, how much can an American woman expect to earn?
2. What does the reading say about literacy rates in developing nations?
3. What deal do some mothers make with their employers?
4. What change related to gender equality occurred in Ethiopia?
5. Why does the reading mention GDP?

## Vocabulary Review

### A. What's the Word?

Which word from page 1 is described in the sentence?  
More than one option may be possible.

#	Sentence	Word
1	Elderly drivers are often labeled as poor drivers.	
2	There is supposed to be at least one woman on the board of directors, but this hasn't happened.	
3	The most important thing right now is to make sure the kids get breakfast.	
4	Was there an increase in the amount of goods and services produced in your country this year?	
5	I am a junior advertiser, but I'm hoping to move up to the senior position.	
6	I have a male colleague who does the same job as I do.	
7	The children in this village can't read or write.	
8	My husband earns more than I do, even though we do the same job and have equal experience and expertise.	

## Vocabulary Review cont.

### B. Write a Sentence

Write a sentence or example that illustrates each word below.  
Do not use the word in your example.

1. gender gap

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2. stereotype

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3. discrimination

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4. promotion

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5. take priority

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6. implement

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7. illiterate

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8. a level playing field

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# Punctuation Review

## A. Commas and Parentheses

When you want to include extra (often non-essential) information to a piece of text, use commas or parentheses (singular: parenthesis).

### USE COMMAS to offset non-essential or extra information

The term “non-essential” means that the sentence can exist, and still makes sense, without this information. (Try removing the text between the commas below.)

- Emma Watson, known for her acting role in the *Harry Potter* films, is the UN’s Women Goodwill Ambassador.
- Girls in some developing nations, such as in Ethiopia, are expected to marry at a young age.

### USE PARENTHESES to add non-essential or extra information

- I didn’t get the job (head nurse of pediatrics) because I can’t do overtime.
- My salary is 17% less than my husband’s. (We hold the identical position.)
- The kids are my priority (they’re only two and four) until they start full-time school. (Then I’ll focus on my career.)

## B. Practice

In a notebook or on the back of your paper, rewrite the sentences below by placing some of the information in between offsetting commas or parentheses. Note: There are many options.

1. I didn’t get the promotion. It was a 10% salary raise.  
A male from my department got it. He has less experience.
2. My grandmother left school at age seven. She had to raise her twin sisters. She is illiterate. It makes me sad.
3. Many women are afraid to call themselves “feminists.” They think it’s a negative word. They don’t realize that being a feminist simply means that they support equal rights and opportunities for women. Feminists are stereotyped as man-haters.

## Discussion Questions

1. How are gender equality in the workplace and gender equality in education related?
2. How does gender inequality in the workplace affect families?
3. What professions are commonly associated with females?  
What professions are commonly associated with males?
4. In developing nations, many girls are still not receiving equal education opportunities. What can people in developed nations do to support education for low-income girls?


## Critical Thinking

### IN PAIRS OR SMALL GROUPS

The UN's Women Goodwill Ambassador, known best for her acting role in the Harry Potter series, believes that more men need to be part of this conversation in order to reduce the gender gap. Discuss this quote from a speech Emma Watson gave at the UN:

*"The more I've spoken about feminism, the more I've realized that fighting for women's rights has too often been synonymous with man-hating."*

