

# UNIT 17 TO HAVE OR HAVE NOT

## UNIT OVERVIEW

In this unit, students will:

- 🎧 Read a conversation between Ben and his father.
- Answer open-ended comprehension questions to show understanding of the story
- 🗣️ Consider three alternative opinions about the importance of having children and express agreement or disagreement with the opinions.
- Study the Opinion Network to learn expressions for giving absolute opinions.
- Extend the Topic by doing a role play based on Ben's story.
- Read a Culture Corner extract about reasons to have children.
- Share ideas about the pros and cons of having children.
- Listen to a follow-up video extract from Sun-Hi giving her views about Ben's situation.
- Take the Unit Test.

### Authors' Introduction

Go to [impactseries.com/issues](http://impactseries.com/issues) to listen to Joseph's unit introduction.

### The Issue

In this unit, Ben is discussing with his father the issue of having children. Ben's father wants Ben and his wife Emily to have children. But Ben and Emily have decided not to have children. They feel the world doesn't need more children and they don't want to change their lifestyle. Ben's father thinks this is a big mistake. He feels they'll be lonely and that they are thinking only of themselves.

### Questions Raised

- What are the pros and cons of having children?
- Is it right to bring children into a world which is already overcrowded?
- Is it selfish not to have children simply to have a more comfortable lifestyle?
- Do we have a responsibility to our parents to have children, so that they can have grandchildren?
- How expensive is it to have children, and is this a reason not to have children?

### To Keep in Mind

- Many younger students may not have thought much about having children. They may not realize that some couples consciously choose not to have children.
- The issue of the number of children that a couple has can depend on the country they live in. In China, there are many one-child families because of government policy and a fear of overpopulation. In Japan, the government wants families to have *more* children because the birthrate is low.
- Some students may feel a bit uncomfortable talking about reasons NOT to have children. For students who come from difficult family situations (divorced parents, abusive family life), it can be quite a personal issue. Don't push students too hard to be personal if they don't want to. They may feel uncomfortable because they don't have the "normal" feelings about family life or the desire to have children.

## TEACHING GUIDE

### Getting Ready

→ Have students ask each other these questions in pairs. The questions only require very short answers, so give students time to note down reasons for their answers (#2 and #3) before having them do the activity.

🗳️ **Teaching tip:** You can ask the whole class these questions by using a “voting” system. Students hold up the number of fingers to show the number of brothers and sisters, or the best number of children to have. Having all the students answer at the same time allows students to compare their answers visually with the whole class. For yes/no questions, you can tell students to hold up one finger for “yes,” and two fingers for “no.”

## Situation

➔ Have students read the Situation silently before practicing it with a partner. Then have them practice the dialogue with a partner, but have them close the book when they are speaking. This allows them to consult the book yet not simply read mindlessly.

🗳️ **Teaching tip:** Have students underline the reasons that Ben and his father give for their point of view. You can then go over each of the reasons, given one by one by the students, and ask if they agree with the particular arguments. List the reasons on the board. This will help students clarify their own thinking and give them language support for activities in the rest of the unit.

## Check Your Understanding

### Answer Key (Possible answers)

1. Too many people in the world, too expensive, don't want to change lifestyle.
2. When Ben and Emily are old they will need someone to take care of them. / Children bring happiness and joy.
3. They won't change their minds.
4. They decided to have a child. (They had Ben!)

## What Do You Think?

➔ After you check students' understanding of the story using the comprehension questions, students discuss their opinions of Ben's situation. Discussion should be done in pairs.

🗳️ **Teaching tip:** Before doing the discussion, have students “study” the opinions given by Susan, Ken, and Luis. In pairs, have one student close the book. The other student can be the “teacher” who asks his or her partner if they remember what each of the three said. Put the following language support on the board:

A: What does Susan think about Ben's situation?

B: She thinks...

🗳️ **Culture Point:** The typical age for getting married and starting a family depends a lot on the country and the cultural community. In Pakistan, for example, the average age of marriage is 17, while in China, Japan, and Europe, it is around 30.

## Extending the Topic: I want grandchildren!

➔ This activity involves a role play in which students argue for or against having children. Students should work in pairs. First, have students fill out their opinions about the pros and cons of having children Section B. Give them enough time and make sure they understand each item, as these will serve as the basis for the role play. Then, have students choose to play Ben or Emily (who don't want children) or one of their parents (who want them to have children). Have students practice the role play once with the book open, and then once with the book closed. Point out the Language Hints before they begin and let them know they may use the example to get started. After practicing, you can ask some students to perform their role play in front of the class.

## Culture Corner

Have students work in pairs or groups of three. Students read through the list of Ten Reasons to Have Children. Give them an opportunity to ask about unknown words (for example, fascinating, reincarnation). Then write a few questions on the board for discussion. For example: Which of these reasons do you agree with? Which do you disagree with? For students who know that they don't want to have children, you could ask them to create a list of “Ten Reasons NOT to Have Children.”

## Sharing My Ideas: Children or no children?

### → Choose

Give students a few minutes to think about their choice. Rushing them through the choosing process will make it harder for them to give reasons for their choices later. This should be done in silence. Ask students to compare their answers with those of their partner (if working in pairs at that point).

### → Prepare and Rehearse

To help students come up with reasons, have students refer back to the list on page 76 (Extending The Topic). Encourage them to come up with their own reasons as well. Giving the explanation/example is an important part of the preparation. For example, if students say “they are cute” as a reason to have children, ask them to write down what *exactly* is cute—the way they laugh, how they play, their eyes, etc. This gives much more richness to the activity.

