

## Iceland's prime minister and women go on strike

26th October 2023



Women across Iceland joined their prime minister in going on strike on Tuesday. The action was part of a campaign for greater gender equality in the country. Prime minister Katrin Jakobsdottir told reporters why she took part in the "Women's Day Off". She said: "As

you know, we have not yet reached our goals of full gender equality and we are still tackling the gender-based wage gap, which is unacceptable in 2023." A spokeswoman for the day off said: "On 24 October, all women in Iceland were encouraged to stop work, both paid and unpaid. For the whole day, women (and non-binary people) went on strike, to demonstrate the importance of their contribution to society."

Yesterday was the seventh time that women in Iceland have gone on strike. It was the first such action in nearly 50 years. The last strike was in 1975, when 90 per cent of women did not go to work and did not do housework. The following year, Iceland passed an equal pay law. In 1980, Iceland became the first country in Europe to elect a woman as head of state. According to the World Economic Forum, Iceland has had the smallest gender gap of any country for 14 years in a row. Despite this, Ms Jakobsdottir, said there is still a long way to go. She wants women's pay to be equal to men's pay. She also wants a reduction in gender-based violence. Ms Jakobsdottir said this was a "priority" for her government to tackle.

Sources: [cnn.com](https://www.cnn.com) / [icelandreview.com](https://www.icelandreview.com) / [time.com](https://www.time.com)

### Writing

A women's day off is a great idea. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

women / Iceland / prime minister / campaign / gender equality / gender gap / society strike / 50 years ago / housework / equal pay / head of state / violence / priority

### True / False

- 1) A women's strike in Iceland was to campaign for the environment. T / F
- 2) The strike was called "Men Against Women". T / F
- 3) Iceland's leader said differences in men and women's pay were OK. T / F
- 4) Women who were unpaid also went on strike. T / F
- 5) It is the first time for women in Iceland to strike. T / F
- 6) Iceland passed an equal pay law in 1976. T / F
- 7) Iceland was the first country in the world to have a female leader. T / F
- 8) A priority for Iceland is to lower gender-based violence. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. <b>campaign</b>     | a. involvement   |
| 2. <b>took part</b>    | b. achieved      |
| 3. <b>reached</b>      | c. urged         |
| 4. <b>encouraged</b>   | d. consecutively |
| 5. <b>contribution</b> | e. cut           |
| 6. <b>following</b>    | f. effort        |
| 7. <b>elect</b>        | g. main concern  |
| 8. <b>in a row</b>     | h. vote in       |
| 9. <b>reduction</b>    | i. participated  |
| 10. <b>priority</b>    | j. next          |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) How equal are men and women in your country?
- b) Why do men get paid more than women?
- c) What do you think of the prime minister going on strike?
- d) How can we achieve equality for women?
- e) What do you think of the 'Women's Day Off'?
- f) In what ways is there inequality between men and women?
- g) Would you ever go on strike?
- h) What is the contribution of women in your society?

## Phrase Match

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. part of a campaign for greater            | a. equal pay law         |
| 2. we have not yet reached                   | b. to society            |
| 3. tackling the                              | c. way to go             |
| 4. all women in Iceland were encouraged      | d. our goals             |
| 5. the importance of their contribution      | e. in nearly 50 years    |
| 6. It was the first such action              | f. in a row              |
| 7. Iceland passed an                         | g. gender-based wage gap |
| 8. for 14 years                              | h. to tackle             |
| 9. there is still a long                     | i. to stop work          |
| 10. this was a "priority" for her government | j. gender equality       |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- Who should do the housework?
- Are male or female leaders better?
- What great female presidents or prime ministers do you know of?
- How can we reduce gender-based violence?
- What do you think is your country's biggest priority?
- What do you know about Iceland?
- What questions would you like to ask the striking women?

## Spelling

- The action was part of a ampaicgn
- our goals of full gender uelaqity
- which is aucetpnaclbe in 2023
- ncuearoged to stop work
- went on strike to smodertnate the importance
- their contribution to cseioty
- did not do uesowhrok
- the ollfwiong year
- elect a woman as head of state
- a reduction in gender-based ilvneoce
- Jakobsdottir said this was a rroipty
- for her government to acktle

### Answers – Synonym Match

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

## Role Play

### Role A – Cook

You think cooking is the top thing that women can do better than men. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why men might be better at their things. Also, tell the others which of these women aren't so good at (and why): listening, winning arguments or driving.

### Role B – Listening

You think listening is the top thing that women can do better than men. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why men might be better at their things. Also, tell the others which of these women aren't so good at (and why): cooking, winning arguments or driving.

### Role C – Winning Arguments

You think winning arguments is the top thing that women can do better than men. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why men might be better at their things. Also, tell the others which of these women aren't so good at (and why): listening, cooking or driving.

### Role D – Drive

You think driving is the top thing that women can do better than men. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why men might be better at their things. Also, tell the others which of these women aren't so good at (and why): listening, winning arguments or cooking.

## Speaking – Women

Rank these with your partner. Put the things women can do better than men at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |          |                 |
|----------|-----------------|
| • Cook   | • Write books   |
| • Teach  | • Act           |
| • Listen | • Win arguments |
| • Love   | • Drive         |

### Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	F	4	T	5	F	6	T	7	F	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.