

# www.**Breaking News English**.com

Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

## **The Breaking News English.com Resource Book**

“1,000 Ideas & Activities For Language Teachers”

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/book.html>

## **India's lost female generation**

URL: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0601/060111-abortion-e.html>

## **Contents**

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading	7
Discussion	8
Speaking	9
Homework	10
Answers	11

**11 January, 2006**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **India's lost female generation**

A survey from the University of Toronto and India's Institute of Medical Education suggests that at least ten million females have been aborted in India over the past twenty years. Researchers looked at statistics on more than one million families. The survey covered the period for which ultrasound technology has been available. This technique shows the sex of a baby in the early stages of its life, when it is a fetus. Researchers say middle class families abort female fetuses so that they have male heirs. Researcher Prabhat Jha says: "We...estimate that...selective abortion accounts for 500,000 missing girls yearly."

Selective abortion has been illegal in India since 1994. However, statistics reveal that couples continue to base abortion decisions after having the ultrasound. Figures show that educated mothers abort twice as many female fetuses as illiterate mothers. The number of girls in India has been falling for the past 20 years. For every 1,000 boys up to the age of six the number of girls dropped from 962 in 1981 to 927 in 2001. Many couples believe a family is unbalanced without a son. They think a male is important to continue the family name and take care of his parents in their old age.

## WARM-UPS

**1. BOYS & GIRLS:** Which are better? Talk about this with your partner. Would you prefer to have all boys or all girls? Are brothers better than sisters? Are pink baby clothes cuter than blue? Are girls more expensive? Do parents have to worry more about boys?

**2. GENERATIONS:** In pairs / groups, talk about the following generations. Try to guess about the ones you are unsure of (look them up on the Web for homework).

- India's ultrasound generation
- Generation X
- The chemical generation
- Generation Y
- Baby boomers
- The digital generation
- The lost generation
- The "everything now" generation

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Surveys / medical education / abortion / the past / ultrasound / male heirs / India educated mothers / illiteracy / pregnancy / boys / girls / couples / bloodline*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. OPINIONS:** Do you agree with the following opinions on abortion?

- Abortion is murder.
- A mother has the right to choose whether or not to end her pregnancy.
- The father should be allowed to stop the mother from having an abortion.
- A fetus is a human being and has the right to life.
- Abortion is OK in very special cases.
- All abortions should only take place after court decisions.
- Abortion is for weak people who want an easy life.
- If a baby is unwanted, it'll have a sad life and add to society's problems.

**5. ABORTION:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "abortion". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**6. QUICK DEBATE:** Students A think abortion is the same as murder. Students B think abortion is not murder. Change partners often.

**7. ~ICIDE:** Talk with your partner(s) about the following words:

- patricide / matricide
- infanticide / parenticide
- suicide / pseudocide
- spermicide
- pesticide / insecticide
- homicide / genocide
- linguicide / cybercide
- verbicide

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Millions of Indian women have said they have no aim in life. T / F
- b. A survey looked at figures covering a million Indian families. T / F
- c. Ultrasound is a technology used in recording songs to put on the Web. T / F
- d. A researcher says there are 500,000 missing in India every year. T / F
- e. It is legal in India to have an abortion based on the sex of the baby. T / F
- f. Educated mothers abort more baby girls than illiterate mothers. T / F
- g. The number of girls born in India is going down year by year. T / F
- h. Indian couples prefer boys so that they continue the family bloodline. T / F

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| a. at least   | timeframe       |
| b. statistics | essential       |
| c. period     | against the law |
| d. sex        | uneducated      |
| e. estimate   | figures         |
| f. illegal    | gender          |
| g. reveal     | dropping        |
| h. illiterate | show            |
| i. falling    | a minimum of    |
| j. important  | guess           |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                        |                                    |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. India's Institute of                | having the ultrasound              |
| b. Researchers looked at statistics    | so that they have male heirs       |
| c. in the early stages of its life,    | been falling for the past 20 years |
| d. families abort female fetuses       | in India since 1994                |
| e. selective abortion accounts for     | Medical Education                  |
| f. Selective abortion has been illegal | when it is a fetus                 |
| g. base abortion decisions after       | without a son                      |
| h. educated mothers abort twice        | 500,000 missing girls yearly       |
| i. The number of girls in India has    | on more than one million families  |
| j. a family is unbalanced              | as many female fetuses             |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**WHICH WORD?** Delete the incorrect or least likely word from the pairs in bold.

