

Paternity Leave

*"It is a wise father
that knows his own child."*

—William Shakespeare

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What roles do new fathers have in your native country?
2. Should parental leave benefits be gender-neutral?
3. How do mothers and fathers parent their children differently? *What part of speech is "parent" in this question?*



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. maternity | a) to develop a close relationship |
| ___ 2. eligible | b) related to motherhood |
| ___ 3. paternity | c) to behave toward someone in a certain way |
| ___ 4. pass up | d) resistant, not ready or willing to make a change |
| ___ 5. reluctant | e) to refuse or decline a good opportunity |
| ___ 6. treat | f) to have the right to do something |
| ___ 7. bond | g) related to fatherhood |
| ___ 8. make ends meet | h) to convince |
| ___ 9. coax | i) to have enough money for life's necessities |
| ___ 10. pacifier | j) something that takes away a person's freedom |
| ___ 11. burden | k) a nipple-shaped object that a baby sucks on for comfort |

Reading

PATERNITY LEAVE

Daddy's on diaper duty

1. In most countries around the world, new mothers take **maternity** leave after they have a baby. The amount of pay and time off they receive depends on their government and employer. In some countries, fathers are **eligible** for parental leave. **Paternity** leave is becoming more common as gender equality improves in the workplace.
2. Even though some companies offer a paid paternity leave, many men do not take it. Why would dads **pass up** this benefit and opportunity? Some **reluctant** dads worry about their careers. They don't want to miss a chance at getting a raise. Will their bosses **treat** them differently when they return to work? Many fear they will be viewed as lazy. Although they want to be at home with their family, they don't want to be laid off when their company downsizes.
3. Some fathers take paternity leave despite the lack of a benefit package. They use up vacation or sick days to **bond** with their newborns. The father may quit his job altogether if his partner earns a higher income. This makes it easier for the family to **make ends meet** on one salary.
4. One thing that men can't do is nurse their newborns. Is this nature's way of saying that babies should be with their mothers? Some new fathers feel they work harder than their female partners. **Coaxing** a fussy baby to take a bottle or a **pacifier** is not an easy job!
5. In countries where parental leave is not paid, the primary caregiver may be someone other than the mother or father. This is common in the United States, where many employers do not pay for parental leave. When both parents have to work, the **burden** of childcare often falls on the grandparents. What effect does this have on a family?

Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers below.

1. Why is paternity leave becoming more common?

2. Why are many men reluctant to take paternity leave even if they are eligible?

3. Why do some men quit their jobs after a baby is born?

4. Why do some new fathers feel they have it harder than their female partners?

5. Why is the United States mentioned in this reading?

Vocabulary Review

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

#	Sentence	Word
1	The employee rules state that a father is allowed to take 12 weeks of the paid parental leave.	
2	The father and baby are getting to know each other by cuddling and reading stories together.	
3	The grandparents were happily retired. Now they are responsible for their grandson's childcare.	
4	If she doesn't go back to work, we won't have enough money to buy groceries.	
5	My husband isn't sure about taking paternity leave. He doesn't want to miss out on a raise.	
6	She doesn't know who the father of the baby is. They are going to run a blood test.	
7	I convinced him to take three weeks of paternity leave!	
8	She's kind to everyone except her own husband. I can't believe the way she talks to him.	
9	The baby won't stop crying. Where is her plug?	
10	He could have had three months off with pay, but he declined.	

Grammar Review

DOES THIS SURPRISE YOU?

A. Describing Unexpected Situations

There are a few different English words and expressions for describing unexpected situations. Some are followed by a noun. Others are followed by subject, verb, object (SVO). Read the dialogues with a partner. Take turns being A and B. Can you find a pattern in the comma placement?

despite | in spite of + NOUN

- A: Despite the offer, he didn't take the paternity leave.
 B: Really? That's surprising!
 A: He didn't take the paternity leave in spite of the offer.
 B: That's crazy! Why didn't he?

despite the fact that | in spite of the fact that + SVO

- | | |
|--|--|
| A: Despite the fact that the baby was three hours old, the dad went to work. | A: In spite of the fact that his boss said no, the man took a week off work. |
| B: No way! What did the mother think? | B: Good for him. That's brave! |

even though | although | though + SVO

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| A: Even though his wife was in labor, he went golfing with his friends. | A: Though his friends went surfing, Max stayed home with the baby. | A: Benji stayed home with the baby although he wanted to go golfing. |
| B: Are you serious? That's ridiculous! | B: He did? He must really love that baby. | B: I'm shocked. Benji loves golfing! |

B. Writing

Work together to make up some of your own sentences using these words and expressions. Experiment with sentence structure.

