

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?

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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.