



Working Mothers: The Work-Life Balance

■ Learning Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to...

- Give logical opinions about working mothers and family oriented society.
- Utilize useful discussion phrases regarding asking others to continue and referring to materials.

1. Warming Up!

- A** Check the words you know and *circle* the words that you do not yet know.

Voca-space

drastically	workforce	inventions
valuable	childcare	shrinking
gender gap	prevent	household chores
obligated	obstacles	financial
inconveniences	progress	maternity leave

- B** In groups, help each other to find the meaning of the circled words. The dictionary should be the last resort!

2. Making a Case [A]

Read the article below. Gather ideas about the topic as you read the article.

Family Friendly Society

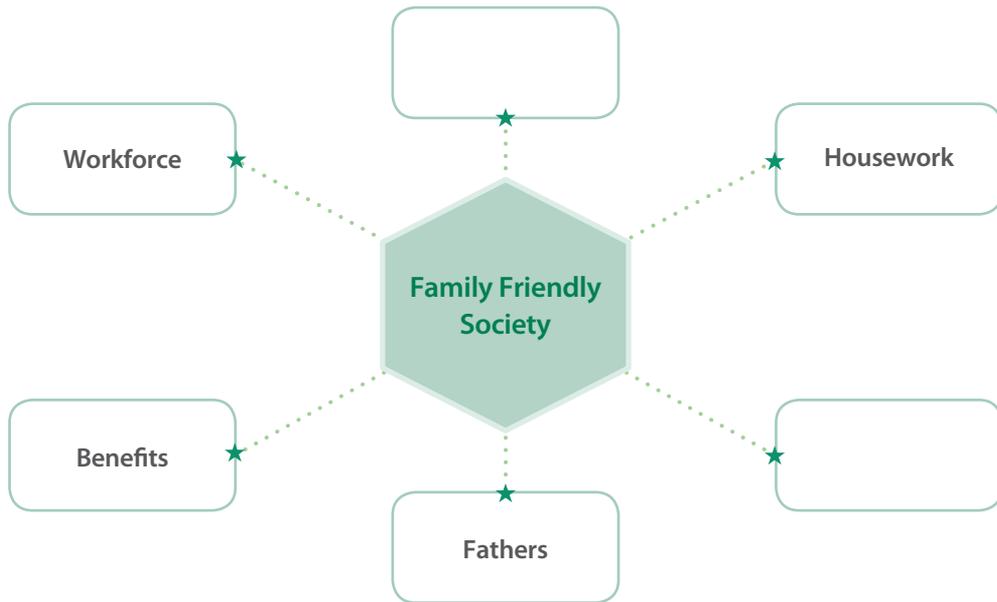
Over the last 50 years, the job market has changed **drastically**. More and more women are **entering the workforce**—not because they need to, but because they want to. Through modern **inventions** like washing machines and vacuum cleaners, household chores have been **reduced to the point** where motherhood doesn't necessarily have to be a full-time job. Modern women **spend less than half** the time on **housework** than they did in the 1960s—from 44 hours a week to 18 hours or less now.

In addition, many companies **have started offering** working-mom-friendly **benefits**, such as **maternity leave**, which gives mothers a job to return to when they have recovered. In addition, many companies can offer daycare options and flexible schedules, so that no one feels the need to **sacrifice** their career for their family.

Fathers are also increasingly active in the home. Recent research suggests that the gap between mothers' and fathers' responsibilities is **shrinking**. Modern fathers spend much more time on **childcare** and other household chores than their fathers and grandfathers did. As society **shifts to become** more family-friendly, the gap **will continue to narrow**.

A Stretch Your Thinking

In groups, brainstorm ideas and opinions about the topic on the provided mind map. The provided keywords from [A] are to be used as starting points.



B Phrase Fit

entering the workforce	will continue to
have started offering	spend less than half
reduced to the point	shifts to become

Fill in the blanks using the above expressions to complete the sentences which are about [A].

- 1) As the world better for families, the gap between mothers' and fathers' responsibilities will be reduced.
- 2) Recently, large numbers of women are out of choice, not necessity.
- 3) Today's mothers the time on household chores than they did fifty years ago—down from 44 hours a week to 18 hours now.

C Time to Digest!

Circle the underlined chunks if they are true about [A]. Highlight the underlined chunks if they are false and correct them.

In the last few decades, company culture¹ has been changing as more women enter the workforce. Modern women spend less than ten percent of the time² on housework that they did in the 1960s. Additionally, many employers³ have begun offering benefits such as maternity leave to help modern parents. Fathers are also performing more household chores.⁴ This demonstrates that the gap between mothers' and fathers' household jobs is widening.⁵

2. Making a Case [B]

Read the article below. Gather ideas about the topic as you read the article.