### India's lost female generation

A **survey** / **surveyor** from the University of Toronto and India's Institute of Medical Education suggests that **at** / **in** least ten million females have been aborted in India **over** / **under** the past twenty years. Researchers looked at **static** / **statistics** on more than one million families. The survey covered the period for which ultrasound technology has been available. This technique **shadows** / **shows** the sex of a baby in the early stages of its life, when it is a fetus. Researchers say middle **lesson** / **class** families abort female fetuses so that they have male **heirs** / **hairs**. Researcher Prabhat Jha says: "We...estimate that...selective abortion accounts for 500,000 missing girls yearly."

Selective abortion has been **legal** / **illegal** in India since 1994. However, statistics reveal that **couples** / **trios** continue to base abortion decisions **before** / **after** having the ultrasound. Figures show that educated mothers abort twice as many female fetuses as illiterate **fathers** / **mothers**. The number of girls in India has been **falling** / **rising** for the past 20 years. For every 1,000 boys up to the age of six the number of girls **dropped** / **drooped** from 962 in 1981 to 927 in 2001. Many couples believe a family is **balanced** / **unbalanced** without a son. They think a male is important to continue the family name and **give** / **take** care of his parents in their old age.

## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **India's lost female generation**

A \_\_\_\_\_ from the University of Toronto and India's Institute of Medical Education suggests that at least ten million females have been \_\_\_\_\_ in India over the past twenty years. Researchers looked at \_\_\_\_\_ on more than one million families. The survey covered the period for which ultrasound technology has been \_\_\_\_\_. This technique shows the sex of a baby in the early stages of its life, when it is a fetus. Researchers say \_\_\_\_\_ class families abort female fetuses so that they have male heirs. Researcher Prabhat Jha says: "We...estimate that...\_\_\_\_\_ abortion accounts for 500,000 missing girls yearly."

Selective abortion has been \_\_\_\_\_ in India since 1994. However, statistics reveal that couples continue to base abortion \_\_\_\_\_ after having the ultrasound. Figures show that educated mothers abort twice as many female fetuses as \_\_\_\_\_ mothers. The number of girls in India has been falling for the past 20 years. For every 1,000 boys up to the age of six the number of girls \_\_\_\_\_ from 962 in 1981 to 927 in 2001. Many \_\_\_\_\_ believe a family is unbalanced without a son. They think a male is important to continue the family \_\_\_\_\_ and take care of his parents in their old age.

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**boy**' and '**girl**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. WHICH WORD?** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "ABORTION" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about abortion.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| • survey       | • illegal    |
| • twenty years | • base       |
| • period       | • twice      |
| • technique    | • falling    |
| • heirs        | • dropped    |
| • yearly       | • unbalanced |

## DISCUSSION

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. Do you think there are any cases in which abortion is OK?
- d. How is the law for abortion in your country?
- e. How does your religion look at abortion?
- f. Do you think the morning after pill is the same as abortion?
- g. Some people think doctors who do abortions are murderers. What do you think?
- h. Is it important to have a male in the family to continue the bloodline?
- i. Do you think fewer females will cause social problems in India?
- j. What would you want to tell the unborn child?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you understand the pro-life argument?
- d. Do you sympathize with the "right to choose" argument?
- e. If a woman wants an abortion, what rights does the father have?
- f. Is having an abortion a selfish choice?
- g. Do you think abortions should be encouraged for girls of 12, 13 or 14 years old?
- h. When is the fertilized egg a human being?
- i. What do you think of back-street abortionists?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?



