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Is It a Boy or a Girl?

If you search for gender selection on Google, there are more than 500,000 hits. Some sites have simple calendars to follow a woman's cycle, and others have star charts. There are even some websites that sell unusual and expensive services to help choose a baby's gender. But according to a new study, a woman's diet is important.

The study followed the eating habits of 740 first-time mothers before and after they became pregnant. The women were placed into three categories based on how many calories they ate each day. 56% of the women who ate a high-energy diet with a lot of vitamins and minerals had boys. Of the greatest surprise, more sons were born to women who ate cereal each morning.

Over the past forty years in the developed nations of the world, more girls have been born. The study suggests that unhealthy diets cause the change. For example, many adults skip breakfast or eat unhealthy fast food. Many women also diet, which can lower the amount of vitamins and minerals.

The study didn't make any recommendations. However, if women want to have a son, maybe they should eat food with a lot of vitamins, minerals, and energy.

Teacher's Notes:

* Underlined words in red typeface are the recommended vocabulary for this lesson.
Select one or all of the following warm-up activities.

1: **Define**: What does “gender” mean? Can you use it in a sentence? Can you give examples?

2: **Brainstorm**: Brainstorm with a partner words and ideas for "pregnancy" for two minutes. Next, talk about the words and ideas for five minutes.

3: **Title**: Today's article is: "Is It a Boy or a Girl?" What will you read about?

4: **Do you agree or disagree? Why?**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>In recent years, more girls than boys have been born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>If it were possible, I would want to choose the gender of my baby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>I would prefer a son to a daughter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>I would want to know the gender of my child before he/she were born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>The food a mother eats affects the gender of a baby.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Select one of the following vocabulary acquisition activities.

1: Vocabulary match: Individually or in pairs/groups, match the words in column A (from the article) with the best choice in column B.

| a. gender        | u. strange          |
| b. unusual       | v. suggest          |
| c. category      | w. make             |
| d. cause         | x. male or female   |
| e. skip          | y. section          |
| f. recommend     | z. miss out         |

2: Fill in the Blanks: Fill in the blank with the correct word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>recommendations</th>
<th>unusual</th>
<th>cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>skip</td>
<td>categories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| a. If you search for (__________) selection, there are more than 500,000 hits. |
| b. There are some websites that sell (__________) and expensive services. |
| c. The women were placed into three (__________) |
| d. The study suggests that unhealthy diets (__________) the change. |
| e. Many adults (__________) breakfast or eat unhealthy fast food |
| f. The study didn't make any (__________) |

3: Define: Look in your dictionary for each word. Write the definition, correctly pronounce the word, and give an example sentence to the class.

| a. gender: |
| b. unusual: |
| c. category: |
| d. cause: |
| e. skip: |
| f. recommend: |
Is It a Boy or a Girl?
Lower-Intermediate

**WORD RECOGNITION**

These activities are optional. They reinforce vocabulary and increase reading speed.

1: **Word Search**: Find only the target words (in bold). Time yourself, and see how long it takes to find all the words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>recommendations</th>
<th>unusual</th>
<th>cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>skip</td>
<td>categories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

```
R R I U L C J K N Q B C X P S
S E X D W A H I Q G W A V T F
F K C B K P U K C D I T Q B H
X R I C A Z Q S P V W E B J T
Y E P P O P S J U C T G M M W
V D K G C M Z S A N L O S Z L
Y N C U A S T R W U R O W I
R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S
Q G M R L G S G D U X E C A A
B H R N O J N V T A B S Q I E
Y F V R U S B D O R T L O S U
R O Y L L U A S U N U I U A A
D S B I L O E B F K J A O L F
C D T X N U J J I Z C A U N B
C F C Z Z U V P B D G B N F S
```

2: **Target Word Pool**: Find only the target words (in bold) with their exact match. Time yourself, and see how long it takes to find all the words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>unusual</th>
<th>cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>skip</td>
<td>categories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

```
category recommending
genders unusually
categorize
categorized
casual
skip

rejoinder

usual cause

recommendation

usury

because

recommend

scrap

recommendations

usual categorize

unusual

cause

rejoinder

catechism

caused
```
Is It a Boy or a Girl?

Select one or more activity to direct students before the article is read, or to check understanding after the article is read.

1: Brainstorm Questions: Brainstorm questions that you would like to ask about today's topic. Answer a partner the questions. He shouldn't look at the article when he answers.

2: True or False?: Guess (before the article) or answer (after the article) if the sentence is true or false. If false, correct the sentence.

   a. There are more than 50,000 websites about gender selection. T/F
   b. Diet affects gender, but researchers already knew this. T/F
   c. Diets high in energy and nutrients often produced sons. T/F
   d. If a woman ate a bowl of cereal every morning, she would always have a boy. T/F
   e. The study recommends women change their diets to choose the baby's gender. T/F

3: Questions: Answer the questions to check comprehension.

   a. What kinds of websites are there if you want to choose the sex of your baby?
   b. What did the study look at?
   c. What has happened over the past forty years?
   d. What could happen if a woman became pregnant while on a diet?
   e. What does the article conclude?

