
Men & women

1 Look at the words and phrases in bold in these sentences and decide if we generally consider them to have a positive connotation or a negative connotation.

1. They would never admit it, but men and women are in a continuous **power struggle** at work. *Positive / Negative*
2. Most major companies are **male-dominated**. *Positive / Negative*
3. It's a fact that, when it comes to promoting their employees, some companies still **discriminate** on the basis of someone's sex. *Positive / Negative*
4. A recent survey suggests that many professional women working for large companies and organisations often hit a **glass ceiling** at some point in their career. *Positive / Negative*
5. Professional businesswomen, especially those in senior management positions, are more **astute** than men. *Positive / Negative*
6. In my experience, they are also more **versatile**. *Positive / Negative*
7. What's more, they are better at **multi-tasking**. *Positive / Negative*
8. They can also be much more **ruthless** when necessary. *Positive / Negative*
9. My elder brother is such a **male chauvinist**! *Positive / Negative*
10. As far he is concerned, women are little more than **sex objects**. *Positive / Negative*
11. He is completely **unreconstructed**. *Positive / Negative*
12. Some might say that he's a bit of a **dinosaur**. *Positive / Negative*

13. My younger brother, on the other hand, has **egalitarian** views. *Positive / Negative*
14. He believes in **equality** between men and women. *Positive / Negative*
15. He doesn't think that women are the **weaker sex**. *Positive / Negative*

2 Use the words and phrases in the box to complete the conversation.

battle of the sexes breadwinner child rearing gender roles
household management male counterparts practical role
division Sex Discrimination Act social convention
stereotypes

Chris: I think that cleaning and cooking are a woman's job. After all, men are no good at 1.....

Sam: I disagree.

Chris: And in the workplace, women aren't very 2....., are they?.

Sam: In what way?

Chris: In the way that there are a lot of things they can't do as well as men can. Such as, er, well, I can't think of anything in particular at the moment.

Sam: Exactly.

Chris: Well, let's face it, women never do as well as their 3..... at work.

Sam: I've never heard such unreconstructed rubbish. Thank goodness the 4..... exists to prevent your views being put into practice. And I suppose you think that women are only good for changing babies' nappies, and other tedious aspects of 5.....

Chris: No, but I do believe that in a modern household, there should be a clearly defined 6..... Men are good at DIY, for example. Most women aren't. And I'll always believe that it's the man who should be the 7....., providing food and shelter for his family.

Sam: Well, all I can say is that I'm glad your ideas of 8..... are not shared by most people.

Chris: Nonsense! A lot of people believe in traditional 9.....: the man goes out to work, the woman stays at home. It's as simple as that.

Sam: Men at work and women at home? Come on, love, those are such typical 10..... With people like you around, the 11..... will continue to rage on and on.

Chris: Oh give it a rest, Dad. I'm right, and you know I am.

Sam: Sorry, Christine, but we're in the twenty-first century now. You need to move with the times.

3 Complete this essay with words and phrases from Exercises 1 and 2. In some cases, more than one answer is possible.

A totally 1..... society, in which sexual
2..... between men and women is the norm, is still
a long way off. This is certainly the case if you watch certain television
programmes, where men are often portrayed as the
3....., bringing money home to the wife, who is often
depicted as the 4....., prone to extreme emotions and
temper tantrums. But is this really the case? Is it still fair to create
5..... such as this? After all, as more women go
out to work, and more men stay at home to look after the house and
children, it is becoming clear that so-called 6.....
are merging and disappearing.

Take the office workplace as an example. For years, businesses and companies were 7..... The directors, managers and other senior executives were always male, the secretaries and personal assistants almost always female. This was probably because men were traditionally seen as more 8....., more able to deal with the cut-and-thrust of business. However, now women are proving that they can be just as tough, if not tougher, while simultaneously being more 9..... and caring. In fact, in many ways, women are much better at 10....., which is vital in modern business where you are expected to do more than one job. And thanks to the 11....., women are paid the same as men. It would appear that, in many cases, the 12..... is a dying breed (although, unfortunately, there are still many 13..... men in the workplace who think they can do everything and anything better than their female colleagues, and there are still cases where women climbing up through the ranks get to a point where they hit a 14..... and cannot climb any higher).

At home, too, there is less evidence of 15..... It is no longer the woman who does all the cooking, cleaning and 16..... Such 17..... is now often shared equally. 18..... no longer expects the woman to stay indoors all day while the man stays out until all hours.

The good news, therefore, is that women no longer need to feel they are regarded as mere 19....., or the underdogs in a 20..... with their 21..... In fact, many believe that in the 22....., it is women who have come out on top.