## SPEAKING

### **ROLE PLAY:** Should all abortion be made illegal?

Team up with classmates who have the same role to develop your roles and discuss ideas and "strategies". Introduce yourself to the other role players.

#### Role A – Pro-abortionist

You believe abortion is a necessary part of society. There are many situations in which abortion will result in a better situation for everyone. For example, in cases of rape, where a mother does not have the capacity to look after the baby or where the mother is a young girl.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY ABORTION IS ACCEPTABLE.

#### Role B – Anti-abortionist

You believe abortion is the same as murder. Human life starts at the moment of conception. You believe no one has the right to end that life. You think mothers should be more responsible and caring. You also think governments should do more to help mothers with problems.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY ABORTION IS UNACCEPTABLE.

#### Role C – Citizen

You are not sure what to think. You can see all sides of the argument and they all sound good. You want to know the answers to lots of questions.

THINK OF MANY QUESTIONS TO ASK THE "EXPERTS".

#### Role D – An unborn child

You're not really sure about the issues on the outside, in the real world. Listen to what is being said and agree or disagree. You can get angry.

THINK OF REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD SEE THE WORLD.

Change roles and repeat the role play. Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

In pairs / groups, discuss whether you really believe in what you said while you were in your roles.

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on this news. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. LETTER:** You are an unborn child. Write a letter to the world. Tell your thoughts hopes and concerns regarding the world outside. Tell the world what you think of abortion. Read your letters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

**4. BOYS 'N' GIRLS:** Make a poster about the pros and cons of having a boy or a girl. Show your poster to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all think of similar ideas?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. T      c. F      d. T      e. F      f. T      g. T      h. T

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| a. at least   | a minimum of    |
| b. statistics | figures         |
| c. period     | timeframe       |
| d. sex        | gender          |
| e. estimate   | guess           |
| f. illegal    | against the law |
| g. reveal     | show            |
| h. illiterate | uneducated      |
| i. falling    | dropping        |
| j. important  | essential       |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                        |                                    |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. India's Institute of                | Medical Education                  |
| b. Researchers looked at statistics    | on more than one million families  |
| c. in the early stages of its life,    | when it is a fetus                 |
| d. families abort female fetuses       | so that they have male heirs       |
| e. selective abortion accounts for     | 500,000 missing girls yearly       |
| f. Selective abortion has been illegal | in India since 1994                |
| g. base abortion decisions after       | having the ultrasound              |
| h. educated mothers abort twice        | as many female fetuses             |
| i. The number of girls in India has    | been falling for the past 20 years |
| j. a family is unbalanced              | without a son                      |

### WHICH WORD?

#### India's lost female generation

A **survey** / ~~surveyor~~ from the University of Toronto and India's Institute of Medical Education suggests that **at** / **in** least ten million females have been aborted in India **over** / **under** the past twenty years. Researchers looked at **static** / **statistics** on more than one million families. The survey covered the period for which ultrasound technology has been available. This technique **shadows** / **shows** the sex of a baby in the early stages of its life, when it is a fetus. Researchers say middle **lesson** / **class** families abort female fetuses so that they have male **heirs** / **hairs**. Researcher Prabhat Jha says: "We...estimate that...selective abortion accounts for 500,000 missing girls yearly."

Selective abortion has been **legal** / **illegal** in India since 1994. However, statistics reveal that **couples** / **trios** continue to base abortion decisions **before** / **after** having the ultrasound. Figures show that educated mothers abort twice as many female fetuses as illiterate **fathers** / **mothers**. The number of girls in India has been **falling** / **rising** for the past 20 years. For every 1,000 boys up to the age of six the number of girls **dropped** / **drooped** from 962 in 1981 to 927 in 2001. Many couples believe a family is **balanced** / **unbalanced** without a son. They think a male is important to continue the family name and **give** / **take** care of his parents in their old age.