

3B Stereotypes – or are they?

1 READING & SPEAKING

a In pairs, answer the questions.

- 1 Are you a talkative or a quiet person?
- 2 Who is...?
 - a the most talkative person in your family
 - b the most talkative person you know
- 3 Do you think that, generally speaking, women are more talkative than men?
- 4 What topics do a) men talk about more than women?
b) women talk about more than men?

b Look at the definition of *stereotype*. Then A read the article *Men talk just as much as women* and B read the article *A gossip with the girls*. Find answers to questions 1–4.

stereotype /ˈsteriətaɪp/ **noun** a fixed idea about a particular type of person or thing, which is often not true in reality. ► **stereotype** **verb** In advertisements, women are often stereotyped as housewives.

- 1 What was the stereotype that the researchers wanted to investigate?
- 2 Where was the research done?
- 3 How was the research done?
- 4 What did the research show?

c In pairs, tell each other about your article, using questions 1–4 to help you.

d Now read both articles again and look at the **highlighted** words and phrases, which are commonly used in articles about research. Match them with definitions 1–10.

- 1 In fact *adverb* really
- 2 _____ *verb* make less
- 3 _____ usually do it
- 4 _____ *adverb* a little bit
- 5 _____ linking word used to connect or contrast two facts
- 6 _____ *verb* say that sth is true
- 7 _____ as said or shown by sb
- 8 _____ *verb* include several different things in addition to the ones mentioned
- 9 _____ *adverb* nearly
- 10 _____ not completely believed, doubted

e Which of the two pieces of research do you think is...?

- 1 more credible
- 2 more important
- 3 more surprising

Men talk just as much as women – can it really be true?

Research by psychologists at the University of Arizona has shown that the stereotype that women talk more than men may not be true. In the study, hundreds of university students were fitted with recorders and the total number of words they used during the day was then counted.

The results, published in the *New Scientist*, showed that women speak about 16,000 words a day and men speak only **slightly** fewer. **In fact**, the four most talkative people in the study were all men.

Professor Matthias Mehl, who was in charge of the research, said that he and his colleagues had expected to find that women were more talkative.

A GOSSIP WITH THE GIRLS? JUST PICK ANY ONE OF FORTY SUBJECTS

Women are experts at gossiping – and they often talk about trivial things, or at least that's what men have always thought. However **according to** research carried out by Professor Petra Boynton, a psychologist at University College London, when women talk to women their conversations are not trivial at all, and cover many more topics (up to 40) than when men talk to other men.

Women's conversations **range from** health to their houses, from politics to fashion, from films to family, from education to relationship problems. **Almost** everything, in fact, except football. Men **tend to** talk about fewer subjects, the most popular being work, sport, jokes, cars, and women.





However, they had **been sceptical** of the common belief that women use three times as many words as men. This idea became popular after the publication of a book called *The Female Brain* (2006) whose author, Louann Brizendine, **claimed** that 'a woman uses about 20,000 words per day, **whereas** a man uses about 7,000.'

Professor Mehl accepts that many people will find the results difficult to believe. However, he thinks that this research is important because the stereotype, that women talk too much and men keep quiet, is bad not only for women but also for men. 'It says that to be a good male, it's better not to talk – that silence is golden.'

Professor Boynton interviewed over 1,000 women for her study. She also found that women move quickly from one subject to another in conversation, whereas men usually stick to one subject for longer periods of time.

Professor Boynton also says that men and women chat for different reasons. In social situations women use conversation to solve problems and **reduce** stress, while men chat with each other to have a laugh or to swap opinions.



2 GRAMMAR articles: a / an, the, no article

- a Complete 1–4 with *a / an, the*, or – (no article).
- 'Have you heard this joke? ____ man with ____ dog walks into ____ bar. ____ man says to ____ barman, "Can I have ____ beer and ____ whisky for my dog...?"'
 - 'I've just read ____ article on ____ internet about how eating ____ strawberries makes you look younger...'
 - 'I'm sure there's something wrong between us because we never go out to ____ dinner or to ____ cinema any more.'
 - 'Did you watch ____ match ____ last night? I can't believe that ____ referee didn't see that it was ____ penalty...'
- b According to the article *A gossip with the girls?*, who do you think would probably say 1–4, a man or a woman?
- c ➤ p.137 Grammar Bank 3B. Learn more about articles and practise them.

3 PRONUNCIATION

/ə/, sentence stress, /ðə/ or /ði:/?

- a 2 20))) Listen and repeat the sound and words.



a about anniversary cinema problem
relationship spider usually woman

- b 2 21))) Listen and repeat the sentences. Then practise saying them with the /ə/ sound.

- What **are** we **going** to have for lunch **to**day?
- I'd **like** to see a good film **ton**ight.
- We **need** to go in the **other** **direction**.
- Could** you ask the **woman** **over** there?
- There's a **cinema** and there **are** lots of shops.