4: Fragments: Remember how the fragments were used, and complete the sentence.

   a. If you search for gender selection on Google...
   b. But according to a new study...
   c. Of the greatest surprise, more sons were born to women who...
   d. Many women also diet, which can...
Is It a Boy or a Girl?
Lower-Intermediate

post-COMPREHENSION

Select one or more activity to discuss the contents of the article.

1: Vocabulary: Circle any other unknown words/phrases in the article. In pairs/groups, use your dictionaries to understand these words. Write an example sentence for each one.

2: Class Questions: Read through the article once more, and write down any questions that you would like to talk about in pairs/groups or as a class. Answer the questions.

3: Summarize: Work with a partner to summarize the article in your own words.

4: Discuss: Talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Remember to support your answers and ask more questions with your partner.
   a. Did you like this article? Why/not?
   b. Do you think the method discovered in the study really works? Why/not?
   c. What are some consequences of gender selection? Are the consequences serious?
   d. Would you want to know the gender of your unborn child? Why/not?
   e. Would you want to know of any possible diseases or conditions of your unborn child?
   f. Will parents be able to someday choose a baby’s gender, eye and hair color, IQ, etc?

5: Discuss: Many traits have been listed below. Decide which traits would be okay to choose before a child were born. Then brainstorm possible costs and problems for each trait. Share your answers with a partner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Yes or no:</th>
<th>Cost:</th>
<th>Possible problems:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye/Hair Color:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height/Weight:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQ:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic ability:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic ability:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6: Google Search: Type "gender selection" into Google news and read additional articles on this topic. Discuss or write an essay about your findings.
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The study followed the eating habits of 740 first-time mothers before and after they became pregnant. The women were placed into three categories based on how many calories they ate each day. 56% of the women who ate a high-energy diet with a lot of vitamins and minerals had boys. Of the greatest surprise, more sons were born to women who ate cereal each morning.

Over the past forty years in the developed nations of the world, more girls have been born. The study suggests that unhealthy diets cause the change. For example, many adults skip breakfast or eat unhealthy fast food. Many women also diet, which can lower the amount of vitamins and minerals.

The study didn't make any recommendations. However, if women want to have a son, maybe they should eat food with a lot of vitamins, minerals, and energy.
Fill in the blank with the correct word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>recommendations</th>
<th>vitamins</th>
<th>skip</th>
<th>surprise</th>
<th>unusual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>categories</td>
<td>gender</td>
<td>followed</td>
<td>cause</td>
<td>according</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is It a Boy or a Girl?

If you search for (a. ____________) selection on Google, there are more than 500,000 hits. Some sites have simple calendars to follow a woman's cycle, and others have star charts. There are even some websites that sell (b. ____________) and expensive services to help choose a baby's gender. But (c. ____________) to a new study, a woman's diet is important.

The study (d ____________) the eating habits of 740 first-time mothers before and after they became pregnant. The women were placed into three (e. ____________) based on how many calories they ate each day. 56% of the women who ate a high-energy diet with a lot of vitamins and minerals had boys. Of the greatest (f. ____________), more sons were born to women who ate cereal each morning.

Over the past forty years in the developed nations of the world, more girls have been born. The study suggests that unhealthy diets (g. ____________) the change. For example, many adults (h. ____________) breakfast or eat unhealthy fast food. Many women also diet, which can lower the amount of (i. ____________) and minerals.

The study didn't make any (j. ____________). However, if women want to have a son, maybe they should eat food with a lot of vitamins, minerals, and energy.
Listen and fill in the missing sentences. Compare your answers with a partner, and then listen once more.

Is It a Boy or a Girl?

If you search for gender selection on Google, there are more than 500,000 hits. Some sites have simple calendars to follow a woman's cycle, and others have star charts. There are even some websites that a) __________________________ __________. But according to a new study, a woman's diet is important.

The study followed the eating habits of 740 first-time mothers before and after they became pregnant. The women were placed c) __________________________ __________. 56% of the women who ate a high-energy diet with a lot of vitamins and minerals had boys. Of the greatest surprise, more sons were born to women who ate cereal each morning.

c) __________________________ __________, more girls have been born. The study suggests that unhealthy diets cause the change. For example, many adults skip breakfast or eat unhealthy fast food. Many women also diet, which can lower the amount of vitamins and minerals.

The study didn't make any recommendations. However, if women want to have a son, maybe they should eat food with a lot of vitamins, minerals, and energy.

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Sentence #1:

Sentence #2:

Sentence #3:
ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary

1: Vocabulary Match:
   a. x
   b. u
   c. y
   d. w
   e. z
   f. v

2: Fill in the Blanks:
   a. gender
   b. unusual
   c. categories
   d. cause
   e. skip
   f. recommendations

pre- or post-Comprehension

1. True or False:
   a. T
   b. F
   c. T
   d. F
   e. F

2. Fragments:
   a. there are more than 500,000 hits.
   b. a woman's diet is important.
   c. ate cereal each morning.
   d. lower the amount of vitamins and minerals.

Student Handout

1: Fill in the Blanks:
   a. gender
   b. unusual
   c. according
   d. followed
   e. categories
   f. surprise
   g. cause
   h. skip
   i. vitamins
   j. recommendations

2: Extended Listening:
   a. sell unusual and expensive services to help choose a baby's gender
   b. into three categories based on how many calories they ate each day
   c. Over the past forty years in the developed nations of the world