In this unit, students are asked to find someone who has the same topic to rehearse with. As you go around the class, check to see that students are doing the Listener task. They should be helping each other with good explanations and examples.

### Sample Presentation

*I will talk about having children. In fact, I want to have children. I would like two children. Children give a reason to live. They are full of joy and this helps us remember to have happiness in our own lives. Also, they remind us why we work hard every day. Finally, they help us to be generous because we must learn to take care of them. But I know that raising children is difficult. You must do a lot of work. For example, you have to give them a bath and make food for them. Also, it's very expensive to have children. So, I want children, but I will wait until I am over 30 to have children. I want to be stable and have enough money before I take on such a big challenge.*

### → Present

Have students find a partner who has the opposite topic, or try to put them into groups with an equal number of students who want children and don't want children. Before they begin presenting, go over the Presentation Tip as a whole class. This tip encourages students to smile, relax, and look confident. You may want to demonstrate these qualities by doing the sample presentation above. Be sure that the listeners have read and understood the Listener task. Encourage them to take notes.

If you are using the assessment guide below, go over each point with the whole class before students begin their presentations. (This could also be done during the Rehearse step so that students have time to prepare for or practice each assessment point.) Be sure to remind your students that communicating their ideas is more important than using perfect English!

### Assessing the Activity

Have students evaluate the presenter. Create a handout showing a checklist such as the one below, or write it on the board:

- 1 – The presenter gave good explanations or examples.
- 2 – The presenter used the Language Hints.
- 3 – The presentation was well organized.
- 4 – The presenter smiled.
- 5 – The presenter looked confident and relaxed.

When students are working in pairs, have each student evaluate the other. If a student presents to a small group or in front of the class, have each student evaluate him or her.

### Bonus Activity

If there is time, consider doing the Bonus Activity. Set up the debate by dividing the class into two groups. If you are working with a large class, you may want to create multiple debate groups to ensure student participation. Give the groups time to prepare a list of reasons. Have the first group (Couples should have only one child) present their reasons. The opposing group (Couples should have many children) should take notes and prepare any questions they might have. Repeat the same method for the second group. You can allow the groups to argue back and forth a number of times until they are finished, or you can set a time

limit. At the end, ask students to decide which group had the better argument. You also have the option of assigning one judge per group.

## PERSONAL OPINION

→ If you have downloaded the video clip or have access to the Internet in class, play the video clip. The first time, have the students watch with books closed. Ask questions to see if the students have understood the gist of Sun-Hi's opinion. Then have them look at the summary. See if they can fill in the missing words. Play the extract once or twice more. Then check the answers.

### Answer Key

#### Sun-Hi

It's easy for me to understand the son when he says that it will cost a lot of money to have and raise children. That's true. But I also think that they might be missing out on a lot of the joys of life if they decide not to have children. As for myself, I have a sister and I am really happy that my parents decided to have children, more than one child, because my sister and I have a really good relationship. She is actually one of the best friends I have.

Of course there are things you won't be able to do, such as going to fancy, expensive restaurants or going on luxurious vacations. But there will also be new discoveries and joys by raising your children, such as teaching them language, teaching your beliefs, and watching them grow. There is also a question of fairness. In this situation, his father gave up some of his freedom when he had his son, and now maybe it's his son's turn to pay him back by having children.

### Video Script

Well, I understand the son when he says that it will cost a lot of money to have and raise children. But I also think that they might be missing out on a lot of the joys of life if they decide to not have children. And as for myself, I have a sister and I am really happy that my parents decided to have children, and more than one, because me and my sister have a really good relationship. And she is one of the best friends I have.

Of course, there are things you won't be able to do, such as going to fancy, expensive restaurants, and luxurious vacations. But there will also be new discoveries and joys by raising your children, such as teaching them language, teaching them your beliefs, and watching them grow. There is also a question of fairness. In this situation, his father gave up some of his freedom when he had his son, and now maybe it's his son's turn to pay him back by having children.

## UNIT TEST

→ Make copies of the Unit Test for each student. Distribute the copies and allow about 15 minutes for the class to complete the Test. Correct the Test in class.

A. **Understanding the Situation:** The focus is on understanding Ben and his father's disagreement over whether or not Ben and his wife should have children. Students answer five multiple-choice questions.

B. **Vocabulary:** The focus is on understanding three words or phrases from the Situation or the Extending the Topic sections. Students fill in three missing words of a short paragraph that summarizes the Situation.

C. **Expressions:** The focus is on you check students' understanding of expressions or phrases from the What Do You Think? and Opinion Network sections. Students answer two multiple-choice questions.

### Answer Key

- A. 1. c 2. c 3. c 4. a 5. b  
B. decision, lonely, change  
C. 1. a 2. b

## LINKS

If you would like the class to do additional research on marriage, having children, and whether or not to have them, here are some useful links:

Average age of marriage around the world: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age\\_at\\_first\\_marriage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_at_first_marriage)

World overpopulation awareness: <http://www.overpopulation.org/>

Article about someone who regrets having children:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20070929.wdoug0929/BNSStory/lifeFamily/home>

Forty reasons to have kids:

<http://karenedmisten.blogspot.com/2007/10/40-reasons-to-have-kids.html>