Discussion

1. How do babies and older children benefit from a father taking paternity leave?
2. What responsibility should a government have when it comes to parental leave benefits?
3. What can mothers or childcare workers do to help working fathers feel more involved in the lives of their newborns?
4. How have paternal benefits changed in your country since you were a baby?

Critical Thinking

IN PAIRS OR SMALL GROUPS

How would society change if all employees were eligible for a “family leave benefit”? Work together with a group to come up with a benefit package that makes sense for everyone. How much time off and pay would families receive? Why would this benefit the employer and the government as well?

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

PATERNITY LEAVE

Daddy's on diaper duty

1. In most countries around the world, new mothers take maternity leave after they have a baby. The amount of pay and time off they receive depends on their _____ and employer. In some countries, fathers are eligible for parental leave. Paternity leave is becoming more common as gender equality improves in the workplace.
2. _____ some companies offer a paid paternity leave, many men do not take it. Why would dads pass up this benefit and opportunity? Some reluctant dads worry about their careers. They don't want to miss a chance at getting a raise. Will their bosses treat them differently when they return to work? Many fear they will be viewed as _____. Although they want to be at home with their family, they don't want to be laid off when their company downsizes.
3. Some fathers take paternity leave despite the lack of a benefit package. They use up vacation or sick days to bond with their newborns. The father may quit his job _____ if his partner earns a higher income. This makes it easier for the family to make ends meet on one salary.
4. One thing that men can't do is nurse their newborns. Is this nature's way of saying that babies should be with their mothers? Some new fathers feel they work harder _____ their female partners. Coaxing a fussy baby to take a bottle or a pacifier is not an easy job!
5. In countries where parental leave is not paid, the _____ caregiver may be someone other than the mother or father. This is common in the United States, where many employers do not pay for parental leave. When both parents have to work, the burden of childcare often falls on the grandparents. What effect does this have on a family?

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read about the reasons why some fathers take time off work when their children are born. The lesson includes vocabulary review exercises, comprehension questions, discussion questions, and grammar practice.

LEVEL: Int – Adv

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: discussion, parenting, family, business, Father’s Day, babies, children, unexpected situations, despite, although

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class. Discuss the quote. You may also want to discuss how the role of fatherhood has changed since Shakespeare’s time.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

1. b 3. g 5. d 7. a 9. h 11. j
2. f 4. e 6. c 8. i 10. k

Extension: Show your students how “pass up” is a separable phrasal verb (pass up something OR pass something up.) This expression is often used with offers, invitations, or rare opportunities. You may also want to introduce the related expression “to take advantage of” or “to not take advantage of.”

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

1. Paternity leave is becoming more common due to increased gender equality in the workplace.
2. Many men are reluctant to take paternity leave even if they are eligible because they fear the risks. They don’t want to get laid off or get treated differently. They don’t want coworkers to think they are lazy.
3. Some men quit their jobs after a baby is born because their partners earn more money.
4. Some new fathers feel they have it harder than their female partners because they can’t nurse their babies. They have to soothe their babies in other ways. (Make sure that your students know that the word “soothe” means “comfort.” You may also want to introduce the fact that many families use a different word for used for “pacifier,” such as soother, binky, sookie, sussy, sucky, or dummy. It might be fun to hear this word in other languages.)
5. The United States is mentioned in this reading because this is a country where many parents do not receive paid leave, and mothers and fathers have to rely on grandparents for childcare.

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Vocabulary Review

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1. eligible | 6. paternity |
| 2. bond | 7. coax |
| 3. burden | 8. treat |
| 4. make ends meet | 9. pacifier |
| 5. reluctant | 10. pass up |

Grammar Review

Review our editor's tips for teaching these words and expressions:
<https://ellii.com/blog/how-to-explain-despite-vs-although>

Discussion

Answers will vary.
Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

Critical Thinking

Answers will vary.
Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

Listening

1. government
2. Even though, lazy
3. altogether
4. than
5. primary