## Listening – Gap Fill

 <http://blog.esllibrary.com/2014/11/04/podcast-gender-inequality/>

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

### GENDER INEQUALITY

#### *Leveling the Playing Field*

1. Gender equality in the workplace has come a long way in developed nations. This is largely due to equal access to education. On \_\_\_\_\_, women in developed nations are at least as educated as men. In the US, women can expect to earn about 80% of their male **counterparts'** salaries. While much progress has been made, this is far from a **level playing field**. And in developing nations, where two-thirds of **illiterate** people are female, the **gender gap** is much wider. There are several factors that hold women back in the workplace.
2. Throughout the world, women are still expected to be the primary caregivers of their children. Some women accept lower pay in exchange for family-friendly hours (flex-time) or benefits. Responsibilities at home may prevent women from \_\_\_\_\_ higher-paying jobs or **promotions** that require business travel. In some cultures, women are expected to marry by a certain age. Focusing on family before job training makes it difficult for women to achieve equality in the workplace. In Ethiopia, women have achieved greater success in the workplace since the minimum age of marriage was moved from 15 to 18.
3. Long-held **stereotypes** about gender roles keep many women out of certain industries and professions (e.g., computer programming or construction). While women in the US hold about 80% of the jobs in the health industry, males are much \_\_\_\_\_ to hold the high-paying positions. (Men are more often surgeons and specialists, while the majority of nurses are female.) Gender **discrimination** laws have been introduced in many parts of the world but are not always **implemented**. How can a woman prove that she missed out on an employment opportunity because of her gender?
4. To bring attention to gender inequality, the UN has declared October 13 as *International Day of the Girl*. Emma Watson, the UN's Women Goodwill Ambassador, thinks men, especially fathers, need to be more \_\_\_\_\_ in the conversation. After all, gender inequality is not only hard on women. It affects families and entire nations.
5. In developing nations, \_\_\_\_\_ gender inequality in education must **take priority**. A nation's **GDP** is directly associated with the education of its girls. Each additional year of education can increase a woman's future income by 10%. An educated mother is more likely to raise a healthy daughter who will go to school, get a job, and marry later in life.

5. addressing  
4. involved  
3. more likely  
2. seeking  
1. average

**ANSWERS:**

# Answer Key

### LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students read about gender inequality in the workplace. The lesson includes vocabulary development tasks, comprehension questions, discussion questions, and a review about parentheses.

### TEACHING TIPS:

See *Discussion Starters Teaching Guide* (<https://esllibrary.com/courses/72/lessons/>) for a variety of ways to use the reading. Audio is available for this lesson. Students can access the audio via our podcast and iTunes.

**LEVEL:** Int – Adv

**TIME:** 1.5–2 hours

**TAGS:** discussion, gender, inequality, equality, family, business, money, workplace, feminism, education

## Pre-Reading

### A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class. Discuss the quote. Introduce the term “glass ceiling”: *an invisible barrier to advancement due to being a woman or a minority.*

### B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- |      |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. e | 3. d | 5. c | 7. h | 9. g  |
| 2. a | 4. b | 6. i | 8. f | 10. j |

## Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 7. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

## Comprehension

- On average, an American woman can expect to earn about 80% of her male counterpart’s salary.
- The reading says that about two-thirds of illiterate people in developing nations are female.
- Some mothers arrange for family-friendly hours or benefits in exchange for lower pay.
- The minimum age of marriage changed from 15 to 18 in Ethiopia. This improved gender equality in the workplace.
- The reading mentions GDP because a nation’s GDP is directly affected by the education of its girls. If girls are educated, the country can produce more goods and services. These women are more likely to raise girls who are educated too.

## Vocabulary Review

### A. WHAT’S THE WORD?

- |                  |                |                |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. stereotype    | 4. GDP         | 7. illiterate  |
| 2. implement     | 5. promotion   | 8. gender gap, |
| 3. take priority | 6. counterpart | discrimination |

### B. WRITE A SENTENCE

Answers will vary.

*(continued on the next page...)*



# Answer Key

## Punctuation Review

### A. COMMAS AND PARENTHESES

Review our editor's tips about parentheses:

<http://blog.esllibrary.com/2014/09/24/punctuation-rules-parentheses/>

### B. PRACTICE

Answers will vary.

1. I didn't get the promotion (a 10% raise). A male (with less experience) from my department got it instead.
2. My grandmother, who is illiterate, left school at age seven. She had to raise her sisters (twins) instead of going to school. (It makes me sad.)
3. Many women are afraid to call themselves "feminists". (They think it's a negative word.) They don't realize that feminists, often stereotyped as man-haters, simply support equal rights and opportunities for women.

## Discussion Questions & Critical Thinking

Individual answers. Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs. You may want to show Emma Watson's speech "He For She." Also, you may want to share and discuss Emma Watson's definition of feminism: "*the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities.*"

### SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Leveling* and *Labeled*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Levelling* and *Labelled*. Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.