



"In the future, there will be no female leaders. There will just be leaders."

Sheryl Sandberg, chief operating officer of Facebook

1. Women in the Workplace Discussion

1. What are some jobs typically associated with men? What are some jobs typically associated with women?
2. What behaviour is considered appropriate for men, but inappropriate for women? What behaviour is considered appropriate for women, but inappropriate for men?
3. Which well-known businesswomen do you know about?
4. What kind of discrimination do women face in society? What about in the workplace? Why does this happen?
5. Is it easier to be a man or a woman at work? Why?
6. Are there any differences in the way men and women communicate?
7. Do you think people prefer a male boss or a female boss?
8. Have you experienced or witnessed sexism in the workplace?

2. Women in the Workplace Vocabulary

- **the glass ceiling** (noun) – *invisible barriers that prevent women from progressing to top jobs in management.*
- **the broken rung** (noun) – *obstacles that prevent women from taking the first step on the career ladder from entry-level position to junior-management position.*
- **maternity leave** (noun) – *time off work for women to care for a newborn child.*
- **gender pay gap** (noun) – *the difference in salary between men and women who perform the same role.*
- **sexism** (noun), **sexist** (adjective) – *prejudice and discrimination against women.*
- **to mansplain** (verb) – *when a man explains something to a woman in a patronising or condescending manner.*

Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun)

1. I have a master's degree in marketing and have been working in the industry for over 20 years; I don't need Tony to keep _____ marketing to me every day!
2. In Sweden, women are entitled to 480 days of _____ at 80% of their normal salary.
3. Many people say the _____ exists because women are less likely to ask for a pay rise.
4. One barrier of _____ is that men are more likely to favour other men in the hiring process.
5. _____ can be fixed by offering women leadership training before they apply for their first management position.
6. Women are often asked _____ questions in job interviews. For example, they may be asked how old they are or if they are married.

Women in the Workplace vocabulary comprehension questions

1. What are some common barriers that form the glass ceiling for women?
2. What solutions can you think of to fix the broken rung?
3. How much maternity leave do women get in your country? What about paternity leave for men? Is this sufficient? Should it be the same amount of time for both men and women?
4. How do you explain the gender pay gap? How could a company fix this?
5. What kind of sexism exists in the workplace?
6. Have you ever experienced or witnessed mansplaining?

3. Video: Why There Are So Few Women Leaders

You are going to watch a TED Talk by Sheryl Sandberg called "Why we have too few women leaders."

Watch the video here: <https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/business-english-conversation-lesson-plan-women-in-the-workplace/>

Watch the video and after, discuss the following questions:

1. Do you think women feel guilty about leaving their children at home while they work?
2. Do you agree that women underestimate their own abilities? If so, why do you think this is?
3. Why do you think men tend to attribute their success to themselves, while women tend to attribute their success to other external factors?
4. Why is success and likability positively correlated for men, but negatively correlated for women?
5. Do you agree that there is more pressure put on boys to succeed than girls? If so, why is this?
6. Why might women not apply for a promotion if they were planning on having a child?

4. Women in the Workplace Conversation Questions

1. Why might a woman get asked if they are married in a job interview?
2. Why might flexitime benefit women more than men?
3. How can you explain the imbalance of men and women in leadership positions? Should there be an equal number? Why or why not? How can companies with an imbalance between men and women address this?
4. What insights can women offer businesses that men cannot? Do companies with a good balance of male and female leaders perform better than companies with an imbalance?
5. Why do you think women don't negotiate their salaries as much as men?
6. In which countries do you think it would be easier to be a woman at work? In which countries do you think it would be more difficult?
7. Are we in denial that discrimination against women in the workplace exists?
8. Do you think discrimination against women has got better or worse over your lifetime? How do you see this changing in the future?

5. Women in the Workplace Writing Task

A company-wide study has found that there is an imbalance between men and women in leadership positions in your company. Your CEO has asked you to come up with some solutions to address this. Write the executive summary for a report summarising why this imbalance exists, how it can be fixed, and what benefits the company might experience with a more balanced leadership.