

# Gender Roles



## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Are women typically the primary caregivers in your country?
2. What jobs would you be surprised to see a woman doing?
3. What are traditional gender roles?
4. Are most households dual income?

### 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. traditional   | a) having two adults in a family that both contribute financially              |
| ___ 2. primary       | b) based on old-fashioned ideas  |
| ___ 3. homemaker     | c) a duty that needs to be done to keep a household clean and functioning      |
| ___ 4. breadwinner   | d) a person who looks after the household duties such as cleaning and shopping |
| ___ 5. dual income   | e) main  |
| ___ 6. chore         | f) the person who earns the money for the family                               |
| ___ 7. nuclear       | g) referring to a mother, father, and their children living together           |
| ___ 8. spouse        | h) stress  |
| ___ 9. pressure      | i) a balanced option that satisfies everyone                                   |
| ___ 10. happy medium | j) a husband or wife   |

## Reading

### GENDER ROLES

*Whose job is it to take out the trash?*

1. Have you ever heard of the terms *pink jobs* and *blue jobs*? It wasn't long ago when men and women held **traditional** roles at home and in the workplace. Women were the **primary** caregivers and **homemakers** and men were the sole **breadwinners**. Wars and women's rights changed how average households are run. When traditions *go out the window*, gender roles are the first thing to go.
2. In many parts of the world, households are now **dual income**. Two adults share the bills and the **chores**. Women go back to work after having children. They are educated and hold careers similar to their **spouses**. Children are raised by a village of helpers. This includes childcare workers, extended family, and community services. The **nuclear** family isn't the norm anymore. Single-parent families are more and more common. Some families are run by two men or two women. Many people opt to stay single.
3. Was life easier when gender roles were specific? That depends on who you ask. A woman may say no. She had to do all of the work at home and never got a break from the children. A man may say no too. He was out of the home for most of the day. All of the **pressure** to support the family was on him. What would the children say if you asked them?
4. As humans, we are always looking for a **happy medium**. We want what we don't have and we have what others want. This is one personality trait that women and men share. Who takes out the trash in your family?

*"My father always defined my gender to my brothers. He'd say, 'This is your sister; you must take care of her.'"*

—Sandra Cisneros, author

## Comprehension

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

1. What are pink and blue jobs?
2. What role do men have in households where women primarily look after the children?
3. What does the reading say about the traditional nuclear family?
4. According to the author, was life easier when gender roles were more specific?
5. Why does the author mention trash in the last sentence?

## Vocabulary Review

### A. Complete the Sentences

Complete each sentence with the correct word from the vocabulary list on page 1.

1. One role of a \_\_\_\_\_ is to keep a home clean.
2. Parents have the added \_\_\_\_\_ of finding suitable childcare.
3. When I lost my job, my wife became the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Even small children can help out with household \_\_\_\_\_.
5. A \_\_\_\_\_ family refers to a mother, father, and their kids.

### B. Choose the Correct Word

Choose the word or phrase with the closest meaning to the underlined word or phrase in the following sentences.

1. Dual-income families sometimes pay hired help for household chores.  
a) female  
b) two  
c) fighting  
d) rich
2. My primary role is to make sure my kids get home safely from school.  
a) early  
b) main  
c) homemaker  
d) young
3. I don't want to quit, but I don't want to work full-time. I need a happy medium.  
a) role  
b) happiness  
c) balance  
d) life
4. Bill Davidson is my spouse.  
a) nuclear  
b) dual  
c) colleague  
d) husband
5. None of my friends come from nuclear families.  
a) breadwinning  
b) pressured  
c) high-income  
d) traditional

## Discussion

1. Do parents treat their baby boys and girls differently?
2. How do children develop stereotypes about gender?
3. Why does a woman feel guilty about going back to work after having a baby?
4. Why does a man feel guilty for taking time off work to be with his family?

## Class Opinion

Walk around the class and ask your classmates about chores. Which chores do males in their families usually do? Which chores do females usually do? Which chores do both genders do? Use two different colors of pens to mark responses from male and female students. Then discuss the results with your class.

Male Chores	Female Chores	Chores Suited to Either Gender

## Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

### GENDER ROLES

*Whose job is it to take out the trash?*

1. Have you ever heard of the terms *pink jobs* and *blue jobs*? It wasn't long ago when men and women held \_\_\_\_\_ roles at home and in the workplace. Women were the primary caregivers and homemakers and men were the sole \_\_\_\_\_. Wars and women's rights changed how average households are run. When traditions *go out the window*, gender roles are the first thing to go.
2. In many parts of the world, households are now \_\_\_\_\_. Two adults share the bills and the chores. Women go back to work after having children. They are educated and hold careers similar to their \_\_\_\_\_. Children are raised by a village of helpers. This includes childcare workers, extended family, and community services. The \_\_\_\_\_ family isn't the norm anymore. Single-parent families are more and more common. Some families are run by two men or two women. Many people opt to stay single.
3. Was life \_\_\_\_\_ when gender roles were specific? That depends on who you ask. A woman may say no. She had to do all of the work at home and never got a break from the children. A man may say no too. He was out of the home for most of the day. All of the \_\_\_\_\_ to support the family was on him. What would the children say if you asked them?
4. As humans, we are always looking for a \_\_\_\_\_. We want what we don't have and we have what others want. This is one \_\_\_\_\_ trait that women and men share. Who takes out the trash in your family?

# Answer Key

## LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read about gender roles and discuss how traditional roles have changed in modern times.

**LEVEL:** Int

**TIME:** 1.5–2 hours

**TAGS:** gender, gender roles, male, female, modern family, family, chores

## Pre-Reading

### A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Answers will vary. Discuss as a class or in groups.

### B. VOCABULARY REVIEW

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

## Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. Discuss the quote. (You might want to look at the punctuation in the quote and teach your students how to use semicolons.) You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 5. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

## Comprehension

1. Pink jobs refer to traditional responsibilities that women had, and blue jobs are the ones that men had.
2. In households where women primarily look after the children, the men are usually the breadwinners.
3. The reading says that the traditional nuclear family is not the norm anymore.
4. According to the author, men and women still had difficult lives when gender roles were more specific.
5. The author mentions taking out the trash as a rhetorical question. Are there some jobs that will always be stereotyped as “pink jobs” or “blue jobs”?

## Vocabulary Review

### A. COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

- |                |            |
|----------------|------------|
| 1. homemaker   | 4. chores  |
| 2. pressure    | 5. nuclear |
| 3. breadwinner |            |

### B. CHOOSE THE CORRECT WORD

- |      |      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. b | 2. b | 3. c | 4. d | 5. d |
|------|------|------|------|------|

## Discussion

Answers will vary.

## Class Opinion

Have students walk around the class and survey their classmates about chores. Discuss the results as a class.

## Listening

1. traditional, breadwinners
2. dual income, spouses, nuclear
3. easier, pressure
4. happy medium, personality

### SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the word *Colors*. Most other English-speaking countries spell it this way: *Colours*. Make it a challenge for your students to find this word in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spelling.