WHY ARE WOMEN LEAVING SCIENCE CAREERS?

Words

Look for the following words as you read the passage. Match each word with its correct definition.

Words	Definitions
1. absence	A. n., a person who gives help and advice
2. academic	B. n., demands; responsibilities
3. approximately	C. adj., similar in size or amount
4. bear	D. v., to give, commit
5. commensurate	E. adj., very serious or extreme; very bad
6. devote	F. n., not being present, time away
7. dire	G. v., to move forward
8. discrepancy	H. n., difference between two things that should be the same
9. equality	I. adv., close but not exactly
10. frustration	J. v., to continue
11. funding	K. n., being the same, having the same rights and opportunities
12. guidance	L. v., to confirm, make a person feel valued
13. inordinate	M. n., lack of satisfaction, inability to reach goals
14. invaluable	N. adj., related to school, especially university
15. mentor	O. n., financial support
16. persist	P. v., to fight
17. pressure	Q. adj., more than is reasonable
18. progress	R. adj., very valuable; extremely useful
19. struggle	S. v., to carry, have responsibility for
20. validate	T. n., advice, assistance

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Reading

Why Are Women Leaving Science Careers?

Generations of women struggled for the right to pursue careers in science and technology, yet today nearly half the women scientists in Europe and the Americas leave their careers. The difference in numbers between men and women who advance and persist in their fields cannot be attributed to race, ethnic, or social group. The dire consequences of this loss may become more acute as the number of women entering science careers increases. Since the 1990s, more women than men have enrolled in college, earned higher grades, and majored in science or technology fields. If the trend continues and more than half these women leave their careers by their mid-forties, approximately one-third of all scientists will leave their careers in the next twenty years. So why are women leaving the science careers they worked so hard to attain? Studies by academic and professional associations show the causes for the loss of this valuable resource are threefold: time, family responsibilities, and lack of role models.

High-level jobs in science, in both the corporate and the academic world, require inordinate amounts of time. With increased use of the Internet, cell phones, and other electronic forms of communication, scientists are not only required to be in the lab or office ten to twelve hours a day, but expected to be available the rest of the time, too. Professional time demands are the same for both men and women, but many more women opt out than men because of significant issues that men do not face.

Although women are nearing equality in the professional world, the pressures of caring for family still rests largely with women. According to studies, professional women with children still bear the majority of the responsibilities at home. They spend more time with the children and on taking care of the home than men. Biology dictates that women require extended leaves of absence when they are pregnant and give birth, yet to advance in their careers, women cannot afford to take time off until their late thirties, when the optimal time for having healthy babies is ending. Women can devote the necessary attention to neither career nor home life, often creating intense frustration.

Discrepancies in opportunities and salaries still exist between the sexes. Because there are fewer female role models in the upper levels of science and technology fields, women have fewer mentors, who provide invaluable support. Without mentors, women in the sciences go without the support, guidance, and networking needed to lead them through the complications of corporate culture, to validate their ideas and secure funding for research, and to access those who can help them progress in their careers. Mentors also help scientists develop business expertise:

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Mentored scientists hold more patents, an important source of wealth. Women hold only 14 percent[1] of new patents awarded. Without mentors, women have to work harder to reach the same goals as men, and all the while, many women are still paid less than men for commensurate work.

To keep women scientists in the workforce, some companies are instituting mentoring programs, on-site child care, flex-time, and other innovative accommodations. Unfortunately, many companies are content to outsource or to bring in men from other countries to fill positions that valuable but frustrated women scientists leave behind.

Answer the questions about **Why Are Women Leaving Science Careers?**

Questions 1–3

Choose an ending from the list to complete each sentence. There are more endings than sentences, so you will not use them all.

A funding offered by the government.

B discrepancies in opportunities for men and women.

C pregnancy and childbirth.

D the type of guidance they receive in school.

E the need to divide their time between career and home life.

_____ 1. Women may request permission for long periods of absence from work because of

_____ 2. Women in science careers experience frustration because of

_____ 3. Women often don't progress as far as men in science careers because of

[1]BrE: per cent

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Questions 4–7

Do the following statements agree with the information in the reading passage?

Write

TRUE *if the statement agrees with the information.*
FALSE *if the statement contradicts the information.*
NOT GIVEN *if there is no information on this in the passage.*

_____4. Women scientists are hired for academic jobs more often than for research jobs.

_____5. Both men and women in science careers are expected to devote inordinate amounts of time to their jobs.

_____6. Women in science careers tend to get less support from mentors than men do.

_____7. Salaries for women in science careers are commensurate with men's salaries.

My Words

Write the words that are new to you. Look them up in the dictionary and write their definitions.

Words	Definitions
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
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