- c 2 22))) Listen and underline five phrases where *the* is pronounced /ði:/ (not /ðə/). Why does the pronunciation change?

the cinema the end the other day the world the sun
the internet the kitchen the answer the Earth

4 SPEAKING

Prove that the research in *A gossip with the girls?* is wrong! Work in pairs or small groups.

If you're a **woman**, try to talk for two minutes about:

football cars computers

If you're a **man**, try to talk for two minutes about:

fashion shopping your family

5 READING & LISTENING

- a Do you think it is a stereotype that women are better than men at looking after small children? Do you know any men who stay at home and look after their children? How do they manage?
- b Look at an illustration from a new book about looking after young children. Can you name some of the things in the picture?



- c Read the beginning of an article about the book. Why did Neil Sinclair write it? In what way is it different from other books about bringing up children?

For six years Neil Sinclair served as a commando with the British army. He had been in lots of dangerous situations, but nothing prepared him for the day when he brought his first baby home from hospital. 'I put the car seat containing my two-day-old son Samuel down on the floor and said to my wife, 'What do we do now?'

When he left the army, Sinclair and his wife agreed that he would stay at home and look after the baby, while his wife went back to work.

'I have done a lot of crazy things, but when I put that baby down I thought: I have a tiny baby and he is crying. What does he want? What does he need? I did not know. It was one of the most difficult days of my life.'

It was at that moment that Sinclair had an idea. 'I found myself thinking how much easier life would be if I had a basic training manual for my baby, like the manual you get when you join the army. I realized

- d 23 Listen to two men talking in the park about the book and mark the sentences T (true) or F (false).



- 1 Miranda is older than Stephen.
 - 2 Miranda's father slept badly the night before.
 - 3 Stephen's father recommends sleeping tablets.
 - 4 Stephen's father hasn't read *Commando Dad*.
 - 5 He likes the website because he enjoys reading about other men's experiences.
 - 6 Stephen's father really likes the book because it helps him and makes him laugh.
 - 7 In *Commando Dad*, BT means 'Baby Trooper' and 'Base Camp' means the kitchen.
 - 8 The author of *Commando Dad* thinks that women are only better than men when the baby is small.
- e Listen again and correct the wrong information.
- f Do you think it's a good idea to have a book and a website on childcare especially for men? Why (not)?

COMMANDO DAD

that somebody needed to write such a manual, and who better to write it than me? I had been a commando, but I was now a stay-at-home dad. I was the man for the job.'

His book, *Commando Dad: Basic Training*, is a set of instructions that explains with military precision and diagrams how new fathers should approach the first three years of their child's life to become a 'first-rate father'.

Adapted from The Times

Glossary

commando *noun* one of a group of soldiers who are trained to make quick attacks in enemy areas

stay-at-home dad *noun* a man who stays at home and looks after the children while his wife goes out to work

6 SPEAKING

- a 2 24))) Listen to someone talking about men and women, and complete the gaps.

'Generally _____, I think women worry more about their appearance than men. They _____ to spend hours choosing what to wear, doing their hair, and putting on make-up. Women are also _____ better at making themselves look more attractive. But I think that in _____, men are more worried than women about their body image. They feel more insecure about their hair, for instance, especially when they're going bald.'

- b In small groups discuss if the statements opposite about men and women are stereotypes or true. Try to use the **highlighted** expressions for generalizing from a.

MEN & WOMEN stereotypes or true?

- Women worry more about their appearance than men.
- Women spend more time than men on social networking sites.
- Men talk more about things; women talk more about people.
- Men are more interested than women in gadgets like phones and tablets.
- Women are better at multitasking than men.
- Men find it more difficult than women to talk to their friends or family if they have a problem.
- Women spend more time than men talking about celebrities and their lifestyles.
- Men are more interested than women in power.
- Women are less interested in sport than men.
- Men worry more about their health than women.

7 VOCABULARY

collocation: verbs / adjectives + prepositions

- a Cover the statements above. Can you remember the missing prepositions?

- 1 Men worry more ____ their health than women.
- 2 Women are better ____ multitasking than men.
- 3 Men are more interested than women ____ power.

- b ➤ p.156 Vocabulary Bank *Dependent prepositions.*



When are prepositions stressed?

Prepositions are normally only stressed when they are the last word, e.g. in a question. Compare:

We **need** to talk about our holiday.

What are you **talking** about?

Freddie is **afraid** of flying.

What are you **afraid** of?

- c Complete the questions with a preposition.

- 1 When you're with friends of the same sex, what do you usually talk ____?
- 2 Are there any sports or games that you're good ____?
- 3 Is there anything you're really looking forward ____?
- 4 Who in your family are you closest ____?
- 5 What kind of films are you keen ____?
- 6 Are there any animals or insects that you're afraid ____?
- 7 What's your town famous ____?
- 8 Are there any superstitions that you believe ____?

- d 2 27))) Listen and check. Then ask and answer the questions with a partner.

