

Questions 21-27

Choose the correct answer: A, B or C.

21 Jess wants to start the meeting by

- A organizing his notes
- B taking a photo
- C reviewing the objectives for the project

22 What are Matt and Jess planning to study?

- A different species of insects
- B different species of plants
- C old photos

23 How far apart are the plots supposed to be?

- A 12 feet apart
- B 10 meters apart
- C 10 miles apart

24 Where can the bamboo sticks be purchased?

- A department stores
- B toy shops
- C gardening centres

25 One person throws the frame and the other person

- A turns on the spot
- B smiles and waves
- C marks out the squares

26 The instructions sound complicated because

- A they are in writing
- B there is so much turning around
- C there are so many squares

27 Jess thinks Matt should do the throwing because

- A he has more experience
- B he has a stronger arm
- C he is more accurate

What do Matt and Jess decide about each of the possible locations?

Write the correct letter, A, B, or C, in boxes 28-30 on your answer sheet.

A they will go there

B they might go there

C they will not go there

locations

28 the lowland around the marsh __

29 behind the beach __

30 behind the headland near the bay __

Questions 1-8

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1?

write

TRUE T if the statement agrees with the information

FALSE F if the statement contradicts the information

NOT GIVEN NG if there is no information on this

1 Mothers in India eat cereal for breakfast so that they will have male babies.

2 New drugs have been developed that allow parents to choose the sex of their child.

3 People used to think that the father was responsible for the sex of the baby.

4 Elissa Cameron used both humans and mice in her research.

5 The majority of research on gender selection is happening in Europe.

6 People in the United Kingdom often do not eat breakfast.

7 Some people think that drinking tea has an effect on the sex of a baby.

8 High-calorie diets have been shown to increase the likelihood of female births.

Gender selection—the choosing of a baby's gender prior to birth—occurs in many parts of the world. In China and India, for example, a baby's gender is considered to be of vital importance to the family, and male babies are often preferred over females for cultural reasons. In Western countries as well, there are many reasons why a family might want to choose a baby's sex. Often, parents wish to have a mix of both boys and girls in the family.

There are also health reasons for gender selection: many diseases affect children of only one sex, and a family that is susceptible to these diseases may wish to choose a baby's gender to avoid having an affected child.

This demand for gender choice by parents has led scientists worldwide to investigate gender selection prior to conception. Conventional wisdom states that the father's sperm is the main determinant of a child's gender, but recent research has begun to reveal a number of other possible determining factors.

Elissa Cameron's research, conducted in 2007 at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, investigated the effects of diet on sex ratios at birth. In one experiment, she changed the blood sugar level of female mice prior to conception by putting a chemical in the animals' water. Mice that received the additive saw their blood sugar levels fall from 6.47 to 5.24 millimols/litre. A separate control group of mice received pure water, without the additive. After a few days, the two groups of mice were allowed to mate. In the control group, 41 % of the mice were born female, as compared to 47% in the group that received the additive-a disparity that Dr Cameron ascribed to the differences in the mothers' blood sugar levels. Interestingly, the idea that blood sugar levels affect a baby's sex follows traditional wisdom. It has long been believed that mothers should eat more red meat and salty foods-which raise blood sugar for a long period-if they want to have a boy; they are advised to eat chocolates and sweets-which raise blood sugar levels for a short time-if they want a girl.

Another researcher in this field, Fiona Matthews of the University of Exeter, England, has come up with further evidence in support of the effect of diet on the sex of the unborn child. Her study followed 7 40 pregnant women who kept detailed records of their diets before conception. Her study found that mothers who consumed high-energy foods prior to conception were slightly more likely to have boys. The food with the greatest effect seemed to be breakfast cereals, which tend to be high in energy and often high in sodium content as well. Among women eating cereals on a daily basis, 59% had boys, compared with 43% of women who ate less than one bowl of breakfast cereal per week. These results are said to echo those seen in other animals, for example horses and cows, which statistically bear more males when well-fed. The eating habits of women in rich Western countries could explain the slight fall in male

births that has been reported over the past several years. In the UK, male births are falling by 1 per 1,000 births per year. This decrease could be ascribed to the decline in the number of adults and adolescent girls eating breakfast on a regular basis. In addition, the popularity of low-calorie diets for females of child-bearing age could also be a factor contributing to the reduction in male births.

The recent decline in male births in Western countries appears to make sense if one looks at it from an evolutionary standpoint. Historically, more boys tend to be born in times of food plenty, while females tend to be born in times of scarcity. One explanation is that when food is scarce, it is better for the survival of the species for female children to be born-as one male can father offspring by many females. Lower-calorie diets among Western women could be biologically echoing the effects of scarcity-hence, the decline in male births.

So what can we conclude from this complicated picture? If you would like to have a son,

it might be a good idea to eat a breakfast that includes cereal. On the other hand, if you would prefer to give birth to a daughter, then cut out breakfast and continue a weight reduction diet, at least until after conception.

Complete each sentence with the correct ending, A-K, below.

9 In Western countries, gender selection

10 Elissa Cameron

11 Fiona Matthews

12 Eating breakfast cereal on a daily basis

13 Evolution seems to support

A artificially decreased the blood sugar levels of mice.

B is often based on cultural preferences.

C asked patients to write down everything that they ate and when they ate it.

D the influence of food scarcity upon sex ratios at birth.

E that adding sodium to food affects the sex of a baby.

F is an American scientist.

G sometimes occurs for health reasons.

H an equal balance between male and female children.

I conducted research on horses and cows.

J is more common in the UK than in other Western countries.

K seems to increase the likelihood of male births.

Choose the correct letter: A, B, C, D or E.

14 Which of the following is the most suitable title for Reading Passage 1?

A Eating Cereal Is Good for Pregnant Women

B Research Says Mice Make Better Mothers

C Diet May Influence the Sex of Your Baby

D Asian Research Influences Western Medicine

E Gender Selection Research Sparks Scientific Debate