Obstacles for Working Mothers

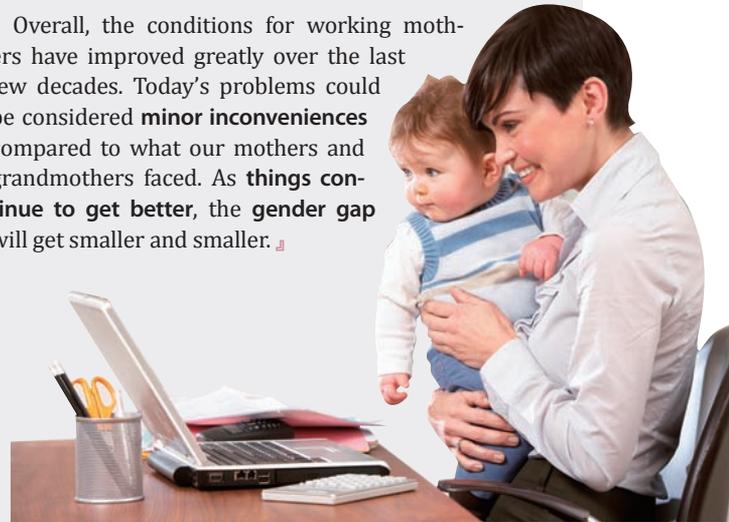
Despite all of the **progress** that has been made for working mothers, there are still significant **obstacles** that **prevent** many women from fully participating in the workforce.

One common issue is **financial** problems. If a mother works, then **it is often necessary to** pay for child-care. These costs can easily **eat away at** the money that the mother makes working. In addition, despite more men **helping out at home**, housework is still very much women's work. Research suggests that, because of **household chores**, women that work part-time have the longest actual working hours of all.

There are also occasional problems like sick children that the mother is usually **obligated** to take care of. Many men still earn more than their wives, so some families consider the husband's work more

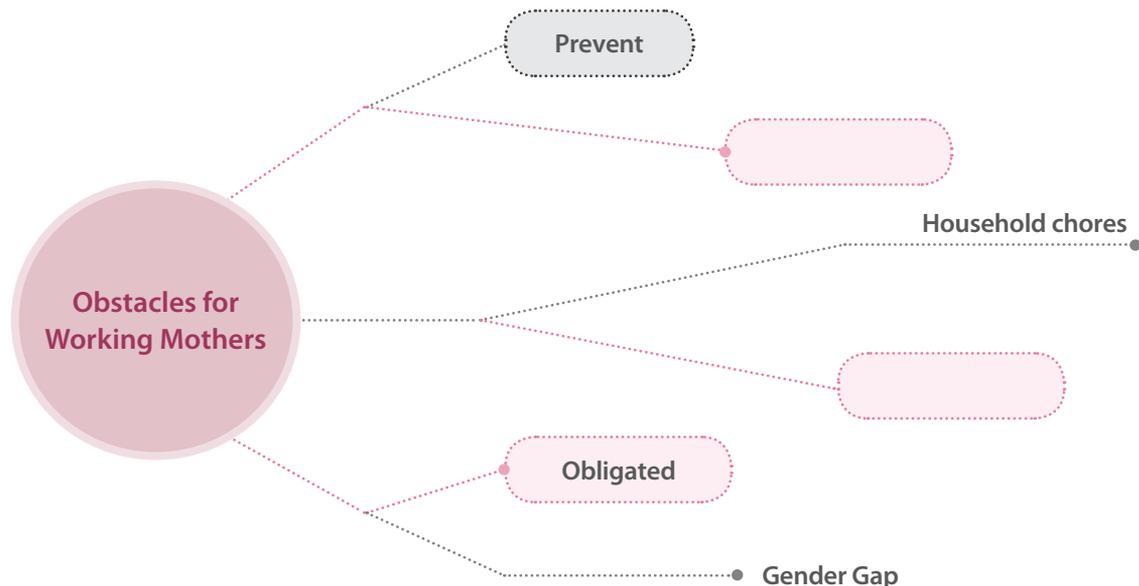
valuable—leading the mother to be more likely to **call in to work** to tend to a sick child.

Overall, the conditions for working mothers have improved greatly over the last few decades. Today's problems could be considered **minor inconveniences** compared to what our mothers and grandmothers faced. As **things continue to get better**, the **gender gap** will get smaller and smaller. ▮



A Stretch Your Thinking

In groups, brainstorm ideas and opinions about the topic on the provided mind map. The provided keywords from [B] are to be used as starting points.



