

The advantages of paternity leave

Level: Intermediate to upper intermediate (B1–B2)

Time: 60–90 minutes

Business topics: Maternity and paternity leave, the gender pay gap, company benefits

Business language focus: Language associated with benefits such as maternity leave and the advantages these may present for companies.

Activities: In this lesson, students will:

- read a business article and look at the language necessary to understand and talk about it;
- look at business-specific words and expressions and apply them to their own personal work experience;
- discuss aspects of the article in greater depth;
- suggest possible future benefits that would attract new employees.

Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student, possible internet access for Exercise 6

Group size: All of the tasks can be completed in pairs or groups, so that as much communication as possible takes place in the class. However, this lesson plan can also be used in a one-to-one teaching situation.

This lesson is based on an authentic article, republished here with its full, original text.

The article discusses the advantages of paternity leave.

1. Warmer

Students work in pairs to match the countries with the number of weeks of statutory maternity leave they typically offer. Make sure they give reasons for their choices. At the feedback stage, ask students if they were surprised by any of the correct answers and ask them

to compare the amount of statutory maternity leave in these countries with the amount in their own country or countries. (Note that there may be maternity leave in the USA but it is not a legal requirement or right. The amount of maternity leave may also vary depending on whether it is the first child or not.)

Key:

1. Estonia
2. The UK
3. France
4. Japan
5. The USA

2. Key words and expressions

Students search for words and expressions in the text and write them next to the definitions while noticing how the words are used in context.

Key:

1. eligible
2. financial risk
3. maternity leave
4. average
5. non-transferable
6. level playing field
7. impact
8. empathise
9. empirical
10. mandatory
11. productivity
12. work ethic

3. Understanding the article

Students work in pairs and decide if the statements are true or false. They correct the false statements.

Key:

1. False. He was thrilled.
2. False. Fathers are typically entitled to 2 weeks paid paternity leave while mothers can take up to 52 weeks.
3. True.
4. True.
5. False. First he was excited and then he became worried.
6. True.
7. True.
8. False. He believes it has a positive effect.

4. Business language

In part a, students read the business words and phrases in the box and find and underline them in the article, noticing how they were used in context.

In part b they then use them to complete the sentences before, in part c, deciding which of them are likely to be useful for them and writing sentences of their own that contain these words but also reflect their own company's activity or the potential activity of a company they might work for in the future. For example, a student decides that *bias* and *policy* are not important for them but that being able to talk about *benefits* and *recruitment* is, so they concentrate on writing sentences that focus on the benefits a company or their company can offer and how this could affect recruitment.

Key:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. <i>benefits</i> | 5. <i>career</i> |
| 2. <i>basic pay</i> | 6. <i>policy</i> |
| 3. <i>recruitment</i> | 7. <i>earnings</i> |
| 4. <i>bias</i> | 8. <i>budget</i> |

5. Discussion

In small groups, students discuss the questions which pick up on and expand on topics and quotes from the article. Hold a short whole-group feedback session and compare and contrast each group's answers and input.

6. Wider business theme – Benefits over and above basic pay

Suggest that students go online and use search engines to find information on the kind of benefits that companies typically offer their employees. Note that such benefits are sometimes described as 'perks.' A typical example would be the use of a company car.

Then ask students to work individually and make a list of benefits that would attract people to work for it. They then present their ideas to the class.