B Phrase Fit

eat away at things continue to get better
to call in to work it is often necessary to
helping out at home minor inconveniences

Fill in the blanks using the above expressions to complete the sentences which are about **[B]**.

- 1) Childcare costs often the mothers' salaries, decreasing the benefits of working.
- 2) A lot of husbands make more money than their wives, so their job might be considered more valuable—leading mothers to be more likely to take care of sick children.
- 3) Despite the trend of more men, housework is still very much women's job even in modern society.

C Time to Digest!

Circle the underlined chunks if they are true about **[B]**. Highlight the underlined chunks if they are false and correct them.

Even though working mothers have made a lot of progress over the last few decades,¹ there are still some obstacles preventing many women from working. Childcare costs can eat up much of the family's retirement fund.² In addition, housework is still mostly the wife's responsibility.³ Mothers are also responsible for taking care of occasional problems like paperwork.⁴ Many men still earn more than their wives, so some families consider the husband's work more valuable— the father is more likely⁵ to take off work to care for a sick child.

3. What's Your Opinion?

Share your opinions about the discussion questions below using the provided useful expressions from the Phrase Bank as much as possible.

- 1) Do you think working mothers have enough time for their children? Give specific reasons.
- 2) Why do you think many modern women want to work—for money or for professional fulfillment?
- 3) Do working mothers get many benefits in your country?
- 4) In your country, do most women work after having children?
- 5) Would you or your wife prefer working after having children? Why or why not? Give specific reasons.

Phrase Bank

• Asking to Continue

- Please go on.
- Please go ahead.
- You've clearly thought about this topic. What else have you considered?
- Does what you say relate to...?
- What you say is (interesting, etc.). What else do you see/think?
- Your ideas sound great. Please tell me more.

• Referring to Material

- Please take a look at... for reference.
- Please consult...
- As you can see illustrated here,...
- Mapping the data gives us this picture.
- If we put all this data together, the picture is clear that...
- The best way to see my point is to look at...

4. Raise the Issues!

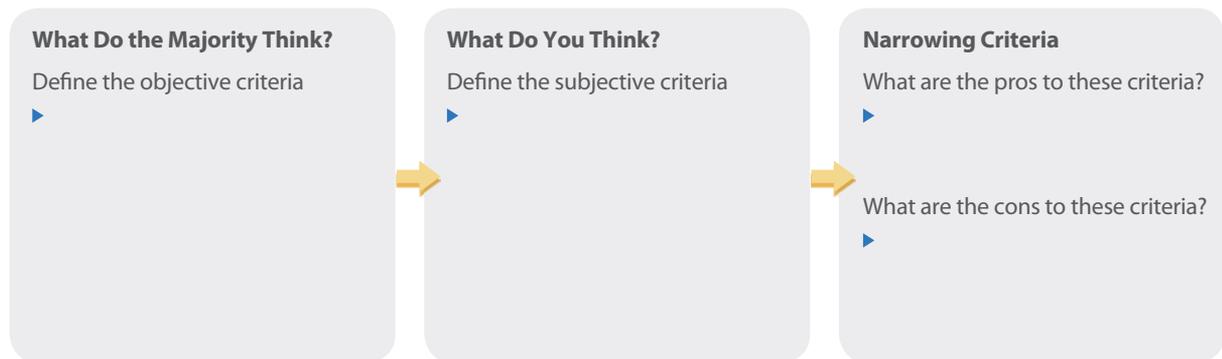
Pros & Cons

To Work or Not to Work?

Despite the difficulties, many women today are returning to the workforce soon after having children. This might improve the quality of their daily lives and give the family a little extra cash, but some argue it can have negative effects for the children. For a healthy family, do you think it's better for mothers to work or to stay at home if they can afford it?

Are You Pros or Cons? • Pros • Cons

- A** **Make two groups:** pros and cons. Come up with a solution supporting either the Pros or Cons regarding the given topic. Follow the solution formula provided below.



Coming Up With A Solution:

Final Opinion

- B** Discuss your supporting ideas with the opposing group. All members of the group should participate in giving and answering the questions.

Phrase Bank

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5. Fun Forum

Be Spontaneous!

Q1 What was the most spontaneous thing you've ever done? What made you do it?

Q2 Now discuss with your group members the most spontaneous thing they have done before. Are there any acts that you want to copy? Why? Give specific reasons.



A Sneak Peek!

If you were a host to a Roundtable Discussion program, what would you ask about the following topic? Write three questions and discuss about it.

[Handwriting in Modern Society]

1.

2.

3.

